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Mackintosh and "The Cranston Tea Rooms", Glasgow

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PREFACE

'Altogether the up-to-date Glasgow tea room is an interesting institution', wrote a journalist in 1895: 'Future historians might do worse than give it an entire paragraph' (3, p.1). In justification of an entire thesis on this subject I can only say that the gentleman was commenting on the first decade or so of the tea rooms, and that they were just about to become even more interesting as Miss Cranston hit her stride and began to employ Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Illus.1,p.1) to design for her. Long after she left the scene they continued to be very interesting and they were dearly loved throughout their existence in Glasgow.

It is harder to justify why an Irish Woman who never knew of the Glasgow Cranston Tea Rooms, should take it upon herself to write this account. I can only plead the 'spell' which the 'artistic tea rooms' (22, p.8) have cast over many an outsider and which has made me as chauvinistic an admirer as any true born Glaswegian. I came to the subject of the 'Cranston Tea Rooms' through my research of Bewley's Oriental Cafes, Dublin. Both sets of tea rooms have many similar and contrasting features. However, after extensive examination I have found the Cranston tea rooms to be more worthy of attention and therefore have put more emphasis on them throughout this thesis.

Researching this topic has not been easy and due to lack of available information on the Cranston Tea Rooms in this country, I decided to visit Glasgow in November 1991 to get a personal feel for the tea rooms and to assist my research by visiting the various museums, archives, the Glasgow School of Art and the recently revived Willow Tea Rooms (its 'Room de Luxe' has been restored to use as a tea room). The trip enabled me to get a lot of original information, photographs and inspiration. I have divided this thesis into five main chapters including a detailed 'artistic' analysis of the individual Cranston Tea Rooms, their demise and revival, a discussion of the crafts used in their construction and stylistic influences. A short concluding chapter is devoted to comparing and contrasting the Cranston Tea Rooms in Glasgow with Bewley's Oriental Cafes in Dublin. To do this I have also researched the historical and social aspects to tea in Ireland to those in England, a factor which influenced and shaped the appearance of the 'tea room' itself.

It was partly to set Miss Cranston and Mackintosh in context that this thesis grew to such proportions. Miss Cranston's commitment to Glasgow's 'new school' from 1896 and the connection of tea rooms with 'art interiors' is well established. I hope that for people who approach from an interest in design history, this exploration of the 'tea room movement' will be

illuminating; that those generally interested in social history will find useful material here on a significant part of the way people lived in both Glasgow and Dublin.

I am deeply grateful for all the generous help given to this project on all levels. I particularly thank Pamela Robertson at the Huntarian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, who has been so liberal with access to the University's magnificant Mackintosh collection and who has been so efficient and helpful. She gave me extensive use of selected material (ie. newspaper clippings) from the Mackintosh Archive and kindly furnished me with a translated copy of an article from the German magazine 'Dekorative Kunst' (April 1905) 'A Mackintosh Tea Room in Glasgow' which greatly assisted my research.

I have also been greatly assisted by Peter Trowles, Curator of 'The Mackintosh Collection' in the Glasgow School of Art, who provided me with numerous photographs of the interiors and furnishings of the original Cranston Tea Rooms. I would also like to express my warm appreciation to Victoria Campbell, wife of Patric Campbell (chairman of the Bewley's company). She is the person responsible for maintaining the original 'oriental style' interior decor at the Bewley's chain in Dublin and has been a great source of information. I am extremely grateful to all those individuals in both Glasgow and Dublin including Elizabeth Carmichael, Librarian of the Mitchell Library in

Glasgow, the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society, Glasgow, the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, and finally the Irish Architectural Archives whose willingness to help has been truly invaluable.

INTRODUCTION

Tea Rooms were invented in Glasgow, one of the city's many contributions to civilisation, and they became a distinctive feature of its social life. This thesis traces the rise and fall of the 'Cranston Tea Rooms' over a century of change, as part of a rich urban history. The legendary Miss Cranston brought the tea rooms international renown through her commitment to 'The Glasgow Style'. She was a loyal patron to Charles Rennie Mackintosh who designed for her with stunning inventiveness over twenty years. In fact he created the first of his famous high backed chairs for her. Miss Cranston gave ordinary people the chance to experience a complete avant garde interior without having to live with it, and they loved these weird and artistically wonderful tea rooms.

Just why and what was so special about them is the subject of this thesis. From their beginnings in 1875, tea rooms grew and multiplied so that at the start of the new century Glasgow was described as 'a very Tokio for tea rooms. Nowhere can one have so much for so little, and nowhere are such places more popular or frequented' [1]. Dublin's famous 'Bewley's Oriental Cafes' form the best comparisons, with the exception of the coffee houses of Vienna.

The story of the Cranston Tea Rooms illustrates

1 'J. H. Muir', Glasgow in 1901 p.166.

perfectly the special qualities of Glasgow as a city. They were produced by its entrepreneurial 'mindset'. They were nothing to do with amateurish faded gentlewomen but were a direct expression of the city's prosperous, gregarious, effective urban life; and they were championed with a compelling Glasgow chauvinism. This was, after all, a creation of global significance:

> What happened in Glasgow was rather tardily copied in London; other large cities followed suit, and the movement spread over the length and breadth of the land, and was taken up on the continent, and spread to every civilised spot on the earth. - *Glasgow To-day* (1909).

It is ironic that when Stuart Cranston opened the first tea room in Glasgow in 1875, so too Joshua Bewley was beginning to establish the first of the famous chain in Dublin, both men starting out as tea merchants.

However, the climate of openness to new ideas which produced the 'tea room' alongside so much mercantile and industrial innovation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century also produced the distinctive flowering in art and design which so influenced their style, business and art being thus triumphantly united.

In Glasgow Miss Cranston became one of the city's

best known figures. Her name is still repeated with affection, though she withdrew from business at the end of the First World War. She was remarkable in any assesment, but most of all for her committed patronage and support of 'The Glasgow Style '.

At first sight (Illus. 2, p.2), the middle-aged Kate Cranston with her peculiar fondness for the flounces of yesteryear seems an unlikely patron of some of the most strikingly 'modern art' of its time. But her bizarre personal attire is the key: this remarkable woman knew what she liked and was willing to flout convention in pursuit of it. The exceptional work of Mackintosh and three close School of Art friends, Herbert McNair and Margaret and Frances Macdonald - the Four, as they became known - had become widely notorious in Glasgow at the end of 1894, when their contributions to the G. S. A. Art club exhibition provoked a rapid reaction. The rumpus increased with a showing of posters in 1895, stirred by a gleeful press:

> relishing the language of spooks,
> ghouls and delirium tremors
> which had become attached to the
> style, and printed letters from
> the members of the public left
> frothing by what they had seen [2]

2. Elizabeth Bird, 'Ghouls and gaspipes: Public reaction to the early works of the Four' - Scots Arts Review 14 No. 4 (1975), pp. 13-16.

Kate was undoubtedly attracted by this stir, and sympathetically drawn to these confident and unconventional young artists. (25, p86). In 1896, the year Mackintosh exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in London to more howls of rejection, she handed him his first of many commissions - The Buchanan Street Tea Rooms, which turned the tide of public opinion. It is true, of course, that the credit of the 'Tea Rooms' was often deflected from the designer to Miss Cranston herself; and how much work this brought Mackintosh cannot be easily assessed. But the tea rooms became major show rooms for him. They introduced generations of Glaswegians to a direct experience of his work. The tea rooms became accepted as a special part of their city, their avant garde design supported by top quality catering and service.

But one objective of this thesis is to set Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms in context, for there were countless other tea rooms in Glasgow. In the first half of this century, tea rooms became common in the towns and cities of Britain. But in Glasgow they remained something special, distinguished by high standards of catering and most noted for their artistic decor. They became very dear to the middle classes so that Glasgow outstripped all rivals for many decades in the overall quality of its tea rooms.

In 1917 Miss Cranston sold the tea rooms thereby withdrawing her patronage of Mackintosh. The Second

World War brought about many changes which these tea rooms could not withstand. Their slow decline and collapse was a symptom of wide social upheaval and more locally of deep difficulties in Glasgow's economy. Today, the Cranston Tea Rooms evoke affectionate memories of a lost past. But the sad part of this story can wait until later (see Demise Chapter). I will return to a discussion of the origins of the Cranston Tea Room 'phenomenon', in the years of Glasgows' growing properity and self-confidence.

In Dublin, however, the Bewley's chain of tea rooms have withstood the test of time, despite many setbacks. Bewley's Oriental Cafes have a special place in the heart of Dubliners. People come to Bewley's to see and be seen, to savour a moments leisure on a little sugared luxury in the unique mix of private and public space provided by high ceilings and cloistered booths, in the nostalgic atmosphere of open fires and mahogany. 'Bewley's' is the Irish counterpart of those great Cranston Tea Rooms.

The Beginnings

(1875 - 1888)

Glasgow prides itself in having invented the 'Tea Room'. It was in 1875 that Stuart Cranston, a tea dealer, first arranged accommodation for sixteen customers 'elbow to elbow' and announced: 'A sample cup 4/ - Kaisow, with sugar and cream for 2d. - bread and cakes extra; served in a sample room, No. 2 Queen Street'. Nothing comes from nothing of course, as we shall see in exploring the background from which tea rooms emerged, but the city was credited - and certainly credited itself - with originating an identifiable 'movement'.(22, p.5)

The tea rooms filled a 'felt need' as their poliferation at the end of the nineteenth century shows. They were called into being by various things: by the strength of the Temperance Movement in the west of Scotland; by a native tradition of fine sweet baking; by the Scottish 'high tea'; but most of all by the practical demands of a busy mercantile city. With their smoking and billards rooms the tea rooms catered particularly for men, in days when the business man's morning coffee, a notable Glasgow habit, was believed to be a powerful tool of wealth creation. This may come as another surprise to people who associate tea rooms with ladies in hats. But it was really the deftness with which the tea rooms met the separate social needs of both men and women that wove them so inextricably into the fabric of middle class life. (22, p.8)

Tea dealer Stuart Cranston (1848-1921) took the momentous step of opening the first tea room. Tea became a passion with him. With determination which was evidently characteristic of his family, he set out to conquer this business, training his palate to excellence. By 1871 he set himself up as 'Stuart Cranston and Co.', 'trained tea tester'. Illus 3, p.2. He became a major buyer in the market, making quality his absolute rule, as he strove to make Cranston teas a household word. (5, p. 17).

It is perhaps not surprising that this should have happened in Glasgow, where tea had long had an honoured place in the economy. After the collapse of the tobacco trade on which Glasgow's first fortunes were built, tea and sugar became its major imports, establishing strong links with the Far East and India. This all resulted in tea and coffee merchants flourishing from the 1830's onwards and Stuart Cranston gradually became a millionaire. (22, p.9)

However, by the end of the century despite attempts at emphasising to the decerning the quality of his loose teas and continuing to champion China tea, they were being ousted from public favour by Indian and Ceylon blends. This perhaps paved the way things were going, so he then began to concentrate on expanding the tea room side of the business. Despite this, probably the most significant reason for the development of the tea room both in Glasgow and Dublin was the Temperance propaganda at the time. The misery of alcohol abuse went hand in hand with the enormous social

dislocation of the industrial revolution. Just as Glasgow could claim to be the 'Workshop of the World' in the second part of the nineteenth century, so also had it a long reputation as Britain's most drunk-sodden city. It is not surprising that the temperance movement in Europe could trace its roots to the West of Scotland.[3]

In Ireland so too was the temperance movement, one contributory cause of the spread of tea drinking and the development of the 'Tea Room'. No longer was faction fights and drunken revelling acceptable. Strong drink was held by nationalists to have contributed to the failure of the risings in 1798. As a result of these forces, Irish tea consumption was also to rise very markedly.

After the famine, between 1840 and 1890, the tea drinking habit spread even further, westward, throughout the country. Annual tea consumption in Ireland grew from 4.1 million lbs in 1840 to 35 million lbs in 1890. Like Stuart Cranston, Joshua Bewley saw a prosperous market and set up his own business as a tea merchant, sometime in the 1840's. The beginning of the Bewley's tea rooms is almost a parallel to that of the Cranston tea rooms. The Bewley's Oriental Cafe's will be discussed in more detail at a later stage (4, p.19).

The main problem in Glasgow society at that time was that for the menfolk of a high proportion of families living in one and two room houses, pubs served as extra living space. A natural instinct for comradeship and brightness had driven people from overcrowded and squalid homes into

3. John Burnett, *Plenty and Want* (2nd ed. 1979) p.146

illuminated streets. From these the weather seemed to drive them to the shelter of a public house.[4]

Campaigners for the Abstinence Movement developed "Temperance refreshment rooms" which flourished. Tea Rooms in Glasgow had by the later part of the nineteenth century been brought clearly into the domain of the temperance movement. Most of them were attatched to temperance hotels, and their appearance as a distinctive feature of the Scottish scene primed the way for the tea rooms. This is in itself an interesting story which is dominated again by the name Cranston. (5, pp.32-39).

Tea rooms became a class of establishment catering for a new inclination to sobriety and were particularly successful in so doing. When the Bailie Magazine 7 Nov. 1886, p.3, a Glasgow magazine gave Stuart Cranston the honour of its 'Men you Know' profile slot in 1889, it summed up:

> A practical, although not a professed tea-totaler, Mr Cranston had done more probably, to advance the cause of temperance than all the Permissive Bill agitators put together.

