

# NEWSLETTER



Issue 6 Winter 2012/13



CHARLES  
RENNIE  
MACKINTOSH  
SOCIETY™



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[www.crmsociety.com](http://www.crmsociety.com) [www.mackintoshchurch.com](http://www.mackintoshchurch.com)

Cover image: South façade of the Mackintosh Tower at The Mackintosh Church by Stuart Robertson



*Les Sirènes Choir concert at The Mackintosh Church in December, with Musical Director, Andrew Nunn and the Choir celebrating a fantastic evening. In October Les Sirènes were crowned Choir of the Year 2012 at London's Royal Festival Hall. © Stuart Robertson*

### London and the South East Events

**Friday 26 April 2013**

**6:15pm for 6:45pm**

**The Architecture of Oliver Hill**

**by Alan Powers**

Lecture: Alan Powers, Professor of Architecture and Cultural Design at the University of Greenwich, has written and lectured widely on art and architecture in the first half of the twentieth century and is the author of "Oliver Hill - Architect and Lover of Life 1887-1968".

Tickets: Pre-booked CRMS Members £7.00; Guests £9.00. On the door add £1

Lecture Venue: The Gallery, situated at the rear of Alan Baxter Associates at 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL

Contact: [crms-londser@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crms-londser@hotmail.co.uk)

### Exhibitions of Interest:

**At the Fleming Collection:**

The Fleming Collection, situated at 13 Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, has the following exhibitions planned:

**Land Landscape: The Paintings of James Morrison – 19 February to 6 April 2013**

### Other Matters:

**Thursday 21 February 2013**

**Twentieth Century Society Lecture Series - Reputations Reassessed**

**John McAslan on Charles Rennie Mackintosh**

6.30pm at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street  
John McAslan CBE is a major figure in contemporary architectural practice in Britain. He grew up in Dunoon and studied at Edinburgh University, working in America before joining Richard Rogers and founding his own practice in 1984. He has been involved in a wide range of projects, most recently the new concourse at King's Cross Station, as well as working on the conservation of the De La Warr Pavilion and Mackintosh's last built work, 78 Derngate. In the lecture he will talk about the architects of Mackintosh's generation in Glasgow as well as Mackintosh himself.

Members £8, non-members £10, students £5, including a glass of wine. Some tickets will be available at the door. The CRM Society is delighted to work with the Twentieth Century Society.

Book online through The Twentieth Century Society – [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk) Event code: [13/06]



This year the Society achieves a remarkable landmark in celebrating 40 years of protecting Charles Rennie Mackintosh's unique architectural heritage. We hope you can attend a number of the special events we have planned throughout the year. Below is a provisional programme of events taking place in 2013. Other events and talks are still to be added to the programme. All the events will take place at the Mackintosh Church except where indicated. A fuller version of the programme with a booking form will appear in the next newsletter and the anniversary section of the website.

## March

Currently there is a Mackintosh Design Competition for students and staff of GSA Silversmithing + Jewellery to produce a contemporary motif as part of our 40th anniversary. The competition will be judged in February with a planned exhibition in March.

Bill Blackwood Art Exhibition

## April/May

Ruth Castle Art Exhibition

## June

### AGM Weekend 7-9 June 2013

Friday 7 Special evening event at The Mackintosh Church.

Saturday 8 June - AGM at House for an Art Lover followed by afternoon programme.

Sunday 9 June - 'Tale of Two Houses'

Special visit to The Hill House and Windyhill.

Monday 10 June - Mackintosh Birthday Event at The Mackintosh Church (Italian Dinner)

## July/August

Frances Law Art Exhibition - Architecture of Nature  
Frances Law is a Scottish artist who studied at the GSA. Frances invites us to question our own relationship with the natural world and the emotional energy that lies therein.

## September

CRM Society 40th Anniversary Exhibition from September to November.

Glasgow Doors Open

## October

4 October - CRM Society Special 40th Anniversary Event

Mackintosh Symposium Follow-Up

Yarn Cake Knitting and Craft Event

Creative Mackintosh Festival - Year 2

15 October - Douglas Lecture

## November

28 November - Members' Afternoon Tea

## December

5 December - Special Shopping Event

December will also include concerts by Les Sirenes and the Mackintosh Choir.



