# Robert Burns painting sparks time travel theories over mysterious object



A recently unearthed painting depicting Scotland's celebrated poet Robert Burns and his beloved Highland Mary has ignited a flurry of imaginative theories surrounding time travel. Created around 1882 by artists Ralph Josey and James Archer, the artwork, entitled "The Betrothal of Burns and Highland Mary," illustrates the couple in a tender moment by the River Ayr, where they are seen exchanging glances while each clasping a dark rectangular object. This has led some social media users to assert, somewhat incredulously, that Burns appears to be holding what looks like an early iPhone.

The object in question draws striking parallels to modern smartphones, and enthusiasts laughingly speculate whether Burns and Mary were partaking in social media interactions, perhaps discussing old flames or sharing memes. Yet, beneath this light-hearted banter lies the broader context of their relationship, which was famously brief. Burns and Highland Mary, whose real name was Mary Campbell, are said to have pledged their intention to marry during a meeting in 1786, an event marked by a traditional custom of exchanging Bibles over a running stream. This longstanding tradition hints that the mysterious rectangle might more likely be one of those Bibles rather than a glimpse into the future of technology.

Interestingly, this is not the first instance of contemporary devices being seemingly spotted in historical art. An earlier case surfaced involving Umberto Romano's "Mr Pynchon And The Settling Of Springfield," painted in 1937. Even though this was decades before the advent of mobile phones, observant viewers identified a figure clutching what appears to be a modern gadget, fuelling theories that transgress the bounds of time.

The fascination surrounding these anachronistic interpretations extends to other photographs, such as a vintage image from 1943 showing a man on a crowded beach, leading to speculation about the nature of the object he appears to be engaged with. With attire and devices that seem incongruous for their respective eras, these moments spark discussions among observers regarding the intersection of history and modernity.

Amidst the modern lens of social media speculation, it is crucial to reflect on the established historical narratives. Research has shown that the bond between Burns and Campbell has often been romanticised to enhance Burns' stature as a cultural icon. In actuality, their relationship likely spanned only a few weeks, shaped more by myth than by robust documentation. Items such as statues and elegant snuff boxes have been attributed to their connection, complicating the lore surrounding this beloved poet and his Highland muse.

As entertaining as these theories may be—provoking thoughts about technology transcending time itself—the reality often proves less fantastical. The rectangle in the painting serves as a stark reminder of human connections rooted in historical customs, rather than as evidence of time travel. As we confront the interplay of art, technology, and the stories we tell, these revelations underscore the enduring nature of love and fidelity, which echo through the ages, independent of devices.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/time-travel-evidence-iphone-spotted-35288101), [[4]](https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/art-lovers-spot-iphone-1882-30108183)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/time-travel-evidence-iphone-spotted-35288101), [[3]](https://www.jumblejoy.com/iphone-spotted-in-painting-from-1882-sparks-time-travel-theories)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/art-lovers-spot-iphone-1882-30108183), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-12726935)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4052033), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highland_Mary)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/time-travel-evidence-iphone-spotted-35288101> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-12726935> - An article from BBC News discusses the relationship between Robert Burns and Mary Campbell, known as Highland Mary. Researchers from Glasgow University suggest that the myth surrounding their relationship was largely constructed to enhance Burns' cultural significance. The article highlights that their relationship likely lasted only a few weeks, and the legend of Highland Mary was built from objects like statues and snuff boxes, rather than written documentation.
3. <https://www.jumblejoy.com/iphone-spotted-in-painting-from-1882-sparks-time-travel-theories> - This article from JumbleJoy examines the 1882 engraving titled 'The Betrothal of Burns and Highland Mary' by R. Josey and James Archer. The engraving depicts Robert Burns and Mary Campbell exchanging a rectangular object, leading some viewers to speculate about time travel. However, the article suggests that the object is likely a religious book, as Burns and Campbell were known to have exchanged Bibles over a running stream during their meeting in 1786.
4. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/art-lovers-spot-iphone-1882-30108183> - An article from the Daily Star reports on art enthusiasts spotting what appears to be an iPhone in a 19th-century painting of Robert Burns and Mary Campbell. The painting, titled 'The Betrothal of Burns and Highland Mary,' shows the couple holding a dark rectangle that resembles an early iPhone. The article suggests that the object is likely a Bible, referencing the tradition of exchanging Bibles over a running stream during their meeting in 1786.
5. <https://www.nts.org.uk/collections/object/object-54888> - The National Trust for Scotland provides information about the painting 'The Betrothal of Burns and Highland Mary' by William Henry Midwood. The oil on canvas depicts Robert Burns kneeling beside a black and white sheepdog, offering a Bible to Highland Mary, who is dressed in shepherdess clothing. The painting is part of the National Trust for Scotland's collection and is on display.
6. <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4052033> - Christie's auction house provides details about the painting 'The Betrothal of Robert Burns and Highland Mary' by James Archer. The oil on canvas, measuring 36 1/8 x 28 inches, depicts Burns and Mary Campbell exchanging a Bible over a running stream. The painting was signed with a monogram and is part of Christie's collection.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highland_Mary> - The Wikipedia page on 'Highland Mary' provides information about Mary Campbell, the woman known as Highland Mary, who was the lover of Scottish poet Robert Burns. The page includes details about her life, the poem 'Highland Mary' composed by Burns, and the historical context of their relationship.