The attitudes expressed in this article give a clue to why the tea rooms took off so noticeably during this period. No longer were people limited by having nowhere to go for refreshment other than the bar of a public house or the parlour of a restaurant. This is where tea rooms

4. 'J. H. Muir', Glasgow 1901, p.176

scored and, despite impressive temperance connections, Cranston approached the business from a new angle, from his passionate dedication to quality tea. This encouraged his sister Kate to establish her first tea room in 1878 in the bottom of a temperance hotel. But as we shall see, she made her name not only by the quality of service and catering but most importantly through decor.
Between them the Cranston's created something new enough to catch the spirit of the times, attractive to a clientele repelled by the hard-line respectability or the missionary atmosphere of many temperance establishments. Though a large number of tea room proprietors were, like the Cranston's, abstainers, temperance was not an issue in the running of the business. The smoking rooms (which were standard) and the billiards rooms provided by the large tea rooms were not temperance 'counter-attractions' but were an entrepreneurial response to the needs of the commercial classes in the city. (12, p.14-16)

By 1900 the daylight drinking exploits of Glasgow and Dublin clerks prior to the 1880's survived only as an office legend. The tea rooms catered for sobriety and in doing so certainly promoted it. Thus, business men's needs and likes combined with pressure from the temperance movement, primed the ground for the tea room movement.

Women, too, were a new and crucial element in the

flowering of the tea rooms. Tea rooms, with their appealing decor, often appealed to ladies by offering an attractive way to fit socialising into an afternoon about town. Women took to them gladly.

Kate opened her Crown Tea Rooms in 1878 and therefore can be seen as the originator of the essential 'Glasgow Tea Room'. She undoubtedly produced the feminine 'artistic atmosphere' which became its distinguishing feature. By 1886 Kate first expanded into the ground floor of a commercial building at 205 Ingram Street, her brother giving her the financial backing necessary. This new tea room opened on the 16th September, 1886 in the heart of Glasgow's business centre and was designed chiefly for men. It immediately became noted for its comfort and artistic charm and was to lead the way for many more of her innovative tea room ventures.

CHAPTER I

Mackintosh and 'The Cranston Tea Rooms'

The years from 1888 to the First World War were a golden age for Glasgow in which a sense of sophistication and well-being pervaded the city and during which the tea rooms grew and multiplied. Recognition of the tea rooms as a phenomenon was just dawning. In 1901 Glasgow was, to repeat a memorable phrase, 'a very Tokio for tea rooms' (11, pp. 32) and it was Kate Cranston who held centre stage. Sir Edwin Lutyens, in a letter to his sister in 1897 after his visit to the Buchanan Street Tea Rooms, designed by George Walton and Mackintosh wrote:

> Miss Cranston has started large restaurants, all very elaborately simple on the new highart lines. The result is gorgeous: And a wee bit vulgar. It is all quite good and just a little outre...

Some years later the artist Muiread Bone wrote in the late 20's:

> Those Glasgow tea rooms were things of extraordinary beauty and originality and one cannot find any restaurants today in London comparable with them.

The distinctive 'Glasgow-style' brought fame to Miss

Cranston while she was its most important single patron, starting at a period when it most needed support in her commissions to the young George Walton, and then to Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whom she continued loyally to use for the next twenty years, through some lean times for the artists. For this she truly, in Pevsner's words, 'deserves the art historian's unstinted gratitude' (17, p.84) as well as that of thousands of ordinary people who had their senses stimulated and horizons enlarged by the experience of interiors where everything was different and the whole atmosphere was one of gay adventure.

In this thesis I naturally focus on Miss Cranston's commitment to Glasgow's 'new school' from 1896 and the connection between 'tea rooms' and 'art interiors' will be further examined.

Her tea rooms introduced to public places a new, intimate, feminine note derived from the 'artistic' domestic style of this period. These were years during which women were bombarded by books and magazines instructing them on how to transform their homes into havens of comfort and art (20, p.32). Miss Cranston raised the tea room business in Glasgow from the level of mundane commercialism to that of a profession if not a 'fine-art'.

This was made possible by no other than Charles Rennie Mackintosh who was first commissioned by Miss

Cranston in 1896. Over a period of twenty years he executed an immense number of projects of all kinds for her, ranging from designs for cutlery and menu cards, to complete schemes of decoration and furnishings, projects which for originality, ingenuity and, let it be admitted, occasional eccentricity, would be difficult to equal. What a happy coalition: the clever, determined and arts-concious Miss Cranston and the ambitious and innovative architect-designer, young Mr Mackintosh, both hoping to bring their customers and clients the 'Japanese tea ceremony' Glasgow-style. (23, p.35).

Miss Cranston's first modest premises opened in 1878 at Argyle Street. Strange as it may seem in retrospect, it used dark plush comfy chairs and antlers over the fireplace for the contemporary baronial touch. The advertisement (Illus. 3, p.2)for her new tea rooms at 205 Ingram Street in 1886 reflected mainstream artistic taste as did what we know of its decorators. By this time the influence of Whistler and the aesthetic movement, with its passion for things Japanese, was making itself felt. 'The painting of the walls and ceilings is of the most artistic charm', opened The Bailie, and is altogether in the style of the "Flowery lands" -13 Oct. 1897, p.10.

Miss Cranston's first interiors , which contributed to the journalist's parody quoted above, were thus in 'good' but not unprecedented taste. But in refurbishing her ten

year old Crown Tea Rooms for Exhibition in 1888, Kate turned to a young and largely untested designer working in a more innovative style - George Walton (1867-1933). Miss Cranston, being satisfied with her new discovery, offered him the interior design job for her first major tea room development on Buchanan Street in 1896 (25, pp.38-94).

1. The Buchanan St Tea Rooms:

THE FACADE Illus. 5, p.4.

For this important venture into Glasgow's premier thorough-fare, Miss Cranston played safe on the outside, commissioning the established Glasgow-trained but Edinburgh-based architect George Washington Brown who specialised in banks and prestigious public buildings. The result is a pleasantly revivalised Edwardian addition to the upmarket streetscape, in stripes of red and yellow stone, with its general approval: 'The Evening Citizen', a Glasgow newspaper, for instance, thought it 'quaint-looking and artistic', while a visiting English journalist remarked on its 'pretty little gabled front...'. (9, p.125). It is, as can be seen in the photograph, charmingly detailed in a very refined manner and the two-stoned oriel over the door is an exceedingly picturesque feature not withstanding its ugly shaped pediment.

However, when critically analysed, this facade has

little claim to distinction when you compare it to the later Willow tea room facade. (Illus. 26, p.17). It seems to be far more appropriate to a bank than a tea room, which it subsequently became. (see Demise).

PLAN

Washington Brown planned the building in four floors with a spacious top and a lit staircase well at the rear containing broad galleries at each level, which could be used for dining purposes. There were the following independently decorated appartments: a ladies' tea-room (Illus. 6, p.5) and a ladies' dining room (Illus. 7, p.6), a general tea room (Illus. 8, p.6) and a general luncheon-room (Illus. 9, p.7), a gentlemen's luncheon room and adjoining gallery, and in the top floor, a billiards room and smoking gallery.

Miss Cranston's first really big project, embodied the transition in her tastes from the conventially 'artistic' exterior to the 'new art' surprises of the furnishing and decoration. There was an advance warning of originality from the hoarding (Illus. 10, p.7) which sheilded the building work from curious passers-by. It is perhaps the earliest hoarding to be given this kind of aesthetic treatment, a highly effective advertisement. The timber background was painted black; a brightly coloured exotic peacock motif was stencilled at each corner, acknowledging the powerful influence of Whistler in Glasgow. The scheme was completed by a heraldic

frieze flowers, heart shaped emblems, and appropriate lettering. These heart shaped leaves became a Walton trade-mark as it was he who designed the hoardings.

INTERIORS

Inside wonderful things were afoot; including something new to the point of weirdness. For it was now that Miss Cranston 'tried-out' Mackintosh, just as she had tried out Walton eight years previous on some mural stencilling.

In these Buchanan Street tea rooms Walton had control of the general interior decoration and Mackintosh seems to have contributed nothing but stencil decorations which filled the walls of the Ladies' Tea Room, the Luncheon Room and the Smokers' Gallery. The Tea and Luncheon Rooms extended around an open well containing a staircase, and Gleeson White described how the background colours of green, 'greyish-greenish yellow' and blue here could be seen as a progression from earth to sky.

FURNITURE

Although far less imaginative, Walton's restaurant furniture was much more practical than Mackintosh's subsequent designs. Walton never went to extremes and all the chairs at Buchanan Street were well proportioned and soundly constructed. Many of them are still in use, and in fifty years have required neither repairs nor

modifications. The later Mackintosh chairs, on the other hand, have rarely survived for long without attention from the cabinet maker. Four principal types of chair used by Walton in this restaurant : one with a highback and centre splat (Illus. 9, p.7); the second with a stocky spindle back, turned legs and uprights made of oak from the grounds of 'Scone Palace' (Illus.7, p.6); the third with a shaped back and rectangular reeded panel (Illus.8, p.6); and lastly, and elegant rush-seated ladderback (Illus. 6, P.5). The latter is an especially attractive design along soundly traditional lines. All this furniture was designed in 1896 and records show that it was built and delivered in the following year. (11, p.40).

THE STENCILLED MURALS

Mackintosh may have had little to do with the furnishings of this tea room but he certainly made an important contribution in painting the walls. Here for the first time he was able to put into practice on a large scale the technique he had perfected in poster work, and which was readily adaptable to this new medium.

On his generous allocation of bare walls, Mackintosh developed in a more decorative manner the arresting styles of the recent posters, most notably in the frieze of the stately white robed figures schematically entwined in rose bushes and grouped with abstract tree shapes round walls of the ladies' lunch room (Illus. 6, p.5).

and blending well with Walton's elegant furniture. While the technique used was stencilling there were many variations in detail. Characteristically, the shapes and their placing maintained a clear rhythm in the overall design. The stylisation of organic forms towards abstraction went even further in the simple decorations of the Smoking Gallery. (See Crafts Section). (7, p.54)

Mackintosh always avoided 'naturalism'. It can be noted in these tea rooms where the overall view of the murals is one of strongly delinated and highly conventionalised human and vegetable forms, colour is applied in flat ungraded washes and bright colour of primary intensity is confined, to small areas. Mackintosh learned a great deal from the Buchanan Street experiment. Although he continued to use formalized trees, flowers and plants in his interior decoration schemes, the exotic and complicated forms employed here did not appear again. He realised that it was possible to obtain the effect desired not by recourse to intricate pattern but rather by simplification , to achieve greater refinement. (21, p.89).

PUBLIC REACTION

The opening of the Buchanan Street tea rooms caused something of a sensation. Its success was instantaneous, though the strange unorthodox decorations were subject to much controversy. The attitude of the

man in the street to Miss Cranston's first tea room in the 'modern' style may be summed up in the following observation by a contemporary:

> It is believed that in no other town can you see in a place of refreshment such ingenious beautiful decoration in the style of the "New Art" as in Miss Cranston's tea rooms in Buchanan Street. Art critics might well fume about the delerious fantasies of the "Scotto-Continental New-Art", but Miss Cranston has made a major contribution to a breakthrough in taste. (17, p.538)

2 The Argyle Street Tea Rooms

The same design partenership, with Mackintosh as George Walton's junior, was set to work on Miss Cranston's next big project to expand into the entire building at 114 Argyle Street. The relationship between the two designers is inscrutable: both are committed to perfection, and to the notion that every detail of an interior should receive creative attention, but they were temperamentally very different and must surely have found it difficult to share interiors.

Work on Argyle Street was not far behind Buchanan Street and the new rooms opened in the autumn of 1897. The 'deal' on the commission seems to have been done in tandem with Buchanan Street, for while Mackintosh was

there given a share of the mural decoration, at Argyle Street he did a number of light fittings and all the movable furniture, another major challenge which produced the first high-backed 'Mackintosh chair'. However the lions share of the work remained Walton's, who had all the fireplaces, doors, screens and so on to manage, as well as the general doors. (2, p.46).

FACADE Illus. 11, p.8

The brief was: to reconstruct 'from the most commonplace of buildings, rooms to suit the most modern requirements and most artistic tastes'. (9, p.126). David Barclay of H. & D. Barclay, a firm specialising in school buildings, was perhaps chosen to reflect Miss Cranston's increasingly austere tastes, as well as the less up-market location, after her experience with the lavish Washington Browne. The facelift job was very thorough: the front of the old tenement hotel was shaved of its mouldings, then rough-cast. Gables and dormers to the street and a quaint red-tiled turret behind were applied to create a fancy Belgian-like effect. There were two entrances which gave separate access to the different levels: men could thus bolt to and from the masculine haven of smoking, billiard and reading rooms on the second floor without inconvenience. The interior was gutted and left as a series of low interconnected rooms lit by regular windows, with

prominent beams and central aisles of plain pillars. (12, p.8). The facade appears today much as it did fifty years ago - except for the intrusion of 'modern' shop fronts.

PLAN

The same general layout of the interior was followed as in Buchanan Street. The ground floor was occupied by the tea rooms, the first and second floors by luncheon (Illus. 12, p.8) and tea rooms, the third floor and spacious attic by a billiards room, reading and smoking rooms.

FURNITURE

In this scheme, where Mackintosh's contribution was more pervasive, his tendency to self-assertiveness is noticeable. He designed the chairs, tables, coat and umbrella stands. His designs were very strong, all in oak, mostly stained dark, relieved only by the simplest cut-out shapes, curved panels and subtle taperings. The furniture was mostly four-square and heavy to move about, a nuisance for those who had to sweep up the crumbs. But it was solidly made, and has lasted better than some of Mackintosh's later designs. None of the chairs had the grace and lightness of Walton's furniture at Buchanan Street, but nevertheless, they possess a down-to-earth, homely character eminently suitable for their particular purpose - they were chairs made for men. Their masculine strength was appropriate to the

smoking room. However it seems at odds with the dainty, spotty style of Waltons stencilling and his characteristic use of gathered fabric in the panelling. One feels that the result would have been better if one or the other of the designers had had complete control of the room. The lunch room shows more collaboration with Mackintosh's excellent slat-backed chairs relating well to Walton's plain panelling and screens with vertical insets of stencilled decoration. Perhaps, as Roger Bilcliffe suggests, it was a desire to dominate Walton's rather strong room divisions that led Mackintosh to design the first of his revolutionary high-backed chairs Illus.13, p.9.
(7, pp.76-82). He was evidently pleased with the effect which achieved the clear spacial definition he always sought.

