

# McKendrick sets Gallery aglow

Bankies, veterans and shipyard workers were among the dozens of visitors who packed the Gallery for the opening of Tom McKendrick's retrospective exhibition in the autumn. Many of the paintings, over 70 of them produced over 55 years, drew on his experience as a loftsman in John Brown's shipyard: they range from The Burning, a massive triptich in fiery watercolour, to smaller seeming abstracts in metallic mixed media which show details of the painstaking work.

One wall of the main Gallery was given over to striking portraits in acrylic and pastel of military men of different ages and ranks, whose moving stories were attached. These are the first ten in a series of 100 which Tom is planning to complete. A raffle for one of his smaller paintings was held during the evening and raised £1300 for Combat Stress and BLESMA

In a follow-up evening Conversation. Tom explained how growing up in Clydebank with local memories of the blitz affected his awareness of the industrial process and its visual impact. He also enthralled pupils involved in the Club's education programme with an account of his career.



Tom presents picture to raffle winner Mrs May Elliot.

Below, L to R  
Jim Davis declares exhibition open.  
Blythe Duff draws the lucky ticket.  
Friends packed into Gallery



## Memories sparked off by vital member

Among the organisations making use of the Club's facilities is the Neil Munro Society which is holding its winter meeting in 185 Bath Street this February. Munro, the popular journalist and author of Para Handy, was an enthusiastic member in the early years of last century: this entertaining account was published in the Glasgow Evening News in 1924

Originating in a casual gathering of artists who had walked from Glasgow to a tavern in or about Duntocher, the Art Club, after a period of creaky wicker chairs in an upstairs flat in Bothwell Circus, turned two houses into one in Bath Street, and has now for many years had the cosiest club quarters in the city.

Externally inconspicuous, the Art Club is difficult to find during the day, but in the evening you have only to hail a taxicab, give the chauffeur a kind word and a cigar, and he will intuitively drive you to the door without instructions.

Every element of the majestic has been carefully left out of the club's interior decoration, there is not enough marble about it to make a paperweight, nor are any other unnerving opulent features to suggest the head-office of a bank. It is so like home that many

members would probably keep their slippers there if it were not contrary to the rules.

When the two houses were taken over, they had the washing-greens behind, which are now the site of the Art Club's star feature - a hall of baronial dimensions which is at once smoke-room, lounge, concert-room, and picture-gallery. Ladies' afternoons, evening harmonies at which the most renowned of operatic singers and instrumentalists take part, and lectures not too remotely dissociated from art periodically fill the room to overflowing. A suggestion made on one occasion that a Prominent Politician of redoubtable fluency should be invited to give an instructive evening had curiously sinister results: the proposer disappeared next day, and has never been heard of since.

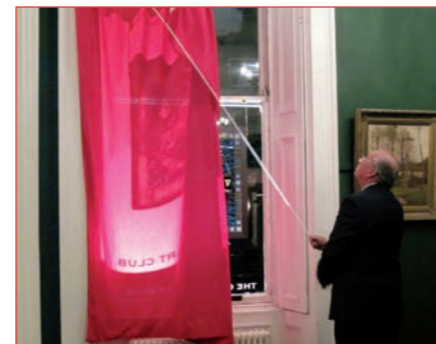
The only male on the establishment is a boy in buttons, the Art Club has consistently maintained that the correct home atmosphere is only to be secured by feminine management.

## Three steps to launch a panel

(see finished article on front page)



1. Greet guests of honour



2. Draw back the curtain



1. Greet guests of honour

# News from 185 BATH STREET



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GLASGOW ART CLUB

WINTER 2012/13

No. 38

## President's column

### Thanks for a smooth start

I can't believe that my first year of Presidency is quickly winging to a close and I can now begin to look back on a whirlwind of Council meetings, social events, exhibition openings, business lunches and formal dinners. I have to say it has been a most enjoyable experience and many thanks must go to my hard working team of council members who have supported me so well in my first year in office. This support has been vital to me as I still continue to exhibit fully as a professional artist, with recent solo exhibitions in London and Dunkeld, and a major solo exhibition in Glasgow in September 2013.

