



Christchurch City Council



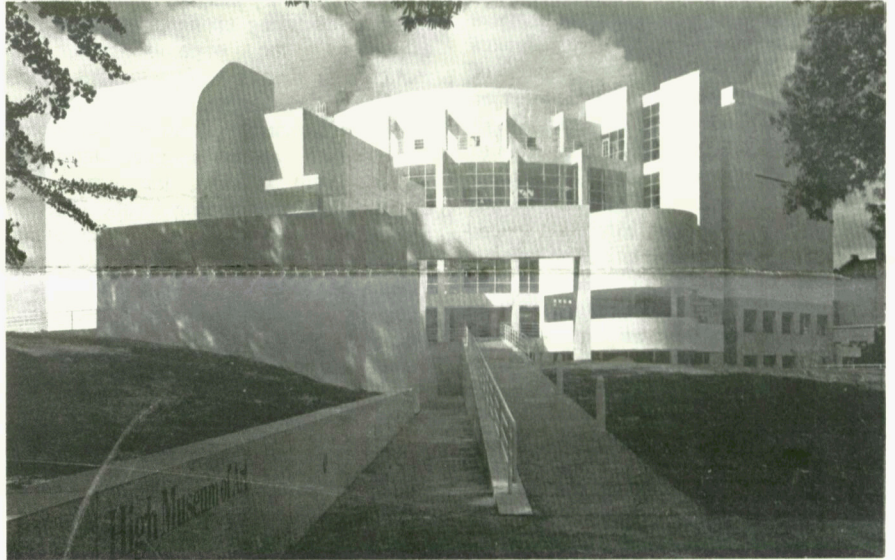
# The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
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Art  
to  
the  
Future



*Fine Arts Museum, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. Architect: Richard Meier and Partners.*

## A New Art Gallery — A Clouded Future

With the rejection by the Christchurch City Council of a report on suitable sites for a future city art museum, progress towards establishing a new gallery slowed. It came to a halt with the deletion from the McDougall's estimates of \$25,000 budgeted for the preparation of a sketch brief, essential for the initial planning of an art gallery.

1990 may be the year of the Sesquicentennial celebration but it is also one of economic uncertainty. With ratepayer resistance to increased Council spending, it is not a good time for new ventures. The new Christchurch City Council in its first budget has opted for a nil increase in rates, leaving no room for a commitment to a future gallery. If there was an unwillingness to put the preparatory costs of a relocated gallery on the budget, the torpedo which sunk the council officers' report was the issue of the old Government Buildings, long promoted by the Civic Trust as an ideal solution to the gallery space problem.

The three part report, the result of research and consultation between Town Planning, Property, Design Services and Art Gallery department staff and drawing on previous reports on the matter dating back to 1984, gave a low priority to the Government Building, listing its defects and drawing the wrath of the building's advocates. The ensuing debate split the Council and lost sight of the more realistic options the report proposed. The Civic Trust's advocacy has succeeded in placing the Government Building in the public mind as the only solution to the McDougall's space crisis. However, the structural, functional, design and locational inadequacies of the 1912 structure and the functional needs of a new gallery are not adequately addressed in the plans put forward.

The main aim of the Trust has been to save the historic building from demolition. That it would make a very unsatisfactory art gallery seems to be of little consequence. The objections of gallery staff, experienced in gallery management, are viewed as efforts to thwart a realistic option. Whatever the contending views, the sad fact is that the long running and now rather tiresome debate, a virtual re-run of that which preceded the building of the McDougall in 1927, has dampened enthusiasm to seek other more positive initiatives to establish a gallery to serve the city through the 21st century.



What are the objections to the Government buildings? Why should the gallery staff be so strong in their opposition? Surely the chance to save a fine old building and gain a new art gallery should be taken. Supporters must realise that the days when the city might be expected to fund a purpose-built gallery have long gone. Half a loaf is better than none, why do they not bow gracefully and accept the one chance there is of rehousing the gallery in a central site?

The first problem is the space requirement of a replacement gallery. Gallery estimates are for 7000m<sup>2</sup> of floor area, exclusive of car parking. While these figures must be validated by independent museum design experts, it is clear that it is not possible to fit this space into the Government Building's 5000m<sup>2</sup>. Mr Beaven's design adds a rooftop temporary exhibition space, bringing capacity to 6000m<sup>2</sup>. The present basement, without damp coursing, with a very low ceiling and broken into dozens of bunker-like spaces is virtually unusable. In the unlikely event of the gallery's space projections being overestimated by 1000m<sup>2</sup>, a tight fit might be possible, but this would leave no room for future growth, an absolutely fundamental requirement in any museum, and a key requirement in a new art gallery brief. If the McDougall Gallery had been designed for future expansion, today's problems would not be with us.

