

news from

185

bath street



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THE GLASGOW ART CLUB NEWSLETTER

President's Column

As I said at the Annual Business Meeting, it is a great privilege to have been elected President of Glasgow Art Club. I have been very touched by the messages and good wishes from members.

We are still in the "first hundred days" of the new Council and I welcome the new members of Council and office bearers. The spring exhibition filled the Gallery. It would have been good to have had more sales and we are looking at various methods to promote these exhibitions. Our website is one vehicle where works for sale can be displayed during the exhibition.

It has been decided to strengthen the various teams within the Club to spread the load and to that end we now have:

The Gallery Convenor Group, led by Shona Barr. The dates for year 15 exhibitions are in place and we already are working on year 16.

The Events Team, led by James McNaught. The programme for the next few months is well in hand.

The Newsletter Group, led by Jean Reid. It is the intention to ensure that two Newsletters are published in Spring and Autumn.

The Activity Plan, as required by the funding conditions, is wide ranging and will be monitored.

The education brief is ably managed by Jackie Marno. The Senior School exhibition, which I had the privilege to open, was exceptional. The tours of the Club, organised by John Hamilton, have now commenced and I want to thank those volunteers who take visitors round. Our student programme, undertaken by Theo van Asperen is highly regarded.

Membership Promotion is led by Naomi Brown, marketing manager. The Club's membership has remained steady and is now increasing. The new scheme to encourage recruitment is bearing fruit.

Catering: En Croute remains in place and numbers in the dining room are increasing. I am pleased to advise that the re-instatement of Monday lunchtime dining has been a success and will continue.

The next year will be an exciting time for the Club. I am looking forward to both the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Efric McNeil

Visitors welcome



John Hamilton points out gallery features to visitors on tour.

When the Club applied for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, it undertook to share its history and heritage with a wider public. Our exhibitions had always been open to non-members, but this commitment called for a formal programme of activities to show visitors what the building and its contents had to offer.

While the refurbishment was under way, plans were drawn up for regular guided tours led by volunteer members, and John Hamilton took on the job of co-ordinating the itinerary and drawing together information on Club history and its collections.

Tours started at the beginning of March and have been offered on Tuesday mornings till the

end of May and again in the autumn. An early 'tourist' was Herald diarist Ken Smith, whose favourable account led to follow-up bookings.

"We had 19 members of the Contemporary Art Glasgow Meetup Group at the beginning of April" John reports "Their leader wrote to say how impressed they had been by the building and the Gallery".

Later in the month, 35 members of The Friends of the National Galleries of Scotland came, and stayed to lunch. "They shared their approval equally between lunch and the tour!"

"Over the summer special tours can be arranged for members and their friends." John points out, "Just contact Jonathan or Dan to find out when one of the guides might be available."

Face to face with the President

Neil Munro finds himself back in the 'cosiest club quarters in the city' with the loan of a bust from the Kelvin Grove Art galleries. The writer of the Para Handy sketches and a handful of serious novels was an enthusiastic member in the early years of last century and wrote about the Club in the Evening News.

The bust by Alexander Proudfoot was welcomed to its new place in the Club library by president Efric McNeil, who shares his Argyll background and has been an active member of the Neil Munro Society.

Her unusual name is the Gaelic version of Euphemia, a popular choice for Victorian girls particularly in Scotland. She inherited it from her mother and has passed it on to a daughter and grand-daughter. It's derived from the Greek words for good and speech, which would suggest skills most appropriate for chairing!

Though born in Glasgow, Efric has maintained the family connection with Campbeltown, where her mother was born and returned with three small children after her RAF husband was lost in WW2.

With her elder siblings, our Efric went to the local high school but returned to her native city to start an accountancy apprenticeship with a Glasgow firm. The five-year course sandwiched part-time study round a full-time year at Glasgow University, and it was there that she met Gordon – as both were running late for a class! Efric was one of only two women who completed the testing CA course.

