



A bi-monthly publication containing news, views, and reviews of activities at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

**Number 21****May/June 1982****ISSN 0111-1426**

### Gallery Jubilee Celebrations

Keep the evening of Saturday June 19 for a very special occasion. The gallery has much to celebrate and on June 19 we intend to do it in style with a "Thirties Theme Banquet and Ball" to be held in the Gallery.

The Friends of the Gallery will be assisting with the organisation of this function which is certain to be an enjoyable and memorable affair.

Because a strong demand for tickets

is anticipated from visual art supporters who would like to wish the Gallery well on its 50th Birthday an early application for tickets is advisable.

Those attending will need to hunt out of attics or otherwise acquire suitable thirties dress in keeping with the style of the decade in which the McDougall was established. Appropriate dress can range from tight, shiny suits with two inch turn-

ups to swagman's kit, cloche hats and furs to plain print frocks and ankle socks. The gallery will be decorated in keeping with the theme, with dancing in the centre court.

We know there will be an enthusiastic response to this Jubilee Occasion. Anyone wishing to attend can obtain an application for tickets form by phoning or calling at the reception desk of the Gallery, or the Council Chambers in Tuam Street.

### Artists' Birthday Greetings

Some seventy five well-known artists have been invited to create individual "Greeting cards" carrying their good wishes to the Gallery on its Jubilee.

The greetings will be displayed during the Jubilee Celebrations and thereafter placed in the Gallery's archives to make an historically significant collection which will no doubt be viewed with interest at the time of the Gallery's centenary in 2032.

### Jubilee Publication

A jubilee publication, "The Robert McDougall Art Gallery — Profile of the Art Gallery of the City of Christchurch" is being prepared by the Curator, Mr Neil Roberts, and his research assistant, Miss Linda Bercusson. Describing the history and growth of the Gallery and its collection, the booklet will also explain the behind the scenes workings of the various departments responsible for the care and conservation of works, for research and data collection, exhibitions organisation, education programmes and gallery management.

Neil Roberts has included highly readable accounts of the artistic scandals and controversies that have erupted from time to time in the gallery's first fifty years. With full colour reproductions of important works from the gallery's collection throughout, the book will be an attractive and informative souvenir.

### New Exhibitions Officer

The Gallery's new Exhibitions Officer is Mr Roger Smith. Mr Smith was educated at New Plymouth Boys' High School and the Palmerston North Teachers' College where he studied art education under Frank Daris and Ray Thorburn. He was closely involved on a voluntary basis with the Manawatu Art Gallery working in a number of exhibitions with its then Director, Luit Beiringa. He taught for some time in the Rotorua district, again assisting in a voluntary capacity at the Rotorua Art Gallery. In 1979 he was appointed Head of the Art Department at Goroka Technical College in Papua New Guinea. During his three years in Papua New Guinea he helped organise the very successful South Pacific Arts Festival as Chairman of the Eastern Highlands Region Festival Committee. Mr Smith is also a practising artist.



*Roger Smith the new Exhibitions Officer*

### An Afternoon at The Gallery Project

A special programme organised by the volunteer Gallery Guides to cater for the special needs of the older

members of the community is now underway on the first Thursday of each month. A group from Holly Lea enjoyed a discussion on Grahame Sydney and the works in the special Jubilee Exhibition and Mrs Hearn, the Holly Lea Matron, reported "The ladies returned in raptures, in fact they are clammering to go again".

We hope many other groups can also enjoy this programme and thank the Gallery Guide team for making such an outing possible.

### Planned Additions to the Gallery

Apart from the Night Entrance, workshop and basement extensions to the Gallery, the building is essentially the same as that opened fifty years ago when it was envisioned as housing works on long term static display attended by a custodian. Today the Gallery carries out many functions never thought of in its initial planning. Conservation, education, curatorial and exhibition activities are now integral parts of the Gallery's service to the community, all involving professional staff.

Fitting personnel into a building which has no spaces provided for them has been a continuing problem in the gallery's management. The Night Entrance space has served as a combination office for two and often more senior officers and often additional temporary staff, doubling as a staff morning and afternoon tea room as well, since the Gallery has no staff room or kitchen.

To overcome some of these pressing

problems an investigation was made of the possibility of placing staff accommodation on the roof. The estimates for this solution were prohibitively high. Casting around for a more reasonable solution, a small wedge shaped section between the north wing and Christ's College presented itself as a possible site for an addition to the gallery.

The City Architect's Department devised an ingenious plan which not only provided three office spaces and a kitchen/staffroom but upgraded toilets and an audio-visual lecture room as well.

The proposed addition would be situated on art gallery land, would not interfere with the Botanic Gardens plantings and would continue the north wing facade to the Christ's College boundary. Shaded by the adjacent trees and viewed obliquely from the gallery entry, the two-level building would be unobtrusive.