An art gallery must above all be secure, built strongly of non-combustible materials. The Government Building is condemned, requiring extensive structural work to make it earthquake resistant. This cannot be done on a piecemeal programme carried out over a number of years, but must be accomplished before the gallery opens its doors, a very costly process. Similarly, fire safety requirements will affect the design of the gallery. The Government Buildings has wooden floors and does not in any way conform to the fire and security regulations for an art gallery which on a busy day may have 4000 to 5000 visitors.

These concerns are serious enough to make the Government Building a doubtful candidate as a future art museum without considering just how it would accommodate the various operations which it must house. The building is long and narrow, with a double staircase at its centre separating the west from the east ends. The staircase is listed by the Historic Places Trust as worthy of preservation. In effect, it cuts the structure in two, making the task of arranging temporary, rotational and permanent exhibition areas together with education facilities, workshop, exhibition preparation, gallery reception, storage, administration offices, conservation laboratory, loading dock and security room into one functional unit an impossibly difficult task.

The suggestion has been made that the present bus depot behind the Government buildings could be utilized to build on an addition. In this scenario, the space problem is solved but the costs of this exercise equate with those of a purpose built gallery on another site, with all the disadvantages of an old structure and not many advantages of a new.

There is not enough space in this article to discuss fully the many difficulties that conversion of the Government Buildings poses. Lack of car parking for large numbers attending openings and popular exhibitions, the ongoing costs of maintaining the brick facade of an old building, the major cost of placing numbers of security guards on each floor (costs which can be designed out of a purpose built gallery), the impact of installing air conditioning on the interior architecture and the important consideration of its location are just a few of the headings for further discussion. They are largely academic because as already noted the building does not offer the space required for the future needs of a new gallery.

If the idea was to proceed by some miracle of advocacy, the city would be poorly served in the 21st century by a gallery housed in a structure conceived at the beginning of the 20th, still retaining many of its shortcomings.

Much has been made of the charms and delights of the great European galleries housed in abandoned palaces. The advocates for these conversions speak exclusively from the viewpoint of visitors enjoying the fine architectural features and paintings contained therein. No one has spoken of the vast amounts of state funds which pay the wages of the multitude of guards required to secure the hundreds of rooms in these rambling structures, or of the hideous management problems that the thousands of daily visitors pose for the Uffizi and the Prado, nor that these great institutions house fabulous collections which never change and which, unlike the McDougall and thousands of active community galleries like it, never present touring shows.

One day the city of Christchurch will have the art museum it deserves. It will be a major attraction, welcoming, accommodating of all ages and cultural backgrounds, displaying its enviable art history in informative permanent installations, presenting short term exhibitions focussing on aspects of the collection, showing major touring international exhibitions, with a place for illustrating the diversity of new developments in the visual arts within our country and beyond it. The gallery will be a place in which visitors will feel comfortable, relaxed and 'at home'. It will be well but not extravagantly appointed, with a coffee shop, a good bookshop and gift shop, a space for small public

concerts, a lecture theatre, art library, a studio where art instruction can be had. Children will be welcome and an education suite will cater to their needs. It will not only be a place where people can take pleasure and instruction from the art of the past and present, but also a social centre where friends can meet and enjoy a stimulating environment and altogether have a good experience.

The Gallery is currently experiencing storage problems. We need more space in which to store and display our collection, gallery furniture and equipment but the future art gallery seems to be a long, long way in the future.

Let us hope the clouds lighten and progress towards the day it opens comes soon.

*John Coley*

## Staff List

### Director

John Coley M.B.E., Dip.F.A.(N.Z.), Dip. Tchg.

### Administration Assistant/Secretary

Janis Churchill T.Dip.T.

### Typist/Clerk (part-time)

Jenny Barber

### Curator

Neil Roberts B.A., Dip.F.A.(NZ), Dip. Tchg.

### Assistant Curator (Art Annex)

Lara Strongman B.A.(Hons.)

### Education Officer

Penelope Jackson B.A., Dip. Tchg.

### Education Officer – Schools (part-time)

Judith Hoult B.A.(Hons.), Dip. Tchg.