Gordon was very interested in buildings and a Mackintosh enthusiast, Efric keen on design and paintings: "We liked the same things" she points out: "and we'd both started to collect art and artefacts".

Married and settled on the south side of the city, they became involved in local organisations. The CRM Society appointed them joint treasurers. Much of their artistic enthusiasm went into the restoration and furnishing of a Victorian villa on the front at Campbeltown, which



Efric & Neil in the Library

Iain Somerled MacDonald McCormick

September 18, 1939 – September 19, 2014.

Iain McCormick, who died last autumn, was a long-standing member and office-bearer whose varied life was closely connected to the Club.

He was the second son of 'King' John McCormick, the nationalist leader who advanced the cause through the Covenant movement in the late '40s. Brought up in a Glasgow household where political debate was part of everyday life, Iain was introduced to GAC by his father, who was a stalwart member in the '50s, and enjoyed the lively company of artist friends.

At Glasgow University Iain distinguished himself as a debater, then went on to teach in Oban where he won the Argyll seat for the SNP in 1974. He was returned to Westminster with an increased majority but when all but two SNP MPs lost their seats in 1979, Iain went on to develop a business career and for a time defected to the new SDP party. It was in the Art

Club Gallery that he returned to the SNP fold, being signed back in by Mrs Winnie Ewing, a long-standing member of GAC. He was admitted to the Club in 2000 and co-opted to the Council in 2005 where he served as treasurer and took great pride in being elected lay vice-president.

It was at a family function in the Art Club that he met Riona Macinnes: they married in 2009 and moved back to Oban, but Iain retained his connection with the Club.

Last year, despite illness, he campaigned locally for a "Yes" vote, and insisted on being taken to the polling station on the September 18 to cast his vote with pride and hope. He sadly died the following day.

He will be sorely missed by Art Club friends and our sympathy and thoughts are with Riona and his family.

Rosaleen Orr

The Kilbarchan-based artist and former art club member Rosalyn Orr has died at the age of 79. A distinguished student at Glasgow School of Art, she was a former principal art teacher in Glasgow and also an award-winning poet. In

2006 she shared an exhibition in the art club's main gallery with her husband Robert Mulheron. Another side to her creative talents was revealed in the past year when two darkly comic thrillers by her were published by Kennedy and Boyd. Her second novel 'Postcards from Garda' draws on experience of a very enjoyable Art Club trip in 2006.

We are also sorry to report the recent death of Jack Henry, who joined the Club in 2003. Our sympathies go to all who knew him,

remains a home for all the family. They had three daughters – the second one, Efric 3, is preparing to take over her mother's accountancy firm once Efric 4 is settled at school.

Gordon had joined the Art Club in the 70s, when women were not admitted. He was a keen walker, and it was only after he died on a hillside ten years ago that Efric found a new outlet for her energy through membership of the GAC, where she was soon persuaded to serve on the Council, and take on the duties of Club treasurer.

"The Art Club's been very good to me" she admits. She has now cut down her commitments to other organisations such as the Neil Munro Society and the Campbeltown cinema appeal, but she retains a committee place on the Strathclyde branch of the National Art Fund.

Your new office bearers

Efric McNeil – President
Robert Kelsey – Immediate Past President
John Mulhern – Lay Vice-President
Joe Hargan – Artist Vice President
Kimberley Nelson – Honorary Treasurer
Shona Barr – Gallery Convener

Council Members

Office-Bearers listed above, plus:

John Hamilton
Jackie Marno
James McNaught
Philip Raskin
David Smith

Letter to the Editor

As I'm sure all art club members are, I'm delighted with the renovations to the club. The main gallery and public areas are handsome and elegantly decorated, a fine backdrop to paintings – and of course there is the extra attraction of the reconstituted Mackintosh frieze. It's a pleasure to invite guests to the building.