The Kitchen facilities would give the Gallery, for the first time in fifty years, some capability to deal with the catering of functions held in the gallery. Opening off the North Gallery, the audio-visual room would provide a much needed space in

which tape/slide presentations could be viewed and talks given to visiting school parties.

At this time of financial stringency with city administrations facing difficulties in raising loan finance, building projects such as the gallery's additions must undergo close scrutiny. We believe that the facilities envisaged would provide at relatively modest cost, a very considerable improvement in the Robert McDougall Gallery's ability to serve the public.

## Number 11 is Missing

That was a remark often directed at gallery attendants for a number of years by visitors who used the old gallery catalogue to find their way round the collections.

Number 11 was definitely missing as it had been stolen in 1942.

The year 1942 was not a happy one for the Gallery. As the first decade of its existence drew to a close two events in particular marred the calm of earlier years. On February 21st the gallery lost its benefactor with the death of Mr R.E. McDougall. Then just three months later this loss was followed by one of a different kind, when the gallery's most valuable Victorian painting was stolen.

The events surrounding its theft still remain to this day as much of a mystery as it did forty years ago. All had seemed like any other Sunday evening when the gallery custodian Mr Palmer had secured the building and left for his home. Attendances had been average that afternoon and no incidents had occurred. However Monday June 22nd was to prove to be a day he would remember for years to come. The reason being that late Sunday night or early Monday a person or persons unknown broke into the gallery and stole from a wall the oil painting "Psyche" by the British artist Solomon J. Solomon. Entry to the gallery appeared to have been gained through a skylight in the roof although police found traces of other attempts to break in, as several panes of glass had been smashed at the rear of the Gallery. An open window at the front of the building showed every indication that this was how the thief had made his escape. After entering the gallery the thief had first removed the painting stretcher from its frame and then torn the painting from its stretcher.

The stolen painting was 90 x 153 cm in size and depicted the life size sleeping figure of the nymph 'Psyche'. It was painted during the 1890s and was sent to New Zealand by the artist as an exhibit in the British Fine Arts Section of the International Exhibition of 1906-1907. In 1907 the Canterbury Society of



*Psyche, Solomon. J. Solomon.*

Arts purchased the painting with several others from the British Commission. Its purchase price was 440 pounds. For the next 24 years it was exhibited regularly with other works from the Society's collection in their Durham St gallery. Early in 1932 when a decision was made finally to pass works over to the Robert McDougall Art gallery 'Psyche' was selected for inclusion.

The painting was duly hung in the new gallery and entered number 11 in the gallery's catalogue published in 1933, and there it was to remain up to the time of its theft.

In treatment the painting was typical of the London born Jewish artist Solomon J. Solomon. Solomon gained quite a reputation in his day as a portrait painter though he was equally well accomplished in dealing with biblical and classical subjects and by the time he painted 'Psyche' he was well known by his contemporaries.

Solomon had started his career in painting at sixteen, when he attended Heatherley's Art School in 1876. Samuel Butler who had spent some time in Canterbury in the 1850s was a fellow student, but many years Solomon's senior. During 1877 Solomon moved on to attend the Royal Academy school and was fortunate to have among his tutors (Sir) John E. Millais, (Lord) Frederic Leighton and (Sir) Lawrence Alma Tadema all Victorian artists of some distinction.

The following year, he moved to Paris and spent a short time studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts under Alexander Cabanel, this was followed by a year's travel in Europe, which also included a few months study at the Munich Academy. In 1880 Solomon, who was barely 20 returned to London to continue a promising career, as a portrait painter. Over the next forty seven years up until the time of his death in 1927 he was able to include among those who sat to him some of the most notable figures of British society.

He proved to be almost as accomplished with the pen as he was with the brush and had published a number of books, usually of a technical nature, those varied from a treatise on the practice of oil painting to camouflage in warfare. It was therefore a considerable blow to the gallery to lose from its small collection a work by such a distinguished British artist.

Many theories have been suggested concerning the reason for the theft of 'Psyche'. One is that it was a mid winter prank by two servicemen, another is that it was the work of an enraged puritan fanatic. Whatever the reason we may never know.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
P.O. Box 237 Christchurch.  
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Avenue,  
Christchurch 1.  
791-660 Extension 484



May 1982

This article by Julie King, Lecturer in Art History, University of Canterbury, is based on a lecture arranged by and presented to the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Society at their Annual General Meeting on 26 March 1982.

### Henriette Browne and *La Lecture de la Bible*

*La Lecture de la Bible* by Henriette Browne has the distinction of being the first painting to be acquired by the McDougall Gallery. The Christchurch Times, 27 March 1930, records that Mr McDougall intended it "to form the nucleus of a collection for the new Art Gallery". The Mayor, the Reverend J.K. Archer, added the still laudable sentiment that "Mr McDougall's generosity is very extraordinary and it is hoped that other well to do citizens will emulate his example and purchase pictures for the gallery".