### Conservator

Lynn Campbell

B.A.(Hons) (Loughborough),

P.G.C.E. (Liverpool),

Dip. Cons. (Newcastle)

### Exhibitions Officer

Hubert Klaassens Cert. Graphic Design

### Art Handler

Simon Mulligan

### Registrar

Anna Crighton M.A.(Hons)

### Information Officer

Merilynne Evans B.A., Dip Tchg.

### Receptionist (part-time)

Alexandra Ott

### Supervisor (Art Annex)

Martin Young

### Technician

Les Fibbens

### Custodian

Harry Ipenberg

### Custodial Assistant (part-time)

Denise Paulger

### Custodial Assistants (weekend)

John Mottram

Merilynne Evans

Gordon Ducker

Susan Leckie

Anton Parsons

Tony Webster

Susan Paterson



## Roads to Rome August 30-October 14

For more than two centuries Italy has held an attraction for artists worldwide.

During the twentieth century this had included New Zealanders and visits by New Zealand artists have been constant and are still occurring.

This exhibition comprises mostly work from the Robert McDougall Art Gallery's permanent and loan collections. It presents the experience of Italy by both New Zealand and non New Zealand artists through a series of installations which occupy the entire gallery space.

Among the New Zealanders represented are: Robert Procter, Maud Sherwood, David C. Hutton, Olivia Spencer Bower, William A. Sutton and Alan Pearson.

The Italian artists include Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Luca Giordani, Renato Guttuso and Marcello Mascherini. There are also a number of works with just an Italian theme.

Visits to Italy by New Zealand artists began early this century. Among the earliest were C. N. Worsley, Robert Procter and David E. Hutton.

By the 1920's the number of artists including Italy on their travels to Europe had increased considerably. Both Maud Sherwood, and Olivia Spencer Bower were two artists active there in this period. Olivia Spencer Bower returned to Italy in 1963 for a brief visit.

In the 1970's the more notable artists from Canterbury to travel to Italy were Doris Lusk and William A. Sutton.

Between December 1973 and August 1974 while on sabbatical leave from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, W. A. Sutton made a remarkable series of drawings and watercolours. Some 100 of these have been included in 'Roads to Rome' and forms a pictorial diary of the artists visits to Rome, Florence, Venice and other Italian cities and towns.

For most artists the roads to Rome have inspired them to be documentators or recorders of place however occasionally more rarely the weight and power of Italy as a core of Western civilisation has been overwhelming.

In the early 1980's Alan Pearson lived in Southern Italy briefly and was confronted by the timeless spirit that pervaded this region. The artist's reaction was intense and profound and his experiences not only with place but with people were expressed in a way that had been unparalleled by any other New Zealand artist visiting Italy in recent decades.



Robert Procter, *In Sunny Italy*

## Woollaston on the Port Hills October 20-December 6

Earlier this year Sir Mountford Toss will Woollaston spent time in Christchurch painting on the Port Hills.

Woollaston first came to Christchurch in 1931 and over the years has returned from time to time.

This exhibition comprises a selection of Plein-air drawings and watercolours from his most recent visit.

## Friends

### A Selection of works from the collection of Doris Lusk October 20-December 6

The recent death of the artist Doris Lusk was a considerable loss to the art community of Canterbury which she had been a part of for almost half a century. During that time she had developed many close friendships particularly with fellow artists, not only of her own generation but frequently younger.

Often she painted her friends but she also supported them by collecting their work. This exhibition selected from Doris Lusk's private collection reveals something of the regard she held for her friends.

## Gallery Talk

Dr Ian Lochhead, University of Canterbury, will give an illustrated talk on September 21 in conjunction with the exhibition 'Roads to Rome'. The topic of his talk is "In the Footsteps of Claude, Eighteenth Century Landscape Painters in Rome". See Coming Events for more details.

## Acquisitions:

The following works have been acquired for the collection:

### Rita Angus

*The Riverbed, Waiau 1932*  
Watercolour

### Aus Australian

*Print Portfolio published by Rene Block, Berlin 1988*  
Varied graphic media

### Five South Island Artists

*A Portfolio - Limeworks*  
Includes lithographs by Michael Armstrong, Graham Bennett, Sue Cooke, Ralph Hotere, Marian Maguire.

