PRESS RELEASE

The Russian Scotsman on the Service of Peter the Great: the Moscow Kremlin Museums open up James Bruce

On 13 November 2026, the Moscow Kremlin Museums open the exhibition **"James Bruce. The Scottish Genius of the Petrine Era"** devoted to an outstanding statesman, military commander, diplomat and scientist on the service of the first Russian emperor. The project will for the first time show the wide audience the scale and diversity of the contribution made by Count James Bruce, descendent of the Scottish and Irish kings, to the science, culture, and military affairs of Russia.

Consisting of two sections, the display has joined more than 300 objects from the Moscow Kremlin Museums, State Hermitage, State Historical Museum, State Russian Museum, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Military-Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineers and Signal Corps, State Russian Archive of Ancient Documents, and other leading museums, archives, and libraries of Russia.

The first section – "Under the Auspieces of St Andrew" (the Exhibition Hall of the Patriarch's Palace) – is dedicated to the political and military career of Bruce. The visitors will learn about the origin of the emperor's comrade-in-arms, his acquaintance with Peter the Great during the service at the command of Patrick Gordon, participation in the Grand Embassy and the Northern War. The exhibition presents James Bruce not only as a reformer of the Russian artillery and a key figure in military and diplomatic affairs, but also as an editor and interpreter. The final part of the section will feature its main hero as the connoisseur of the West European ceremonies and heraldry, one of the organizers of Catherine I's coronation, and the mourning ceremony of Peter the Great.

Among the memorial items, the most valued are notes of Count Bruce on mathematics and astronomy, scientific instruments that he had brought from the Grand Embassy, and the diary of Patrick Gordon, who came from Scotland and was Peter I's counsellor on military affairs. One of the most notable items of the exhibition will be the original of the Treaty of Nystad signed and sealed by Bruce – after this document was signed, Peter I acquired the title of emperor, and the Russian Empire was announced.

The second section – "Bruce's Universe" (the Exhibition Hall of the Assumption Belfry) – encompasses the period of scientific revolution of the 16th-17th cc, when the traditional global picture went through a radical transformation, and immerses the spectators into the intellectual world of the count.

MOSCOW KREMLIN MUSEUMS

"The Scottish genius" was interested in mathematics, geometry, astronomy, physics, optics, ballistics, chemistry, and medicine. His library comprised over 2000 volumes among which were the works of the leading scientists of that time: Isaak Newton, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, Christiaan Huygens, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz; with some of them Bruce corresponded. He founded the School of Mathematics and Navigation that was situated in the Sukharev Tower. After retirement, Bruce continued living in his Moscow estate "Glinki" amid books and pieces of art.

This section demonstrates not only various artifacts and items from the "cabinet of curiosities" of James Bruce, "Chinese" set in particular, but also books from his collection among which was "Cosmotheoros" by Huygens - the first published translation in Russian that introduced the readers to the heliocentric model of the universe. Besides, the collection contained the entire set of Bruce's Calendar – a set of practical advice and universal astrological predictions. The guests will have an opportunity to study the model of famous Sukhareva Tower and the layout plan of the Moscow estate "Glinki" that was obviously designed by the Scotsman himself in the Palladian style.

An illustrated catalogue will be published and the scientific conference "Foreigners on the Russian Service in the 17th-18th cc" will be held on 17-18 November 2026 within the framework of the exhibition.

A special programme incorporating lectures, book club, excursions, children and family programmes as well as Musical Festival "Ambassadorial Gifts" was prepared for the visitors of the show.

General sponsor:

ГАЗПРОМ

Dates: 13 November 2026 – 28 February 2027

Exhibition Hall of the Assumption Belfry, Exhibition Hall of the Patriarch's Palace

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