In October I had the pleasure of hosting a gala dinner and presentation of a stained glass panel in honour of Lord Macfarlane. The panel, designed and produced by Anne Ferguson, was commissioned by the Club to thank Lord Macfarlane for his contribution to the arts in Scotland for more than fifty years. My personal thanks go to George Devlin and Hazel Nagl for bringing this event to fruition.

As you will be aware there is a new staff structure in the Club. Dan Luck and Gary Gilday have taken over the running of the club as operations managers and Naoimh has stepped down as general manager. She will continue in the marketing role until she departs the Club, after nearly ten years, in the spring.

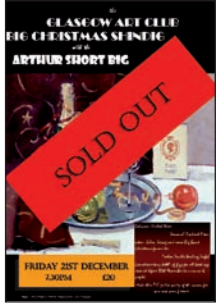
Having survived the festive season, I hope you will agree that when we look back over the year the Club has never been livelier. We enjoyed a full programme of art and music events which carried us through into 2013. The annual Christmas party, which saw around 100 guests enjoy the Arthur Short Big Band, was a roaring success and also allowed me as your President to revive an old Art Club tradition and produce a painting to promote the party. As well as being a source for posters, the painting was sold at the Winter Exhibition, with a major share of the price going directly to the furniture restoration fund.

Kind regards to you all.

Robert Kelsey



President's granddaughter Kirsty Robson displays the glass panel recording Lord Macfarlane's varied interests, which now hangs in the dining room. See also page 8.



Poster proof of success.

## Membership drive beats the ton

It seems not long since there was a call for a hundred new members to strengthen the Club and boost its activities. That sounded like quite a challenge, but it is just what was achieved in 2012. Thanks to word of mouth, marketing, and the efforts of members and staff, a total of 106 names has been added to the roll call in the past year, 48 listed in the spring newsletter and another 58 printed on page 6.

Already we are seeing plenty of new faces around in the dining room and at events such as the Christmas party. We trust that they all feel welcomed and are enjoying the

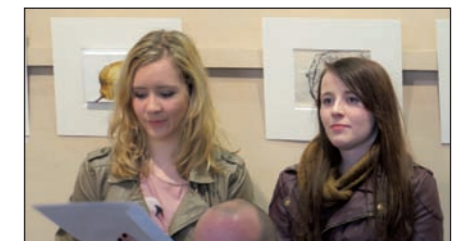
facilities, and hope that they will begin to take part in shaping the future of the institution. Come to meetings, talk to Council members, maybe volunteer to join a working group dealing with Club activities.

In particular the Events Team is keen to add fresh blood to the small committee chaired by Shona Barr: if you have ideas for parties and performances which would appeal to more recent members, and can fit in a meeting once a month, why not put your name forward? The more become involved, the merrier the programme!



## Catching them young at art

There was a full turnout for the opening of the Club's Small Works exhibition, organised by council member Jacki Marno (left in big picture.) Over 130 works were submitted by pupils, mainly seniors specialising in art, and certificates were awarded in four categories - design, printing, photography and expression. There was a £250 prize for the winner, and help in kind from the sponsors AB Framing Ltd.





## Now you can wear your art on your lapel

Members are being offered the chance to tell the world that they belong to a prestigious organisation with a proud history and promising future. A discreet pin on collar or lapel announces to the cognoscenti that the wearer is a signed-up member of Glasgow Art Club.

The logo which identifies the Club on menus, programmes and publications is now available as an elegant badge suitable for wear by either sex.

It features the familiar head of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, the arts, trade and most positive activities of civilised society, though the helmet also hints at some warlike qualities. Her Greek equivalent was Athena. The image has changed over the years - a different Minerva appeared in the Club's centenary brochure - but just when it was adopted is still unclear. No mention has been found in the records though the goddess appears on an ex-libris label in a minutes book for the late 1870s.

The badge was designed and made in hallmarked silver by a reputable jeweller in Carradale, Kintyre. It comes in a presentation box and would make a splendid present for any member - partners and friends may order on their behalf! Each badge costs £17.50 and orders should be placed through the Club secretary.