### Nicholas Chevalier

*Untitled (Otago Landscape) 1865/66*  
Watercolour

### Julia Morison

*Hermes, 1985*  
Gold paint, excrement and oil stick on canvas boards

### Richard Reddaway

*Barrel Vault*  
Photomontage on Aluminium

### Adrienne Martyn

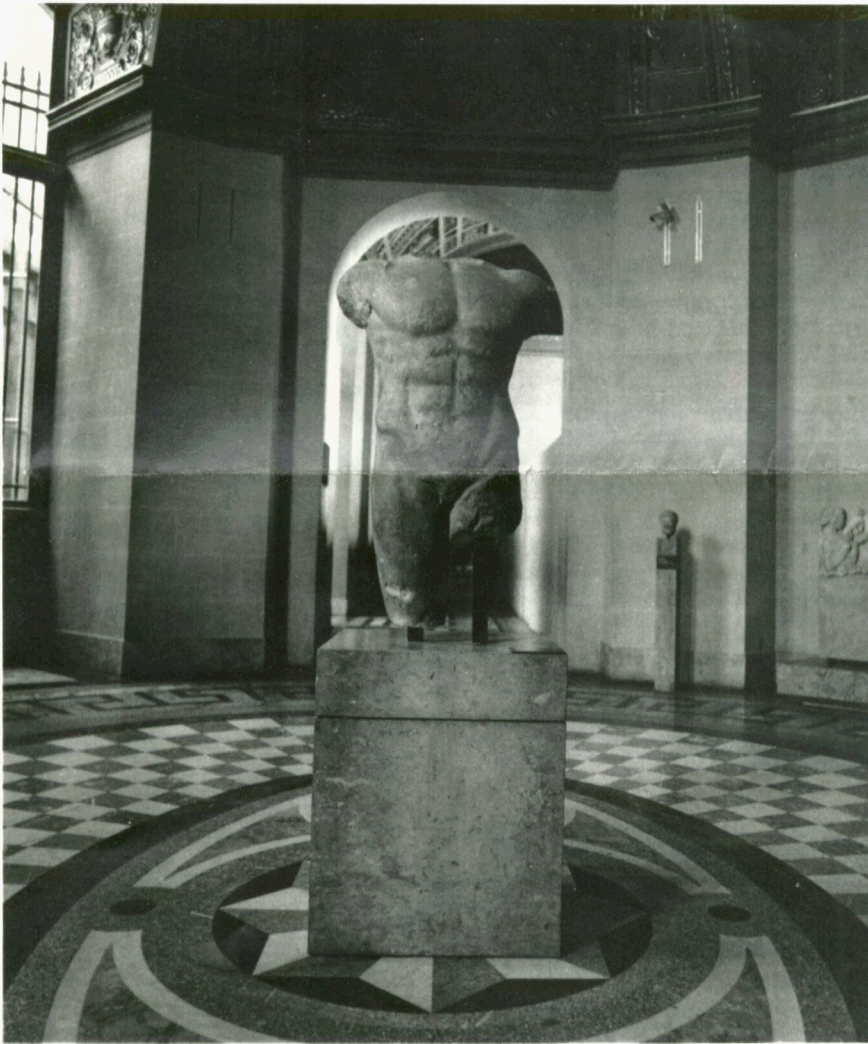
*Black and white photographs of:*  
Doris Lusk  
Jeffrey Harris  
Louise Henderson

The following work was generously gifted to the gallery:

### W. A. Sutton

*Study for Portrait of Frank Dickson Esq*  
Pencil by the Artist





Adrienne Martyn, *Louvre, Paris, 1990*

**Photographs by  
Adrienne Martyn and  
Fiona Clark  
September 5-October 9**

New images by two photographers, Adrienne Martyn and Fiona Clark, will be exhibited at the Annex during September.

Adrienne Martyn will be showing a portfolio of ten silver gelatin prints entitled *Originals and Replicas*. Photographed in Paris in May 1990, the prints are Martyn's response to the sculptural forms which she encountered by chance in the courtyard of the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts and in the Louvre. Using a straight-forward documentary approach to capture what she saw, Martyn establishes an intriguing dilemma; is the photograph an original

work in itself, or is it simply a reproduction of a work of art?

Fiona Clark's photographs "stem from the notion of Beauty/Self Beauty". She writes:

In 1977 I had a motor-vehicle accident which left me with considerable plastic surgery and sight in one eye. I have taken hospital files and images of myself as the basis of this work.

Clark's photographs are attached to the scalloped-edged, 'picture' mirrors of 1960's New Zealand, to create images which reverberate with reflections, past and present, personal and cultural.

The preview of this exhibition will be held on Wednesday September 5 at 5 p.m. Everybody is welcome.