The painting has an intriguing history. On the back is inscribed the name of Haro who was a prominent art dealer in mid-nineteenth century Paris. At an unknown date, it was bought by the Empress Eugénie and probably after the collapse of the Second Empire it was brought to England when Napoleon III and the Empress settled in Chislehurst. After the death of her husband in 1873, the Empress moved to Farnborough, and subsequently divided her time between there and the south of France until she eventually died in 1920 at the age of ninety four in Madrid, where she was on a visit to her god-daughter, the Queen of Spain. Christie's of London can confirm that the work was then sold two years later as Lot 2 to Wadham. Unfortunately, there is no record as to who Wadham might have been. But the painting next appears, however, in Dunedin when it was shipped out for the exhibition of 1925-26. McDougall subsequently purchased it from Mr J.W. Gibb of Christchurch and presented it to the Gallery.

Its fine quality makes it an accomplished example of the academic realism which was highly esteemed by some members of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie in mid-nineteenth century France. The composition is carefully ordered so



'*La Lecture de la Bible*', 1857, Henriette Browne, McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch.

that attention is concentrated on the bible and on the faces of the two girls. A glimpse of the arm of a chair at the bottom right of the painting establishes space within the picture and points towards the bible and the second girl. On the table, the still-life of the books is apparently casually but similarly carefully arranged to enforce the unity of the composition. Such compositional control and attention to the positioning of objects suggests Mme Browne may have profited from studying the still-life and genre painting of Jean Siméon Chardin. There was a revival of interest in his work amongst nineteenth century realists and the format of half length figures placed around a table is a common one in Chardin's oeuvre. The technique, however, with its concealed brushwork and immaculate finish, conforms to nineteenth century academic practice. Nevertheless, the detailed description of the black sleeves of the girls' dresses and the delicacy of their white head-dresses reveal her ability to portray textures. Colour is subdued so that the girls' faces and the white pages of the bible emerge from the overall darkness. The composition is structured around these three points and the meaning of the painting lies

in this relationship. In the foreground, the girl reading aloud from the bible is composed and of quiet demeanour, whilst her companion or, perhaps, sister (they are almost uncomfortably alike and Henriette Browne surely relied on the same model) is removed behind the table, sitting quietly with her hands together and with an inward, withdrawn expression. The still-life of the withering flowers on the table adds a suggestion of the passage of time and the brevity of youth's fresh bloom. The moralizing dimension is characteristic of the conventions in which Henriette Browne worked. Only two years after *La Lecture de la Bible*, H. Fantin-Latour painted his *Two Sisters*, 1859, St. Louis Art Museum, which depicts two girls reading and embroidering within a domestic interior, but it is a bolder realist statement, without any moralizing overtones and more freely executed.

Henriette Browne was not an innovator. Women painters in the nineteenth century tended not to be, for a number of sociological and related psychological reasons. Given the attitudes to women which restricted their freedom of action and thought, to have a painting career and exhibit regularly and publicly was