The smoking-room and billiards-room at Argyle Street were furnished entirely by Mackintosh and the plain wooden panelling of the low screens would indicate that he had a hand in the design of the fixtures too. However, there was one room whose scheme of decoration at Argyle Street was entirely designed by Mackintosh and the only one of which any reliable records remain.

THE DUTCH ROOM : Illus. 14, 15, p.10

In 1906 Mackintosh was recalled to transform the

basement tea room at the Argyle Street into the 'Dutch Kitchen'. This prompted another article in 'The Studio' to note that 'Nowhere has the modern movement in art been entered upon more seriously than at Glasgow' (20, p.36). Mackintosh's reference to the quaint Dutch concept was a delft-tiled fireplace with a rack of decorative plates above and a large fake inglenook area. The room was a square, low apartment with a black open-timber ceiling. It was a very smart and sophisticated room mainly due to the 'black-and-white-square' theme.

The ceiling of this apartment was black and gleaming black columns half screened the inglenook. The floor was covered in stout chequered lino traditionally woven in diamonds but laid at Mackintosh's request on the smaller 'cross' to make squares, with smaller ceramics chequers on the diagonal to mark off the inglenook area. The dado was in tiny velvety checks, the walls white above. More vibrant chequers defined the square supporting pillars and mother of pearl squares were set into the simple dresser. To this black and white, sparkling under scantily shaded electric light, Mackintosh added a further dazzling touch: the chairs , a satisfactorily homely Windsor design - so normal that only one has been recently identified - were painted a strong emerald green. (9, p.131)

The only other touch of colour and survivor of organic motifs was a little pink in the weeping rose

detail of the attractive leaded windows filtering light from the street grate above. Niches for the flower arrangements so characteristic of Miss Cranston's tea rooms made further points of relief. The result was pure urban chic, despite its allusion to the antique country style now established as a tea room norm. The modernity of the effect is noticeable in comparison with the rooms upstairs where Mackintosh had worked with Walton a decade ago, though his furniture design is now more traditional.

Electric lighting was used, with pear-shaped hanging panels of coloured glass shading the pendant lamps.

> The daylight coming through the borrowed lights must have been very soft and the harsh electric light would have made the enamelled chairs sparkle. (2, p.192)

WALTON'S CONTRIBUTION

It is difficult not to be seduced by hindsight and talk first about Mackintosh. However, the overall effect of these tea rooms owed most to Walton: his airy repetitive wall patternings suffused the whole interior with an element of prettiness not found in the furniture. The colour scheme broke

> away from the Victorian furnishing conventions which decreed dark sober colours and materials for male areas (which

> included dining rooms), keeping lightness and patterning for female preserves. It was Walton's work which confirmed the feminine domestic style of the artistic tea room. (25, p.89)

Fireplaces often attracted his most original and effective ideas, so to Walton made notable use of stained glass, combined in a new and effective way with beaten copper, in several excellent door designs. His luscious Eros panel 'pieced together from green marble, slate, coloured glass, mother-of-pearl and like..' (14, p.87) at one end of the lunch room was typical of Walton's widely liked decorative work. He also handled the shop entrance with its wrought iron and repousse copper fittings to great effect. Even the staircase in the turret, where simple designs were stamped into wet plaster, shows traces of his inventiveness.

Walton's individual but attractive version of advanced Arts and Crafts style, comparable with work of such as Voysey and Baillie Scott in England, was clearly visable. In the White Rooms, Walton's use of stencilled floral pattern (thin and spidery) right around the apartment and his application of stencilled patterns to the underside of the ceiling beams seemed to be in the manner of Baillie Scott. [5]

However, the general overall effect of the Argyle

5 The Studio, 39, 1902, p.23

Street project was rather disappointing. The interiors were pleasing enough but lacked the vitality of the later tea rooms in which Mackintosh was given complete control. Apart from the furniture in the smoking and billiards room, and of course the 'Dutch Kitchen', there was little enough evidence of his handiwork.

After the reconstruction of the Argyle Street premises Miss Cranston directed her attention to the expantion and alterations at Ingram Street in 1900. Mackintosh who truly felt the need to control all parts of the job must have rejoiced to be given sole charge of the design.

3 The Ingram Street Tea Rooms.

1900 was an eventful year for Mackintosh for it marked his marriage in August to Margaret Macdonald. The formalising of this important creative partenership was celebrated in Mackintosh's new White Room at Ingram Street, where they made two large gesso panels, 'The May Queen' (Margaret) and 'The Wassail' (Mackintosh), to face each other at the ends of the apartment. 'We are working them together and that makes the work very pleasant', wrote Mackintosh to Muthesius (9, p.132). They also each worked a beaten silvered lead panel to go with the friezed, in another symbolic act of union.

Margaret's ideas were clearly fused with Mackintosh's at this period which saw some of the

couple's most successful work. However Margaret has come in for some venomous comment as the spoiler of Mackintosh's art, driving it temporarily down a road to trivial over-prettiness (26, p.98), though recent champions have reserved this tendency to denigration. Although after marriage, as convention demanded, Margaret to a great extent pooled her identity with her husband's, she was an independently gifted artist, and theirs was an unusually deep and supportive relationship. But many admirers of what they apprehend as Mackintosh's isolated genius have felt a need to protect it from all changes of 'lower influences' (23, pp.18-21). Unfortunately Margaret is available to embody the invidious old opposition between 'masculine' architecture (pure, reasoned, essential) and 'feminine' decorative art (distracting, trivial, superficial) (2, p.86). But it was precisely its feminine quality that made 'Glasgow Style' design, to which women's contribution overall was very important (18, p.72), so appropriate for domestic interiors and by extention the new kind of tea room. However Margarets work is rated her importance as a source of inspiration to Mackintosh cannot be denied: his alleged remark that 'he had talent, Margaret had genius' is well known. (11, p.42)

There is little evidence of any 'contamination' at Ingram Street, rather an assured, and delightful expression of Mackintosh's capacities in all fields: the

thoughtful architectural management of given spaces, furniture design, decorative stencilling, leaded glass and metal-work. This was the longest surviving of Miss Cranston's tea rooms, not abandoned for restaurant use until 1950. There is sadly not many contemporary photographs, though some desolate pictures of the interior before dismantling in 1971 add to the record of detail. Unfortunately however, there is no records of the facade.

PLAN

Here for the first time Mackintosh had an entirely free hand. He opened up the party walls and combined the four sections of inter-communicating apartments. In addition, here were of course kitchen and service counters and the billiards room and smoking room in the basement. A main doorway was made in the centre of the block and the former entrance at No 205 retained (9, p.133).

STAIRCASE

A new staircase was built; giving access to a small balcony over the servery and through an opening in the party walls to the balcony of the 'Scott Morton Room'. (9, p.132). The original wooden staircase thus became redundant and was dismantled. The main stair, like all Mackintosh stairways, is a fine luxurious feature. It has a well- proportioned wooden balustrade crowned by the

customary cornice of wide projection; the sturdy balusters are square in section and rise to a height of about ten feet at the foot of the stair to meet the cornice, which is carried horizontally at balcony level. The entrance hall and staircase are separated from the main dining-room by an attractive timber screen six feet, six inches high, with square leaded glass panels just above eye level. (15, p.84). The room itself is panelled vertically (Illus. 17, p.11) to a height of about ten feet and the lines of the broad corner strips are echoed in the front of the balcony, which in turn is decorated by a single row of square stencilled patterns. The woodwork of the staircase is of course painted white. (See Willow Staircase) (Illus. 34, p.23).

THE WHITE DINING ROOM. Illus. 16, 17, p.11.

As originally furnished and decorated, Mackintosh's White dining room was a spacious and dignified apartment - the white enamelled paintwork appropriate to an area intended mainly for female use. The airy lightness of the apartment was enhanced by its high ceilings and large window area.

The ceiling height allowed for a mezzanine balcony along the back of the room exploited by Mackintosh for spatial and social interest.

The two gesso panels were fixed high against the ceiling. These provided a contrast in both colour and

texture above hard white panelling. The furniture was 'the stained oak style' established at Argyle Street. The chairs were of a sober, square backed variety, soundly constructed and well proportioned except for one or two which for some reason not now apparant had excessively high backs. These chairs were stronger in visual impact than fact, as the splats were not connected to the back of the seat - until many were screwed together for first aid in years later.

BILLIARDS ROOM

Mackintosh's subterranean billiard room, appropriately masculine with dark stained panelling, relieved by simple stencilled squares and rush-seated settles, was judged 'a great success' and 'distinctly artistic'. (11, p.49).

THE OAK ROOM. Illus. 18, p.12

In 1907 the 'Oak Room' was made on the ground floor at Ingram Street. It was designed in a new style enschewing organic decoration for effects, arising austerely from structure and spatial manipulation.

The Oak Room, as can be seen from the illustration (Illus. 19, p.12), was a narrow apartment and Mackintosh treated it with a balcony around three sides. In this tea room square posts carrying the balcony branch out into five slender uprights, which pass through the balcony wall and terminate at the ceiling against a moulding of

slight projection. These members serve no structural purpose, they simply define and contain the balcony area. The balcony is virtually a room within a room, separated from the whole yet part of it.

Decoration here was the simplest - squares of glass in the open spaces of the staircase, and blue ceramic tiles around the serving hatch; cut-out or inlaid ovals; a lath applied over upright ribs to make a series of lattice panels on the front of the balcony.

The new interest in wavy lines recurrs in the back splats of striking low chairs of which sixteen were made for this room, and a simple little dresser. Dark oak was used throughout. The main chair is again unusually strong, with its back sloping away from the bolt uprightness characteristic of Mackintosh's earlier designs. The chamfering of the back rails is another traditional detail which reappears as a decorative device in the Glasgow School of Art library (Illus. 20, p.13).

Overall this small apartment with its golden brown panelling and delightfully intimate atmosphere forms an admirable contrast to the sparkling 'White Dining Room' and is, as far as I am concerned, definitely one of the most attractive of the Ingram Street group.

THE OVAL ROOM

In 1909 Mackintosh's ingenuity was again tested with a most awkward space, a thin rectangular area

adjacent to the Oak Room. This complex solution based on the 'oval' is well described by Billcliffe: Below was a rest room for 'business ladies', with two couches for those who needed to get their feet up. Supported above it, as a kind of mezzanine floor on free-standing pillars, was the Oval Room, an additional tea room area opening off the Oak Room gallery. Two carpets designed early in 1910 measured 19ft 6in. X 4ft 6in. : with wavy lines overlaid on checks for the Rest Room, and an oval design on checks for the Oval Room, they anticipated 'modernist' post-war design. (2, p.87). Sadly the only photographs of these rooms show the bare interiors in miserable condition before dismantling in 1971.

THE CLOISTER ROOM. Illus. 21, p13.

In 1911 Mackintosh redesigned the small rear ladies' tea room which linked the Scott Morton Room and the Chinese Room. The room already redecorated by Mackintosh in 1900 was now thoroughly transformed into the novel Cloister room. This gave Mackintosh further stimulus to develop his search for a new style of tea room. A new barrel ceiling decorated with a wagon-chamfering pattern hid the old embossed finish, which had previously been spared. Warm waxed wood panelling was run up and down all round, edged with double strings of a little diaper pattern picked out in strong colours - red, green, yellow and blue outlined in black.

At one end of the room there were groups of deeply recessed niches lined with leaded mirror glass and embellished with Chinese Gothic tracery; and a strange wooden lintel over the doorway has a rich, scale-like surface pattern. The wavy lines of the diaper patterning on the walls is picked up by plaster bands running transversely across the ceiling. (7, pp.26-28).

In this room Mackintosh said he would not have a straight line, and he nearly succeeded. But the multiplicity of elements, the broken wall surfaces, and the wavy decorations, together produce an air of restlessness that is not found in any of the other apartments. Was this 'design concept' suitable for a 'Tea Room'? Being without natural light it must have been bewitching, the low barrel ceiling inducing a womb-like, quite new effect.

The original chairs had high square backs with a broad wavy central slat of which no records remain only that in August 1912, Francis Smith and Son were given the task of reducing the height of thirty-one of them - no doubt because they appeared out of scale with the low ceiling apartment, and added to the confusion.

The room was one of the most mysterious and innovative ever designed by Mackintosh, as moodily atmospheric as the Willow Tea Rooms in Sauchiehall Street are light and airy. It was his last major work in Glasgow before World War I, the themes and motifs used

in it were taken up again at 78 Derngate 'The Dug Out Willow Tea Room', in 1916.

The China Tea Room Illus. 22, p.14.

Having remodelled the principal rooms to the west of the main entrance and having transformed the ladies' tea room into the Cloister room, Mackintosh now remodelled what was formerly the gentlemen's tea room at 205 Ingram Street. The room does not appear to have been worked on by Mackintosh before 1911 when it was turned into the 'Blue or China Tea Room'. The name and decorative scheme continued a tradition already established, for originally the room boasted several exotic oriental motifs, notably the pagoda-like canopy of elaborate fretwork in the Chinese style over the doorway (Illus. 23, p.14) and a pseudo-chinese chippendale screen. The surviving picture reminds one inevitably of this verse from 'The Ballad of Bedford Park':

> Now he who loves aesthetic cheer
> And does not mind the damp
> May come and read Rossetti here
> By a japanese - y lamp. (11, p.35)

The square decoration dominated here: It was applied against canvas-covered walls, varied with insets and niches of mirror glass and for the first time plastic.