However, there is one problem which requires to be tackled. A lift is badly needed from ground to first floor, in order to offer easy access to the library and the second gallery, as well as to the splendidly upgraded facilities of the ladies' cloakroom. For those without knee or hip problems the stair offers no challenge, but it is steep and an obstacle to people who have such problems, whether members or their visitors. (I know this as a former boulder-up of stairs and mountains!)

It's surprising that this sensible amenity was not included when the club was updated; but surely the oversight can be remedied now? There are nooks and crannies that could be adapted to take a small, utilitarian lift.

I do believe there would be general approval for it. At the moment, people struggle and feel awkward; quite a few women dodge the problem by using the disabled lavatory on the ground floor instead of venturing upstairs. Male club members of course, with their ground floor facilities, are probably less aware of the problem, but I hope they will be sympathetic.

Lesley Duncan

We put Lesley's letter to those responsible for the building project: this is their response.

Thank you for drawing my attention to the suggestion that a lift might be installed to give ease of access to the first floor: I am only too well aware of the need for one, having to tackle these stairs every time I attend a meeting of the Trustees in the Library!

This was of course on the agenda way back years ago when the club first embarked on the project to repair and refurbish the whole envelope of the building, as was the proposal to renovate the extensive accommodation on the upper floors. These projects were going to add considerably to the overall cost however, and greatly extend the scope of the works. As disabled access was going to remain a problem – Historic Scotland would not permit a ramp at the front steps of this listed building – it was decided to defer these until a later date, and the Trustees were instructed to concentrate instead on repairing the fabric of the building to make it wind and watertight, plus the associated works – new floor in the Gallery, the frieze etc. etc.

It may be that the Council will wish to consider a lift as part of a second phase. That is a matter for them of course. But I doubt if anyone wants to proceed with that just now. It would be expensive – upwards of £100,000 I believe – and I think the members have had enough disruption to be going on with. One day maybe!

Iain A. Macmillan
Chairman,
The GAC Property Company.



Search to recover the master's vision

John Fowler talks to Chris Allan about the daunting task of recreating the Gallery Frieze

Christopher Allan hesitated when asked to assume the mantle of the master. The request was deceptively simple: would he undertake to replicate the long-lost frieze Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed for Glasgow Art Club's gallery? Chris knew from past experience that the task would be far from easy. For a start no one knew for sure what the original looked like.

The evidence was scanty. There was a small black and white drawing in the Glasgow weekly magazine The Baillie from 1893 which purported to show the two alternating images of Mackintosh's design, wrongly described as thistle and rose (the 'rose' is a decorative device known as a gorgon). There was a vestige of paintwork scraped from under the many layers that had overlain it throughout more than a hundred years of redecoration. And there was a grainy photograph showing club members lounging elegantly in their new gallery, with all details of the frieze above their heads indistinguishable in the gloom of an indifferent photo reproduction.

After much scrutiny the faint, shadowy outline of a pattern was discerned in the section of the frieze above the fireplace,

barely visible but just enough to give Chris confidence to proceed. From this small clue and hints from Mackintosh work elsewhere, including decorative details in the Art Club itself, Chris was able to build up the whole sequence.

Establishing the appropriate colour scheme proved daunting, with little to go on but faint daubs and a reference to 'quiet tones'. So, though the frieze you see now cannot be an exact replica of the original – for who could judge that? – its integrity has been recognised by the Mackintosh experts and, importantly, the heritage funding bodies.

'Having taken on the job I wanted to do it properly', says Chris, who reckons that it represents a full year's work from his first small sketches through many stages to the full-sized cartoon from which the design could be transferred to the wall.

In a way, Chris is an old hand at Mackintosh restoration, having worked on the creation of the replica Mackintosh house at Glasgow University when he first came to Glasgow from Manchester in 1977, first as senior assistant keeper and then deputy director at the Hunterian Art Gallery. He quit arts administration happily nearly 20 years ago in order to concentrate on his work as a freelance painter, printmaker and researcher in art history.