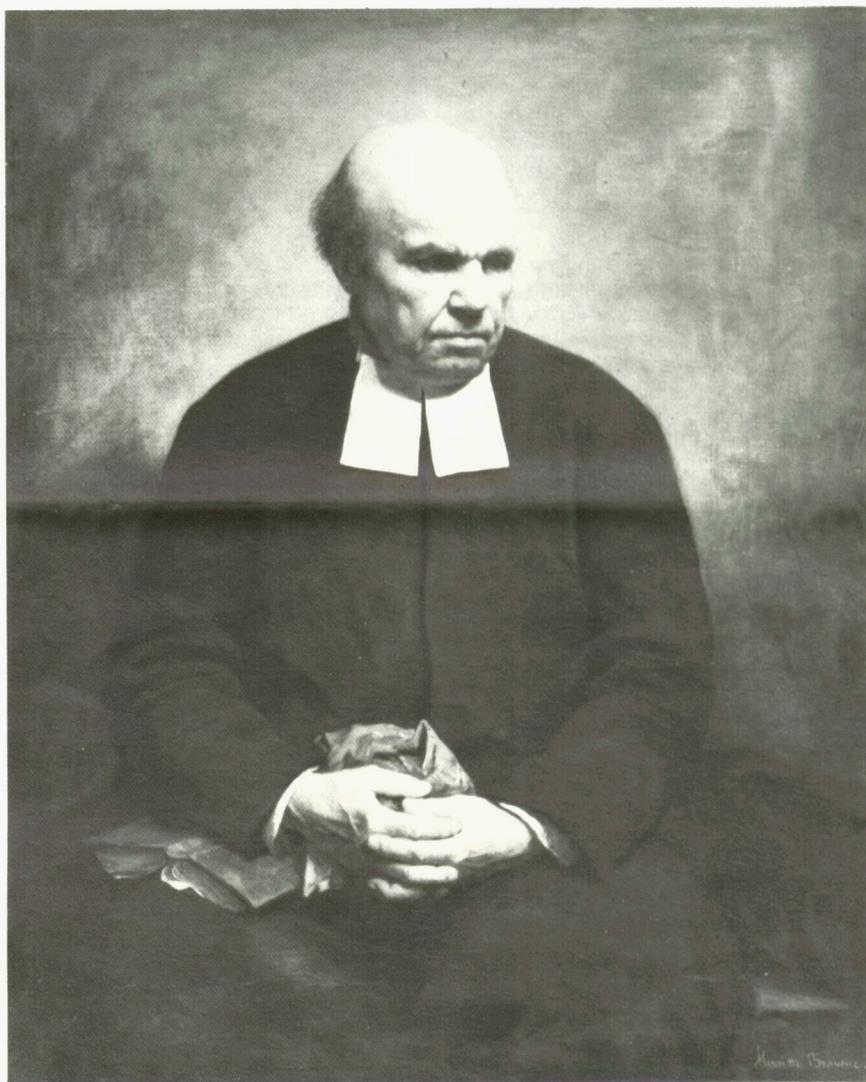
in itself an act of courage. Henriette Browne is to be admired for her commitment to painting. She showed regularly at the Paris salon for over a period of twenty six years from 1853 to 1879, as well as occasionally exhibiting in London at the Royal Academy. Indicative of the social conventions governing behaviour in the nineteenth century, however, is surely her adopted pseudonym and perhaps the significance of the years in which she showed.

She was born Sophie de Bouteiller, the daughter of the Comte de Bouteiller, a member of an old aristocratic family in Brittany. The Comte de Bouteiller was a gifted musician and well known in Parisian high society for his accomplishments. His daughter, Sophie de Bouteiller, appears to have inherited his musical gifts and a talent for drawing. Both accomplishments were valued in a society lady. Sophie de Bouteiller, however, wanted to develop her visual talents further and left her drawing master to study painting with Charles Chaplin, a fashionable salon painter. In 1853, when she was twenty four, Sophie de Bouteiller married Jules de Saux, a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1853 was also the year in which she first began to show her paintings publicly in the salon. (Her first submission was called *La Lecture de la Bible*.) She continued to exhibit until 1879, the year in which her husband died. She may have ceased to exhibit at this time in deference to social conventions, or perhaps her withdrawal was an indication, also, of the possible support that she had got from him. She always showed, however, under the name of Henriette Browne, which must have given her a degree of anonymity in a restrictive society. She took the name from an eighteenth century ancestor, the daughter of General Browne, an Irish supporter of the Pretender who had settled in Brittany after the massacres at Culloden. She showed, however, as a contemporary critic in *L'Art*, 1877, said, "remarkable perseverance and a true vocation to devote herself with such constancy to art amidst all the demands made on her by her fashionable life." She had no children and painting must have been a significant part of her life. Marriage to a diplomat, however, also provided the opportunity for travel. After her first trip to the Near East, she showed *A Visit to the Harem* in the 1861 salon. Indeed, in her painting throughout the sixties she followed contemporary taste for orientalist subjects in which she was able to draw on her experience of visits to Morocco, Egypt and Syria. (Wilhelm Leibl, the German realist painter, visited her apartment in 1869 and described how it was fashionably and luxuriously furnished with orientalist objets d'art.)

Unfortunately, it is impossible to follow her development as a painter

closely since so much of her work cannot be traced. Several works are preserved in public galleries, however, and testify to her early realism. At the Universal Exhibition of 1855 which was her second show, she exhibited *A Brother of the Christian Schools*, City Art Gallery, Manchester. It is a study of a single figure which gives an indication of how early in her career she had already developed strong powers of characterisation. The Brother is simply posed close to the front of the picture, holding a pink duster in his hand and with a book left open on his knee. Age is described in the veined hands, the texture of his skin, the sagging muscles and flesh of the face and his lined brow. A number of contemporary critics, including Castagnary, who was a staunch supporter of Courbet, praised Browne's talent for portraiture. The Christian Brothers played an important part in the education of children in France in the Second Empire. During the fifties, Browne tended to specialize in religious genre, a branch of painting which appealed to members of the Establishment and at the same time provided her with contemporary subjects in accordance with her realist aims. In 1859, she showed