**Press Art Award Exhibition  
October 12-October 24**

The first Press Art Award Exhibition will be held at the Annex from October 12 until October 24. A combination of intermediate and secondary schools from Christchurch and Nelson will be exhibiting selected artworks by promising pupils. An interesting feature of this exhibition is that the art teachers have been invited to exhibit their own work in conjunction with that of their students. The preview is on Friday October 12 at 5.30 p.m., and everyone is most welcome to attend.

**Philip Price  
31 October-27 November**

From 31 October until 27 November, the Art Annex will be exhibiting an installation by young Christchurch sculptor Philip Price. Philip completed his BFA in sculpture at the University of Canterbury in 1988, and was holder of the Rosemary Johnson Muller Scholarship for 1986. He held his first solo exhibition, *Black on Yellow, White on Blue*, at the CSA Gallery in 1987, and in October 1988 was included in *Here and Now*, the Art Annex's inaugural exhibition. In 1989 Philip took part in an exhibition at the Manawatu Art Gallery entitled *General Motors: Three Canterbury Sculptors*. He has also worked as a set designer for the Canterbury Opera.

Philip is currently working on sculpture in metals and plastics which expresses his interest in the formal aspects of industrial design. Looking particularly at aerodynamic forms such as those found in aeroplanes and cars, Philip is also concerned with the organic predecessors of these forms – birds and fish.

This promises to be an exciting and challenging exhibition by an innovative Canterbury sculptor.

**Congratulations**

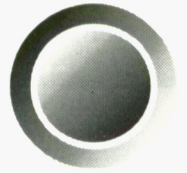
Lara Strongman, Assistant Curator of the Art Annex, is the first recipient of the newly instituted C.S.A. Award. This award will assist Lara to publish her M.A. Thesis on the late Canterbury artist, Tony Fomison.

The staff wish to extend their congratulations to Lara.



# Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President – Ian Miles 519-955  
Vice-President – Hilary Langer 348-3982  
Treasurer – Chris Brocket 557-133  
Secretary – Marie Lockey 885-075



## Speaker of the Month

### JUNE

On June 20 Marie Ritchie spoke to the Friends about dealer galleries. As she explained the varied activities of a typical dealer gallery she showed many slides of New Zealand paintings she had available. It was an impressive display. The range included works by John Gully and Petrus van der Velden through examples by Rata Lovell-Smith and Olivia Spencer Bower to such moderns as Alan Pearson, Brent Wong and Susan Wilson. Familiarity with her subject enabled her to comment knowledgeably also on well-known painters whose work was not represented in the slides – Margaret Stoddart, Colin McCahon and Doris Lusk.

The range of activities and the importance of art dealers and their galleries was also made clear. Marie pointed out that in a modern dealer gallery there was something for all art lovers, citing as examples screenprints, etchings and lithographs at under \$600 each by such people as Graham Sydney, Ted Dutch, Michael Smither and Philippa Blair.

Not surprisingly, Marie keeps up to date with all aspects of the art world, visiting galleries and exhibitions, going to auctions and acting as advisor and consultant to buyers and sellers alike. Well ordered brochure books give illustrations and details of all work in stock, and in her new premises these are arranged so that they can be perused most conveniently. Another inviting and unusual feature of her gallery is the excellent collection of reference books on New Zealand art which visitors are welcome to browse through.

### JULY

Speaker of the Month for July was Mr Jonathan Mane (Ngapuhi) of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts. Mr Mane presented a slide lecture with the theme of 'New Zealand Art and the Maori Renaissance'. Throughout the presentation the nature of the Maori 'renaissance' was explored and juxtaposed against the concept of a "resurgence" rather than a renaissance, and, if so, certainly not the first.

The Second World War provided an opportunity for many Maori males to travel more broadly to countries such as

Italy where they found themselves strangely in accord with both the more passionate Latin temperament and with the language.

This foreshadowed a new vision of life in Aotearoa which expressed itself ultimately in the works of Fred Graham, John Taiapa, Cliff Whiting and others.

Often mistaken for primitivism (an exclusively European concept) this resurgence began to be noted in an increased use by Maori artists of European resources. This did not apply however to sculptured works where casting was not used but the traditional methods of carving on stone and wood were retained.

Immediately following the Second World War Maori women still did not carve, although a change in attitude was evident in that Barbara Hepworth was greatly admired by male sculptors.

