

For Trish, art begins at forty

Patricia Cain is one of nine artists, all in the early stage of their careers, who were recently awarded a two-year membership of Glasgow Art Club. Their work was seen in the Group Fellowship exhibition in the club gallery last summer



Patricia Cain in her studio

Six years ago Patricia Cain was a successful lawyer running her own practice in Carlisle. She had a staff of eight and good prospects of expanding the business. But she had doubts. 'Do I want to do this for the next twenty years?' she asked herself. At the age of forty, she felt it was time to fulfill a youthful ambition. She'd be an artist.

Trish knew what she was doing. She had studied at art school, at first in Carlisle, near her home town of Penrith, and then at St Martin's College of Art in London. Now it was time to make up for lost time.

She came north on a scholarship to train at Glasgow School of Art, where she gained a PhD in fine art. As a struggling artist and a single mum, money was tight, but since graduating she has gained increasing recognition, most recently as winner of the Aspect prize, worth £15,000. This prize, funded by Aspect Capital, the investment management company, is open to artists Scottish by birth, or those who live and work in Scotland. Trish was one of four artists short-listed.

Her entry consisted of paintings of construction work at the Riverside Museum, Glasgow's new museum of transport designed by Zaha Hadid. They are intricate representations of the building in its skeletal stage, closely detailed and yet imaginatively interpreted

Trish lives in a top-floor flat overlooking Kelvingrove park with her

husband Sam Cartman, who is also an artist – they married last May. His studio is at one end of the roomy flat, hers at the other. From her first marriage Trish has a 20-year-old son, Tom, and a daughter Ella, who is 14. Stacked against her studio walls are paintings of work in progress, most visibly a large triptych showing the rooftops of Florence, where she lived for three months in 2008 after winning the RSA's Kinross travel scholarship. Recently, fascinated by old wartime photographs of Clydebank, she has been imaginatively recreating images of the bombed tenements. She has immersed herself in the subject, researching stories of the blitz and talking people who lived through it, which she feels is a necessary grounding for her art.

John Fowler

Chance to see the leaning towers - both of them!

Once again a visit to Italy for club members and friends is being planned for later this year. This time the destination is the Emilia-Romagna district, where the group will be based at or near Bologna. The seven-day trip, organised by Osprey Holidays of Edinburgh, is provisionally scheduled for the first week in September, flying from Edinburgh, with a coach laid on from Glasgow city centre to the airport.

Bologna, at the foot of the Appenines, is one of the oldest and finest cities in Italy, the old city still partly enclosed by medieval walls. Amongst its many landmarks are not one but two leaning towers. There will be visits to Mantua, birthplace of the poet Virgil, 'a very attractive little town', according to Michael Moulder, regular leader of these visits. 'It's like a little Venice' – there's a lot of water. The group will also visit Ferrara, where the moated Castello Estense and the Cathedral are particularly worth seeing, and Ravenna, 'literally wall to wall mosaics', says Michael. 'Binoculars are a must'.

Fruitful trip

On last year's trip a street scene caught the eye of artist Hazel Nagl, resulting in her painting 'Fruit Shop, the Veneto'. Suffused with the colour and light of Italy, it won her the Alexander Graham Munro award, worth £1000, at the recent RSW exhibition in Edinburgh.

See the mural, catch a train

Passengers on the southbound platform at Arbroath station can now study a large mural by past president Charles Anderson showing the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath, the historic



occasion in 1320 when Scotland's claim to be an independent nation was asserted in the presence of Robert the Bruce. Charles unveiled a plaque beside his mural on April 6 to mark its safe arrival.

Charles painted the mural in 1984 for display in Arbroath's Abbeygate shopping centre. When the centre was given a make-over in the 1990s the mural was taken down and stored. Recently enthusiasts saved it from its imminent fate ('in a skip' says Charles) and arranged for it to be erected at the station. 'After ten years in storage it still looks good', he says.

News from 185 BATH STREET



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GLASGOW ART CLUB

SPRING 2010

No. 33

President's column

Young artists - why are so few accepted?

I am sure all members will have learned of the death of Dr James D Robertson with great sadness. He was a legendary figure in the life of the Club, a great artist and a dear friend to many of us. His loss is a grievous one. What should have been a dinner to celebrate the award of an MBE will now be a retrospective exhibition and tribute to his life's work this autumn. Can I thank Martin Frame and Paul Dowds, who left council at the annual business meeting, for all their hard work. Paul will continue as a trustee and I am sure Martin will continue to beaver away in the club's interest, encouraging people to join and attend club events.

