

Nane the waur o' a guid hanging

By John Fowler

The scene in the Gallery on Wednesday morning, March 30, was animated. Paintings were everywhere, some lying face up on the floor, others stacked randomly in a pile against the walls, one or two placed face down on the tables as members of the hanging team performed some basic DIY work on the frames with pliers, screwdrivers and awls. A toolbox was a vital component.

People were busy with measuring tape, fixing hooks into the frames.

'Anyone got the sellotape?' someone called. And – 'Where are all the screws? They keep walking.'

The enthusiastic team were setting up the members' spring show. The Newsletter's observer arrived shortly after half-past ten to find the team hard at work and about a dozen pictures already hanging in a row – not in their final position, but merely as a guideline.

Then came the difficult choice: making a pleasing alternation between large and small works, finding sequences or patterns or contrasts in size or subject.



The essential toolbox

To begin with, progress was swift. The headaches came later when most of the big decisions had been made and the bulk of the pictures were on the wall leaving little freedom of movement. For example, no one was happy with the placing of one small work but finding the right slot – which would mean shifting others – was not easy. It was lifted from where it hung, carried across the room, hung again but in the end, after much debate, taken back to its original position.

'Where can I put this one?' was the plaintive cry. 'There's no room.' Or, 'I can't see a natural place.' And, 'It looks a bit squashed.'

The rule is that any member can submit pictures and be assured of a place on the wall – with one important proviso. Each artist may submit three works listed in order of preference. If there's a surplus of pictures over space



Jennifer (above) prepares to hang a picture, while Ronnie and Robert (top right) take down a banner from the previous show



Hamish inspects progress

then the third preferences are held out. (A kind of alternative vote.)

At the private view for a previous show, the Deutsche Bank Scottish Art Exhibition, an artist was overheard to grumble that one of his pictures had been hung behind a pillar, which didn't delight him (but it was sold on the night!)

Such problems occur. Behind the Christmas tree is not the most coveted spot for a festive season show. And no one much liked being placed above the coffee machine when it stood in a corner of the Gallery – now it has been moved elsewhere. The piano can be a nuisance.

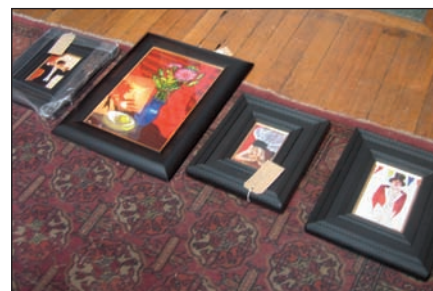
As far as possible the hanging team try to be neutral and objective. 'You mustn't get into the habit of looking at whose pictures they are,' said one.

The Deutsche Bank show filled every spare corner of the building, flowing from Gallery through the bar and up to the Billiard Room. So did the Jimmy Robertson retrospective last year. This show is much smaller – a fact which made it easier to mount, even in terms of physical labour: 'Sometimes you get to the stage when you just want to run away.'

But by lunchtime the show was on the wall and the hanging team – Jim



Delny makes an adjustment



Line-up on the floor

Bankier, Delny Goalen, Jennifer Irvine, Paul Kennedy, Hamish Montgomery, Robert Murray and Ronnie Smith – could relax. Job done.

Gift of paintings

Two paintings were recently donated to the Club by Robert Kelsey. One is his own oil on linen painting Beach Grass and Shadows, Arisaig, the other is a self-portrait by Dan Ferguson which Robert felt should have a home in the Club's collection.

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.

News from 185 BATH STREET



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GLASGOW ART CLUB

SPRING 2011

No. 35

President's column

Lunch, listen and enjoy!

Dear Members

An invariable response from the musicians who play in our Gallery is how grateful the acoustics are and how appreciative they are at being given the opportunity to play in such magnificent surroundings.

On Sunday April 10 the Edington Ensemble gave a wonderful concert. It was a joint venture between the Club and Music in Hospitals – a splendid charity which provides live music to those in hospital, particularly long stay patients.

What a buzz there was in the Club! The Dining Room and the Billiard Room were both full for the pre-concert lunch. It was what the Club should be like when we put on an event.