More lattice was supported horizontally by screens and the cash desk to hide the original ceiling, which was painted dark. Pagoda-ish finials, a strange door feature and dark polished step-backed chairs combined with the latticing to produce Mackintosh's personal version to 'Chinoiserie', which waxed and waned in fashion. The most startingly new element, however, was that of colour: a powerful lacquer blue with touches of red. Mackintosh was clearly moving in the same direction as contemporary designers in Paris, where the 'Ballets Risses' were provoking a revolution of colour, stimulating the nascent 'Art Deco' movement.

Since this room was excessively high in relation to width, Mackintosh introduced three broad openwork canopies spaning from wall to wall, each with an immediate support serving as a hat or umberella stand. By dividing the room in this manner, instead of building a false ceiling he secured the intimacy he required, meanwhile retaining the sense of spaciousness engendered by the high walls and existing ceiling.

The movable pieces of furniture consisted mainly of round tables of the kind noted at Argyle Street (designed in 1896), and some excellent chairs with fretted backs and side rails which match the Chinese style motifs of the 'Blue Room'. (Illus. 24, p.15). Mackintosh also designed built-in, tip-up setees which were originally upholstered in blue corduroy to match the colour of the surroundings.

In contrast to the refurbished Cloister Room, the Chinese Room is severely rectilinear. The emphasis is wholly on the square and the relationship between the solid and open panels of the lattice-work.

> The linear style is relieved by the fretwork decoration of the door, canopy, the chairs, coat-hooks and pay desk but Mackintosh introduces a curved feature in the lattices which project from the wall; these are about 20cm deep, and the spaces between the lattice frame are filled with concave niches of leaded mirror glass, or a plastic substance, or a simple flat leaded panel. (7, p.129)

The niches were used in many pieces of furniture and fittings from about 1903, but the material used to decorate them was usually a coloured glass.

The general effect of this room with its blue painted woodwork, dark oak furniture and subdued lighting must have been mysterious and bizarre. The Ingram Street Tea Rooms thus contain examples of work by Mackintosh in many moods. The pleasant white dining-room in the Mains Street tradition; the Oak Room sombre and restrained; the restless indecisive Cloister Room; and the ingeniously contrived fantasy of the China Tea Room, together reflect the personality of the designer.

The Willow Tea Rooms

After furnishing the white dining-room at Ingram Street, Mackintosh commenced work on 'The Willow Street Tea Rooms', Sauchiehall Street. The site was acquired by Miss Cranston in 1901, but the new building was not finished until 1904. Most of the furniture was designed from July to November, 1903, but some pieces were still being added in 1905. It was the last complete suite of rooms Mackintosh designed for Miss Cranston, although additions and alterations at Ingram Street were carried out piecemeal until 1912.

Of the tea rooms built under Mackintosh's influence, the most outstanding and accomplished is 'The Willow'. The other tea rooms only required interior furnishings and decorating, and in fulfilling this task Mackintosh had to direct his efforts towards completely disassociating his own rooms from the style of the original buildings. Here at last in 'The Willow', Mackintosh controlled the structure as well as every detail of the interior decoration. When he was able to free his aesthetic sense from the alien environment, his taste for unified impression, for simplicity and purity, his loathing for all that is commonplace became magnificently clear. The overall effect of this is quite stunning. (7, p.76)

The Mackintoshes' current preoccupations - Margaret was obviously closely involved - were perfectly suited to the clientele for these tea rooms, fashionable

and largely female. Here is the 'Balie's' greeting in an article which appeared before the opening of the Willow Tea Rooms in November 1903, considered then and now the 'tour de force' of Mackintosh's partenership with Miss Cranston:

> Hitherto Miss Cranston has been famous for the daintily artistical character of her several establishments. However her new establishment fairly outlines all others in the matters of arrangement and colour. The furnishing, besides, is of the richest and most luxurious character. Indeed Miss Cranston has carried the quetion of comfort fairly into that of luxury, when providing for the enjoyment of her friends and patrons. Her "salon de Luxe" on the first floor is simply a marvel of the art of the upholsterer and decorator. And not less admirable, each in its own way, are the tea-gallery, the lunch-rooms, the billiard-room, and the smoking-room.
> - Bailie 15 Sept, 1886, p.5

On this occasion Mackintosh was architect for the entire scheme. He designed not only the interiors and furniture but the fabric and, as already the structure

itself. It is interesting to observe that he followed George Walton's example at Buchanan Street by designing a protective hoarding for the contractors whilst the facade was being re -modelled (Illus. 25, p.16). Part of this was carried forward on heavy beams as a canopy which was painted white and decorated with characteristic stencilled patterns and lettering.

THE FACADE Illus. 26, p.17.

At the 'Willow' there were richer possibilities for the architect; a badly built house, small and ugly, had to be reconstructed. This site was not unlike that in Buchanan Street, a house-size plot between flanking buildings, tenements surviving form the residential use of this part of Sauchiehall Street. To many and architect this enterprise might have seemed to be without prospects, but Mackintosh's imagination immediately conjured out of the mess, a bright white building with a facade decorated with inlaid panels of black and purple and well proportioned windows, rhythmically arranged. These would present an elegant front which, considering the necessarily limited circumstances, might otherwise be overlooked.

Mackintosh's sparkling white little building is cut horizontally, the shallow curves of its front disobeying the rules of Glasgow Street architecture without entirely ignoring the neighbouring buildings. The

decoration of its face, with smart chequered edging and elegant looping ironwork announced again the combination of austere squares and abstracted organic shapes which was curently so fruitful for Mackintosh.

In spite of the limitations imposed by the narrow frontage and restricted site, Mackintosh produced a facade which would be considered modern by present-day standards, with the clean horizontal lines and refined detail, was extraordinary indeed in 1904. He ignored the fenestration of the adjacent property - the windows in any case were not in alignment - and placed a simple unmoulded hood of about 18 inches to 24 inches projection right across the facade at second level, and below this curved the wall gently outwards. The windows on the two upper floors were of normal proportions, but the first floor was illuminated by a beautifully designed horizontal window with a clear span of 18 feet. This was sub-divided into tall, narrow lights of leaded glass each containing a single tiny leaf-shaped motive of mirror glass (Illus. 27, p.18), and was flanked by wrought iron signs (Illus. 28, p.18).

> At the two corners, the willow and swallow symbols are mounted in stylised black wrought iron. They look very pretty on their white background and seem to invite little birds and lovely ladies alike to flee hither from their smokey surroundings. (3, p.3)

The ground floor was lit by a large window enclosed in a slightly projecting architrave, and sub-divided horizontally at door height, the upper portion being deeply recessed and the lower part containing a row of narrow lights similar in proportion to those on the first floor. Two circular hoop-like features (Illus. 29, p.19) of wrought iron - tree symbols - linked the transome and lintel, and the lower part of the facade was set back slightly from the building line so that small ornamental trees in cubiform tubs could be placed outside the tea rooms without encroaching on the pavement. The dark, solid colouring of the ground floor windows gives the impression of a firm foundation over which the light colours and the gently curving window of the first floors, radiating gaiety seem to triumph in multi-coloured harmony. (11, p.164)

I have to say that when I first saw the facade I was particularly impressed by its originality in comparison to the buildings beside. However from an analytical point of view, when considered as a whole, the facade is not really well composed. Firstly the canopy divides it almost precisely into two equal parts, and thereby emphasizes the different treatment of the upper and lower sections. There are, in fact, virtually two facades here bearing little relationship to each other. One can appreciate the architect's wish to emphasize the importance of the first-floor room - the most important

in the whole building - but it is difficult to understand why he changed the character of the upper storeys so completely. Why, for instance, did he make the windows asymmetrical when they all serve exactly the same purpose, there being but one large room on each floor. The explanation may be that, proposed by Howarth

> by introducing larger windows on the left of the facade, he was expressing externally the presence of the main staircase deep within the building. (9, p.138)

This is an interesting theory for it would seem to account for the curved wall surface at this point - the merest suggestion, perhaps, of the familiar staircase bay, or traditional turret.

The lower half of the elevation, however, the only part that could be comprehended with any degree of comfort from the street, is in my opinion, one of Mackintosh's most elegant and attractive designs. Here his use of long horizontal openings, and plain unadorned surfaces brings him closely into line with the most advanced continental architects of the post 1914-18 period. Once again Mackintosh seems to be reaching out towards a distant goal, as yet ill defined - towards an architecture of plain, smooth surfaces that can be deeply defined and modelled like sculptors' clay; as

demonstrated by the sharply defined out-lines of the ground floor window, an architecture of clean cut, mechanical percision.

Here we find wrought iron in the style of Macmurdo and Voysey; the chequered borders of Josef Hoffman, 'borrowed' perhaps from Vienna; and the singing birds and coloured glass of Margaret Macdonald (17, p.131). The enigma of Mackintosh is clearly revealed in this facade nevertheless, despite its contradictions, this work alone would entitle him to a place in the fore front of contemporary European designers - and it would be difficult to find a greater contrast than between 'The Willow', and the heavy carved sandstone facades which are order of the day in Glasgow.

MOTIF

The motif of the willow both naturalistic and metaphorical lay ready to hand in the name of Sauchiehall Street, which means 'alley of willows', and appealed to the the Mackintosh -and especially Margaret's - penchant for symbolism. Thus the predominent motif throughout was the flat, pinnate shape of the willow.

PLAN. Illus. 30, p.19.

The variety and arrangement of rooms was similar to those at the Argyle St and Ingram Street Tea Rooms,

though here there was a special dining-room, the 'Room de Luxe', which was at the heart of the building and was unique in Mackintosh's oeuvre. Also the rear half of the ground floor, a long narrow apartment, was only one storey high and was covered by a partially glazed, hipped roof. Mackintosh concealed the steel trussels by a timber ceiling framed in squares like an egg box, and open in parts to admit daylight - a method very popular today.

On entering customers passed, just as at Ingram Street, behind a white painted screen inset with leaded glass panels to the central cash desk and a choice of moves - into the tea room at the front or lunch room at the back of the ground floor, up the stairs to the tea room gallery, built round a well over the back saloon, or to the Room de Luxe overlooking the street on the first floor, or further up to the male domain of billiard and smoke rooms on the second floor. The back saloon with tea gallery above was contained in a low extention to the rear of the building. It was open to the front saloon, the transition marked by a curious sculptural structure around an enormous flower bowl, suspended over two tables, and by the order desk for which Mackintosh designed in 1905 a high semi-circular chair. The staircase connecting the ground floor and the tea gallery was open too, screened by rods and dangling glass shapes. This distinctly modern interpretation of related

yet distinct shapes can never be fully captured in photographs, though I made an attempt at it.

The basement contained the cloak rooms and lavatories and probably also the kitchens, although in 1917 Miss Cranston created another room here, the Dug-Out, and one cannot be certain where the kitchens were located after this date.

THE FRONT SALOON. Illus. 31, p.20.

The main room on the ground floor at the front of the building was predominantly white. The panelled walls, screens, fireplaces, ceiling and the plaster-relief frieze above the panelling were all painted white. The rooms main decorative feature was a series of strange plaster relief panels, set in a frieze on the side walls. These can be decoded in terms of the willow's long oval leaves and whippy branches, but their transformation by abstraction went far towards modernism.

The movable furniture contrasted with the white, being dark-stained oak; yet only the ladderbacked chair were obvious, because the tables had white cloths which covered all but the bottom few inches of their legs, and the fitted seating - upholstered in velvet (probably purple or blue) - was also hidden by the tables. In the centre of the room, positioned between the fireplace and the entrance was a fantastic timber contraption, a veritable 'baldacchino' nine feet high, enclosing two

tables. This supported a large bowl, about one metre in diameter, in which were suspended glass tubes for holding long-stemmed flowers. Mackintosh was always attracted by the greenish hue of the water and glass and the curious effect of the test tubes seen from beneath must have pleased him emmensely. Encircling this large glass bowl was a broad, flat band of black-painted iron, suspended by hoops from the ceiling, to which were attached unshaded electric lamps. This play between rounded and angular shapes became a theme repeated throughout the building. However, this 'baldacchino' (9, p.140) is an example of Mackintosh's tendency for 'extravaganza'. It could not possibly have been in keeping with the simple refinement of the rest of the room. I have no doubt that it attracted attention by its novelty, rather than its appropriateness and good form. (see crafts chapter).

THE BACK SALOON. Illus. 32, p.21.

In contrast to the white, light front room for ladies' tea, the back, for the service of more substantial food, was darker. This back saloon opened directly on to the white saloon at the front, but Mackintosh's handling of the two spaces indicated clearly that one was entering a different room. The ceiling was much lower than at the front, for the gallery above could be seen from the front saloon through a glazed wrought-iron

screen; the gallery was almost a mezzanine floor, as its own ceiling was much lower than that of the first floor ceiling in the front of the building. The low ceiling resulted in the back saloon being fairly dark, and the walls were divided by dark-stained wooden straps with grey canvas panels between them to accentuate this. At intervls the panels were decorated by stencilled canvas hangings of 'ladies' peeping from behind enormous cabbage roses' Illus. 33, p.22. These were predominantly silver in colour. Light filtered down through the well from the overhead roof-lights and the windows lighted the tea gallery.

The furniture was arranged to reflect the architecture. Down either side of the rear saloon the tables were placed at 90^0 to the walls with six dark-stained ladderback chairs at each table, ranged in two rows of three. In the centre of the room, in the gallery well and running between the fireplace (see Crafts chapter) and the order desk the tables are placed at 45^0 to the walls with four boxy armchairs at each table. Even the carpet emphasised this regularity: It was plain beneath the tables, but in the aisles had a chequer-work pattern. (2, p.158)

THE STAIRCASE Illus. 34, p.23.