## Golden year for George

It is difficult to accept that George Devlin, has been an artist member of the Club for half a century. Though it is 15 years since he served his term as President, he still devotes precious time to Club activities when not in France or other foreign parts gathering material for his latest exhibition. It is fitting that a major retrospective of his work, including paintings from public and private collections, should be one of the last to occupy the Club gallery before it closes down for its major restoration: the opening by Guy Peploe of the Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh, will be a significant milestone in the Club's history.

George joined the Club in 1963, just three years after leaving Glasgow School of Art where he won premier awards and national scholarships. He

went on to add almost all the initials in the business - RSW, RGI, RBA, ROI, ARWS and FRSA - and was elected president of the Club in 1997. He has taught composition in GSA and run his own painting school both here and in France, as well as sharing his insights through lectures and demonstrations for members and the general public. The exhibition runs from 7 to 23 February.

Next comes a solo show in Edinburgh's Scottish Gallery in May, closely followed by joint shows in two London galleries where George will be contributing work inspired by visits to Rajasthan and Malta, while in June he'll be dispatching work to Johannesburg where he has been with the Everard Read Gallery for 20 years.

## Don't watch alone

As the Club adjusts to more restricted premises over the next 20 months, it is more important than ever that full use should be made of all facilities. These include the big screen in the Billiard Room which is designed to be seen by a sizeable audience.

Plans are now being drawn up for regular evenings where members may share a favourite DVD and discuss it with friends over a light meal. If you are interested do let us know what films you might provide - or like to attend.

Please email the Club or speak to a member of staff to register your interest - then watch out for posters giving notice of the first movie nights.

## .and the score so far is...

Peter Russell joined us more than a year ago, though he made little use of the Club till after he retired from managing the Lord Provost's office in Glasgow City Council.

He'd always been a fan of Brain of Britain, so he applied and took part in one of the later heats, to be broadcast on Tuesday 11 February.

Since programmes are recorded well in advance and all involved are sworn to secrecy, all he could say beforehand was that it was 'very exciting' and that he'd like to try other quizzes 'Most of the contestants seemed to know the format - and one another' he admits. "It's clearly quite addictive"

## Return plans up in flames

Artist member Michael Clark recalls every family's holiday nightmare.



We were on our way home from France last summer when our car went on fire! We lost everything, clothing, artwork, cameras cash, wallet, passport mobile phones and about 60 bottles of lovely Rhone wine in the roof box!

It all happened so quickly, we had about 3 seconds to get out of the car which was already on fire as I tried to reach the hard shoulder! But we are safe! I grabbed my camera as we escaped the car.

Marysia Donaldson ( widow of David Donaldson) and Chris Stanton came to our rescue. We then had to travel to Paris to obtain replacement passports and finally a flight home!



## OBITUARY

### Yvonne Cunningham

07.06.1937 - 27.12.2012

Yvonne Cunningham who died two days after Christmas, was made an honorary member of the Club after the death of her husband John, a distinguished painter and former President of Glasgow Art Club.

Although she was not a frequent visitor, Yvonne always kept an interest in the Club and its developments via members with whom she stayed in touch on a regular basis. Sometimes they met for lunch at the Club but more often Yvonne would go with individual friends to film, classical concerts or the opera, or invite them for a cosy or interesting chat at home.

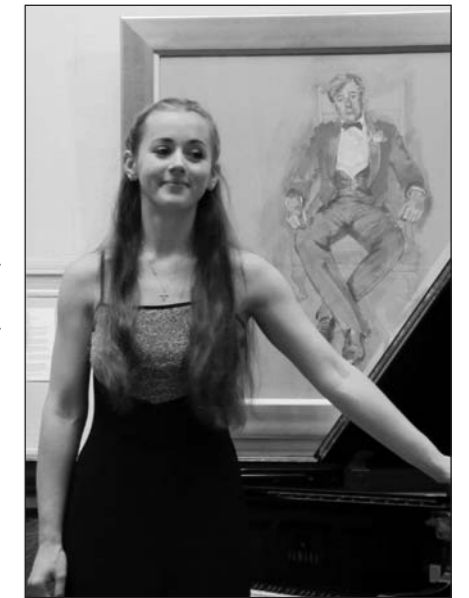
Yvonne had many interests and lots of social qualities; she was honest, very hospitable and never had a need to talk about her own achievements. She was a confident, caring and loving friend who leaves a big gap and will be sadly missed by many.