Can I encourage you to support such events when sponsored by the Club. I cannot imagine a better way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Yours Sincerely



It looks tasty – but where was the party?
See Who's Who in the Big Picture
Show on page 4.



Above, the Edington Ensemble with the Art Club's Iain McGlashan – and (right) the pre-concert lunchtime scene in the Dining Room



The audience assembles in the Gallery (but there's room for more)

State of the building

A progress report by Iain A Macmillan

At the last Annual Business Meeting in February I gave a progress report on the Club's building project. Since not all members were present, it may be helpful to summarise my report and update it.

At the end of 2010 we received a conditional grant of £50,000 from the Isaac Wolfson Foundation, which was much appreciated. This brought our total to £720,000, which is about £200,000 short of our target. We continue to approach other potential funders.

In order to secure the conditional grant of £250,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) we have to submit a Stage 2 application by November this year. We also have to lodge various documents such as a Conservation Management Plan, an Activity Plan and an Evaluation. Preparing these is part of what HLF call the 'Development Stage'. The Conservation Management Plan is a

highly technical document, and we have had to bring in a consultant to do this. The Plan is nearly complete, all 80 pages, plus appendices. The Activity Plan, the Evaluation, and the Stage 2 application itself also require specialist advice, and this is being provided by the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT). These documents are all in course of preparation.

Meantime, we were able to give the Club financial assistance (£25,000) to complete the Billiard Room, which has been a great success, as those of you who have seen it will agree. Our education programme is also proceeding, with many schools interested in taking part, and already a number of school visits.

The investigation of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh frieze ran into difficulties. Our conservator, Alan Ferdinand, having reached the stage at which he could discern something of the pattern of the frieze, and the colours, found it impossible to

continued on page 2

CLUB NEWS

A buzz about the place



A jazz night with Alex Garrett

Live music will continue to bring a buzz to the building and boost bar takings for another year, thanks to links developed with various artistic organisations. Both Bridge Music, which runs the Glasgow series of jazz concerts, and Celtic Connections are anxious to return to their favourite venue and have agreed dates for the coming season.

The jazz series resumes in June, and the Club will be one of the main venues for the 25th anniversary of Glasgow International Jazz Festival, June 28 - July 3. Celtic Connections will be booking for events between January 19 and February 5 next year. This means that the Club will be a key venue for two of the most noted international live music festivals.

Much credit is due to the initiative and perseverance of Art Club staff. What started as Unclubbed, an informal monthly session organised in-house, attracted the attention of some of the major players in Glasgow's live music scene.

It has taken much commitment to work out logistics without disrupting the basic business of the Club. The new Billiard Room allows for normal dining and bar services to be maintained.

The Club is successfully building a wide and varied programme to suit all musical tastes. Already several folk and jazz enthusiasts have applied for membership.

Jean Reid

For the diary

The ever-popular Fejes Quartet returns on Wednesday, June 8 (see story on page 3). Supper (6pm) and concert (7.30) - £12; concert only, no charge.

The Club picnic will be held on Sunday, June 12 at Dumfries House, Ayrshire – cost £8.50. Drive or join minibus leaving Club at 10.30am sharp – (£15 fare).

State of the building

Continued from page 1

penetrate the last layer of paint without risk of damaging the frieze itself. We consulted with Historic Scotland and as a result it was agreed that we would replicate the pattern and the colours based on the original sketches and the detail gleaned by Alan Ferdinand. Meantime the original frieze would be kept in situ but protected from damage in the hope that at some future date improved technology would allow it to be fully revealed. We are now seeking an expert conservator who will be able to undertake the task of creating the pattern based on the original Mackintosh design. The final work of

replication will, however, be the last stage in the operation, when all the building work is finished.

With the inevitable delay in raising the necessary funds and satisfying some of our funding bodies, especially HLF, the structure of the building has not improved in the meantime. We are not permitted to carry out major repair work until the whole building project is completed, but we hope to find ways and means of dealing with this problem in consultation with the Council and others.

If any member would like further information on any of these matters I will be glad to hear from them.