Robert Kelsey was a tower of strength as hon. secretary. He continues on council and will help our secretary

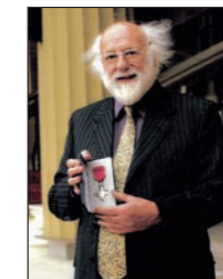
group in the background. It has taken a group of three people to replace him! I wish Jennifer Irvine, Liz Knox and Hazel Nagl well, and congratulate Jennifer on what I am sure you will agree was a most uplifting spring exhibition – one of the best and best supported in recent years. I hope this is the start of a trend.

I raise as a lay member an issue with not a little trepidation. The

future of the visual artistic side of the club's activities and standing depends on the regular recruitment of new

young exhibiting artist members. There is an encouraging number of applications but a depressing lack of successful applications. I raise the question – is this because the applicants are of such low artistic merit, or do our vetting procedures need examination? Is there a case for some objective qualification rather than the subjective judgment of those exhibiting artists who choose to participate in the process?

I look forward to a successful 2010 for the club. Work will soon be starting on the billiard room project and the preliminary investigation on the Mackintosh frieze. Let's keep our fingers crossed that it's there!



James Robertson
MBE
- see pages 4 & 5

Watercolour show is a coup for the club

A notable event took place at Glasgow Art Club on Friday, April 24, with the opening of an exhibition of more than 70 paintings selected from the spring exhibition in London of the Royal Watercolour Society.

The event is important on several counts. It is the first time the RWS, whose origins go back more than two centuries to the earliest days of watercolour painting in Britain, has come to Scotland. It is the first time that the club has hosted such an important exhibition from furth of Scotland.

Guest speakers at the opening included David Paskett, president of the RWS, John Inglis, president of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour, and Lord Macfarlane of Bearsden – who, speaking of the strength of visual arts in Glasgow, mentioned the current Kelvingrove



RWS president David Paskett in Glasgow. Behind him, his painting 'Hat Display'.

show featuring the Glasgow Boys, an exhibition also destined to cross the border, but in the other direction when it transfers to the Royal Academy.

The watercolour show was organised by the Art Club's George Devlin. George had at first envisaged an exchange of shows between the Scottish and English societies (he is a member of both), but when that proved difficult, the opportunity opened for GAC to be host. George

hopes that this will be the first of many such visiting exhibitions. He said: 'Since we recently became open to the public, it would be highly beneficial if we could organise more high-profile exhibitions in the gallery, which as we know is one of Glasgow's best-kept secrets'.

• A Brush with Life, a book on the art of George Devlin by the French writer Thierry Gardie, is now on sale.

In from the cold - a Burns night to remember



Top table. William McIlvanney is third from the left

'From scenes like these...'

Anniversaries – the turnings of the years. They keep coming, eagerly anticipated by the young, celebrated by the many, lamented or even dreaded by the oldies. Christmas comes and goes in a welter of hymns and gifts and hugs; Ne'erday comes and goes in a splurge of lubricated and good humoured nostalgia.

Burns' birthday anniversary pulls us up with the Immortal Memory of the plain man speaking many plain truths – about honesty, sincerity, worth and integrity. What a legacy has Rabbie left us!

The Glasgow Art Club's Burns night has become an anniversary of anticipated pleasure, companionship and conviviality. On January 29 about a hundred members, their guests, invited speakers and musicians gathered in the great gallery, glad to be in from the cauld blast. Various rituals followed with vigorous and stirring piping from James Beaton, a powerful address to the haggis by David Smith resplendent in his tammie, and a fine Scottish supper. (We have always felt a flicker of sympathy for the haggis impotently awaiting the slice of the scimitar.) On this occasion the haggis was within the beef rather than alongside it. Atholl brose in a chocolate tulip cup was a delightful follow-on.

Speakers included Lesley Duncan's soft and sweet poetic delivery, John Hamilton's serious To a Mouse, Martin Frame's apologia for previous unkind words about the lasses and Alison Gordon's forgiving reply. Our principal guest was novelist and literatus William McIlvanney who, in the lead-up to his toast to the Immortal Memory, took us as far afield as the ill-fated World Cup campaign in Argentina, then to Crossmyloof, touched on the Irish power of Ossian, and recalled the Cotter's

cottage. Most memorably he commented on Scotland's 'cultural DNA', that hereditary and genetic strand that links us to past and future generations. Its power does not wane as the years roll. And after music and song from Miller Frondigoun and John Crawford, and melodies from Patricia Mullan's fiddle, we wrapped up well and braved the cold of the night. It was one of the more memorable anniversaries – can we make them more often?