This was a light balustrade of tublar metal rods of about three quarter inches in diameter. Each of these were secured to a tread of the staircase and carried up

to the ceiling where it terminated in a twisting pattern of wrought iron interspersed with green glass balls (Illus. 35, p.24) threaded on stout wire. Here the conventionalized 'tree forms' are echoed in motifs embroidered throughout the staircase (Illus. 36, p.24). These motifs were also adopted by Margaret Macdonald in the delicate curtains for the ground floor windows. In Illus. 79, p.59, one can see Mackintosh's use of stencilled black-and-white checks in a pyramidal shape on the risers of the staircase, this again acknowledging Mackintosh's preoccupation with the square.

THE GALLERY. Illus. 37, p.25.

This was situated over the back saloon, and the tables were grouped around three sides of the well, which gave view down to the saloon. On the fourth side, the north, was a corridor with a glazed and wrought-iron screen at low level which looked out over the front saloon. The ceiling was composed of exposed beams, creating an egg-crate effect, and was supported by eight tapering columns, circular at their base but becoming square about two feet from the top. The columns were arranged in two rows of four dividing the room in three parts; the four central columns sprang from the two heavy beams which crossed the light well. The ceiling above was solid, but the two aisles had open ceilings which admitted light from the glazed panels in

the roof. The woodwork was all painted white including the ceiling: the fireplace (see Crafts chapter), again in the south wall, was also painted white. The furniture, of the same pattern as the ground floor saloons was stained dark. The walls were also dark, with strips of white paint creating an effect of panelling, around which was stencilled a black 'ladder' trellis pattern surmounted by two stylised roses (Illus. 38, p.26). This 'ladder' motif also echoed the backs of the chairs.

THE ROOM DE LUXE. Illus. 39, p.27.

The Room de Luxe or Ladies' Room was and is (for it has been restored to use as a tea room) something different, sumptuously extravagant and sophisticated. It is at the heart and centre of the whole project, an apartment which was to symbolise the grove, or alley of willows. 'It was rich and jewel like in conception, a scintillating creation of crystal and glass, painted white.' (7, p.94)

The north wall, overlooking Sauchiehall Street was made wholly of a charming bow window, with panels of mirror-glass in the leaded panels. Each mirror was separated from its neighbour by a broad fillet by which Mackintosh intended to convey the idea of a forest of slender tree-trunks - an impression further accentuated by the high chair-backs. Around the other three walls, runs a frieze of purple and white leaded mirror-glass

panels, (Illus. 40, p.28), each wall broken at its centre by doors, a fireplace or gesso panel. The double doors contain leaded panels, the most elaborate Mackintosh ever designed, while the centrepieces of the two other walls were a fireplace, a panel by Margaret in a medium which she excelled: gesso laid over string and set with glass jewels and beads, to give a richly textured finish. The panels inspired by lines from a D. G. Rossetti sonnet, drew on the plangent associations of the willow, and the romantic imagery that preoccupied Margaret.

The ceiling is barrel vaulted; in the centre hung a crystal chandelier (82, p62), with balls, ovals and tear-drops of solid glass reflecting the light from the electric lamps in their midst. The walls were originally lined with pale purple silk stretched with beads beneath the frieze and to relieve the whiteness there was a luxurious, soft grey carpet, lined and patterned in squares of various sizes.

FURNITURE

The chairs, astonishingly painted silver and upholstered like the fitted seating in purple velvet, came in two designs: a smaller chair with an elegant ogee curve to its back, used round the outside of the room, and dominating the centre, a set of eight famous high-backed designs (Illus. 41, p.29) These were related to the recent Argyle Street high back, but substituted decoration of

chaste squares of purple glass and ovals for organic shapes. The tables (Illus. 42, p.29) too, unusually, were decoratively embellished, with cloths trimmed short to show off the detail on their legs. On every table there was a ripple of blue in the willow pattern tea services - a homely, healthy colour this, which, no doubt, re-assured those unfamiliar with the new art and overawed by the Mackintoshes' poetic harmonies. And then, of course, there were flowers, and sturdy knives and forks with black handles, and long slender spoons with clover-leaf shafts, and sparkling glassware, all contributing to the brilliance of the ensemble.

The Room de Luxe was indeed an exotic apartment and it became one of the show-pieces of Glasgow, a mecca for visitors to the city, and the rendezvous of Miss Cranston's most elegant patrons. However, despite all its brilliance it had a strangely disquieting air perhaps induced by the maize of mirror glass and the high backed chairs.

The Willow Tea Rooms were opened in October 1904. They fulfilled all expectations and there is no evidence that subsequent alterations were carried out. Oddly enough at the time of professional journalism, Glasgow paid scanty attention to the Sauchiehall Street Tea Rooms. However a writer in the; journal 'Dekorative Kunst' (April 1905) summed up some of the measure of the lyricism of his visit to the 'Room de Luxe' of which

he speaks:

> the beauty of the serene and pure colours of the panels, the lines moved by the breath of destiny and the star like gems whose sparkling rays weave a well of mysterious glowing light around the countenances and forms of women wandering silently under a magic, spell through the willow grove. April 1905, A Mackintosh Tea Room in Glasgow - pp. 5-6.

1917 <u>The Dug-Out</u>, Willow Tea Rooms.

Finally during the 1914-18 war, Miss Cranston commissioned Mackintosh for the last time for an underground extension at the 'Willow', for which plans were submitted in 1916. The dug-out was a novel idea of making a kind of war memorial. A panel over the fireplace read.

> This room was opened by Miss Cranston in the year 1917 during the great European War between the Allied nations and the central powers.

The Mackintoshes', then living in London made two notable contributions to this room. The first was a

fireplace (Illus. 43, p.30), which embodied the flags of the Allied Nations in coloured enamels. The second was a pair of large canvases about forty inches square inspired by the words of the 65th psalm: 'Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ..... and the little hills shall rejoyce'. (9, p.144)

It has not been possible to discover many details of the furniture, fittings and decorative scheme of the Dug Out. However the two elevation drawings of the wall (Illus. 44, p.31) give an indication of its general appearance - there was a small lobby which gave access to lavatories, a rest room with comfy chairs, a writing desk and hanging flower basket and, of course, a tea room. The Dug Out was completely without natural light with black shiny ceilings and dark walls highlighted by strong patches of colour in the decorations and artificial lighting. Here, the resemblance to a war time bunker being without daylight is note-worthy.

Whether or not these elevation drawings correspond with the executed work, one can see that strong linear patterns and dark colours relieved by small patches of red, blue or green, were to dominate the decorations. The triangle appears in a less obvious role, around the door to the ladies' lavatories, but the square lattice is as prominent as ever.

The furniture designs (Illus. 45, 46, p.32) show Mackintosh's use of a 'square section' larger than usually found in his furniture.

This gives the chairs in particular, a heavier, slightly ungainly appearance, but it was almost certainly necessary for them to stand out from the distracting decorations. (11, p.70)

It is upsetting that this adventurous tea room scheme of which there are no photographs has vanished without trace. It shows that Mackintosh and Miss Cranston had still new ideas. This was to be the last tea room commission and the last major tea room work in Glasgow.

CHAPTER I I

Demise.

Miss Cranston continued to preside over her four Tea Rooms until 1917 when the death of her husband Major John Cochrane (who gave her financial aid) snuffed out Kate's will to continue. She soon parted with the Tea Rooms, bringing her career to an abrupt end. She had been devoted to her husband and after his passing seemed to lose interest in life.

Now I will trace the demise of the individual Tea Rooms which illustrates this story of decline.

1. The Buchanan Street Tea Rooms subsequently passed into the hands of the Cydesdale Bank and the interior was entirely remodelled. In fact, all that remains of the original scheme is two large fireplaces - designed by Walton - in the staff recreation room on the top floor.

2. The 114 Argyle Street premises was eventually sold to Messrs Manfield and turned into a shoe shop. With the exception of a forlorn rusty fireplace in the attic, all vestiges of Miss Cranston's charming tea-rooms has vanished. A heavy mahogany staircase with turned balusters stands where Mackintosh's elegant stairway used to be.

3. **The Ingram Street Tea Rooms** were still in operation after the first world war in the ownership of Coopers. At this stage Mackintosh was largely forgotton and his ageing interiors looked battered and strangely dated. Ordinary chairs replaced broken originals, and tables were set with a disconnecting mixture of Mackintosh cutlery and standard cafeteria ware. Nevertheless the bulk was undamaged and under pressure the corporation bought the Tea Rooms for £23,000 in 1950. Nothing could be more indicative of prevailing tastes, than the destruction which occured during the city's ownership over the next two decades, when the premises were let to an outlet for tacky tartan souvenirs.

The Oak Room was painted and grained, with silver and gold flecked insulating tiles stuck to the roof. Doors were moved, tiles smashed, the gesso panels of the White Room brightened up. Finally the building came into the hands of 'Stakis'(a Greek restaurant chain), but and application to revive the interiors for restaurant use was failed by fire regulations and rampant dry rot. The remains were dismantled in 1971 and spent some years in limbo, before passing into the care of Glasgow Art Galleries and Museums, while the building was largely demolished. Much of the furniture had gone to the Glasgow School of Art, when Coopers closed the tea room in 1950. A small section of the Chinese Room had been recreated at Kelvingrove Museum and one end of the Cloister Room reconstructed for the Glasgow Girls exhibition in 1990. There are plans for a further

recreation.

It is a chastening tale, only too characteristic of the bad old days before Glasgow woke to its architectural heritage and the benefits of taking care of it.

4. **The Willow Tea Rooms:** The Willow Tea Rooms were sold to Messrs, Smith restauranteurs in 1919 with a name change to 'The Kensington'. Some years later the premises were absorbed by a large adjacent store 'Daly's', in 1927 and the fine elevation to Sauchiehall Street completely and utterly ruined by the insertion of a commonplace shop-front. Fortunately, no alterations were made to the upper part of the facade which still remains intact and retains much of its original character, not withstanding a thick coat of soot. Over the years the store was ruthless in converting the premises to shop use, breaking through the party wall and. as already mentioned, smashing away Mackintosh's frontage at the street level and much of the interior. (9, p.147)

Apart from the 'Room de Luxe' little remains of Mackintosh's interior work. The staircases, a certain amount of panelling, the plaster frieze, several fireplaces and a large elliptical wrought iron light fitting are still to be seen, though they appear strangely out of place amid the shop fittings which have since been installed.

Thus Miss Cranston's courageous tea room enterprises have come to a more or less ignominious end and she herself, after selling her house and estate at 'Nilshill',

Glasgow (1920), returned nostalgically to Georges Sq., where she spent her childhood. She lived in comparative seclusion in the North British Hotel until her death on the 18th April 1934. So Glasgow lost one of its most colourful personalities and the past twenty years since her death have witnessed the merciless destruction of most of her work and of the artists she employed.

It is not easy to imagine what would be the position of modern decorative art in Glasgow today, apart from the group of tea-houses controlled by Miss Cranston, with the comission of Walton in 1888, 'decorative art' may be said to have entered on a new phase at Glasgow. Kate effectively started Waltons career in 1888 and gave him an important push in 1896. But posterity owes her most of her sustained and loyal patronage to the Mackintoshes'. (2, p.86)

Revival.

In section one of this chapter I demonstrated the virtual disappearance of the Glasgow Cranston Tea Rooms since Miss Cranston's death in 1934. But 1975 might also be picked, again a little arbitrarily for neatness sake, but not unreasonably, as the beginning of the recent upturn in Glasgow's fortunes. In the mid-seventies the first stone-cleaning programmes marked the process of revaluing the nineteenth century past. Tenements stood a chance of being rehabilitated rather than automatically flattened.

Buildings in the city centre began to have their facades propped up while rebuilding proceeded behind them. The losses continued, of course, and the motorway programme cut an unstoppable swathe of destruction, but attitudes changed. By the time this reached its apogee in Glasgows year as European City of Culture in 1990, the building activity and air of prosperity and confidence in the city could be likened to the bustle of the 1890's - though the city has its appalling black spots hidden from middle-class view.

Economic revival spawned a rash of wine bars in the '70's, accommodating women in the way that the traditional Scottish pubs still did not. In the '80's evolved the phenomenon of the cafe bar. These were run by stylish youngsters detatched and casual, who have little in common with the tea room waitresses. These places are nevertheless in a sense successors to the tea rooms, with their designer decor and convenient flexability. Afternoon tea has lost its place in common routine and patrons are more likely to dawdle over a capucchino than a cup of tea, but the demand for a good quick lunch in attractive surroundings during a working day remains, albeit undermined by the takeaway sandwich.

However with the revival of Mackintosh in the late '60's, Daly's restored the 'Room de Luxe' to as much of its original state as possible. Though the decorations have been altered in recent years, the fireplaces alone remain of

the original scheme. This restoration to tea room use of Mackintosh's 'piece de resistance' perhaps symbolises this change of attitude. A new appreciation of Mackintosh fired by the final loss of the Ingram St tea room, was mobilised by the foundation of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society, in 1973.

In the mid '70's the society watched anxiously over the future of the Willow within Daly's imminent departure from the building when it was acquired by the Arrowcraft Development group in 1978, restoration as far as possible to its original structure was made a condition of planning permission. Fittingly it was Mackintosh's old firm now Keppie Henderson, which was called to consult the complex task. The destruction over the past few decades was carefully undone: the party walls rebuilt, the ugly plate-glass shop front removed, the columns and beams and false ceiling of the ugly gallery replaced, casts made of the strange plaster panels of the frieze and so on - though the new beneficient planning authorities penetrated a different kind of wrecking when fire regulations enforced the glassing in of Mackintosh's open stair and gallery. (Illus. 35, p.24).