another single figure study, *The Nun*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in which the sitter is again brought to the front of the picture in accordance with realist practice and posed, looking downwards and holding a book. In the same salon, she also showed a work which was more ambitious in size and subject, *The Sisters of Charity*, Kunsthalle, Hamburg. It depicts a sick child tended by the Sisters of Charity who ran the Hôpital St. Louis, a centre for child care. Several of her paintings record the good works of the Orders amongst the sick and needy in mid-nineteenth century Paris. This painting, for its period, which specialized in paintings of sick children, is relatively restrained in its sentimentality. Instead of over-emphasizing the touching element of the scene, Browne has concentrated on conveying the sense of calm and disciplined order which surrounds the dedication and efficient work of the Sisters. The younger Sister supports the child on her knee whilst behind the table, a second Sister is preparing medicines. (The table and chair are similar to those in *La Lecture de la Bible*, McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch.) Her technical ability in portraying textures is demonstrated by the play of light on



'A Brother of the Christian Schools', c.1855, Henriette Browne, City Art Gallery, Manchester.

the distinctive starched linen coifs of the Charity Sisters, as well as by the still-life on the table. On the wall hangs a religious print which reinforces the main subject of the painting. This practice, as well as the composition, is influenced by seventeenth century Dutch works, which were admired by the realists of the nineteenth century for their qualities of naturalism.

Another example of her genre painting, *A Girl Writing*, is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Other than that it was donated in 1886, very little is known about the work and it is probably the painting which was shown in 1875 at the Royal Academy as *The Pet Goldfinch*. A late date is suggested by the way in which the figure is placed much further back within the picture space than had been Browne's customary practice in most known works of the fifties. Her characteristic sense for the positioning of objects is seen in the arrangement of the still-life on the table and by the diagonal movements running through the composition which unite the three areas of interest, the girl, her pet goldfinch on the table and another in the cage. Herein, in this relationship, lies the conventional invitation to moralize.



'A Girl Writing', c.1875, Henriette Browne, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

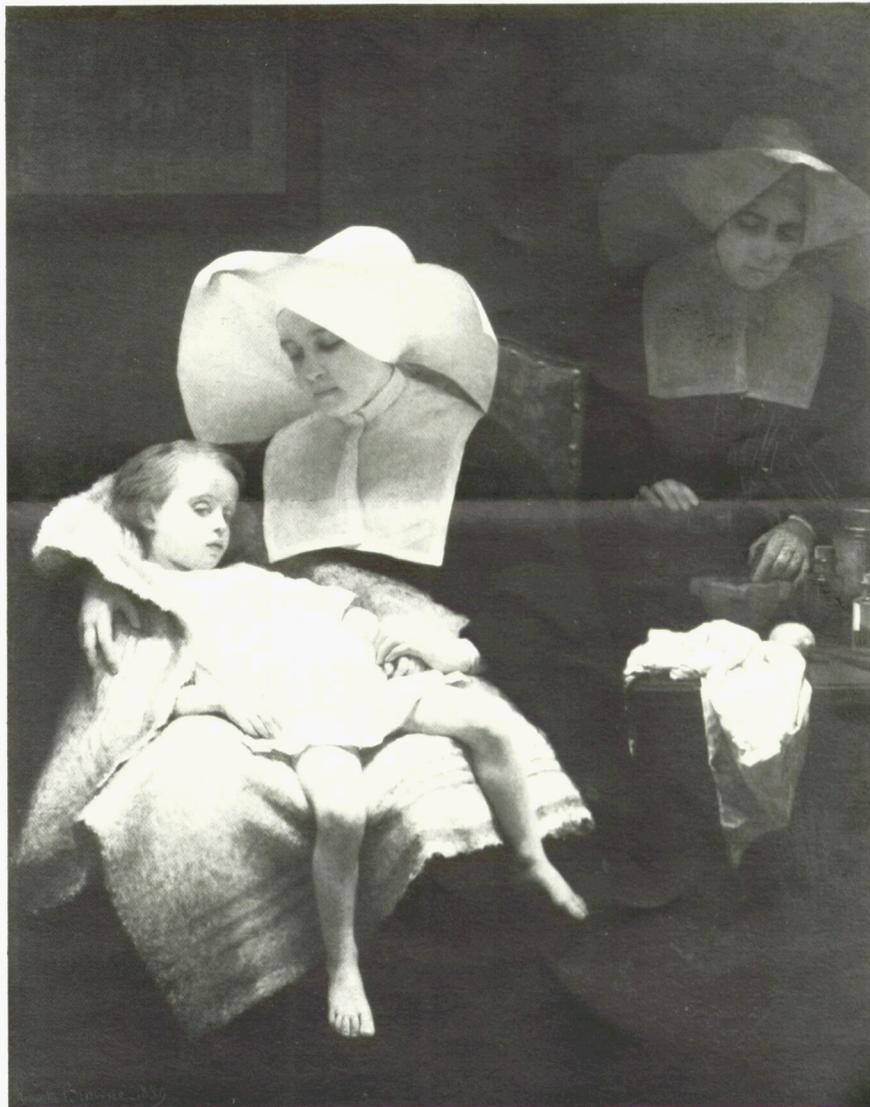
Browne specialised in genre and portraiture, as well as practising orientalist painting. In the mid-nineteenth century, most women were specialists in what were then understood as the minor genres which included genre, landscape and still-life. Access to the life drawing school of the Academy to study the nude, which was an essential part of the training for any history painter at this time, was denied to women in the mid-nineteenth century. They were, therefore, indirectly channelled towards particular subjects. Henriette Browne seems to have concentrated on women and children, despite her ability to portray the ageing Brother in *A Brother of the Christian Schools*, City Art Gallery, Manchester. Contemporary criticism of women painters, from our twentieth century viewpoint, also tends to be discriminatory. The following comments on Browne, made by T. Chasrel in *L'Art*, 1877, are characteristic of their tone and approach:

"Her touch without over

minuteness has the delicacy and the security of a fine work of the needle. The accent is just without seeking for virile energy which too often spoils the most charming qualities. The sentiment is discreet..." Art criticism is only one way in which the attitude of the period towards women is manifest, and undoubtedly, the general social outlook had a fundamental effect on women painters, in determining both their choice of subjects and their treatment.

Contemporary criticism of Browne suggests that she was quite a well known figure in her time, who painted several works which had popular appeal in France and England. Indeed, several critics taking an aloof stance which is a professional hazard, are reticent in their praise for Browne whilst at the same time, referring not without a hint of disapproval, to her general popularity. For example, Paul Mantz in his review of the 1859 salon, in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, takes this position in France, and in England, *Lasteyrie* in the *Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, 1864, admits that, "... artists do not fail to dispute her talent; but the public who feel more than they judge, are carried away by

the pictures of Mme Browne." The Goncourt brothers similarly raised their eyebrows on hearing of Gavarni's preference for her. Not unexpectedly, perhaps, her art appealed to the Victorians and the Rev. Charles Kingsley wrote in the *Fine Arts Quarterly*, 1863, that her painting of the *Sisters of Charity*, was "... destined to hold its place in the highest ranks of art." The prices fetched by her paintings are another indication of the estimation of her contemporaries. At a Paris sale in 1868, the *Sisters of Charity* sold for £1,320, and George Holt paid £400 to Agnew's in 1874 for his single figure study, *The Nun*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Owners of her works included members of the French aristocracy, the Comte de Morny as well as the Empress Eugénie who owned several paintings. In Victorian England, the cotton broker, George Holt, from Liverpool and the cotton merchant, Mr Joshua Dixon, from London, owned paintings by her and subsequently gave them to public galleries, thus assuring the survival of her reputation. Her contemporary renown, however, soon declined. In 1869, Wilhelm Leibl, who had just met Henriette Browne and her party in Munich and been invited to Paris by them, wrote to tell his parents the



'Sisters of Charity', 1859, Henriette Browne, Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

good news and recorded that he had heard she was the best woman painter in Paris. Only ten years later when she ceased to exhibit, the onset of obscurity had begun, and by the time of her death in 1901, was almost complete. It is, perhaps, a function of Gallery anniversaries to prompt an assessment of our heritage which in the case of *La Lecture de la Bible*, also led to the rediscovery of its painter, Henriette Browne.

Acknowledgements for assistance in this research go to Neil Roberts, Curator of the McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, and to the City Art Gallery, Manchester, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Kunsthalle, Hamburg.



*'The Nun', 1859, Henriette Browne, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.*