Theo van Asperen and Delny Goalen.



Oxana Shevchenko, the brilliant young winner of the 2010 Scottish International Piano Competition, gave a scintillating recital to a sell-out audience in the autumn. She took her bow in front of one of Tom McKendrick's moving portraits of military characters.

President Robert Kelsey and Karen Currie of the RGI at the dinner for the Institute's annual exhibition.



## Every picture tells a story

and John Fowler has enjoyed them all

Was it the stories or was it the art that made this summer's exhibition in the Gallery such a pleasing show? A bit of both, no doubt. Every Picture Tells a Story was the brainchild of the Club's new gallery curator Philip Raskin. Philip had invited, cajoled and indeed badgered members to contribute a work of art from their own collections and to add a caption explaining why they liked it or what special meaning it had for them.

As a result the Gallery was filled with a wondrous gallifmaufry of works of art from highly wrought oils to the most cursory of caricatures in a rich diversity of style and subject. Here, centre stage, was a large Hornel of children at play in typical flower-rich setting, there in a corner was a tiny engraving of Burns' cottage by D O Hill, elsewhere a sketch by Dan Ferguson showing 'Goudie Having a Rant' - a sly tribute from one former member to another.

Many of the works held intimate memories for their owners of people and places. 'The house in which my father was born and brought up'; a fishing smack drawn up on a Galloway shore 'painted by my mother'; 'Happy memories of carefree days of wine and roses' - this, referring to a chalk drawing of a sultry oriental princess (what lay behind that one? I wondered).

One exhibitor recalled a tricky moment for a newly-wed: 'My wife went bananas when I brought this home, as we had no carpets on the floor'. Still, since the picture was the painting 'Morning, Ardnamurchan' by

John Cunningham, connubial bliss may soon have been restored. The carpets would come later.

One illustration by Edward Ardizzone of the 'Public Bar at the George' - a London howff - recalled to one Club member the occasion when, as a shy



Charles Randak spotted the work of Leicester-based Paul Wright in a shop window, and was struck by the scale and spontaneity of this powerful oil portrait: he offered it to the show because 'It reminds me what painting is all about'.

student at art college in Camberwell in the early fifties, he met the artist and was too tongue-tied to speak. 'Would you like a pinch of snuff?' asked Ardizzone.

Presents given or received hold a special significance - a 'first present I bought for my wife', or David Donaldson's 'Quarry in Lot et Garonne' given by the artist as a house-warming gift 'when I moved to Glasgow'.

Chance discovery played a part in the history of more than one favourite picture. One 'dark, dirty and damaged' relic with a broken frame disinterred from a garage on the death of a grandparent turned out to be a sketch by D O Hill for his painting of Leith Pier which hangs in the National Gallery. Another contributor vividly remembered a fiery sunset scene in snowy woodland, with a man and small child in the foreground, which she found comforting when visiting her grandparents 'in the bleak 1940s'. It hung above the wireless set in their home but disappeared when the house was sold. 'It was found long afterwards, dirty, in my parents' garden shed'.

'The Art Club Ball' - the design for a 1929 poster by Sir John Lavery showing an elegantly gowned lady scanning a dance list displayed on an easel - was found by a club member not in garage or garden shed but in a Christie's catalogue, offered for sale by Glasgow Art Club, no less. (What were they thinking about? Was the Club on its uppers?) Determined that the Lavery should remain in Glasgow, she bought it herself.

One caption to a particularly garish oil painting brought me up short when I read: 'This painting depresses me'. How on earth...? And then I read on: 'If only I could paint like this'.

It's good to know that another picture-story exhibition is planned for next year. It's a sort of two-for-the-price-of one show. Nice pictures, lively tales. Well done, Philip.