Ian Melville



Piper James Beaton (left) and some of the guests.

GUESS WHO?



Guests at our festive season Masquerade Ball – but whose are the faces behind the masks?



Some highlights in the calendar

The regular **Unclubbed** at the GAC takes place on Thursday, May 20. On the following night there's a private view, with supper on offer, for the opening by Jimmie Macgregor of the **Glasgow Southern Art Club** exhibition (Friday, May 21).

A recital by the intriguingly titled **New 4tet** takes place on Wednesday evening, June 2, with a pot-pourri of madrigals, folk songs, tavern catches, comedy numbers etc. on the programme. It's not all frothy – composers include Purcell, Sullivan and Vaughan Williams. Plus two-course supper for £9.50.

Two bites of the cherry for **Jazz Bites**, the first on June 5, the next on June 19.

The **summer outing** is planned for Sunday June 13 – destination Ardgowan Estate, Inverkip.

Unclubbed returns on Thursday, June 24

(next date will be July 29). The Glasgow Art Club's **Summer Exhibition** opens on Friday, June 25 with buffet at £15. Summer cocktails are promised. On Friday, July 2, it's time for the Art Club **Cabaret** again.

Grounded

The concert by the Fejes Quartet, frequent visitors to GAC, fell victim to the cloud of Icelandic volcanic ash. First violinist Tamas Fejes, who is Hungarian, found himself stranded in his homeland and unable to fly. The concert, billed for April 21, was cancelled but the quartet will return later this year.

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CHEERS!

Champagne for the Clive family, winners in the club's first quiz night, held last month. Quiz master Gary Gilday presents the prize. Sample question: Which animal provides hair for a camel hair brush? Answer: Squirrel. Of course.



Hired for a song - my duet with Dr Mavor (alias James Bridie)

Dr Mavor (otherwise 'James Bridie') was the first member of the Glasgow Art Club I ever met. I thought it might be of interest to describe how that came about, but I seem to have left it rather late, since there can be few club members left who remember him. However...

I was interviewed by him. At least it was supposed to be an interview. I was in my third year at the Glasgow & West of Scotland Commercial College. At that stage one was supposed to occupy one's day-time hours with some sort of clerical employment. Dr Mavor was looking for a secretary and I was told by the college director that if I wanted the job Dr Mavor would wish to interview me.

It was the summer of 1943. He was already a qualified medical practitioner and a successful author. I was 19, diffident and shy, and not all that long arrived in Glasgow from Oban.

When I arrived at his house in Bearsden he was mowing the tennis lawn, assisted by his younger son, Bingo. I was invited to sit down in his study and offered a glass of beer. He was quite a big man, had heavy shoulders, a large head, and a deep voice. He kept glancing at me from under untidy eyerows, but with a bit of a smile, so I did not feel too intimidated. I knew perfectly well who he was, of course. I had read some of his plays, A Sleeping Clergyman and Tobias and the Angel.

When he heard that I was from Oban he asked me if I had read Neil Munro. I had never heard of him, and said so. But when it came to the old myths and legends I was on more familiar

ground. Then he spoke about Oban people being members of the Free Church and about the Seceders. I told him I didn't know much about that, but I had been to the Wee Free church in Oban. 'You'll know the paraphrases then,' he said, and began to sing

Come, let us to the Lord our God
With contrite hearts return;
Our god is gracious, nor will leave
The desolate to mourn.

I thought it would be impolite to leave the man singing on his own, so I joined in.

I was not conscious of being put at my ease while we chatted away. From the start I never felt other than at my ease. He did not treat me as a shy young man from up north. He treated me as an equal. I thought of him almost from the first moment as a friend.

It was late afternoon when I left to catch my bus back to Glasgow. As I said goodbye I realised that I had not really had an interview. Instinctively I felt he would be embarrassed if I asked him about the job, so I just said – 'Will I start tomorrow?' And he said – 'Oh, yes. Tomorrow. That'll be fine'.

And that is how I came to work for James Bridie. It turned out to be a remarkable experience.