The great art educator and humanist Gordon Tovey brought about major changes with his belief that the creation of art should be democratized. Young women were encouraged to carve (traditionally the domain of high born men only) and men were given the opportunity to work with fibre, traditionally a medium for women.

Even more important Tovey encouraged young Maori artists to learn and to teach all their skills.

Whilst many modern Maori artists identify, through their work, as Maori, their cultural heritage has become influenced by western ideas and traditions. Perhaps the most notable exception is Ralph Hotere who has developed a more universal expression and chooses not to be described as a 'Maori artist'.

In concluding it is valuable to heed the words of Hirini Mead (Te Maori p75) 'New forms of art, borrowed from the traditions of the west, have been introduced into the Maori world. Maori artists trained in the art schools of the pakeha are spearheading a movement to change the face of Maori art more radically than ever before. One does not know whether they innovate with love and understanding, or whether they are about to ignite new fires of destruction.'

Jonathon Mané provided ample food for thought (or fuel for the flames) in what was a most satisfying and entertaining dissertation.

### SEPTEMBER

September 19, John Coley will speak on 'W. A. Sutton: A Canterbury Master'. Coffee served at 10.30 a.m. \$1.50 at the McDougall.

### OCTOBER

October 17, Di Ffrench, Artist in Residence 'A Sculptural Approach to Photography'. Coffee served at 10.30 a.m. \$1.50 at the Art Annex, Arts Centre.

## New Members

Robyn Bascand  
Susan Brooker  
Victoria Clark  
Mrs Angela Drennan  
M. Egan  
Pauline Everist  
Neil & Mary Fitzgerald  
Kate Gorton  
Sally Hope  
Andrew & Nichole Johnstone  
Fleur Kinsella  
Blair N. McMaster (Life)  
David Mander  
Anne Rutherford  
Liz Sanders  
Mr & Mrs Sellars  
Alison & David Tait  
Alex Vannerum  
Mrs R. Wheeler





*Opening of 'Poetry Through Material'*

## Art Appreciation for Friends of the McDougall

If you would like to join an art appreciation group at the McDougall then here is your chance. Two clubs operate, the **Saturday Club** (meets on the first Saturday of each month), and the **Continuing Club** (meets on the second Saturday of each month). Assemble in the Night Entrance for morning tea and then on a guided tour and discussion of the current exhibitions. Annual subscription fee is \$10. For further information telephone Penelope Jackson on 650-915.

## Popular Reproductions Available

In response to repeated requests the Gallery has re-printed "Summer Morn" by Evelyn Page and "Cass" by Rita Angus. These reproductions are now available in the Gallery Shop.

## Coming Events

- September**
- 1 **Saturday Club**, 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation club for adults.
  - 5 **Wednesday Club** 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation club for adults.
  - 5 Preview of Photographs by **Adrienne Martyn and Fiona Clark** at the Art Annex. All welcome.
  - 8 **Continuing Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
  - 14 **Volunteers Club** 10.30 a.m.
  - 19 **Speaker of the Month:** John Coley will speak on 'W. A. Sutton: A Canterbury Master', 10.30 a.m. McDougall Art Gallery.
  - 20 **Kilmarnock Club** 10.30 a.m. Gallery club for disabled visitors.
  - 21 **Gallery talk:** Dr Ian Lochhead will give a talk in conjunction with the current exhibition 'Roads to Rome' titled "In the Footsteps of Claude – Eighteenth Century Landscape Painters in Rome". Admission \$2 Audio visual room, 12 noon.
- October**
- 3 **Wednesday Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
  - 6 **Saturday Club** 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation club for adults.
  - 9 Photographs by **Adrienne Martyn and Fiona Clark** closes at the Art Annex.
  - 12 **Volunteers Club**, 10.30 a.m.
  - 12 Preview of **Press Art Award** at Art Annex. These are art works by local intermediate and secondary schools. All welcome 5.30 p.m.
  - 13 **Continuing Club** 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation club for adults.
  - 17 **Speaker of the Month:** Di Ffrench, Trust Bank Artist in Residence will talk at the Art Annex, 10.30 a.m.
  - 18 **Kilmarnock Club**, 10.30 a.m. Gallery club for disabled visitors.
  - 20 '**Woollaston on the Port Hills**' and '**Friends**' opens to the public.
  - 24 **Press Art Award** closes at the Art Annex.
  - 31 Preview of **New Sculpture** by **Philip Price** at Art Annex. All Welcome 5.00 p.m.

Exhibition dates and programmes could vary slightly.