# What's happening to the CRM frieze?

(continued from page 3)

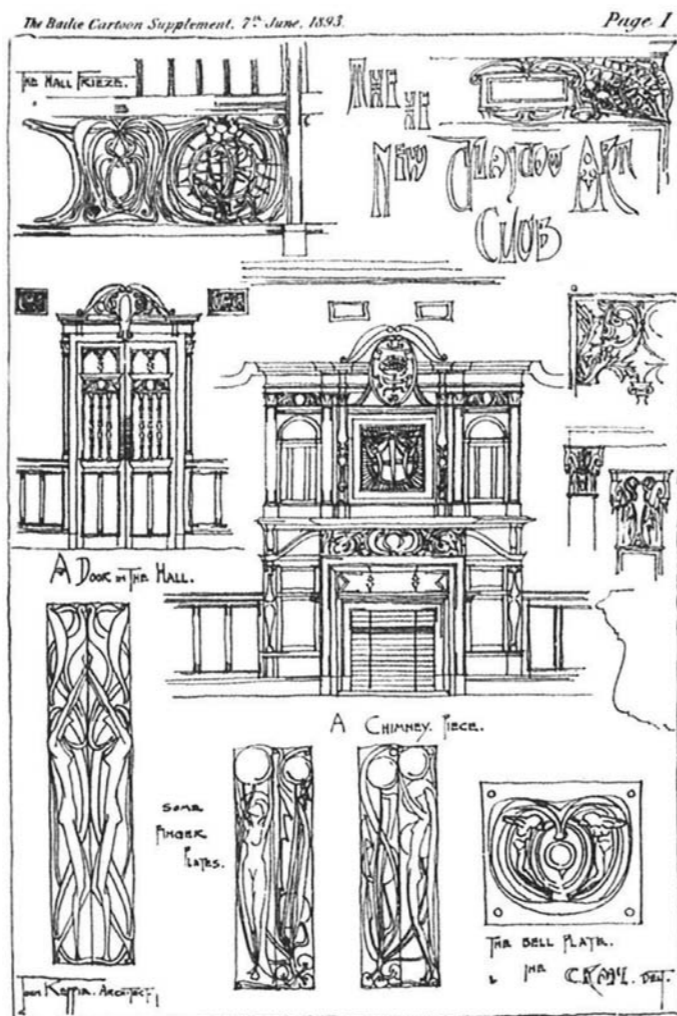
A sub-committee has been formed to see that the replication work is properly and diligently carried out within the framework of the general restoration. The design content of the frieze is being left to the specialist knowledge of the Mackintosh experts advising the Club.

A detailed specification was drawn up with the help of our architects and quantity surveyors and duly issued to four approved specialist sub-contractors.

The firm of Nevin of Edinburgh (also known as Mackay Decorators) were eventually chosen to carry out the work. This firm regularly do work for Historic Scotland.

It was agreed by Roger Billcliffe, Dr James Macaulay and Professor Pamela Robertson of Glasgow University that the illustrations drawn by Mackintosh for "The Bailie" (7th June 1893) were and are the most reliable evidence for what had been created for The Glasgow Art Club Gallery frieze and that no evidence contrary to this has ever come to light. An illustration in the Evening Times of 5th June 1893 also appeared consistent. Advised by the CRM specialists, John Nevin has been instructed to proceed with the production of conceptual roughs based on "The Bailie" designs and to present these to the CRM specialists, as soon as was practicable, for their consideration and approval.

*This illustration from the Bailie Cartoon Supplement of 7th June 1893 is a prime source for the reconstruction of the Gallery frieze.*