Light on the frieze

Members were invited to a consultation in the Gallery last month to hear and discuss the progress of the Club's renewal project – the subject of Iain Macmillan's Page 1 report which is concluded on this page. At the meeting Paul Dowds explained that vital work on improvements to the kitchen, the heating system and to meet health and safety requirements had been completed. This was critical.

Paul explained that the restoration of the Billiard Room had a three-fold purpose. Apart from providing

additional gallery space it should bring in extra revenue through letting to outside organisations, and it would eventually serve as a temporary lounge for members and a space for the Club's functions when the Gallery is closed for restoration in about two years' time.

James Macaulay assured the audience that the long-hidden and much discussed Charles Rennie Mackintosh frieze – a simple repeating A B pattern – would be carefully replicated and that there was no danger of it distracting from the pictures exhibited below it. As in the original, the tones would be muted. He convincingly demonstrated its authenticity as an early example of the young Mackintosh's handiwork.

Iain Macmillan urged members (and not only the small number who attended the meeting) to become involved. 'It's your project,' he said.

After the presentation members were invited to respond to the following questions:

What activities or events would you like to see more of at the Club?

Artists' demonstrations – Lectures on history of art – Re-introduce billiards and have demonstrations [NB: The Club billiard tables are in store.]

Why is the Club important?

Opportunities to mix informally with creative people – As a heritage centre. Any problems or barriers to joining the Club?

Size of subscription – Low profile of the Club.

What are the most positive aspects/benefits of the Club?

Social events – Meeting other members – Music, exhibitions.

The man behind a familiar painting
– the latest in our series on the history
of Glasgow Art Club and its members

The artist, his stepmother and a Glasgow scene

The picture of the playwright James Bridie which appeared in the last Newsletter in reminiscences by Iain Macmillan aroused interest among people who recognised who it as a detail from a painting which hangs above the fireplace in the Club's Reception Room.

The painting is signed by Robert Eadie, a Glasgow artist and a former member of the Art Club, which he joined in 1913. In his time Eadie (who died in 1954) was well known as a portraitist, book illustrator and painter of landscapes, beach and street scenes in oils and watercolour.

Bridie, along with his friend Tom Honeyman, then director of Glasgow Art Gallery, appear in the bottom left-hand corner of the canvas. In fact they appear to be almost a distraction from the subject of the work. The scene appears to be St Vincent Street on a

rainy day, and the most prominent subject is the line of three Clydesdale dray horses standing at the kerb. You wonder whether Bridie and Honeyman were painted into the picture rather as an afterthought – perhaps even as a gesture to fellow Club members.

This suggestion is prompted by the fact that Eadie painted an almost identical scene (without Bridie and Honeyman) entitled Trace Horses which was exhibited at the RGI show in 1945. This work was priced at £150, a considerably higher valuation than most of his paintings received at the time. A painting with the same title, probably the same one, was also exhibited at the RSW. To confuse matters more, a print edition of the same subject was issued with other figures in the foreground. The subject obviously had great appeal to the



Above the fireplace – Robert Eadie's view
of a dreich city centre street, with horses

artist.

The Directory of Scottish Art and Architecture by Peter J M McEwan describes Eadie as 'best known for his landscapes painted in a broad, wet, straightforward style, with more attention to general effect than to detail, sometimes elegant, always decorative.'

Eadie was born in 1877. As a young man he studied in Paris and Munich. The earliest of his works exhibited at the RGI, according to the RGI list compiled by Roger Billcliffe, was a painting called A Monk (priced at £10) shown in 1912. Forty years later three of his watercolours were shown posthumously, the last of his many works to be shown by the RGI.

A short anonymous article on the internet entitled Robert Eadie RSW: some biography & examples of his work, states that Robert was the youngest of four sons. The mother died when the boys were young and when the father married again they heartily disliked his new wife. One brother, William, helped Robert to stand up against the 'tyrant stepmother' and encouraged his artistic aspirations and the artist later regretted that he had not returned the favour when William needed help during the depression.