Iain A Macmillan

Keep in touch

The Newsletter would like to hear from you. If you have an idea for an article, short item, anecdote or picture which you think would interest readers, please contact us at secretary@glasgowartclub.co.uk or phone 0141 248 5210 and ask for the club secretary. Or write to the Newsletter at the club.

DOWN WITH THE 'GLUE-POT' PAINTERS

In March Paul Dowds gave an illustrated and illuminating talk on the history of Glasgow Art Club to the Friends of Glasgow School of Art. The room in which they met, Paul told the audience, had been described by the celebrated cultural historian Kenneth (Lord) Clark, of the TV Civilisation series, as 'the most admirable and important small gallery in Europe'. Looking around them, the large number of guests nodded agreement.



Paul Dowds chats to the Friends

Paul explained the origins of the club as the brainchild of a group of artist friends. Early members included some of the painters known as the Glasgow Boys – reacting against the popular sentimentalist of the time sometimes known disparagingly as the 'glue-pot painters'. Paul also drew attention to the club's own fine collection of pictures, among them David Donaldson's portrait of John Cunningham, reputedly done in an afternoon and finished by teatime.

After a description of the library, archive and other facilities available to members and to the public, Paul touched on a more sensitive subject, the neglect of the building over the years, only now being tackled. He referred to the Mackintosh frieze which is believed to run round the gallery above the picture rail – long hidden but soon, hopefully, to be seen again. A computer-generated image gave a fascinating view of how the gallery could look should the frieze be restored.

The Friends' visit was part of a fund-raising exercise to provide travel bursaries for School of Art students.



Wilma Scott – working with ‘a great wee team’

STAFF PROFILE

‘I’m learning’ says Wilma – 30 years on

Every organisation depends on its backroom boys and girls, but how many Art Club members are aware of Wilma Scott’s remarkable record of thirty years of continuous service?

It was on the first of March 1980 that the young Mrs Scott took up the challenge of looking after the club’s books. She had recently returned to work at accountants Cuthbertson Provan and Strong, where she had started as an office junior straight from college and met her husband Peter. He had to move to another firm when they got engaged – ‘couples were not allowed to work together at that time’.

Now, with two small sons to complete the family, she was ready to tackle something new, and when her boss Leslie McIntyre was appointed secretary of GAC he asked Wilma if she could spend two days a week dealing with the payroll and members’ bills.

‘To begin with I worked from the office in West George Street and Blythswood Street, but after nine years I moved into the wee cubbyhole halfway up the stair’, she recalls. ‘By that time the club was newly open to women members and I enjoyed getting to put faces to the names I knew only through bills’.

The years brought changes in the Glasgow accountancy scene; the small firm was gobbled up by a bigger one, and one secretary succeeded another till David Watson retired last year after ten years of service. The work continued as before till last autumn when Jonathan Lord took over as the first club-based secretary. For the past months Wilma has been helping him to bring the accounting system into the 21st century.

‘It has been hard work digitising all of the data and I’m still learning some of the processes,’ Wilma admits, ‘but we’re beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel which is very satisfying!’ She has always enjoyed working in the club.

‘It’s got a nice atmosphere, there’s always something going on and the staff make a great wee team, working hard to develop the services, especially after we got charitable status.’

Since her husband died five years ago, she has particularly appreciated the support of colleagues, and is a regular attender at Unclubbed evenings.

Jean Reid

We regret to announce the death of the following club members:
Sir James Black OM, Gillian Gemmill Kamming, Brian M Jamieson, Abigail McLellan, A B Robertson, Dr James D Robertson MBE

Brian Jamieson

Brian Jamieson, who died suddenly at the age of 59 from complications following routine surgery, had a long and happy association with the club. He combined a distinguished business career with a passion for the arts and was treasurer of the Nomads, the venerable speakers’ club which meets fortnightly in the GAC.

His old friend Gerry Malone recalls: ‘Always immaculately turned out – his opera cape frequently adorned the stalls bar at the Theatre Royal – he was unfailingly courteous, had a boisterous sense of humour, exuded sound judgment in his business life and enjoyed the company of a cohort of loyal friends. ‘As well as his lifelong support for Scottish Opera, Brian served on the board of the Glasgow School of Art, was an accomplished racing driver, chairman of the Glasgow Society of Epicureans and a trustee of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland – a renaissance man indeed.’