Glories of the Gallery revealed

The last weeks of 2014 were given over to celebrations of the splendidly restored gallery – a gala dinner for members only, an afternoon tea with music for those who preferred a daytime function and above all a much expanded winter exhibition mixing the work of artists from past and present and recorded in a handsome commemorative catalogue.

With the coming of spring, members have been able to enjoy the brighter atmosphere at evening functions in the Gallery.



Artist vice-president Joe Hargan in jovial mood



President Efric McNeil tours the tables



Members mingle during the gala dinner

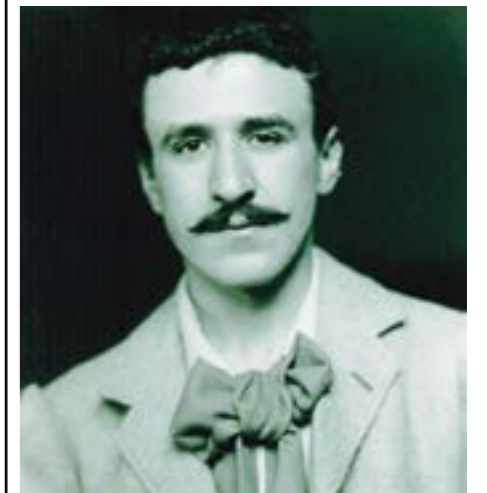


Lady Macfarlane, with James McNaught and The Hon Mrs Fiona McNaught



The commemorative catalogue for the grand opening exhibition covers many of the Club's best loved pictures as well as history and a full list of members. Copies are still available for sale at a cost of £10 – just ask at the bar.

LAST WORD FROM A LATE VISITOR



Charles Rennie Mackintosh, c. 1893 © Anman, Glasgow

Dear Glasgow Art Club,

I write in appreciation of your kind sympathy and hospitality on my recent return to Glasgow. Much has changed in the interim.

As you will understand I was shocked as I strolled along Renfrew Street, to discover the havoc wrought by fire in that building with which my name has been so long associated. I was further mildly surprised to see opposite the blackened shell that large green cube which has recently been built. It will, I think, take me a little time to judge whether it is a supreme example of the art of architecture or an eyesore.

Be that as it may, my good friend Mr Charles Anderson soon calmed my shattered nerves by inviting me to visit your newly refurbished gallery, where I was able to admire the new frieze above the picture rail which he and his colleagues have been able to restore so delicately and skilfully – in part, if I may say so – through a consultation with me through a medium which I am not at liberty to disclose. They have faithfully kept to the spirit of my original.

The furnishings and appointments, now so fresh, are just as I recall them from earlier days. I was glad to see that the clock above the fireplace is now in working order again, though on my visit the club had not yet thought fit to move forward into summer time. In consequence I nearly missed my flight to that corner of the other world I now inhabit. I hope that this is no augury for the future!

Nevertheless, please accept my sincere good wishes for the prosperity of your club in the years to come.

I am, Sirs (and Ladies, too, nowadays)
Your humble servant,
Charles Rennie ("Toshie") Mackintosh.

STILL EXPLORING

In September, a select group of members set out on a joint journey – the 18th to offer members a chance to experience some of Europe’s less crowded centres of culture. After several visits to France, Spain and Italy and one-offs to the Netherlands and Croatia, it was decided to explore the charms of Portugal, from bases in Porto, the centre of the wine trade, and Lisbon, now the capital. Both were close to areas of natural beauty and boasted magnificent buildings and art works reflecting the wealth of former colonial power.

The planned programme was quite a testing one, with plenty of ups and downs in hilly streets and towering castles, but the rewards were memorable. On the Atlantic coast the weather was variable, and there were thunder-showers in Lisbon, but the sun shone steadily on the romantic trip up the Duoro River, and on visits to the Disney-style castle at Sintra and the elegant gardens of the Palacio de Fronteira, a spacious family home for three centuries, with wonderful tilework in main rooms and relaxing terrace.

