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78 DERNGATE NEWS

HOUSE ADMINISTRATOR

Rebecca Coughlan

Hello. Everything is going well in the attic office of 78!

Even though we don't officially open until April 12th, we've had lots of visitors already so we're making some money. Bookings for the new season are also coming from far and wide, which is even better news.

78 continues to be the subject of much media coverage; Rob Kendall and Barbara Floyer have been involved in an Anglia TV production for 'The Way We Were' series. Chris Sherlock and Rob had already been involved in some previous recording for this programme when they previewed some of the early film material when Janet Bassett-Lowke was interviewed. The programme, to air early summer, concentrates on New Ways, but will contain many references to 78. In fact Rob was filmed by the crew in our dining room. Barbara has also been liaising with the BBC TV production crew on another programme about New Ways. The programme, one of the 'Dan Cruickshank's Marvels of the Modern Age' series, will be televised on BBC 2, Tuesday 23rd. May.

You may have read that the John McAslan & Partners remodelling of 78 and 80 Derngate has won another award. A total of 214 nominations were received for the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, known as the Europa Nostra Awards. Out of these only 31 received prizes with

just five of those coming from the UK! The awards will be presented by Queen Sofia of Spain in June. You can find out more about these awards below and at www.europanostra.org.

The 78 Derngate Trust has also been involved in the Museum Maker Project, partly sponsored by the Arts Council and the museums who take part. We have agreed to sponsor the work of an artist chosen from the Arts Council list to install a temporary sculpture in the garden of 78. After short-listing three very different artists and looking at their projections for the piece to be created, we have decided to go with the work of Rebecca Newnham who creates botanically inspired mirrored glass mosaic artwork. The inspiration for her designs for us spring from some of the organic shapes in the hall-lounge of 78. This sculpture should be in place by the end of this April and we will be able to publish photographs and more detail in the next newsletter.

As we approach our official opening, Barbara and I find that we are hungry for Volunteers to join us. So any member of the Friends who is not presently an active volunteer would be very welcome to join our happy band.

For further information please call Barbara or me on **01604 603408** or email us at **78derngate@btconnect.com**.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

78-80 DERNGATE WINS EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE

The European Commission and Europa Nostra the pan-European Federation for Heritage-announced in March the prizes for the annual European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Awards, which included John McAslan + Partners' remodelling of 78-80 Derngate.

The Awards will be presented to the laureates at the European Heritage Awards Ceremony, to be held in June at the Palacio Real de El Pardo in Madrid. This prestigious event with the participation of Europa Nostra's President, HRH the Prince Consort of Denmark, will be presided over by H.M. Queen Sofia of Spain.

A total of 214 applications and nominations received in various categories were assessed independently and evaluated by the Heritage Awards Juries. A total of 31 awards were made, five of which are from the UK. The range of exemplary initiatives submitted illustrate the many facets of Europe's cultural heritage, ranging from the restoration of buildings and sites, their adaptation to new uses, new building projects in conservation areas, urban and rural landscape rehabilitation, to archaeological sites, care for collections, outstanding research and dedicated service to heritage conservation.

The European Heritage Awards were jointly launched in 2002 by Europa Nostra and the European Commission to recognise best practices in heritage conservation on a European level. The aims of this Awards Scheme are three-fold: to promote high standards in conservation practice, to stimulate transboundary exchanges of knowledge and skills, and to encourage further exemplary initiatives in the field of cultural heritage.

MARILYN HIGGS

It is with sadness that we have heard of the untimely death by accident of Marilyn Higgs, Janet Dick's daughter. Marilyn has been so supportive of her mother's passion to have W.J. and his association with CRM properly represented at 78. Marilyn also helped Janet with the preparation of her mother's biography on W.J. Bassett-Lowke. Marilyn was an active participant in a number of organisations not the least being the Inner Wheel, NFU and Barnardo's. The funeral service was at All Saints, Wellingborough, March 10, with representation from the Trustees and Friends of 78 as part of the full congregation. The service was followed by a private family internment. Her husband John, their two children, and her mother, Janet Dicks, survive her.

