

New Anderson Trust exhibition

Written by Mary-Jane Selwood - Last Updated Wednesday, 30 March 2011 16:47



NEW YEAR blues are dispelled every year by the return of the Turners at the National Gallery in Edinburgh . . . and of the Anderson Trust paintings in Helensburgh Library.

This fine local collection, bequeathed to the town in 1980 by Annie Templeton Anderson, now numbers 90 paintings – too many to be displayed together, so a different selection is made each time.

Following the enormous interest generated by the recent Glasgow Boys and Glasgow Girls exhibitions in Glasgow and Kirkcudbright, this year's Anderson Trust exhibition focuses on "the Glasgow Connection".

The part that Helensburgh played in the life and work of many of the famous Glasgow Group is well documented and several of the paintings on show in the Library demonstrate that.

They include Sir James Guthrie's pastel rendering of evening on East Clyde Street, entitled "Stormy Twilight", James Paterson's oil of the view from Rosneath, and Norah Neilson Gray's water colour "July Night, Loch Lomond" evoking the dream-like quality of summer skies familiar to all who live here.

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This painting has just returned after being on loan to the Glasgow Girls Exhibition. Norah Neilson Gray was born in Helensburgh, trained at Glasgow School of Art and, after war service with the Scottish Women's Hospitals in the First World War, she spent considerable time in the family home on Loch Long, which inspired many of her more lyrical later paintings.

The designation "Glasgow Boys and Girls" - created retrospectively - refers to a fairly short flowering of artistic talent in this area, during the early part of the twentieth century, which has since become more widely recognised.

Many of the artists represented in the Anderson Trust Collection have not achieved such renown, yet, like the Glasgow Boys, have benefited from the training they received at Glasgow School of Art, the companionship of other talented artists, and the unique coastal scenery that continues to inspire artists today.

This exhibition seeks to widen the connection with Glasgow beyond the recognised Glasgow Group and to extend it, in time, further back to the mid-nineteenth century and forward to the present day.



Visitors will recognise, for instance, local views by Alexander Nisbet Paterson, James Whitelaw Hamilton, John Carlaw, and John Reid Murray, who were friendly with members of the Glasgow Boys and painted with them when they were in Helensburgh.

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Of the more recent artists, the work of Mary Allan, Gregor Ian Smith, Claire Scullion, and Bill Wright will be familiar. All were or are Helensburgh residents and studied at Glasgow School of Art. Also on display is *The Lucy Ashton (left)*, by R.H.Wylie.

Less frequently exhibited is a lively impression of Rhu Point (*pictured at the top of this article*) by Sir Harry Jefferson Barnes, also a resident of Helensburgh and former Principal of Glasgow School of Art.

This painting has recently been reproduced as one of several greetings cards from the Anderson Trust Collection now on sale at the Scandinavian Shop. The full selection can be seen on a download from this Heritage Trust homepage.

It is hard to do justice here to the scope and quality of the works on display and I do hope that visitors to the Library in West King Street will take the opportunity, in the next six months, of getting to know and enjoying some of these paintings for themselves.