Brian Jamieson was born in Edinburgh and brought up in Kirkcaldy, then Uddingston. School at Uddingston Grammar (school captain) was followed by an LLB at Glasgow University and an apprenticeship with Maclay Murray and Spens, after which he moved to the world of commerce as a legal adviser and company secretary.

Following a period with Coats Paton/Viyella, Brian moved to the Glasgow Development Agency, then later Scottish Enterprise, as company secretary, a constant in a sea of changing political tides, his advice always well received and his discreet toleration of the whims of his various political masters philosophical.

Brian frequently lunched at the club and he and his wife Linda were faithful

supporters of in-house activities, especially anything musical.

*Born 30 August 1950,
died 15 February 2010.*

Sir James Black

The legacy of the Nobel prize-winner Sir James Black, who has died at the age of 85 after a long illness, is in the countless lives saved by his pioneering research as a pharmacologist. His name will always be associated with the discovery and use of beta-blockers in the treatment of heart disease, and with the development of new drugs to treat a wide variety of conditions.

James Whyte Black was born in Uddingston, the son of a mining engineer. On graduation from Glasgow University in 1946 he spent twelve years as an academic physiologist, initially at St Andrews and then in Singapore. He returned to take up a post at the Glasgow University veterinary school. In 1973 he was appointed head of pharmacology at Unversity College, London.

Thereafter he worked mainly in industry. A spell at the Wellcome Research Laboratories was followed by the professorship in Analytical Pharmacology at King’s College Hospital medical school.

A man who shunned publicity, his reaction to winning the Nobel prize for medicine in 1988 was one of shock. ‘I was in an absolute funk,’ he has been quoted as saying. ‘I went down to the pub and contemplated my fate’. He was knighted for services to medicine in 1988, and in 2000 was appointed to the Order of Merit. He was chancellor of Dundee University from 1992 to 2006.

*Born 14 June 1924,
died 22 March 2010.*

First lady? But Jemima missed her chance

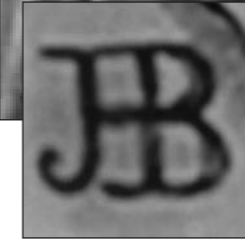
NORMA FARQUHAR, in her latest article on the history of Glasgow Art Club, reveals how the club might never have acquired its century-long reputation as ‘an entrenched male stronghold’ if one woman had persevered.

When Glasgow Art Club was founded in 1867 by William Dennistoun, ten young men, all enthusiastic amateur artists, met in a temperance hotel in Buchanan Street every Saturday. These meetings were serious working occasions where sketches were presented for criticism, watercolour landscapes being the main output. Six months after the first meeting it was decided that professional artists should be invited to join and new men were drawn in.

The company must have been somewhat taken aback when in 1869 the secretary read out a letter ‘in a feminine hand’ applying for membership and offering to send a picture for approval. The letter was signed JB and the club minutes record that ‘in the absence of more explicit information, the consideration of said Letter was in the meantime deferred’.

The distinctive initials JB were the signature of Jemima Blackburn, a gifted and renowned illustrator and painter, wife of Hugh Blackburn, professor of mathematics at Glasgow University. Jemima’s first painting was hung in an exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1848 and later toured in America. A copy of her book *Birds Drawn from Nature*, published only three years before her application, was presented to the Zoological Society of London.

Jemima Blackburn (1823-1909) was the daughter of James Wedderburn, Solicitor General of Scotland. She was friend and



The serious-looking woman above is Jemima Blackburn, an admired painter and illustrator in the second half of the nineteenth century. Inset: her signature initials.

pupil of John Ruskin and Sir Edwin Landseer. In 1854 Professor and Mrs Blackburn bought an estate, Roshven, on the southern shore of Loch Ailort in Moidart, where Jemima redesigned the ‘big house’ in the arts and crafts style. She daily recorded life around her, especially the birds and wildlife there, becoming one of the leading bird painters of the day. She sketched the last known sea eagle’s nest before the species became extinct in Scotland.

It was at Roshven that she did her best work. Beatrix Potter described her as a ‘broad, intelligent observer with a keen eye for the beautiful in Nature’. Almost certainly Beatrix named Jemima Puddleduck for her friend.