The Billards Room on the next floor now houses a gallery. The rest of the building is occupied by the clutter of jewellery and a 'Mackintoshicana' buisness. Despite a lack of refinement in the restored decor, one can only be thankful that so much of this intimate little building can once more be appreciated. The queues of enthusiastic

tourists on the narrow stairs waiting to take tea and try out a Mackintosh chair suggests that more of the premises might probably be restored to their intended use, in time.

None of the other tea rooms have been restored only some of the furnishings saved. Fortunately enough in the 1970's the 'People's Palace Museum' in Glasgow salvaged what it could from Argyle St premises as refittings to keep the Cydesdale Bank and Manfields show shop up to date had removed nearly all traces of the original interiors.

Today, there is an exploitative appreciation of Mackintosh's tea room designs and imitations commonly known as 'Mockintosh' are rampant in Glasgow today. An example I noticed in the Sauchiehall Centre shopping mall is a particularly crass example . Crude application of Mackintosh motifs to its open plan 'food-court' including and 'echo' of the Argyle Street high-back chair, in plywood, metal-tubing and naked screws serves only to highlight by contrast the old quality of the tea rooms.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES

The main intention of this chapter is to provide a clear and succinct account of the various influences on the designs of the Cranston Tea Rooms. The major stylistic influences were the result of a great many intersecting trends: the Arts and Crafts Movement and its striving for renewal; the Pre-Raphaelite School and the literary and symbolical tendencies; the refined art of Japan, and the Celtic Revival with its nationalistic urge.

It was Mackintosh who, with great creative power seized on the stylistic tendencies of the age, giving them independent form in what is called 'Scottish Art Nouveau'. It has therefore proved necessary for me to deal with the various movements which contributed to the 'Cranston Tea Rooms' style and decoration.

1 THE INFLUENCE OF ART NOUVEAU.

Art Nouveau is essentially a European style of decoration which developed a number of national variants about 1892-1902-3 but with precursers further back in the nineteenth century. Its leading exponent in Glasgow was Charles Rennie Mackintosh. (1, pp. 14-16)

The style of the Tea Rooms designed by Mackintosh ranges from the diagrammatic version of full blown Art Nouveau, complete with mysterious females and

spiralling plants, at one end of the scale (Buchanan Street Tea Room - High Art Nouveau), to unadorned arrangements of geometric shapes at the other end (Ingram Street and The Willow Tea Rooms - Late Art Nouveau). In between, every degree of formalization and abstraction is to be found. Much of Mackintosh's tea-room work has as its main feature the swelling curve that characterizes Art Nouveau at the turn of the century. His ornament often has some symbolic meaning, as in the 'Willow' Tea Rooms, another feature of Art Nouveau. Although Mackintosh and his wife disliked the writhing forms of French and Belgian Art Nouveau, their work is usually put in the same category. (14, p.98)

The fundamental decorative principles of the movement and one of Mackintosh's fundamental artistic 'points of departure' was the decorative value of line. The mirror which Mackintosh designed in 1903 for the 'Room de Luxe' (Illus. 40, p.28) in the Willow Tea Rooms on Sauchiehall Street illustrates a number of his outstanding decorative qualities. The mirror is built up of intersecting vertical and horizental lines together with separate surfaces which are egg or drop shaped. The lines are given peculiar tension by their deviation from regular forms: the straight line is not quite straight, as one would expect, but slightly curved, while the circle is not perfectly round but appears to have been inflated, until it has acquired a slightly unsymmetrical

ellipsodial form. Mackintosh always manages to retain an unresolved tension - factor in regular shapes. He often makes use of the onion, the egg or the drop shape (Illus. 35, p.24), the split bud or cell form, the thin line with the circle at one end and the 'flexed knee joint'. All these elements are formally speaking closed, not often or sprawling - and in their small deviations from customary shapes they give the impression of breathing, budding, or being alive (21,p.32).

'Nature' is observed here as if from a great distance. The figurative element of representation has lost its value, existing merely to allow a play with forms pursued as a harmony of lines.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART NOUVEAU MOTIFS.

The 'motifs' Mackintosh employed were increasingly giving way to abstraction in a movement away from realism and naturalism, Mackintosh always avoided naturalism; this can be noted in the Buchanan Street Tea Rooms where the overall view of the murals (Illus. 6, p.5) is one of strongly delineated and highly conventionalized human and vegetable forms. Mackintosh rejected the literal use of organic decoration and confronted allegorical devices by the use of abstract motifs. In the Willow Tea Rooms, the motif of the 'Willow' lay ready to hand in the name of 'Sauchiehall

Street' which means 'alley of willows'. This obviously appealed to the Mackintoshes', especially to Margaret MacDonald for imagery.

In the Buchanan Street Tea Rooms, Mackintosh's stencilled female figures are treated in a stylised manner which did not reflect contemporary female types and which enshewed naturalistic representations in favour of decorative execution. The stylistic movement thus appears as being in the direction of increasing abstraction though a highly innovative approach to imagery which although founded upon a synthesis of several contemporary influences fascilitates significant freedom from the kind of substantive meaning congerelized through traditions of western realism.

The Tea Rooms link with Art Nouveau involved a return to origins focusing fundamentally on 'nature' which became an overpowering decorative and constructional theme within the Cranston Tea Rooms. Thus characteristic ornamentation of the movement was based on a stylised and markedly abstracted plant form. The sprouting bulb, leaf and petal, rose and tulip, buds and egg-shaped forms were throughout the development of the tea rooms, the characteristic emblems, being abstract rather than realistic representations of nature. These abstractions can undoubtedly be regarded as motifs associated with life and growing force. Just as Mackintosh regarded himself as the germ of a new age

and a new style, which was to flourish, it is natural to assume that he expressed this feeling in the motifs he chose. The object of which was to free furniture and interior decoration from the grip of Historicism. Thus, this artistic influence known as Art Nouveau became a clearly defined and conscious attempt on the part of Mackintosh to evolve a style for the tea rooms entirely independent of tradition.

Alternatively he also used nature to provide imagery which evoked a psychological mood - creating the right atmosphere was important. It often determined his recognition of the differences between the 'sexes' and in so doing used motifs evoking a 'flowery' elegant feminine atmosphere in his ladies' tea rooms and a more prosaic rectangular Japenese-like atmosphere in his mens' rooms. In many of the ladies' Rooms the 'stylised Glasgow rose' appears. It can be found frequently used in the Willow Tea Rooms in stencilled form (Illus. 38, p.26), and in decorative doors (Illus. 75, p.56) and the panels. He provided a 'pretty' decorative element, presumably attributed to Margaret MacDonald's romantic influence.

Mackintosh appeared to have been impelled by an urge to express growth, particularly seen in his use of narrow, and angular upright forms. Surging vertical lines invariably predominate whether in lattice patterning (Illus. 22, p.14) or in exaggerated high back chairs. It has

been said by Howarth (9, p.145) that the designs of the tea rooms are directly linked with European Art Nouveau, if one is to interpret the linear and symbolic elements in Mackintosh's work as expressing 'growth' and 'force'.

Another important characteristic of the Art Nouveau influence on Mackintosh's tea room style is the well balanced relationship between ornament and surface, 'while at the same time the ornament appears to fuse with the structure of the object it ornaments'. (21,p430). Consequently the various elements in a design seem to flow into one another. Taking the 'Room de Luxe' in the Willow Tea Rooms, for example, it can easily be seen that the room has been designed as an 'entity'. All the component parts are subordinate to the main decorative conception 'willow' and they fuse to such an extent that they cannot exist apart form one another. In this field of interior decoration Art Nouveau is applied with absolute consistency as it represents a synthesis of form. Can you imagine a silver high back chair from the Room de Luxe' fitting in with the interior decor of the Billiards of Smoking Rooms for instance?

'Colour' was another important feature in the synthesis of each room. Invariably the colour ranges of the individual tea rooms vary some what, as well as it's form-pattern but various common features may be observed. Art Nouveau influenced Mackintosh's predominant use of pastel shades: silver-grey, pale grey,

pale blue, pale violet, mauve and pink and a predilication for olive green, cream, greenish pink and milk white. Mackintosh applied colour to everything from whole interiors to furniture. It should, however, be noted that Mackintosh sometimes decends to a very deep toned colour scale especially in his dining room interiors for men.

FURNITURE

Finally and probably the most significant factor that associates these tea rooms with Art Nouveau is that the furniture shapes employed are entirely free from historicism and they are at times subtly refined with exaggerated single features such as the back of the chair and the square capital-like terminations of upright parts. Hand in hand with Mackintosh's plant form - language goes the frenquent use of geometrical form, especially the 'square': These two flourish side by side in the tea room style without either merging with or disturbing one another.

A lot of the tea room furniture has an aspect of novelty which makes it appear unrelated to the history of furniture design. Mackintosh abandoned the accepted principles of design and construction, - he lacquered some pieces of his furniture in various colours, some blue (Illus. 22, p.14), some silver (Illus. 64, p.46) ..... This was usual practice during Art Nouveau's main phase, they were marked with the purposeful intention of

concealing wood disguising it under a homogenous mass of colour so that one does not recognise the material used for construction - 'Aestheticism' being the all important factor.

However a weakness common to the exponents of Art Nouveau and especially to Mackintosh's tea room furnishings, was that the search for new forms for their own sake irrespective of tradition, logic and the nature of the materials in which they were executed, resulted in the furniture not withstanding the 'test of time'. This indeptness into aestheticism overroad practicality, 'function' was the last element to be considered in the design of things. Quality was equated with authenticity and newness, hence a heightened significance was bestowed upon experimentation, inventiveness and imagination. This will all become very evident in the examination of individual pieces of furniture designed by Mackintosh for the tea rooms in the crafts chapter.

2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT.

Mackintosh was not an Arts and Crafts designer. However, some of his earlier furniture desings in the tea rooms do appear to show some of the enthusiam for the guilded principles of the Arts and Crafts movement. Some of the Movements principal aims may be usefully summarised:

- Firstly and most obviously the Arts and Crafts

Movement emphasised the artistic potential of everyday objects.

- Secondly, vastly higher standards of craftsmanship were applied to these objects and the ideal of craftsmanship was realised much more widely than had been possible before.
- Thirdly, new stress was given to the importance of function in the creation of forms - what Voysey was to call 'fitness for purpose'.

Mackintosh readily accepted the first and the third of these principles but craftmanship was too often for him synonymous with old fashioned methods and techniques of construction. If traditional craftsmanship stood between him and the realisation of a design then it was craftsmanship which had to go. This meant that many of his Tea Room pieces have not withstood the test of time and that in Glasgow at the time, they gained a reputation for shoddy craftsmanship as well as providing an inhuman lack of comfort; high back chairs were hard on the 'back' and would have been perfectly suitable in the Edwardian era.

But some of the early furniture was well made, at least in the sense that it was sturdy and that it takes cogniscence of the assimilations of the basic material - wood. Some good examples of this style of furniture can be found in the Ingram Street Tea Room: The barrel

shaped armchair with its domino table as seen in (Illus. 47, p.33.) and the sturdy armchairs and tables employed in the smoking room of the Willow Tea Room (Illus. 48, p.34) The 'ladderback' chair found in many of the tea rooms (Illus.31, p.20) represents the successful solution of Mackintosh's attempts to use traditional vernacular design, an important part of the Arts and Crafts Movement. However, it was to lead to the development of the later non-traditional high back.

VOYSEY

Mackintosh was greatly influenced by Charles A. Voysey (a leading exponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement) who designed some very simple chairs in plain oak, the uprights often having, or ending in small platforms and a heart cut out of the back. Voysey led Mackintosh towards a more rational stark style in architecture and interior design. Mackintosh first came under Voysey's spell after the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1898 in Glasgow and though assimilating some of the older man's spirit, Mackintosh expressed himself in his own way, as can be seen in the furnishings of the 'Willow'. Although Mackintosh subscribed to Voysey's ideals and closely emulated his methods, he remained always the individualist and applied himself to the development of his own personal style with Voysey as his initial inspiration, not his master.

> . . . . the value of Voysey's art,
> wrote a contemporary is not in
> the use of any material, or of any
> mannerism, but is his evident
> effort to seek, first the
> utilitarian qualities of strength
> and firmness and to obtain beauty
> by common honesty! (26, p.98)

Mackintosh applied 'Voysey's rule' to a few of his early pieces of Tea Room furniture. However, for the most part he became obsessed with the 'beauty' and abstract imagery, as can be seen in the 'Room de Luxe' which became more decorative than practical or utilitarian.

It is in the later furniture designs that one can especially see that Mackintosh's Art Nouveau style became absorbed solely in authenticism, being opposed to the utilitarian attitude and values of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Thus the initial enthusiam aroused by Voysey and his contemporaries gradually waned.

3 JAPANESE AND ORIENTAL INFLUENCES

> Japanese art was the hobby of
> those in Glasgow . . . .
> among the artists as well as the
> dilettanti who could not afford
> whistlers . . .
>
> - Neil Munro, Glasgow 1910.

The impact and understanding of the arts of Japan

was vital to the development of Mackintosh's tea room work. While he certainly looked inward to his own country for inspiration, he undoubtedly looked to one other source, and was subtly but deeply affected by the 'alien' civilization of Japan. He was not alone in this for the influence of Japanese arts in Britain, especially in Glasgow, is well documented. While Voysey, Beardsley, Whistler, the Arts and Crafts associates had all responded to the stimulus of Japan, in Glasgow there were a number of opportunities for a young and maturing Mackintosh to have had first-hand contact with Japan's culture in the various exhibitions of 1878, 1882, 1889 and 1893. (11, p.37)

The library of the School of Art, the city library's and the Art Gallery and Museum all had books and objects for Japanese study. There was a Japanese partition at the 1901 International Exhibition and two war ships were commissioned by the Japanese imperial Navy. Japan was so great that it was bound to influence Mackintosh in the designing of the Cranston Tea Rooms.