A photograph in The Bulletin newspaper dated January 1 1938 headlined Socialist Art Exhibition shows Eadie, a somewhat gaunt figure with a thin moustache, wearing glasses and clutching his hat and gloves in his hand, along with local councillors at the opening of the show, so presumably Robert had left-wing views. It's difficult to imagine a 'socialist art exhibition' being mounted today.

For more on the artist, Google Romiley Arts Federation: Robert Eadie RSW, history & works.

A STORMY NIGHT WITH THE BARD AND TOMMY SHERIDAN

On a night when gales and floods played havoc with the Edinburgh-Glasgow train service your correspondent was marooned for an hour and forty minutes on platform 2 at Linlithgow station, on his way to the Club Burns night. As a result he missed the grace by Iain MacCormick and the address to the haggis by Iain McGlashan. However on arrival he found the haggis, neeps and tatties (with Drambuie drizzle) followed by venison-wrapped chicken breast with a black pudding centre had been het up for him. A culinary triumph weel worthy o' that unheard grace – which may or may not have been as lang's Iain's aim – he cannot judge since he was not there to hear.

Truncated at the start, his attendance was cut short before the end for fear being stranded in the city by an uncertain train service, so that he also missed Alfie Wellcoat's delivery of

Tam o' Shanter (a sad loss for a man born and bred a mile from Alloway kirk), Jean Reid's 'word to the lassies' and Burns Shearer's toast to the same. But he was able to appreciate the spirited singing of Douglas Nairne. And, of course, the immortal memory delivered with panache by Roddy Macpherson, a rumbustious homily stuffed with apt and often sly quotations from the bard in a performance that was at time almost balletic.

Immortal memorisers often draw parallels with the contemporary scene, and in this case Roddy defended the law (supported by citations from the works) against certain opinions expressed by the populist politician Tommy Sheridan. Roddy, in his role as messenger-at-arms, has had occasion to challenge Tommy's stance before. Unfortunately Mr Sheridan was not available for comment.

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Off to Seattle



Simon Woods, the outgoing Chief Executive of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, left recently to take up the post of chief executive of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. To mark his departure, the RSNO Circle hosted a drinks party in the Gallery on April 6, when Simon gave an overview of his six years with the RSNO.

Brother artists

(continued from page 5)

‘She taught me 13 years ago and since then she’s had a huge influence on my work,’ he says.

Both Adam and Paul graduated at Edinburgh College of Art. Paul graduated in painting, Adam in what is now known as intermedia art, formerly (and confusingly) called ‘tapestry’. Before the change of name the course was attended almost exclusively by girls. He says it’s all boys now. The old name gave little idea of what the course was about. It’s not likely that Adam will be seen at the loom.

The brothers grew up in Broomhill. Neither of their parents were artists, though painting and drawing became a big part of the boys’ childhood. Paul says he was influenced by his big sister Laura, now an art teacher.

Paul says that their father was obsessed with boats – one of his two paintings in the recent members’ spring exhibition shows their father and uncle as boys playing in a small boat in the village of St Abbs. As children, they frequently holidayed with their parents in the village – a month in St Abbs in the summer was already a family tradition.

Adam is fascinated by the industrial past of Glasgow – as his images of ships under construction show. Again, the link with St Abbs may be significant: ‘I remember as a small boy of four looking up at the boats beached on the shore. From my perspective they must have looked huge.’

They still do. Looking at Adam’s shipyard pictures with the vessels towering on the stocks, you can imagine seeing them through that small boy’s eyes.

A celebration of David Donaldson at Rozelle

It’s always a pleasure to visit the Maclaurin Gallery at Rozelle House in Ayr. Throughout April and into May the Maclaurin hosted a major exhibition celebrating the life and works of the late David Donaldson, one of Scotland’s finest painters of the present day.

Donaldson, a weel kent figure in Glasgow Art Club for many years, was associated with Glasgow School of Art throughout his long career, from student at the age of 15 to head of the department of drawing and painting. He was a Royal Scottish academician and the Queen’s Painter and Limner in Scotland.