*Detail of the mosaic fireplace in the Drawing Room of The Hill House. © Stuart Robertson*

**1973-2013: Celebrating 40 years of protecting Mackintosh's unique architectural heritage.**



## Mackintosh Trail opens in France

A commemorative trail has been opened in Pyrénées-Orientales, celebrating the artistic legacy of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. In 1923 Mackintosh moved to France with his wife Margaret and devoted himself full-time to painting.

The Mackintosh trail stretches from the Mediterranean coast to the Cerdagne Mountains and features 30 markers. Each marker has a reproduction of a landscape located on the site where it was painted. Alongside the trail, three permanent exhibition centres have been opened, relating the life and work of the Mackintoshes in the area.

The inauguration ceremony in November was attended by the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore, who unveiled a bronze plaque of the artist at the Hotel du Commerce in Port Vendres, where the Mackintoshes stayed. The event was also attended by Robin Crichton – the initiator of the trail project which took eight years to complete. He told Border Telegraph:



Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore with Robin Crichton at the Launch. © Scotland Office

“Mackintosh was completely forgotten and unknown in this corner of France until the Scottish Government provided a grant of £20,000 to fund an introductory exhibition here as part of the celebrations of the Entente Cordiale in 2004. It was seen by over 3000 people in three months so we decided to try and develop it further.”

Further information can be found at [www.crmackintoshfrance.com](http://www.crmackintoshfrance.com).

## Nijole Ukelyte

## North East England

It is with sadness that we announce that the York branch of the Mackintosh Society closed at the end of 2012. It was not an easy decision for the organising committee to take, and one they made with great regret. ‘The decision to close was due ‘to a combination of reasons; difficulties with getting speakers, dwindling attendance, the time commitment of the existing committee and no volunteers to take over’ advised Chair, Aileen Somerset ‘It has been getting more difficult to organise over the last few years despite all our efforts.’

Fellow committee member Paul Gilby agreed, ‘having held 84 talks over 14 years we’d dried up and it was becoming more difficult to raise a decent size audience.

Aileen, Kathy, Mike and I will always remain loyal members and supporters of the Society and you’ll definitely see us at the 40th celebration in June.’

‘Whilst the regular York meetings have stopped, if you feel there is anything that you’d like to involve the region in but is primarily a CRM Society initiative, we’d be more than willing to help where we can.’

All of us here at the Society would like to thank Aileen Somerset, Paul Gilby, Virginia Wedgwood, Michael Fisher and Kathy Smith for all their years of hard work organising and running the York branch. We also wish to thank everyone who attended talks and events organised by the York branch over the years.



Peter Trowles

***Peter Trowles has spent his last 25 years looking after the Mackintosh collection at the Glasgow School of Art. Interview by Lorna Hepburn, Property Manager for The Hill House.***

Peter Trowles' career as Curator of the Mackintosh Collection at Glasgow School of Art began in 1987. It was an exciting time to be joining the GSA as, under Tony Jones (Director till 1986) the school was building an international reputation and attracting students from all over the world.

It was while working as a graphic designer in the south of England, teaching and organising design workshops that Peter became interested in curating exhibitions. To increase his knowledge, he applied to the University of St Andrews to study on its Museums and Galleries Diploma Course. The Diploma was followed by a master's thesis on the artist and printmaker Muirhead Bone, concentrating on his Glasgow works produced when the city was very much in transition. Peter's choice of subject was influenced by his own experience of printmaking and graphic design, together with his discovery that although a wealth

of material was held in the print collections of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and at the Hunterian Art Gallery, little research had been done on Bone's work. Bone had studied at Glasgow School of Art and Peter found the GSA student records another rich resource for his thesis. It was an obvious next step to put together an exhibition on Bone. This proved of sufficiently high quality to be shown at the Crawford Art Centre in St Andrews, and then in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow. It attracted the attention of numerous art critics including Cordelia Oliver who reviewed it in the Guardian newspaper.

Peter remembers finishing his master's course on a Friday afternoon and starting work the following Monday morning, in a part-time post cataloguing the collection at the Hunterian Art Gallery. This was soon followed by the offer of the post of Curator of the Mackintosh collection at Glasgow School of Art.