We were blessed with wonderful care from Christina, our friendly and well-informed guide, and driver Claudia who shared in all the activities – and neatly manoeuvred a way round a large van which challenged us on a hairpin bend. Throughout the nine-day trip they kept us informed, advised on eating places and comforts and pampered with attention.

Whether there will be a 19th trip remains to be seen. Holiday habits have changed, and younger members tend towards more independent travel – and to further-flung airts. Costs are rising, families are scattered, and interests have changed. But as a way of getting to know fellow-members, enjoy relaxed travelling with congenial friends and creating a hard core of Club supporters, the trips were invaluable: it’s up to the new wave of members to come up with a pattern for today.



Perfect day for a sail up the Duro River



L to R – Under the walls of Sintra Castle; Monestary library; Art deco house in Porto park



Fascinating features of the Palacio terrace



Breakfast on the boat

... and in the beginning

Michael Moulder was the original organiser but Jim Bankier took over for the more recent tours. He recalls “The first ‘club holiday’ was actually a Christmas weekend in Paris, advertised in the Herald as a shopping trip in a fleet of buses leaving from the old Herald offices. Our bus was shared with a few non-members but was virtually filled with GAC members. Michael had spotted that the trip would allow members to go to the Quai d’Orsay. We queued for ages in the rain but it was a hugely successful trip and Michael was prevailed upon to run more.”

JOHNNIE TAKES A BOW

Long-term member Johnnie Cuthbert is sprucing up his gear in preparation for a regal command. As a member of the Royal Company of Archers, he may be asked to form part of the Queen’s Bodyguard for Scotland on official occasions such as the Thistle Ceremony at St Giles or escorting special visitors, but he is regularly on call in the summer when the great, good and worthy are invited to Holyrood for one of the coveted garden parties.

While aggressive crowd control is not required, the presence of the towering guards dressed in dark green with feathers adding another foot or so lends an impressive dignity to the social scene – and a splendid photo-opportunity for visitors.

There are around 500 active archers on

the books with a further 200 who no longer take part. They are all volunteers who have spent several thousand pounds on the elaborate uniform which they retain for life. Applicants must be proposed and seconded by people of standing and supported by four referees: and there is a waiting time of around seven years for acceptance.

When Johnnie joined the company in 1990, he was already a member of the GAC. As a solicitor in Glasgow, and later a tutor in law at Glasgow University, he was well placed to know potential proposers, but reckons that the main qualification is height: he still stands six feet three in his uniform – and that’s without the feather! This year he has said he’ll be available for the Holyrood garden party but does not know of any other potential engagements.



Loos on the List

It’s 33 years since ladies were officially admitted to membership of the Club but they are still not welcome in one section of the historic building. Glasgow Art Club as a whole enjoys full A listing but the state-of-the-art lavatories installed in 1912 have their own separate listing. They are particularly admired for the splendid Twyford’s ‘adamant’ urinals and basins, the faux-marble surfaces the vertical oak panelling and brass coat hooks which were retained as the Gents cloakroom when membership was expanded.

Today’s lady members may however, catch a sneak view of this unique example of Edwardian plumbing if they can find a gentleman prepared to stand guard on the door when the facilities are not in use – just ask anyone when the loos are free!



Two men and a piano



Lit by the evening sun from the renewed roof-light, the Gallery was set out cabaret-style for the May recital by baritone Ralph McDonald. His programme ranged from Finzi to Coward, including a couple of charming short songs by Skemp-ton and ending up with an entertaining Gerhswin set.

He was accompanied by distinguished pianist Dr Andrew Plant whose mid-concert playing of Maxwell Davies’ Farewell to Stromness was particularly moving.

Members could book for a simple supper after the concert, when they had a chance to chat at leisure – and still get home before dark.