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH BOOK COVERS

I have always believed that the cover on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th editions of W. J. Bassett Lowke's *The Model Railway Handbook*, pictured here, was designed by Mackintosh. There are copies of the Handbooks here at 78 Derngate and a copy of the book was displayed and attributed to Mackintosh at last year's exhibition of books designed mainly by Talwin Morris, but also by others including Mackintosh, for Blackie & Son, at Blackwell, the Baillie Scott House in the Lake District.



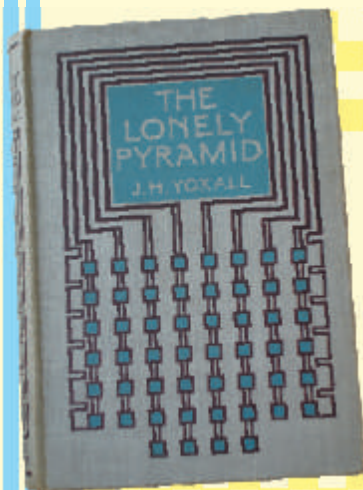
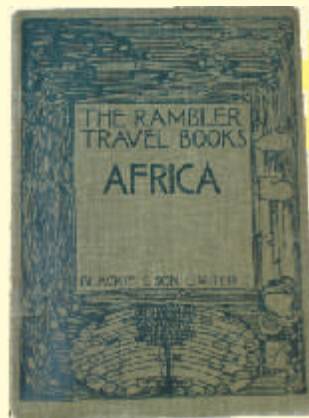
However, to date, despite talking to the curator at Blackwell, Bill Buchanan, an expert on Talwin Morris*, and Pamela Robertson, Professor of Mackintosh Studies at The Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow, I have not found any solid evidence to prove that the design was actually by Mackintosh. Indeed there is one piece of evidence to the contrary. In Roland Fuller's book *The Bassett-Lowke Story* he claims that these covers were designed by Kenneth H Cullen. I do know that the style of lettering on the cover was used earlier by Bassett-Lowke as we have a publication from 1914 with the same lettering and this was before he met Mackintosh.

The Hunterian do have copies of Mackintosh's original artwork for the business cards and Christmas card he designed for WBL but nothing about the Handbook. I will, however, continue my search for actual evidence, so if any of you can help please get in touch.

Mackintosh and Talwin Morris, who was the Art Manager with Blackie and Son, were both part of the same circle in Glasgow and it was Morris who introduced Mackintosh to Walter Blackie, who then commissioned him in 1902 to design The Hill House. After Morris's death in 1911 Mackintosh designed his gravestone.

It was after this that Mackintosh was asked to design the covers for two Blackie series of books, *The Rambler Travel Books* and *Rambles Among Our Industries*.

The first of these was published in 1913. The design for the *The Rambler Travel Series* was printed on limp light green cloth and was a rather organic design, whereas *The Rambles Among Our Industries*, also on green cloth, was much more geometric, being an arrangement of little squares.



In 1921 Blackie wrote to Mackintosh asking him to design another cover for a series of Henty stories; however the design was actually used for a series entitled *The Boys and Girls Bookshelf*, circa 1926. These designs are much bolder. The title is placed in a rectangle and surrounded by five heavy lines that carry on downwards carrying rows of little squares. The books were printed in brown and blue on a grey cloth.

Another example of a Blackie book design which could conceivably be Mackintosh's was the one that replaced Morris's design in the 1920s on the shilling series Blackie's Library for Boys and Girls. These covers consist of horizontal rows of semi-circles crossing vertical lines. The design reminds me of rows of birds and brings to mind the bird-like shape cut out of the Mackintosh high backed chairs designed for The Argyle Street Tea Rooms.

It is possible to find copies of Mackintosh designed books in secondhand book shops, book fairs or on (you either love or hate it) e-bay. You can pay as little as £4.00 for a book and upwards to £80. It is probably the only way that the majority of us can ever afford to own an original Mackintosh design.

Barbara Floyer

*Roger Buchanan is staging a major exhibition this year of Talwin Morris books in Scotland. I will give you more details when I know them.

■ MACKINTOSH CONSERVATION & ACCESS PROJECT ■

The Glasgow School of Art has news of a Heritage Lottery Grant for a stage one grant of £4.466m and a development grant of £153,500 to support the Mackintosh Conservation and Access project. This is the first step in the redevelopment of the Garnethill campus.