**NOTES FROM THE GALLERY DIARY  
1932-1942**

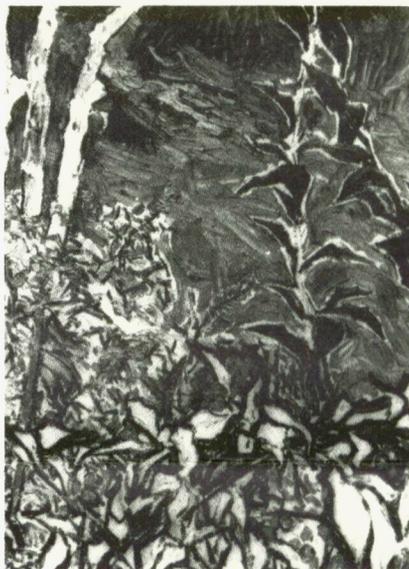
- 1932** **June 16** Gallery opened at 1.30 pm by Mr D.G. Sullivan Mayor of Christchurch.  
**August 11** Visit to the gallery by the Governor General of NZ Lord Bledisloe D.Sc.P.C. G.C.MC K.B.E.
- 1933** **January 24** Art gallery committee decides to erect a bronze plaque to Mr R.E. McDougall.
- 1934** **February 1** Gallery's first publication placed on sale.  
**October 3** The gallery receives several works from the estate of George Du Maurier.
- 1935** **August 1** Letters of criticism concerning the quality of the gallery's collection appear in the local press.
- 1936** **June 9** A major bequest of works received from the estate of Sir Joseph Kinsey. This bequest was the foundation for the gallery's present print and drawing collection.  
**October 8** The gallery's lack of climate control becomes critical. The custodian finds paintings drenched with water and the gallery awash, due to excessive humidity.  
**November 26** Opening of the Loan Collection of 'Scottish Art' by Dr J Guthrie which was the first temporary exhibition mounted by the gallery.  
**December 11** Lecture programme by Dr Guthrie commenced. The first of a series of lectures and talks which occurred in the gallery during the 1930s.
- 1937** **May 11** The first temporary touring exhibition opened by Dr Guthrie 'Chinese Art Loan Collection'. Over 2000 visitors attend during the first day. Interest was so high that the gallery remained open until 9pm in the evening.
- 1938** **April 21** A large work of sculpture 'Ex Tenebris Lux' presented by Mr R.E. McDougall.  
**September 6** Important additions to the collection received from the May Schlesinger Bequest.
- 1939** **May 21** Mr and Mr H. Cowell the gallery's first custodians resign after 7 years service.
- 1940** **June 19** Important additions made to the painting collection through the Whetter Bequest.
- 1941** **June 13** Several works purchased in Britain with the aid of the National Art Collection Fund, and presented to the gallery.

- 1942** **February 21** Death of the gallery's benefactor Mr R.E. McDougall at his home at 219 Papanui Rd Christchurch.  
**June 21** 'Psyché' an oil painting by Solomon J. Solomon stolen.

**Philip Truettum  
Selected Works 1962-1979  
May 14-June 20**

This exhibition by local painter Philip Truettum promises to be one of the highlights on the Gallery's 1982 calendar. The work will reinforce to the viewer that Truettum is one of New Zealand's finest colourists. The artist has always been concerned with projecting the living quality that stimulates the art process rather than producing "just art". It is in this context that much of the work's vitality emerges. The nature of the exhibition itself enables one to appreciate the various stylistic changes that occur throughout the artists development.

The exhibition was arranged by the Sarjeant Art Gallery and has proved extremely popular with the public at each of its venues.



*Red Berries and Blue Sky. 1973,  
Philip Truettum*

**May School Holiday Programme**

This year the May school holiday programme will be concentrating on two major artists from the Gallery's permanent collection

The programme called 'Getting Acquainted' will involve stories and dramatisations from the lives of Francis Hodgkins and Petrus Van der Velden and will be suitable chiefly for children aged between six to ten years. Getting Acquainted will be presented at the Gallery May 10-21 each weekday at 11 am and 2 pm.

**School of Fine Arts Centenary  
Exhibition  
June 5-18 July**

This exhibition will display student work from past graduates and staff. Preparatory studies and finished work will be selected from the Gallery's permanent collection and from private resources, and the Gallery itself is very pleased to be able to mark the centenary of this institution through what will prove to be a very informative series of works. The viewing public will be able to examine student work by well known New Zealand artists and these formative years often give an indication of future potential in various media.



*An Old Beach-comber 1888 Margaret  
Stoddart*

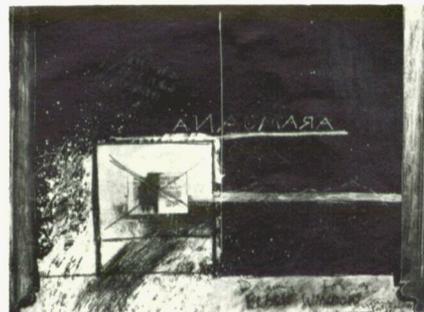
**Acquisitions**

The following works have been recently purchased.

**Gretchen Albrecht**  
*Voice II 1981*  
Acrylic on Canvas

**Ralph Hotere**  
*Aramoana Drawings 1981*  
Mixed Media/College

**Peter Wolden**  
*B Helen II 1981*  
Acrylic on Canvas 1981



*Aramoana Drawing 1981, Ralph  
Hotere*



## Newsletter

## Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc

### Flashback

If you were on one of the Friends who didn't get to the Annual General Meeting on Friday, 26 March you missed a very pleasurable experience; a number who were there commented that it was the best Annual General Meeting of any organisation they'd ever attended!

The formal part was brief. Our President, Robert Erwin, drew attention to the Society's logo which looked so well on the Annual General Meeting invitation which you will remember receiving and which was designed by our talented Secretary, Pat Unger.