Two of the works on show at Ayr would have been familiar to Club members – a fine portrait of his friend, colleague and fellow club member John Cunningham, the other a print by Robert Stewart showing Donaldson peering quizzically over his specs – one of an edition commissioned to celebrate Donaldson’s career on his retirement from the School of Art. Both usually hang on the Club’s walls. (The Cunningham portrait has become legendary among members for non-artistic reasons. He’s shown with his lunch on his lap – a carry-out fish and chips brought in during a sitting in the West Campbell Street studio Donaldson inherited from the sculptor Benno Schotz.)

And there was a self-portrait of Donaldson looking imperious and rather like a cardinal in his red robes and extraordinary hat, lent from the collection of Lord and Lady Macfarlane.

Sandy Moffat, a later head of painting at the School of Art, once described Donaldson as ‘probably the finest Scottish portrait painter’ of the twentieth century. Portraits formed a major part of this exhibition – self-portraits among them. The chubby Donaldson was not averse to posing in the nude, with a strategically placed red rose held in his hand.

The Ayr exhibition arose tangentially from the purchase by the Maclaurin of Donaldson’s portrait of his daughter Caroline, shown on roller skates with a Walkman in her hand. This came about through the interest of Michael Clark – painter, member of Glasgow Art Club and an Ayr resident – who is a member of the Maclaurin purchasing committee. It seemed appropriate that the purchase should be followed up by this comprehensive record of Donaldson’s lifetime achievement.

OBITUARIES

Bill Alston

Lynda Nicol wrote in the East Kilbride News:

The artist and former teacher Bill Alston died of a heart attack in March while snorkelling in Cuba. He was 73. He was in Cuba with his wife Pat, also a retired art teacher, to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

Among those paying tribute was former colleague and fellow artist Andy Edgar, who said: ‘Bill will be remembered by generations of school students as an inspirational art teacher. His enthusiasm and willingness to go the extra mile for his young charges will never be forgotten by many. Indeed, a significant number of Bill’s former pupils took up the gauntlet of art teaching because of the love of art engendered in them by him.

‘Bill’s untimely death is all the more tragic given that he was at last gaining the wider recognition his superbly executed, keenly observed, naturalistic paintings deserved.’

Originally from Larkhall, Bill, a former pupil of Hamilton Academy, continued his studies at Glasgow School of Art before going on to teach at Hamilton Academy, Lesmahagow High School and Strathaven Academy. He took early retirement in 1997. He and his wife continued to live in Strathaven where he played a significant role in the local community. Last year Bill had highly acclaimed exhibitions at Glasgow Art Club and the Kelly Gallery in Glasgow. He also ran jazz clubs, assisted with drama groups and was a keen hill climber and cyclist.

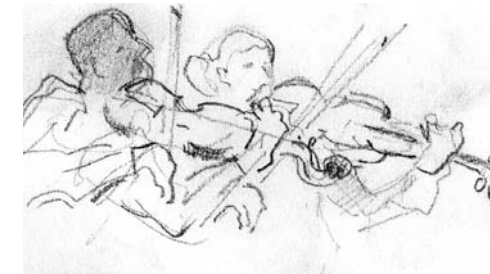
Bill is survived by his wife Pat and their two daughters and two sons.

Meg Ferguson

Margaret Ferguson – Meg to colleagues and friends – was a graduate of Glasgow School of Art, a teacher of art (latterly at Hillhead High School, Glasgow), and an artist herself. It was at the art school that she met her fellow student and future husband Dan Ferguson, and they married in 1954. They lived in Glasgow and in 1970 bought a weekend retreat in Argyll – it had been a private estate chapel – where they entertained neighbours and friends. Meg was an accomplished cook and hosted many dinner parties where food was plentiful and the wine flowed. Dan, a past president of the Art Club, died in 1993 aged 68. Meg died in January at the age of 83 after a brief illness. She is survived by her daughter Anne and son David.