The project includes restoring the school's outstanding heritage vested in the Mackintosh building and making the collections and archives more accessible to all. The conservation aspect of the project will restore the interior of the Mackintosh Building, bringing back original features, removing inappropriate additions and reverting some studio places back to their original purpose. It will conserve the GSA's Archives and Collections and store them in improved and environmentally controlled conditions. The Mackintosh Furniture Gallery will be moved to the basement thereby allowing disability access; create a gallery space for programmes of temporary exhibitions enabling the restored items in the Collections and Archives (many of which have not been seen in public) to be viewed; provide a meeting point for tours within the interpretation centre opposite the Mackintosh Building and re-route tours through the building to meet the growing demand for larger numbers of visitors. The whole development will be carried out in phases up to 2010.

The GSA needs to raise a further £2.6m to supplement the HLF grant and the campaign to raise these funds will be fronted by Jan McKenzie, currently Director of Corporate Affairs at Robert Gordon University, who has been appointed as Campaigns Director.



■ MECCANO MAGAZINE ■

As many of the Friends know W. J. Bassett-Lowke wrote a great deal about models and model collecting as well as about the re-modelling of 78. Some of the Puffin illustrated children's books from the 1940s, for example, have become collector's items.

B-L's writing generally expressed his enthusiasms whatever the audience or publication and the Meccano Magazine was no exception. We have been sent facsimiles from Michael Savage of the Meccano Magazine for January 1948 and December 1948 where B-L writes respectively about The Valhalla by the Thames and The National Maritime Museum. Mr. Savage acknowledges that B-L 'used to advertise in the magazine from time to time but W. J. must have rated it as being seriously worthy of his valued contributions'. Although there is almost a year between the two editions it would seem that they were inspired by the same visit to the Thames and are very evocative of a time gone by.

'Those who go by steamer down the Thames or by rail to Greenwich, in order to visit the famous National Maritime Museum, may not know that further down the Thames, on the Waterfront at Gravesend, there is a private museum at 'The Look Out', or, as it is sometimes called, 'The Valhalla of the Thames'. Here is a personal collection of old merchant ship figureheads, models, pictures, relics and souvenirs of the sea; all of them Mercantile Marine and mainly connected with ships of London river. The collection is part of the home of 'Long John (Cap'n) Silver'..... I would like to mention that the general arrangement of the models is to the collector's personal fancy and the layout is quite removed from a formal ship museum.'

In the second article B-L asserts 'If you are interested in maritime history and who on this island of ours is not? a visit to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich will reward you with some happy hours The dockyard ship models are a special feature of the Museum, as they are contemporary models, made usually before the ship herself was built...the purpose of these models was to assist ship builders in the actual building of the ship herself.... Many hours of careful, painstaking labour went into carving and gilding of decoration on the stern and bows of many of these relics of an ancient craft.' Echoes perhaps of the twentieth century craftsmanship that went on in B-L's workshops. He finishes his article by hoping that his piece will 'arouse a keen desire among readers to see this valuable treasure-house of ours at Greenwich, in South East London'.

The Valhalla of the Thames, I am afraid as far as I am aware, has gone to its Valhalla but B-L would be pleased to know that, some sixty years on, the National Maritime Museum has more visitors than ever. **RK.**



: FRIENDS NEWS IN BRIEF :



Underscan by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

The Friends took part in the 50/50 café in Northampton Fish Market in early February during the internationally acclaimed Underscan light show presentation on Northampton's Market Square. Northampton Arts Collective ran the café over a period of ten days and we were able to have a display board and publicise 78 & the Friends.

St. George's Day is being celebrated on Saturday 22 April (rather than the 23rd) in The Guildhall courtyard, Northampton. The Friends and 78 will have a display and publicity table from 10am 3.30pm. The courtyard is open to the public and there will be other display tables. Other than stalls there will be some theatricals about dragons from Masque Youth Theatre to watch! So if you are in the vicinity of Northampton town centre please call in.

Sabine Schaebitz's illustrated lecture, From Art Nouveau to Bauhaus, in March was very well attended and extremely well received. We would like to thank Sabine again for her continued support for the work of the Friends and her expertise on her chosen subject that she was prepared to share with us.

BB. In our last newsletter we surmised that BB was Binden Blood. Several letters have informed us that

BB was in fact author Denys Watkins-Pitchford's pseudonym.