# Welcome to new members enrolled by end of 2012

Craig Armstrong Mr	Lay Town	Glasgow	Marcus R N Males Mr	Lay Country	Edinburgh
Sara Barker Ms	Artist Town	Glasgow	Farhat A Malik Mr	Lay Town	Glasgow
Robin Barr Mr	Honorary	Glasgow	Helen McCook Ms	Young Artist NP	Birmingham
Beverley Benson Ms	Artist Country	Tenterden	David McCue Mr	Young Lay	Glasgow
Ian Black Mr	Lay Associate	Milngavie	Marion McDonald Mrs	Lay Town	Paisley
Cara Broadley Ms	Artist Town	Glasgow	James McDonald Mr	Lay Associate	Paisley
Peter Broughan Mr	Lay Town	Gartocharn	James McNaught Mr	Young Lay	Glasgow
Richard Burns	Honorary	Edinburgh	John Moore Mr	Lay Country	Edinburgh
Fiona Chautard Mrs	Lay Town	Glasgow	Clare Munn Ms	Retired	Troon
Stuart Cosgrove Mr	Lay Associate	Glasgow	Philip Murnin Mr	Lay Associate	Glasgow
Janice Crean Ms	Lay Retired	Kilmacollm	James O'Donnell Mr	Lay Country	Crieff
Patrick T Doyle Mr	Lay Country	Twickenham	Iain R Pender Mr	Young Lay	Glasgow
Tom Farmer Sir	Honorary	Edinburgh	Stewart Readman Mr	Lay Country	Sanquhar
Jane Gardiner Ms	Artist Town	Glasgow	Aidan Reilly Mr	Young Lay	Renfrew
Ling Ge Dr	Young Lay	London	Maggie Ritchie Ms	Lay Corporate	Glasgow
Felicity Grainger Dr	Lay Town	Glasgow	Andrew Robb Mr	Young Lay	Lanark
Alison Gray	Lay Town	Glasgow	Craig Robertson Mr	Young Lay	Glasgow
Fran Hanley Mrs	Artist Town	Glasgow	Shirani Sabaratnam Ms	Lay Town	Glasgow
Kaye Horsfall Dr	Lay Associate	Glasgow	A E H Salvesen Mr	Honorary	Pathhead
Lisa Hotchkiss Miss	Young Lay	Glasgow	Hugh Sagle Mr	Lay Country	Berkhamstead
Stuart Hudson Mr	Young Lay	London	Marie Smart Sheriff	Lay Town	Glasgow
Caroline Inglis Mrs	Honorary	Milngavie	Brian Souter Sir	Honorary	Perth
Scott Inglis Mr	Honorary	Milngavie	Elaine Speirs Ms	Artist Country	Edinburgh
Dorothy Kenny Mrs	Artist Country	Anstruther	Judith M Tatham Mrs	Honorary	Glasgow
Scott Langlands Mr	Young Lay	Glasgow	Anna Toal Miss	Artist Country	London
Catherine MacDonald Ms	Young Lay	Glasgow	A Boyd Tunnock Mr	Lay Town	Glasgow
Hamish Macfarlane Hon	Lay Town	Glasgow	Linzi Watson Miss	Young Lay	Glasgow
Jimmy Mackellar Mr	Lay Town	Skelmorlie	Matthew Whiteside Mr	Young Artist NP	Glasgow
Sheila Macmillan Ms	Artist Town	Glasgow	Hilary Wood Ms	Lay Town	Milngavie

# All set for a Spring Start

In April the Club embarks on the most important refurbishment in its history. The work will affect every part of an important Glasgow building and secure the future of a distinguished institution, but it will be done with a minimum of disruption to members and their activities

## Why is the work needed?

The 19th century building is in a severe state of dilapidation - when a window was removed for repair it simply crumbled to bits!

The Gallery includes some of the earliest work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh which is of vital interest to art historians and architects.

The Club which holds a proud place in the artistic life of the city could not survive without premises fit for the 21st century.

## What has been done to date?

A surprising amount more than members would suspect!

The enabling works started with what could be called 'the heart of the Club' - bar area, kitchens, toilets and offices have all been renewed and upgraded. At one stage two rear walls and the roof had to be demolished and rebuilt - while members enjoyed a leisurely lunch, they had no idea that behind the partition was open to the sky as the cupola was being replaced..

A professional survey of all the leaded glass was carried out, and two large panels were moved from behind the bar and restored to replace others which were missing: with background lighting they create an attractive new feature for the space.

A new accessible toilet has been created from a dilapidated store cupboard in the entrance hall, and the ladies room has been upgraded with a separate cloakroom for 60 coats. Crumbling windows have been replaced. In the gents, new ventilation and flooring has been installed.

There is a new door entry system with a smart brass panel covering the accumulated holes in the timber and matching the original door bell. Replacement handrails for the front steps are on their way.

All this has been achieved while the Club was in full use - it has not interfered with any functions or meetings.