In her book *Birds Drawn from Nature*, Jemima observed a hatching cuckoo throwing out nestling meadow pipits from a nest and with a drawing of the event settled an argument which had long puzzled ornithologists. Charles Darwin referred to her observation in the sixth edition of *On the Origin of*

Species. During her lifetime Jemima Blackburn illustrated twenty-seven books. Her work was acquired by the Natural History Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the Royal Collection, and the British Library.

More than two years passed before the members of Glasgow Art Club replied to her letter. The secretary wrote that the members would be ‘most happy to receive three specimens of your work should you still wish to join’.

The minutes of the next club meeting record Mrs Blackburn’s reply. She explained that ‘frequent absence from town would prevent her fulfilling the rules of the Society and so from accepting the responsibility of membership.’

The offer had been made bravely and fairly. Had Jemima accepted it, other women would undoubtedly have followed. No rule was ever made to exclude women members from Glasgow Art Club, but with the inclusion of lay membership at a later date the club was to become ‘an entrenched male stronghold’ – the words of a ‘lady artist’! The admission of lay members changed the club meetings from simply working occasions to meetings of a more social nature. In this Victorian age it would have been undoubtedly difficult for women to join the club.

Eleven years elapsed before a group of women, all graduates of Glasgow School of Art, formed the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists, Scotland’s first club run by and for women. A hundred years would pass before Glasgow Art Club again opened its door to women members.

See who’s hanging in the vaults

Inverarity Vaults, the culturally-minded wine shop handily situated below the Art Club, is hosting work by some of our artist members past and present throughout the year. March saw an exhibition by Liz Knox. Stephen Carruthers is represented in May, followed by Muriel Barclay (June), Glen Scouller RSW RGI (August) and Ronald F Smith RSW RGI (December). All are on show for the full month.

New Members

We welcome the following new members. All are lay members except where indicated: Maria Mangan Barr, Hugo Brown, Matthew G Galbraith, Lynne Crombie Gilmour, Anthony Hamilton (artist), Neil Mackintosh, Derek McLean, Iain Mullholland, Alex Norton, Brian Simmers.

In tribute to James Robertson



James Robertson's painting 'January Landscape'

Landscape

for James Robertson

Each painting an open door to an unknown universe landscape...yet emphatically

not scenery.

An invitation to witness this artist's vision landscape in form, in content

painted meditation.

Colour and shape and texture marks in rich profusion confer upon us Right of Entry.

To this, his, other world.

Stan Bell

A painter of zest

James Robertson – 'Jimmy' to his many friends – died on January 7 at the age of 78.

An outstanding and much honoured artist, Jimmy was a former president of Glasgow Art Club and one of its best known and most characterful members. James Downie Robertson was born in Fife on November 2, 1931, one of twin boys. He moved with his parents to Glasgow where he went to Hillhead High School, before attending Glasgow School of Art. After a short spell teaching, he joined the art school staff, at first as part-time lecturer and then as full-time lecturer in drawing and painting. He retired in 1999 but continued to paint zestfully. An RSA, member of the RGI and a D Litt of Glasgow University, he was appointed MBE for services to art in Scotland last year. Sadly, his wife Ursula had died shortly before.

Memorial Show

A memorial exhibition commemorating and celebrating the work of James Robertson will be held later in the year. There will be a private view on Friday, October 1, and the exhibition will run until Saturday, October 27. A dinner in Dr Robertson's honour will take place on Friday, October 15. Details will be announced later.

A fond farewell - and so much in life to celebrate

The empty leather armchair by the fireplace made its own poignant comment that sunny January morning. For the presiding genius of the Art Club, Jimmy Robertson, was not there, perched on the arm of the chair, holding court with fellow artists and friends, the centre of convivial and lively conversation. He had seemed an indestructible part of the club, its most distinguished painter (a long-time Royal Scottish Academician with an honorary doctorate and recent MBE to his name), a connoisseur of the sister arts of music and poetry, and raconteur par excellence.

Friends who had talked to him in the run-up to Christmas and quizzed him about his sortie to Buckingham Palace could simply not believe that he had been snatched from them so suddenly, without warning or a chance to make proper farewells.

After the official funeral at Woodside Crematorium, Paisley, attended by family and close friends, there was a commemoration event at the club. The atmosphere was inevitably sad but also in a real sense celebratory, for this was a man whose attitude to life and art and friendship enhanced the mood of

everyone who came in contact with him. The club was decked out with flowers. Paintings by Jimmy (including one magisterial canvas from the RSA) lined the long wall of the gallery, complemented by caricatures by Dan Ferguson in which Jimmy and other notables such as David Donaldson featured wittily.