The GSA collection was awarded Museum Accreditation in 2007, in recognition of achieving professional standards in collections care. While care of the Mackintosh material is a core part of the Curator's job, it comprises less than 10% of the collection held by the art school. The rest consists largely of students' work, which presents Peter with interesting challenges when trying to ensure that the work of all departments is represented. Storage space is a major issue, with some types of work such as textiles, being easier to store than others but how, for instance, do you include site specific or large scale pieces and increasingly works represented digitally? ? Having found the collection invaluable for his own research, Peter particularly enjoys helping make the collection accessible for other researchers, particularly undergraduates. For example students training as silversmiths have benefitted from being able to look at the



School's collection of historic medals. Also, there is an increasing demand from the public seeking information about family members who studied at GSA.

Over the years, Peter has enjoyed involvement in a number of international exhibitions. These include the largest exhibition of Mackintosh's work that had ever been held and which was organised in 1996 by Glasgow Museums in collaboration with Glasgow University and the Glasgow School of Art. Over 300 pieces drew an audience of around 220,000 visitors in four just months to the McLellan Galleries in Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street. The exhibition was as successful when it travelled to venues in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

In 1998, along with Glasgow gallery owner William Hardie and Doctor Hiroaki Kimura, Peter curated an exhibition of Mackintosh's works, including the famous cashier's chair from the Willow Tearooms, which GSA lent to the newly opened Hida-Takayama Museum of Art in Takayama in the Japanese Alps. In lieu of an exhibition fee, Museum Director Mr Tetsuya Mukai provided an endowment to establish the Tetsuya Mukai Postgraduate Scholarship which has since enabled Japanese students to study fine art at Glasgow School of Art.

By the 1990s, the GSA had come to realise that the Mackintosh "brand" was good for the school and with the help of The National Trust for Scotland, set up a modest programme of tours of the Mackintosh building with a group of volunteer guides organised by the late Ogilvie McKenna. Demand for guided tours just kept growing and it became necessary to recruit paid guides. These are now all drawn from the school's own students, who give tours at set times all the year round. All profit from the tours and related shop sales go to the school and the income generated has risen from a few thousand pounds a year in the

late 1980s to a current and healthy six-figure sum. Peter sees other benefits for the school from these tours: the Art School is meeting a demand from the public; tours provide students with employment and useful inter-personal skills; tours can offer a shop window for student's work. On the other hand, tours can occasionally be disruptive, particularly at degree show time. Some visitors can forget that the building is still a working art school not a museum. As one commented "It is a great building. Shame about the students"!

The Art School, like other Mackintosh sites, benefits from its membership of the Mackintosh Heritage Group. Peter remembers the group's early days when he says it was a good talking shop, mainly for curators but from 1990 onward, it has been stronger and more focused in working for the common good of the properties by, for example, joint applications for funding to Scottish Enterprise and other agencies. The Art Nouveau Network, of which the Mackintosh Heritage Group is a member, was set up in 1999 to provide a network which was much more than just a talking shop for cities with Art Nouveau architecture.





The MHG joined with the newly opened Lighthouse representing it in the Network. Around 15 European cities each made a small investment in the Network (often in kind rather than in cash) and thus were able to make applications for funding for fairly large sums. The last funding application brought in an additional two million Euro of EU grant funding to be shared by 12 city partners. Peter was President of The Art Nouveau Network for 18 months following the temporary closure of The Lighthouse but as of last year (2011) Glasgow has been represented on the board of the Network by Helen Kendrick of the Glasgow City Heritage Trust.

Much of the art school's budget is spent on maintenance of the buildings and it is a struggle to keep them wind and water tight. It had been nearly 40 years since the GSA last had a new building. The School's Newbery Tower was much loved but together with its neighbouring Foulis Building were proving increasingly impractical, being full of dead spaces so a more strategic, long term approach was needed for future accommodation. An audit of the GSA estate had shown that the Mackintosh building

was the only one now fully fit for purpose. Just as Mackintosh designed a building fit for the 20th century, so its newest building should be suitable for the 21st. It should be a low maintenance, environmentally friendly and provide spaces that work for the building's users. Work started last year on Steven Holl's extension to the art school, sited directly across from the Mackintosh Building on Renfrew Street and has attracted much media interest, keeping GSA very much in the public eye. The new build is due for completion by autumn 2013 and importantly will see the School's design students, currently housed in temporary accommodation in the Finnieston area of the city, return to the very heart of the historic Garnethill campus.