ARTISTS' NOTES

Artist Members' Exhibition
dates 2015

Summer Exhibition

Hand in Wednesday June 17
Hanging Thursday June 18
Opening Friday June 19
Ends Saturday August 8
Works removed by Monday August 10

Autumn Exhibition

Hand in Wednesday September 9
Hanging Thursday September 10
Opening Saturday September 12
Ends Thursday October 8
Works removed by Friday October 9

Winter Exhibition

Hand in Thursday November 26
Opening Friday November 28
Ends Thursday December 22



Pictured above is the opening of the Spring Exhibition, the first of the club's regular artist member exhibitions to return the refurbished Gallery.

DIARY DATES



Plans for the coming months

Dates on the calendar ...so far

- 'Good Spirits Co.' gin tasting evening July 3
- The Ivor Novello Story Friday September 11
- St Andrews Ceilidh Saturday November 28
- Christmas Party Saturday December 19

New Members

Mr Christopher Allan,	Glasgow	Honorary	Mr Ian Hopkins,	Lodsworth	Honorary
Dr Joel Anderson,	London	Country Artist	Mrs Valerie Hopkins,	Lodsworth	Honorary
Mrs Irene Armstrong,	Glasgow	Associate Lay	Ms Cate Inglis,	Glasgow	Town Artist
Mr James Armstrong,	Glasgow	Retired Lay	Mr Joseph Karaviotis,	Cyprus	Country Lay
Mr John Balding,	Glasgow	Corporate Lay	Mr Martyn Kenyon,	Glasgow	Corporate Lay
Dr Margaret Balsitis,	Paisley	Town Lay	Mrs Vera Kenyon,	Glasgow	Corporate Lay
Dr Gillian M Beattie,	Glasgow	Associate Lay	Mrs Amanda Lorimer,	Glasgow	Town Lay
Mrs Fiona Beattie,	Balfirn	Associate Lay	Ms Laura McAllister,	Glasgow	Young Lay
Mr John Beattie,	Balfirn	Retired Lay	Ms Helen McCook,	Birmingham	Country Artist
Miss Celie Byrne,	Kelty	Country Artist	Mrs Julie McCulloch,	Strathaven	Town Lay
Mrs Victoria Callaghan,	Glasgow	Young Lay	Mr Tom McKendrick,	Clydebank	Town Artist
Mr David Campbell,	Glasgow	Young Lay	Dr Andrew Perchard,	Glasgow	Town Lay
Ms Morag Campbell,	Glasgow	Corporate Lay	Ms Winifred Power,	Helensburgh	Retired Lay
Dr Seonaid Chiah,	Carmunnock	Town Lay	Dr John Richards,	Stirling	Retired Lay
Mrs Marie Devlin,	Glasgow	Honorary	Mr David Robertson,	Glasgow	Corporate Lay
Mrs Carol Dunbar,	Glasgow	Associate Lay	Mr Andrew Traub,	West Kilbride	Town Architect
Mr David Dunbar,	Glasgow	Town Architect	Mrs Margaret Urquhart,	Bearsden	Retired Lay
Mrs Patricia McCormack	French, Coleraine,	Country Lay	Mr William Wallace,	Glasgow	Town Lay
Dr Anne Lorne Gillies,	Dunlop	Honorary	Mrs Margaret Young,	Bearsden	Associate Lay
Mr Craig Grant,	Paisley	Young Lay	Mr Nairn Young,	Bearsden	Retired Lay
Mr Cooper Hay,	Glasgow	Town Lay			

Wear the club on your sleeve – or lapel

Stunningly sophisticated silver lapel pins and cufflinks bearing the club insignia are available to purchase from the Club Secretary.

The insignia bear the head of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, the arts, trade, strategy and most positive aspects of civilised society.

Your GAC lapel pin or cufflinks tell the world that you are a member of Glasgow Art Club and proud of it!



The badges and cufflinks were designed and made in hallmarked silver in Carradale, Kintyre.

GAC Lapel pin:
£17.50

GAC Cufflinks (bar fitting or oval fitting): £36

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