Luminaries of the Scottish art world joined Jimmy's many friends to crowd the gallery. Speakers included Sandy Moffat, formerly head of painting at Glasgow School of Art, and Bill Scott, president of the RSA. The event was presided over by Gordon MacPherson, president of the Royal Glasgow Institute, who had also conducted the funeral. They and others, including Jimmy's stepson Ian, offered appreciative insights into Jimmy's life and achievements. There was, quite properly, laughter to lift the elegiac mood. Jimmy's granddaughter Isla read a moving little poem about her 'Grumps' while Stan Bell's perceptive verses about Jimmy's art made another thoughtful contribution. It all added up to a most civilised and affectionate leave-taking.

Lesley Duncan

On this page three people who knew Jimmy Robertson well share their memories of the man

The Friend ...

Raymond Williamson

Firstly there was the landscape painting. He painted them – I bought them! He was not shy about telling me his views on other painters. There was no in-between – either you had it or you didn't. Anything less than the highest standards of technique and above all artistic integrity would not do.

It was much the same with our other shared interest in music and it was a source of irritation to him that the general public seemed to have better critical faculties through their ears than their eyes. Many happy hours were spent in discussion and in listening with him to early recordings from the world-class collection of 78s of his old friend the late Dr George Fraser. His views on singers were particularly clear – Caruso, Björling, di Stefano in – Pavarotti definitely out. I used to source recordings for him, the last a recording of Shostakovich's Jazz Suites shortly before Christmas – not necessarily the easiest of tasks as often he could not remember either the name of the composer or the work or the performer – and sometimes all three. But with the aid of my reference books and Google (now there is something beyond his comprehension) I don't think I ever let him down.

Jimmy was of course, except for motor cars, a technophobe. My offer to give him some elementary cooking lessons were firmly rejected, as was David Smith's offer to teach him how to work a microwave.

That familiar figure will for many of us always be perched on the arm of the chair by the fireplace, glass of whisky in hand.

Now we are left with our memories, but above all with the legacy of his wonderful art.



'It's Jimmie's new well-balanced diet' – caricature by Dan Ferguson

The Colleague ...

Barbara Rae

I always called him James, using 'Jimmy' only in third-person company. I first met him when at the Glasgow School or Art in 1975 on the day of my interview. He showed me around; I got the job, and we became instant close friends.

He was a natural painter. He didn't do studies or sketches, he just painted it straight away. Jimmy managed to balance his teaching, his devotion to the students, with his own work, a good example to them because they saw their tutor to be a serious practitioner, not merely a proselytiser or theorist.

I shall cherish all the memories I have of my time working with him. And there are generations of students and aspiring amateurs who owe him a debt of gratitude too. When one of them asked what a black mark was on one of his paintings, he answered...

'That, madam, is art.'

The Son ...

Ian Smith

In 1970 Dad met and fell in love with Mum. Being five or six at the time I can remember their early relationship clearly as Mum's 'special friend' was often at our house, and sometimes used to lay low in my bedroom when my Granny (who could be a formidable lady) popped in unannounced. They were married in 1971 whereupon Dad also took on the role of father to Dougal, Katie and me

– a no doubt daunting prospect for him.

Some of my favourite memories include:

His wonderful cars – the Triumph, the Spitfire, the Citroen Safari, the Porsches. Even his last car was a soft-top sports car.

His forthright opinions – Dad was never wishy-washy or neutral about anything. He always had a view that was expressed boldly!

The frustrated TV critic – particular areas singled out for his special attention being sports (usually footballers) and politics. I learned some fairly colourful language at a pretty young age, and was still learning it last year.

His occasional absent-mindedness – he once went to pick Katie up from school, and drove off with the wrong child. And I recall him losing his car for three days in Glasgow because he had forgotten where he parked it.

His domestic incompetence – A great frustration to my long-suffering mother who jokingly called him Mr Fixit whenever he picked up a hammer or screwdriver. Thankfully this allowed him to spend more time in his studio.

His love of music – mostly jazz (he was an enthusiastic drummer and played regularly in his twenties and thirties) and opera.

Occasional visits to the Art Club – where we were introduced to many of his friends and colleagues (and he finally taught me a sport – snooker).

Dad was a private man and usually kept his emotions well guarded. He also had a great strength and depth of character. We are so proud that this remarkable man was our father.