*"Pat began work with a photograph of the arch above the main entrance to our Gallery and has transformed it into something imaginative and memorable / an image which can well stand for our commitment to the Society."*

*In the left hand corner is a U.F.O.; an "unidentifiable fine-art object", you may think. It is, in fact, what architects call an "oculus" and is purely decorative in architectural terms. But the Executive has decided to adopt it as our logo for the Friends of the McDougall. It is our symbol; our insignia.*

*Why? Because the Latin "oculus" means an eye. A way in . . . A way of seeing . . . It is a symbol that is at once both inward turning and outward looking. Then, it suggests the spreading ripples on a pond moving in ever-widening circles. And, as Bruce Robinson remarked at the opening of the Grahame Sydney exhibition, its three dimensional shape suggests concern, involvement, participation. We look out into the great gardens which surround our Gallery and at the people who take so much pleasure in them. We look inward and see what generations of artists made of society and of the world which surrounds us. We look at the three dimensional circle and realise our commitment to the world we live in and to this Society."*

Members present were pleased to learn that the Mayoress, Mrs Judith Hay, and Bill Sutton, recently retired from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, have agreed to be the Patrons of the Friends of the McDougall Art Gallery.

The gathering was then relieved to hear that as there had been no new nominations for office the present

executive, elected six months ago, will continue for this year. That concluded the business.

Then the first highlight: Julie King, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and a member of the Friends' executive, gave a fascinating illustrated short lecture on 'The Work and Life of Henriette Browne' whose painting, *La Lecture de la Bible*, is the centre piece in the current historical exhibition celebrating the Gallery's Fiftieth Jubilee. An article written from Mrs King's lecture appears as a Supplement with this Bulletin and we would like to thank her for undertaking the extra task of writing this specially for those who missed her sparkling and informative address. The suggestion from Bill Sutton that a copy of her lecture be deposited in the Gallery's archives was warmly applauded.

Then came highlight number two: The performance of Schubert's Fifth Symphony in B Flat by the Amici Chamber Orchestra under the direction of John Pattinson.

The players were arranged in the Centre Court with the audience slightly elevated to three sides of them and probably because of the newly laid carpet, what had always in the past been rather a problem area now acquired, not perfect, but much improved acoustic properties; or perhaps it was just the quality of the Amici's playing!

We have asked a very long-serving member of our Society, Ida Lough, to comment on the Amici Chamber Orchestra's contribution to the evening:

*"This lovely work, published when Schubert was only 19, is full of wit and charm. Melody, musical poetry and an unbelievable inventiveness crowd in on each other. There are no lentos or largos here, no sentimentality, no "angst", no doubts . . . only a lively outpouring of youthful high spirits. The Amici Orchestra gave us a robust and spirited performance.*

*We hope these musicians will be our friends forever and give us more such treats. One does wonder if one of the long galleries would not be more suitable for such an orchestra. Did anyone else feel that sometimes cascades of notes were caught up among the arches of the Gallery's foyer and didn't know where to go?*

*Anyway, the performance was*

*thoroughly enjoyable. We all went dutifully, and full of self-righteousness, to our Annual General Meeting, expecting to be harassed by inflation, rising costs, increased subs, and the tedium of elections. What did we get? A wonderfully interesting talk and a Schubert Symphony!"*

And that, with supper and chat, was the first Annual General Meeting of the new incorporated Society; make a note in your diary not to miss the next one!

### Coming Events

Not long now to the second of our Coffee Mornings; Wednesday 19 May, when we will visit the newly-established conservation laboratory. In June the Coffee Morning will be held on Wednesday 23 June when Bill Sutton will be guest speaker.

The charge for these Coffee Mornings, 10.30am on the third Wednesday in each month, is \$1.50 and members are welcome to bring friends.

Since Professor Edy de Jongh is now unable to visit New Zealand the lecture series earlier announced for the beginning of June has been cancelled. Plans are now afoot, however, for a series to be held in conjunction with the Extension Studies Department of the University of Canterbury in late July or early August.

Finally don't forget the Banquet and Ball to celebrate the 50th Jubilee at the Gallery.

### Membership

Subscription notices have recently been mailed to the three hundred members, out of a membership of 425, with subscriptions outstanding for this financial year.

So, two things to remember: become financial *and* enrol a friend as a Friend!

Well, that's the end of our first News Letter in this format; look for it on the back page of the Gallery's Bulletin each issue.

And if you are looking to enrol new members for our Society there are now Brochures with Membership Application Forms available from the desk at the Gallery or by phoning our Secretary.

---

P.O. Box 237, Christchurch  
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Ave.,  
President — Robert Erwin, 558-675  
Secretary — Pat Unger, 487-482  
Treasurer — Anne Righton, 557-737