*The Project Group insist that the front door will never be blocked by the work going on in the gallery.*

## What happens now?

All necessary planning consents have been secured and the £1.2m funding is now in place, 50% from public bodies, the rest from private trusts and donations.

The Glasgow Art Club Property Company Limited has been formed and trustees appointed to oversee the project. The Building Steering Group, chaired by Paul Dowds, is managing the work on its behalf and has appointed the design team.

Tenders for the fully-costed scheme of works have been issued to five of the many interested contractors and these are now being returned for scrutiny and selection of a main contractor.

A tight programme has been drawn up, due to start in May 2013 and be completed in December 2014.

First the gallery will be closed off: since there is no back door to the building, access for all workers and materials will be via a scissor lift from the basement. The site office will take over the space now used as a rare books shop, which will move to temporary premises during the project. All roof coverings for 185 Bath Street will be replaced. A canopy will be erected over the entire gallery area. The cupola and the 1950's glazed panels will be removed.

Dry rot affecting three of the external structural walls will require treatment. The two ornamental mantelpieces will be dismantled and restored to treat the rot behind them.

Artist members will be consulted on the design of flexible lighting, audio-visual and sound systems as well as the decor.

Throughout the project every effort

will be made to minimise disruption to the activities of the Club and the comfort of members.

External scaffolding will be designed to fit within the basement wall and the pavement.

All contractors' offices and facilities will be provided in the basement to avoid unsightly site huts.

And the front door will be kept clear to show that the Club is open for business at all times throughout the process.

## What about the frieze?

The restoration of the CRM frieze is a key feature of the rehab programme which has attracted funding from public bodies notably Heritage Lottery Fund.

*Turn to page 6 for an update.*

*Don't miss the chance to say au revoir to the Gallery. Book your tickets for the party on 13th April.*





Guide points out details of the Etruscan gate.

# Ever onwards and upwards in Umbria

Art-lover Kaye Horsfall recalls highlights of the Club's latest trip

Following the success of the 2011 visit to Sicily, the Club returned to Italy last September, basing its trip in the medieval walled city of Perugia. Twenty-four of us spent ten days in Umbria where the weather was almost uniformly sunny - just what a party of Glaswegians, jaded by the impossibly grey summer, longed for.

We flew direct to Rome, and after some confusion at the airport we were transported to the beautiful Umbrian capital, set amid lush rolling hills, and surrounded by ancient medieval villages.

In Perugia, which dates back to Etruscan times, we were very satisfied with the delightful Hotel Rosetta where the staff were pleasant and attentive. However, not all of us had a 'Room with a View'. A dilemma had already arisen: would immediate room changes be demanded, or, as in many cases, would there be a pragmatic acceptance of what had been assigned? After all, would a view really be missed when the room was destined to be packed with pre-prandial partygoers?

The city proved to be an excellent base as there was easy access to the museums and architectural sites, and (speaking for myself) scope for some much-anticipated shopping. We visited the Galleria Nazionale

dell'Umbria in which the greatest representation of the Umbrian School of painting can be seen. This huge collection displays the rich artistic heritage of the region through works covering the period from the 13th to the 19th century. We also saw the 13th century fountain by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano which stands at the centre of the main square, where it symbolises the freed city of Perugia, and is considered to be one of the finest fountains still in existence. A great favourite with everyone was the Museo Archaeological Nazionale dell'Umbria which has an extraordinary collection of Etruscan artefacts.

From Perugia we had excursions to the hill-towns nearby. Our first outing was to Urbino where we saw the beautiful Palazzo Ducale, and some of us went to discover the birthplace of one of the greatest painters of the Italian Renaissance, Raphael.

Arezzo and Cortona were optional tours, and in the former we saw the great paintings of Piero della Francesca.

Though all the locations we visited are both ancient and strikingly attractive, it is Cortona which has to be the epitome of 'old Italy', as it appears to have remained largely

untouched for centuries. Here we happened upon a British wedding party, all dressed up and seated around the village's main square, eating Italian cuisine, drinking champagne and celebrating.