A substantial number of Japanese travelled to and form Glasgow. Whether Mackintosh sought them out or not we may never know but what is certain is that it was not in Mackintosh's character to rely on superficial imitation of anything

indeed he looked for and
understood the symbolic and

> spiritual meaning in the arts of Japan and in them found a new, historical encumbered source on which to draw for inspiration though not for imitation. (21, p.206)

Indirectly the Japanese influence led to a more sophisticated attitude to interior decoration, with a special feeling for the light and airy. Furthermore there is an interest in simple and rectilinear construction. The influence of Japanese decorative art also led to a greater understanding of ornament and background, of two-dimensional effect and also asymmetrical conception of detail as well as of the whole. While many examples of the Japanese influence abound Mackintosh's tea room work, it is most noticeable in his use of spatial relationships, his use of screens and refinement of line. These examples of formality appealed to Scotland's own tea rituals. (11,p.39)

Although Mackintosh's study of architectural design from Japan was derived form second hand sources - he never went to Japan himself - many architectural details in his lexicon of motifs came from reworking and reshaping Japanese themes. For example, the crutch-like 'T' support in traditional Japanese roofs is perhaps recalled in the balcony supports in the 'Willow Tea Rooms'. Illus. 49, p.35.

Mackintosh was evidently impressed with the

Japanese domestic house style. Could the delightful freedom and spaciousness of open plan be translated into Western terms - in the 'Tea Room'. Could its remarkable flexibility and exciting aesthetic potentialities be exploited under the climatic conditions prevailing in Glasgow? These questions Mackintosh attempted to answer in his own way by the use of openwork screens, balconies, square posts and lentel constructions.

USE OF SPACE.

Mackintosh's supreme skill as an architect and designer was in his mastery handling of space, volume and shape. He designed his tea rooms in such a way as to reinforce ideas of place, of 'self' through confrontation with a non-historicist architecture.

In controlling the layout of the tea room scheme he never lost sight of space or was smothered in irrelevant detail. He realised to the full, the pleasantries and valuable repose of undecorated space and in conceiving a design he has felt and realised the effects. The tea rooms provided a series of exercises in the control of volume and organisation of the plan. Mackintosh always considered the relationship between the careful positioning of his furniture within a space and the decorative elements in the room. This is perhaps the most important element of the Japanese style to be seen in his work. The unerring skill of the Japanese in

assembling a perfectly balanced composition from straight lines and simple forms combined with Mackintosh's own imagination produced a totally new style of tea room which has never before been matched.

In the 'Willow Tea Rooms' Mackintosh's characteristic interpretation of space is evident in the use of screens (Illus.50, p.35) and slender partitions, (Illus.31, p.36) which were never solely used to solve a utilitarian problem. Balconies and screens were common in commercial buildings but Mackintosh made more than a practical use of them, to achieve a specific visual or psychological objective, - an interesting vista perhaps, a pattern in depth or alternatively to create an illusion of space or an impression of intimacy.

Mackintosh has frankly met and greeted the difficulties 'space' presented so that we recognise them no longer as difficulties but as elements of the composition. The Oak and Cloister Rooms at the Ingram Stret Tea Rooms are perfect examples to illustrate my point. Mackintosh overcame a shortage of space in the Oak Room with the conception of a balcony, and the decorative elements of the Cloister Room together with the use of high backed chairs also distracted from the small area of space involved.

Other examples of Japanese influences can be found in the China Tea Room at Ingram Street. (Illus. 23,p.14) This boasted several exotic oriental motifs,

notabley a pagoda-like canopy over the doorway and a pseudo-Chinese chippendale screen. The surviving picture can be best illustrated in this verse from the Ballad of Bedford Park, 1881:

> Now he who loves aesthetic cheer
> and does not mind the damp.
> May come and read Rosetti here
> beside a japanese lamp. (11, p.31)

Finally the upper floor of the Willow Tea Room - the Gallery best illustrates a Japanese scene of order and simplicity. Here Mackintosh removed a large portion of the roof and replaced the ceiling with a stretched gauze or muslin which brings a gentle flattening shadowless illumination to the interior. (Illus. 49, p.35)

SQUARE MOTIF.

The Japanese arts inspired Mackintosh's use of the simple pierced square motif which he applied to the design of carpets (Illus. 39, p.27), doors (Illus. 52, p.36), staircases (Illus. 34, p.23), cutlery and there are many other details which show his increasing fascination with the square. In the Dutch kitchen at Argyle Street,(Illus. 14,15,p.10) Mackintosh chose the square as his theme, a chequer pattern of different sizes in black and white. The floor was covered with chequered linoleum, bands of white stencilled squares flowed down the black-painted

central columns. The dado was similarly covered by a small-scale chequer pattern and even the dresser had a square mother-of-pearl panel.

The 'square' motif can also be found incorporated into a lot of his furniture designs, most noticably in the high back chair in the 'Room de Luxe'. The rear panel of these chairs contain nine small square insets of purple glass (Illus. 54, p.37). The armchair for the 'Willow' Gallery also features the square as its overall design concept. It is basically made up of the three square pieces of timber, two sides and a back, the two sides having two square holes and the back a segmented hole (Illus. 63, p.45). Many of the fireplaces in the 'Willow', especially the ones for the Back Saloon and the Billiards Room, also feature the square (Illus. 55, p.38). But of all the tea rooms in the 'Willow', the Billiards Room relied most on the square namely in the designs of the seating (Illus. 65, p.47), tables (Illus. 70, p.51) and fireplaces (Illus.71, p.52).

FURNITURE.

The Japanese influence was also manifested in Mackintosh's furniture work. Many of which were geometric, simple and painted in the manner of Japanse traditional furniture. The pierced planes of furniture and timberwork recall the Oriental 'Sukashi' procedure - see the pierced oval high back chair for the Argyle Street Tea Rooms Illus.13,p.9. Also the lacquering of his furniture inevitably originated from Japan Illus. 14,15,p.10.

Japanese influence on Mackintosh was both direct and secondary through the architects and artists he admired. He owned Japanese prints and ornaments and displayed these in his own house and in his drawings he often depicted women wearing 'Kimono', an idiom which he applied to his stencilled murals at the Buchanan Street Tea Rooms Ilus. 6, p.5. (15,p.116)

The Willow Tea Rooms 'sign' Illus. 28, p.18 used decorative devices in the form of abstract circular or angular decorations which resemble the Japanese heraldic 'Kamon' or 'Mon'; these are abstract motifs derived from geometry - circular metal shapes, and natural forms - the stylised bird form. (15,p166)

In the 'Room de Luxe' Mackintosh created a partly mirrored wall interior. Entry is by means of a large pair of very elaborate stained glass doors. The form is reminicent of the familiar Japanese 'Kimono' shape which Mackintosh used in a number of tea rooms but here it is crammed with details based on the Art Nouveau's natural forms particularly the traditional Glasgow style rose. (Illus. 75, p.56)

In conclusion, and to give a contemporary estimate of the influence of Japanese art, it might be interesting to quote Marcel Bing's final pronouncement, in the chapter on Japan in Richard Grauls book, Die Krisis im Kunstgewerbe, 1901:

> Thus some artists believed they could find a new source of ornamentation, or even the lost principle of modern style, in various linear combinations. These attempts seem to have been inspired to a certain extent by the graceful wary movement of Japanese line, which has so happily influenced linear ornament. Which a doubt drawing has in the decorative arts experienced an enrichment in new kinds of linear coils and developed a manner, in which can be found something of the; charm pliancy and sound decorative understanding of oriental motifs.

EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE.

The interest in Egypt falls outside the scope of Orientalism in its narrower sense, but nevertheless an important factor at this time, playing an important role in the decorative arts. Thomas Howarth points out that the murals in the luncheon room in Buchanan Street have something in common with Egyptian decorative work - 'an impression conveyed by the employment of stylised trees reminiscent of the lotus, and the ubiquitous peacock motive' This peacock motive also appears on the unorthodox haordings which piqued curiously outside Miss Cranston's Buchanan Street Tea Rooms in 1896 before they were opened Fig.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CELTIC REVIVAL.

One of the most potent stimuli in the evolution of Mackintosh's Art Nouveau style and one that has generally been overlooked is the Celtic Revival. The elements most frequently adopted are the asymmetrical conception, the 'entrelac' motif, the linear twisting coils, and the principle that the decoration should be kept in one plane, raised above the background plane.

Mackintosh's tall willowy women in the Buchanan Street Tea Room (Illus. 7, p.6) from 1897, are surrounded by 'entrelac' motifs which more than anything else, resemble the Scandinavian animal ornamentation from the beginning of the 11th century, but with this difference, that Mackintosh has omitted the small dragon heads, and given it an extra touch of the Art Nouveau 'whiplash'.

PRE-RAPHAELITE INFLUENCE.

Apart from the Art Nouveau attitude to nature, the interest in 'motifs' was another important and sustaining idea among the Pre-Raphaelites. While naturalism was gradually transforming into the cult of linearism, motifs became a deeper and more important part of Margaret MacDonald's contribution to the Cranston Tea Rooms.

The whole world of Art Nouveau was naturally subject to Pre-Raphaelite influence, so that no direct contact with Rossetti or Bone Jones for instance would have been necessary. Yet, in the case of the

Mackintoshes' we find a concrete link with the specific wave of the early Pre-Raphaelism, particularly with the writings of Rossetti who inspired a lot of decorative work, themes and colour schemes. (21,p143)

Margaret MacDonald designed many panels for the tea rooms with Rossettis influence in mind, but the most inspiring and noticeable of these appears in the heart of the Room de Luxe. She is outstanding for her illustration of mystic poetry, and masterlinks imaginative writings. The visions of Dante Gabriel Rossetti 'echo profoundly in her soul' - (3, p.4) MacDonald creates drawings, paintings and reliefs whose usually meticulous and delicate execution never hampers their spiritual clarity.

Just as it is impossible to put into prose the perfection of Rossetti's sonnets so it is impossible to describe in mere words the consummate beauty of Margaret Macdonalds' Room de Luxe work Illus 56, p.39. This was inspired by one of Rossetti's sonnets from 'The House of Life' - a sonnet, moreover, whose sensuous, sonorous rhythms epitomize the eternal sadness of her work: (21,p.143)

> O ye, all ye that walk in
> Willowwood,
> That walk with hallow faces
> burning white;
> What fathom-depth of soul-struck
> willowhood,
> What long, what longer hours, one
> lifelong night

Ere ye again, who so in vain have wooed
Your last hope lost, who so in vain invite
Your lips to that their unforgotten food
Ere ye, ere ye again shall see the light!

The vision of grief and beauty that the Anglo Italian poet draws from the tangular willow is brought back to life in Margaret MacDonalds panel

it is a symphony of peaceful, pure colours of lines which seem to have been touched by the breath of fate of star like precious gems whose lustre weaves a veil of mysterious light over the faces and forms of women who wander silently through the willow grove under a magic spell. (3, p.5)

The panel is the innermost Kernal, the heart of the building, and the 'blood' which - flows to it is shining, glowing and the limbs through which it runs are arrogantly healthy. (3, p.4)

In the stylised main hall of the ground floor in the Gallery, the 'willow' motif dominates the walls and pillars. This regularity seems to point upwards to an invisible but not distant room and that room is the Room de Luxe.

How many of Miss Cranston's patrons recognised

and appreciated the innermost meaning of the Pre-Raphaelite influence and were unable to unravel the mystery of the mirrors and willow leaves is a matter for conjecture. But to the sensitive observer the Willow Tea Rooms present a miracle of applied art -

'the result of thoughts full of love'.

- wrote the enchanted German visitor (3, p.5)

ART DECO.

The combination of 'form and colour' anticipate the linear grammar of Art Deco - this linear style developed in the tea room work of succeeding decades. Mackintosh's Art Deco relationship began in his exploration of the Chinese and Cloister Tea Rooms in 1911 at Ingram Street and finally in Miss Cranston's later commission at the height of the World War in 1917. This Art Deco interior (Illus. 45, p.32) was to be the Dug-Out at the basement of the Willow Tea Rooms.

In these tea rooms, Mackintosh's style evolved even further, becoming more abstract, in his use of square geometry, intricate grids (Illus. 44, p.31), triangles, steps, stripes and mosaic patterinigs. (15, p.32). The furniture of this 'Jazz Age' is characterized as 'Futurist'; in its use of geometric elements, lacquering and strong colours as opposed to the Art Nouveau stage where Mackintosh used stained woods, soft, blurred

colours which later became lighter, more plain and painted in his post-Art Nouveau period. The style and colouring of the bright yellow settle (with its purple upholstery), from the Dug-Out (Illus. 45, p32) is typical of Mackintosh's later interior designs which have strong links with Art deco.

THE INFLUENCE ON THE VIENNA SECESSION.

Mackintosh's tea room work had a profound influence upon young Viennese designers. The style they evolved bore little resemblance to the furniture pieces in the tea rooms which Mackintosh exhibited in Vienna, but their growing dependence upon painted furniture, coloured inlays and the use of the square as a decorative motif points to their considerable knowledge of Mackintosh's work. The increasing use of geometrical motifs in the secessionists designs are likely to have been inspired by Mackintosh and the tea rooms he designed.

CHAPTER I V

CRAFTS

Virtually all of the tea room interiors were designed with the same total control over the varying elements in the composition: chairs, tables, fireplaces, doors, hat and coat stands, clocks, mirrors, carpets, wall decorations, light fixtures even cutlery (Illus. 57, p.40) and cruet sets all came out of the same fertile imagination.