*Building work progresses at the Glasgow School of Art. Photograph by Algimantas Grigas, © 2013.*





### **Making Mackintosh available to everyone – formal and informal education at Scotland Street School Museum.**

One very appealing aspect of Mackintosh's architecture is that he always bore in mind "the needs of people" and saw them not as masses, but as individuals. A beautiful example of this idea is Scotland Street School, now part of Glasgow Museums, where numerous events and activities for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities are offered. The learning and access team based at the school develop and deliver learning activities that aim to bring Mackintosh's legacy to life and make his ideas relevant for modern day audiences.

The elongated lines and carved organic shapes across the outside of the building and along the school railings can suggest to visitors the ideas of plants and trees. Inside the building the stained glass patterns in the windows and the green tiles of the drill hall evoke similar plant-like forms. This is befitting symbolic imagery for a school, a place where children are nurtured to grow.

Apart from the natural world, the building also reminds a lot of visitors of a fairytale castle – climbing those light flooded stair towers on a dark winter's day really is something magical. These associations are important in order to engage visitors with the architecture, so they were incorporated into a Family Day as part of Festival of Museums in May 2012.

"The Magical World of Mackintosh" used the architect's fondness of fairytales and the natural world as inspiration for different creative activities throughout the day. Interactive storytelling sessions brought back to life the Celtic fairy tales that had inspired Mackintosh and The Four in their work – amongst them were tales of selkies, spirits and of course fairies.

A highlight of the day was a specially commissioned promenade theatre piece aimed at a family audience. Starting out as a traditional theatre play, with the audience eavesdropping, it then followed Charles Rennie Mackintosh around the school and saw him incorporate the audience into his conversations, bringing down "the fourth wall". Along the way he encountered the character of Mrs Graham the janitor's wife, who as it is documented, complained about the small size of the adjacent janitor house she was living in. These personal, true, stories - including the design changes Mackintosh made to Scotland Street School that the Glasgow School Board didn't agree with - make him a bit of a "daredevil" and hence very appealing to a modern audience.

It is important for Glasgow Museums' learning and access team to let the public explore Mackintosh in a fresh way and get creative. It is too simple to emulate the typical Mackintosh patterns; such as giving children a rose to colour in. This is not challenging. It is much more enticing to convey Mackintosh's creative spirit by reinterpreting it. Contemporary artist





## Themed Learning & Access



*“Mrs Graham” confronting Mr Mackintosh over her “wee house” © Culture & Sport Glasgow (Museums)*

Elizabeth Skea was commissioned to work with children on a collective piece of art based on the inspiration of nature. They created a tree mosaic which has now been put on display in the school.

Scotland Street School does not only celebrate Mackintosh once a year. Informal and formal educational programmes take place throughout the year. In the workshop “Wee Builders – Wee Architects” devised



*Scotland Street School’s headmaster is still spreading fear along the corridors © Culture & Sport Glasgow (Museums)*

for nursery and primary school groups, children get to know “Charlie” and his love for buildings. They are engaged to explore what sort of tools and equipment builders would need to accomplish an architect’s vision.

Another workshop, “Spick, Span & Sporty”, presents ‘housewifery’ topics being taught during Scotland Street’s early days as a functioning school. The children get to engage with a lot of hands-on activities – from darning to bed-making. An actress-led session for older children shows how important discipline and respect were throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and remind the young visitors of what this building was designed for in the first place.

These activities are of course not only captivating for a younger audience but also for an older generation. Some of Scotland Street School Museum’s visitors attended the school themselves before it eventually closed in 1979. Since 2001 ex-pupils come back once a year on the first Saturday in September for the specially organised Reunion Day, during which the learning & access team often uses the tool of costumed interpretation to bring characters like the headmaster back to life. Born from this annual event is the desire to set up a local history group, thus establishing another way of continuing the school’s legacy for the area.

So although Scotland Street School Museum is not used as a functioning school anymore, the spirit of learning is still captured when children and adults engage in activities together. Mackintosh’s architecture can not only be passively admired but can still be actively brought alive. Something he surely would have approved of.