Italian food is known for its traditions and diversity, and it didn't disappoint, largely because we pestered Conrad McKenna, whose fluency in the Italian language together with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Italian restaurants in general and his favourites in particular, gave us the inside information we needed to sample many local restaurants in every town we visited.

The food was, of course, delicious. We took the view that as Italian food and wine are an integral part of Italian cultural heritage, we, as culture seekers, should search for the best we could afford....which brings me to the wines! A lot of time was spent comparing and contrasting the *molto buoni vini* ... and, yes, we tried them all ... or so it seemed. In fact, we discovered that Umbria's wines were first produced by the Benedictine monks and that most of the best red wines are made with the Sangiovese red grape - the full-bodied Sagrantino di Montefalco is now a great favourite!



Gathering outside the hotel



Fountain in Perugia centre

There was Todi next, where Charlton Heston was once filmed playing Michaelangelo in the church, and where one of the most perfect medieval piazzas in Italy was built in 1213. Then Assisi, which was home to St. Francis, and its massive Basilica built in his name. The interior of the church is entirely decorated with stunning frescoes - the creations of several artists. The most famous of these is Giotto and we were most excited at the prospect of seeing his work. Sadly, during the earthquake of 1997, valuable works of art were destroyed here, especially the 1290s cycle of frescoes in the upper church of the Basilica of St Francis

In Orvieto, probably Umbria's grandest hill-town, which lends its name to the crisp, white Orvieto Classico wine, we discovered the joys of using the town's funicular. It would have been more of a joy had it not taken so long to get going, but the lengthy wait was soon forgotten when we emerged from the tightly-packed cabin to discover that the town is a natural hill-top fortification, and sits at a majestic height above the valley floor. Dominating the town is the stylish black and white striped Duomo di Orvieto, the façade of which contains elements of design from the

14th to the 20th centuries, including a large rose window, sumptuous golden mosaics and three massive verdigris bronze doors.

It was in Orvieto that some of us ventured into the famous Pozzo di San Patrizio - the 175 foot deep St Patrick's Well - designed using a double-helix pattern, and built by a 1500s Pope to supply himself and, presumably, the townspeople with water whilst under siege. It was here that we had another very long wait and then started to wonder whether we had lost Douglas Forbes who had ventured downward thinking that there would be a handy exit and that his toil would be over when he got to the bottom: he was, unfortunately, mistaken!

Even on the last day there was a chance to visit the lovely Villa d'Este at Tivoli - a UNESCO World Heritage site - on our way back to the airport. It is a High Renaissance triumph of sculpture and statuary with what seems like an endless display of fountains, grottoes and water features.

We arrived only just in time to catch the haunting but brief sounds of the famous water organ which 'comes to life' daily at the Temple of Neptune. It was a fitting end to ten days of Italian sunshine and splendour.

## Here's the very spot

Gib Steele finds a familiar scene during the Club trip to Italy



A considerable number of years ago I bought a painting from Conrad McKenna. It was of an attractive archway leading to a building in Perugia, which he kindly took me to see during the recent Art Club holiday.

In 1950 Conrad was awarded a travelling scholarship by Glasgow School of Art and visited Perugia for the first of many times. Whilst there he was befriended by members of the Salusti family among others, and the friendship has endured over the years.

Grandfather Salusti was a highly successful lawyer (Perugians, according to Conrad, are forever battling over inheritance) who owned this building - a multi-storied townhouse which, over the years, was home to various members of the family who lived on different levels of the property.

One of these was the granddaughter, Teresa, and her husband, Aldo Bombetti, a dentist whose practice was on the ground floor.

The building is no longer in the family and Teresa and Aldo live in the outskirts of the city, in an airy villa with extensive grounds. I and some others were privileged to have been invited to lunch there with Conrad, where we enjoyed local dishes, washed down with some excellent wine produced by the gardener, from his own vines.

A tour of the grounds revealed the location of a secret tunnel to the nearby monastery - centuries ago the property was a convent! - along with a well-preserved Etruscan tomb.

So my painting was brought to life in a very memorable way



Lunch in a cool cellar out of the sun



Ready to explore



Relaxing on terrace above the city



Orvieto Cathedral



Musical fountain in Tivoli