From an artist’s notebook

Everywhere George Devlin goes
his notepad goes with him
- these instant sketches
were made at a recent
concert in the Club Gallery



FOUR YOUNG PLAYERS WITH A MISSION TO PLEASE

Chamber music can be viewed as a rather austere form of music-making. To prove how unfair that image is, just tune in to the Fejes String Quartet who return to Glasgow Art Club on June 8. This lively group of young string players have gained for themselves the unofficial status of ‘house’ musicians to the club. In a series of recitals, featuring classical composers along with twentieth-century masters such as Shostakovich, they have shown that high art is totally compatible with fun. The four players – Rachael Lee (cello), Elita Bungard (violin), Tamas Fejes (violin), and Mike Lloyd (viola) – indulge from time to time in spontaneous banter with each other and the audience. Far from distracting from the music, this friendly, relaxed, atmosphere simply enhances the energy and insight which the quartet bring to their playing. All are



The Fejes quartet

distinguished musicians and members of the RSNO. Tamas and Mike worked previously with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.

Mike is the tall, ebullient, one, who offers illuminating information about the pieces to be played. He has an unusual background: adopted as a baby, he discovered in adulthood that his American father belonged to the Apache Nation. He would like to write a book about his quest for his birth parents, but says ruefully, ‘I’ve never written anything other than a Christmas card!’

Tamas, as quartet leader, shows the musical authority that has marked his career since distinction as a youthful violinist in Hungary. Their women



... and Emily makes five

colleagues play their indispensable part with charm and verve.

Centrepiece of the programme for June 8 is Schubert’s sublime Cello Quintet for which Tamas’s wife Emily Walker joins the group. The programme also includes Haydn’s Opus 54 No 1 and Musique Orante by Charles Tournemire. The musicians’ debut CD, featuring that Haydn quartet, Bartok’s Second String Quartet, and Glazunov’s 5 Novelettes, will be on sale on the evening.

As for the Fejes Quartet’s view of Glasgow Art Club, ‘We love it, quite simply,’ says Mike. ‘We always feel very welcome there.’

Lesley Duncan

The Scottish Art Exhibition, in association with Deutsche Bank, filled every corner of the Club in March. These photographs by Gerardo Jaconelli were taken at the private view. Some faces will be very familiar, others less so

Who's who at the big picture show



Paul Frame of Deutsche Bank (and Glasgow Art Club)



President Raymond Williamson at the microphone



Some of the guests at the private view



A YOUNG PAINTER WHO CUTS A DASH

Above: Frank To in the Gallery with two of his paintings, at the Scottish Art Exhibition in March. In April he had great success with his solo exhibition, called The Human Condition, at the Leith Gallery in

Edinburgh, where all but one of the 22 pictures were sold. They included two self-portraits of Frank in the robes and beaked mask worn by 'plague doctors' centuries ago in the hope of protecting themselves from infection. He raised

eyebrows by dressing up for the part to open the show.

Earlier this year Frank was co-opted to the Club council - at the age of 29!

Photograph: Gerardo Jaconelli

Brothers face a deadline

Brothers Paul and Adam Kennedy have a tight deadline – there's barely a fortnight between their arrival back in Scotland from a working trip to America and the opening of their joint exhibition in the Gallery on July 12. It will help to concentrate the mind, says elder brother Paul.

The schedule for their four-week trip across the USA has involved a circuit from the Arizona desert to New York via Las Vegas (but not for the gambling), San Francisco and the Yosemite, and various places in between. Some camping at national park sites is included – but that doesn't mean roughing it. It's not to be confused with



Adam (left) and Paul Kennedy in front of Paul's painting of their father and uncle. Above right, Adam's Clyde Shipyard Study.

wild camping in the Highlands.

The trip was planned after Adam won the latest Aspect prize, which carries with it an award of £15,000 to enable the winner to explore new avenues without money pressures. Adam, who is fascinated by the relics of past industrialisation, decided to visit the famous 'boneyards' of Arizona, the vast open-air museum of obsolete aircraft now ageing in the desert.

Paul, who was an Aspect prize finalist in 2009, decided to join him. They're used to working together – they share a flat in Glasgow. But their work is chalk and cheese, very different in style.

Adam (23) and Paul (28), joined Glasgow Art Club recently and have had work shown in the Club's exhibitions. Paul joined first, encouraged to do so by Liz Knox, whom he regards as his mentor.

(continued on page 6)