Jean Summerley, who sent us the original copy from The Little Grey Men, had noted that to us BUT, obviously, we hadn't spotted it! The question we also asked was whether the model steamer mentioned in the story, the Jeanie Deans, was ever actually a Bassett-Lowke model. To date that still remains a mystery - unless someone out there knows better.

Wicksteed Park Kettering. Northants. Saturday/Sunday May 5/6th. The Friends have again decided to have a publicity stall in the park during this weekend which will also have 'stalls' from Althorpe and Silverstone. Come and say hello if you can.

Northampton Festival. June 2006. As part of the month long Northampton music and arts festival 78 have two events in the programme. On Wednesday 7th 6pm. Rob Kendall will lead a tour from 78 of the town centre looking at the architectural work of Alexander Ellis Anderson and Art Deco buildings. The tour costs £5 and lasts an hour and can be booked through Explore Northamptonshire/Northampton Festival at the Visitor Centre. Rebecca Coughlan, House Administrator, has an Evening Soiree at 78 on Thursday 15th. with live sixties music and house tour. For further information contact 78 for details or book through Explore Northamptonshire as above.

Exhibition: V and A. Modernism: Designing a New World. April 6- 23 July. 2006 The exhibition will concentrate on the years 1914 1939. There are a wide variety of artists and designers but it also includes the work of architects Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Rudolph Schindler.

: CALENDAR :

OF EVENTS 2006

Membership renewal.
1 April.

Whyne & Toshie: 1914-28.
Playhouse Theatre,
Clare St. N'pton..
Wed 5 April. 7.45pm.
Bookings (01604) 711317

78 re-opens.
12 April (Wed - Sun incl.)
Pre book tours 01604 603407

St. George's Day event.
Sat 22 April. 10.30am - 3.30pm.
78 Dergate stall.
The Guildhall, Northampton

Cecil Higgins Gallery.
Bedford
Sat 29 April
Details (01604) 458842

Wickstead Park.
Kettering
Sat 5 - Sun 6 May
Friends stall.

Port Vendres.
May 9-14 (full)

Northampton Festival.
Wed 7 June. 6pm **£5.**
Guided walk on Alexander Ellison Anderson
and
Thurs 15 June. **£10.**
Evening Soiree at 78
Details (01604 711317) or
Festival Programme.

Cheltenham Museum/
Rodmorton Manor
Fri 9 June. **£25.**
Limited to 20 places
Details (01604) 711317

Glasgow Weekend
Fri 27 - Sun 29 October.
£198
Booking (01234) 781648
(See panel for details)

Friends AGM
The Guildhall, Northampton.
Thurs 23 November 7.30pm.

: CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH WEEKEND GLASGOW & HELENSBURGH :

Friday 27th Sunday 29th. October. 2006. Cost. £198 per person.
Depart Northampton 8am Friday and return approx. 10pm. Sunday.

The price includes

Return travel and use of luxury 5* York's Coach for the weekend.

Two nights dinner, bed and breakfast in the 3* Swallow Hotel.

All rooms ensuite with tea/coffee making facilities. The hotel's leisure facilities include heated swimming pool, gym, sauna, solarium and fitness room.

Blue Badge Guide and Mackintosh specialist Mrs. Audrey Shirra.

Entrance fees to all sites visited.

Not included:

Lunches and refreshments (except where stated)
Insurance at £11 per person
Single supplement £30 per person

Provisional Booking may be made on **01234 781648** to be followed by a deposit of **£30 per person.**

The booking proforma is also available for personal callers at 78 Dergate.

Brief Itinerary:

Friday

Depart **8am.** Victoria Street Coach stop, Northampton.
Queen's Cross Church, Glasgow.
(approx. 3.30pm.)
Introductory talk and light refreshment Swallow Hotel. 5pm.

Saturday

The Hill House, Helensburgh. am.
Sauchiehall Street. 12 noon.
Glasgow School of Art tour. 1.30pm.
Mackintosh House at the Hunterian.
2.45pm.
Return to hotel 5pm.

Sunday

House for An Art Lover. am.
Kelvin Grove Museum. 11.15am.
Lunch (cost not included) and return to Northampton.

NEWSLETTER COPY

Should you wish to contribute to the newsletter articles and/or photographs re 78 please contact:

Rob Kendall
on **01604 711317.**

You may also like to check the
Trust web site
www.78derngate.org.uk