### **Anna Lehr**

*Learning and Access Assistant, Glasgow Museums*



Margaret and Michael Hartley with their Mackintosh Dolls' House when it was exhibited in Scotland Street School Museum, 2007. © Culture & Sport Glasgow (Museums)

We were saddened to hear of the passing in June 2012 of Margaret Hartley, a passionate admirer of Mackintosh's work. With her husband Michael, she created, over a period twenty years, a meticulously detailed 1:12 scale doll's house celebrating Mackintosh's life.

Margaret began collecting miniature Mackintosh furniture in the late 1980s. In 1992 she decided to create a miniature townhouse - detailing how Mackintosh and his wife Margaret may have lived. The Hartleys immersed themselves completely; for holidays they retrod the artist couple's steps throughout Britain. They visited collections, read every surviving letter written by the Mackintoshes and every book, magazine and newspaper article that they could find. The details uncovered in their research embellish their dolls'

house with personal items - things the Mackintosh's liked or would have used.

Margaret always described their Mackintosh house as 'a dream'. 'In our dolls house live a beautiful couple. Successful, healthy, very much in love, still creating wonderful works of art, looking as they looked in their thirties.'

The Mackintosh Dolls' House has been featured in Dolls House World magazine in 1998, past Society Journals and appeared on BBC's interior decorating and design programme Home Front. It is now in Glasgow Museums' collection.

**Alison Brown**

*Curator, European Decorative Arts from 1800, Glasgow Museums*



Henry van de Velde, photographed by Louis Held in 1910 © Klassik Stiftung Weimar

## Thuringia and Saxony Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Henry van de Velde

Various locations throughout 2013

In 2013 Germany is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the all round artist and pioneer of modernism Henry van de Velde.

Born in Antwerp in 1863, Van de Velde began his career as a neo-impressionist painter, but eventually a feeling of unrest, as he himself described it, moved him in the late 19th century to architecture and design. He disregarded the boundaries between “arts” and “crafts” and followed the principle that the design of an object must be based on its function, applying this philosophy to the design of his buildings as well as everyday objects from furniture to lighting and even letter openers.

The festival focuses mainly on Van de Velde’s work in Germany, where he moved in 1897 and stayed until the dawn of World

War II. He was commissioned to restore the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar and was later in the same town appointed director of the Grand-Ducal School of Arts and Crafts (today – Bauhaus University). His most famous buildings include “Villa Esche” in Chemnitz, “Hohenhof” in Hagen and “Villa Schulenburg” in Gera. He encouraged the long-term development of new ceramic designs in the pottery town of Bürgel, leading it to become a European centre for Art Nouveau ceramics.

Through a series of dedicated events and seventeen exhibitions, this year-long festival presents van de Velde’s impressive career in architecture, design and painting; his influence and influences and the work of his contemporaries and students.

For the full listing of events and exhibitions go to [www.vandvelde2013.de](http://www.vandvelde2013.de).

**Nijole Ukelyte**



## The Other Pedreras: Architecture and Design around the World in the Early 20th Century

La Pedrera, Barcelona

Until 24 February 2013

To mark the centenary of Antoni Gaudí's spectacular landmark building La Pedrera, an exhibition has been opened in Barcelona. It brings together six buildings, designed and constructed contemporaneously with La Pedrera, which reflect diverse innovative stylistic trends:

Maison Horta (1898-1902) by Victor Horta, Brussels

Hôtel Mezzara (1910-1911) by Hector Guimard, Paris

Glasgow School of Art (1897-1909) by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Glasgow

Palais Stoclet (1905-1911) by Josef Hoffmann, Brussels

Looshaus (1909-1911) by Adolf Loos, Vienna

Robie House (1908-1910) by Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago

Each of the featured architects maintained tight control of their works, paying close attention not only to the exterior, but to the



interior as well, creating furniture pieces specifically for each of their buildings. Alongside the models, photo and video footage and plans of the buildings, visitors can explore original pieces of furniture - including Mackintosh's famous chairs - as well as decorative artworks.

To find out more about the exhibition, visit <http://www.lapedrera.com/lesaltrespedreres/en/>

*Nijole Ukelyte*

*All photos © La Pedrera*



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