1 CHAIRS

The most controversial pieces of furniture designed by Mackintosh for the tea rooms were undoubtedly chairs, which he used as a means of expressing his dissatisfaction with the existing order of things. He used to place tracing paper over illustrations of fashionable pieces of the day and experiment with new forms that were usually remote from the original model. Backs would be extended, arms splayed, rails deepened and remodelled, stencilled fabrics or glass inlays introduced and so forth. (6, p.41)

(i) High-backed chair with pierced oval back rail for the Argyle Street Tea Rooms, c 1897. (Illus. 13, p.9)

The introduction of the excessively high back (53 inch or more from the floor) with its obvious disadvantage of imbalance seems to have been a feature employed by Mackintosh. They evolved as a way of defining space and gave a pleasant sense of privacy at

the table. Their lack of comfort might almost be seen as an advantage in the context of a busy tea room, and anyway this common complaint against Mackintosh takes no account of lamentable changes in posture since the beginning of the century: after all if one was an Edwardian lady one's back did not touch one's chair - in public at least (Illus. 58, p.40). More damaging is the charge of unsound construction in some cases, and unwieldiness in others - drawbacks avoided by George Walton's designs. The first high backed chairs appeared in the luncheon room at Argyle Street Tea Room in 1897. The high back was a 'motif' which became Mackintosh's own and which distinguished his tea room chairs from those of a host of other designers. This chair is one of the best known of the whole of Mackintosh's oeuvre and is certainly the most advanced stylistically to be designed for the Argyle Street Tea Rooms. Most of the other furniture at the tea rooms can be said to have some basis in tradition or at least to have stylistic connections with the Arts and Crafts movement but this chair is quite different.

The high back chairs have no practical function other than in the context of the design of the whole room. At Argyle Street Mackintosh was faced with a long narrow room, divided by George Walton's partitions, about 1.5m high. In order for his chairs not to be over-whelmed by the room with its screens and heavy

decorated beams and columns Mackintosh increased the height of their backs. When the room was empty of people the chairs stood like sentinels at the tables, and when the customers were seated the oval panels would appear over their heads emphasising the pattern of the layout of the tables and chairs in the somewhat rigid and formal architecture of the dining room. As I have observed elsewhere (ie. the 'Willow') the high backed chairs grouped around a dining table create a remarkable sense of intimacy, of enclosure, in fact a room within a room. We can only assume that Mackintosh recognised and intended to achieve this effect. (2, p.47)

This chair is worth analysing in some detail for although individual motifs may appear in earlier pieces this is the first time they are brought together in one design. These high backs with the oval top rail are conventionalised tree forms, expressive of the upward surging vitality of so much of his work.

The wood is dark-stained oak, and the upholstery usually of horse hair. The seat narrows towards the back, and the square front legs taper at the bottom. The back legs are more complicated as can be seen in the illustration. At the bottom they are rectangular, but as they rise they gently curve towards the front of the chair, the rear surface more quickly becoming vertical than the front of the leg. The hard corners become softer, disappearing gradually as the section changes

through ellipse until it finally tapers to a circle. At the front and the sides the legs are connected by two circular stretches, tapering as they enter the legs, but the back has a solid spar connecting the back legs. This is curved at the bottom, echoing the curve of the front of the seat. From this spar rise two broad splats - not connected to the back of the seat - terminating in a large oval backrail which also connects the two upper parts of the back legs. This rail, cut from a single piece of timber, has been machined to display a curve through its section; it is located in slots in the uprights, with no fixing by pins or glue. The stylised shape of a flying bird, wings outstretched, is cut through this oval. (6, pp.80-92)

In this piece, Mackintosh breaks away from Arts and Crafts tenets. There is no 'truth to materials': he does not use his timber in a natural or organicway; its limitations seem to have forced him away from Morris, (5, p. 47) but as there was no alternative material to be used, soon after this Mackintosh adopted the practice of painting or ebonising his wood to conceal its grain.

A small number of chairs exist where the back splats are thicker and are attached to the back of the oval panel rather than mortised into it. There were probably ordered directly by Miss Cranston from a firm like Francis Smith (local cabinet maker) to provide extra seating. Their detailing suggests that Mackintosh was not involved in their manufacture.

(ii) Armchair with high upholstered back for the Argyle Stret Tea Room, c1897 Illus. 59, p.41.

This is one of the more successful and comfortable pieces from Argyle Street. It is made of oak, stained dark with horsehair upholstery and was intended for the Ladies Reading room. The carved decoration on the side panels is similar to that on the table (Illus. 67, p.49), except that here it is raised in front of the plane of the panel as well as being cut into it, as in the table.

(iii) High-back for the White Dining Room, Ingram Street Tea Rooms, c1900 Illus. 60, p42.

This is a taller and more elegant version of the high-backed chair. Its higher back, however, makes it less rigid and more liable to damage through careless use as the two back splats were not originally attached to the seat-rail, however, at some later time the chairs were strengthened by screwing them to the rear seat-rail. Here Mackintosh begins to make use of the Japanese square motif which appears again in his later high-back in the Willow Tea Rooms.

(iv) Chair for the Chinese Room, Ingram Street Tea Room. c1911 Illus. 24, p.15 .

This chair is manufactured out of ebonised pine. The fretted back and side rails match the Chinese style motifs of the 'Blue' Room. Much of the woodwork of the

Chinese room was painted blue or red and these chairs, if they ever were enamelled, would have been painted to match. There is no trace, however, of any other finish having been applied to them, other than the ebonising which most of them still display.

(v) Armchair for the Ingram Street Tea Room, c1907, Illus 51, p.43

I have already discussed this chair in relation to the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement as being one of the more solid pieces of furniture to be found in the Tea Rooms. These chairs were made of oak, stained dark. Although this chair was used in the Chinese Room in the late 1940's, there is no record of any such chair associated with Ingram Street which could be called armchairs, and I believe that they have been referred to as the 'barrel chairs'. (2, p.86)

(vi) Curved Lattice-back Chair for the Order Desk - Willow Tea Rooms, c1904, Illus. 62, p.44 .

This is one of the most impressive and novel of Mackintosh's chairs, made out of ebonised oak. It stood in the centre of the ground floor saloons, isolated and defining the point at which the white Front Salon became the dark Back Salon. Its basic role was to act as a transparent division between two spaces which are actually part of the same room. (2, p.158)

The chair is not semi-circular but segmental and

the design which appears to be straight forwardly based on simple geometrical forms, has other subtleties which become apparent on closer inspection. The chequer-work of the back forms a pattern of a stylised tree, another reference to willow trees, and the lattice is made from short horizontal insets between the continuous verticals. The front of the seat which also serves as a small locker or chest, projects beyond the two sides and then slopes gently backwards towards the bottom until it finishes within them. The base runs along this front panel, but at either end curves out to meet the side members.

The chair was provided for the supervisor who took orders from the waitresses and passed them to the kitchen below by dropping coloured balls, coded to each dish on the menu, down a tube to the kitchen below.

(vii) Ladderback chair for the Willow Tea Room, c 1903, Illus. 33, p.22.

These ladderback chairs for the Willow Tea Rooms represent Mackintosh's succinct rationalisation for the traditional ladderback and are the most successful solution to his attempts to use traditional vernacular designs. The chair looks strong yet simple, with rear uprights and front legs of rectangular and square section. The uprights are set slightly splayed and the rungs, which are again rectangular in section, are curved along their length and set into the leading edge of the uprights. The seats were originally rush.

The chair was not, however, as sturdy in use as it appeared and all the surviving examples some years ago have had an additional cross-piece fixed to the top of the uprights, behind the ladder to hold the uprights in position.

(viii) Armchair for the Willow Tea Rooms, c1903, Illus. 63, p.45.

These chairs were made out of ebonised oak and were very sturdy but not particularly comfortable. They were used in the ground floor saloons, the gallery and the smoking room. The chair is basically three square pieces of timber - two sides and a back, the sides having two square holes and the back however a segmented hole (a hand hole to assist in moving the chairs around). Their boxy shape contrasts with the taller and more open ladderbacks arranged alongside them in the layout of furniture which Mackintosh divised.

(ix) Chair with high back and coloured glass insets for the Room de Luxe. Willow Tea Rooms, c1903. Illus. 64, p.46.

These oak chairs were painted silver and contained nine coloured glass insets. They were upholstered in velvet and are the most famous of Mackintosh's Tea Room chairs. This and other pieces in the Room de Luxe are the only furniture to have been painted a colour other than black or white. The rear panel which contains nine small square insets of purple glass (Illus. 54,p.37) swells out

towards the back in a concave curve, projecting beyond the line of the two uprights and is fastened at the bottom to a stretcher. The front of the seat is wider than the back and the side panels below it are cut diagonally by a double ogee curve. The seat and back are upholstered in a deep purple velvet also used on the smaller chair and the fitted seating in the Room de Luxe.

(x) Fitted Seating for the Billiards Room - Willow Tea Room c1903. Illus. 65, p.47

The basic unit was a group of four seats fitted against the wall, the lower front apron of which described an ogee curve. Each group of four was divided into two bays by a central projecting panel, decorated with piercing squares, which had armrests attached at the bottom. Each bay had continuous rush seating for two people with separate leather backs, between which was a small lamp. The timber was probably pine, stained dark. Above the seats was a continuous shelf supported on a wall-plate which had the same kind of decoration as the Front saloon fireplace and the ladies Dressing Room.

2. TABLES

(i) Domino Table with Quadrant Shelves for Argyle Street Tea Rooms, c1897. Illus. 66, p.48

This table was used in the Smoking and Billiards

Rooms and is made of oak, stained dark. It is one of the simplest yet most practical of Mackintosh's Tea Room Tables. Its legs are planks of oak mortised into the table top and pinned to four lower quadrant shelves. These lower shelves held the cups and plates and unused dominoes of the four players. Although at first sing a rather crude piece, there are elements in the design which mark it unmistakably as Maackintosh: the pattern made by the five square tenons which are allowed to come through the top; the deliberate shaping of the inner face of the legs and the gradual outward sweep of the outer faces; the emphasis on the separation of the four lower shelves, which project beyond the legs, while the width of the legs is emphasised by the gap left between each shelf and its neighbour.

Some of these tables also appear in photographs of the Ingram Street Tea Room taken in the 1940's. It is not known whether Mackintosh specified them for the Cloister Room or, which seems more likely, whether they were taken there after the closure of the Argyle Street premises in 1920.

(ii) Circular Card Table for Argyle Street Tea Rooms, c1897. Illus. 67, p.49.

This table was used in the Smoking Room, and is another solid piece of furniture presumably used with

stools. The overhanging top, however, makes the table unsteady if any pressure is exerted at the edges - not an asset in a card table. The panels between the legs are decorated with relief carrying an abstract 'bud' shape not dissimilar to the armchair in Fig

(iii) Domino Table for the Ingram Street Tea Room, c1911. Illus. 51, p.43.

This is a stylistic updating of the Domino Table made for the Argyle Street Tea Rooms and would not have looked out of place if used with the low chairs. There is no record of any tables being made for the Chinese Room but it is generally believed that these Domino Tables were designed to be used there.

(iv) Serving Table for the White Dining Room, Ingram Street Tea Rooms, c1900. Illus. 68, p.49

This appears to be the only free-standing piece of white painted furniture to be designed for the White Dining Room. The pierced square motif echoes that in the backs of the chairs.

(v) Square Table with Four Legs for the Room de Luxe - Willow Tea Rooms, c1903. Illus. 39, p.27.

These were originally oak, painted silver with coloured glass. Probably the only dining tables designed for any of the tea rooms to have any form of decoration.

Surviving photographs show that four tables were used with the eight highbacked chairs in two groups of two. The legs of these four were on the diagonal, with crossed stretches at the bottom, the table cloths were left deliberately short in order to show the decoration on the legs. The other tables in the room, which were rectangular and used with the lower chairs and fitted seating, had legs of the same width but positioned along the short sides of the table forming an almost solid gable. No example of either design has been traced.

(vi) Circular Table with Five Legs for the Room de Luxe - Willow Tea Rooms. c1903. Illus. 69, p.50.

This was originally pine painted silver. The legs on this circular table are identical with those on the other tables for the Room de Luxe which are all square or oblong. There is no existing photograph taken in the Room de Luxe showing the table in its environs, but it was probably used in the centre of the room at the bow window. There were three of these in all. No photograph exists of this side of the room but a circular table here would have been more in harmony with the gentle curve of the window than one of the rectangular tables.

(vii) Table for the Billiards Room - Willow Tea Rooms . c1903. Illus. 70, p.51

This table is made of ebonised oak and is believed

to belong to the Billiards Room at the Willow Tea Rooms. It is quite different from the other circular table being cruder in construction and more robust and thus has affinities with the heavier looking furniture designed for the Billiards Room. The square cut outs on the legs echo the similar arrangements of squares on the panels dividing the fitted seating in the Billiards Room. Fig

3 FIREPLACES

The only fireplaces I could find andy record of were in the Willow Tea Rooms.

(i) Fireplace for the Back Saloon. c1903. Illus. 71, p.52

This fireplace has a simple wooden frame stained dark enclosing a cement surround inset with ceramic tiles. Instead of carved decoration at the top, Mackintosh has introduced a series of niches inlaid with glass, mainly squares of mirror glass which give a fragmented reflection of the room.

(ii) Fireplace for the Gallery. c 1903. Illus. 72, p.53

This fireplace is made of wood inlaid with glass panels. Here the timber fireplace is finished flush with the chimney-breast, the only projections being the two stylised tree uprights and the raised curve over the fire-surround. The latter was again rendered in dark cement with four oval panels of glass set into the cement and a simple Caird Parker grate. Above the

carved canopy was another panel of faceted mirror-glass, similar to that on the Room de Luxe fireplace, which is now unfortunately lost.

(iii) Fireplace for the Room de Luxe, c1903. Illus. 74, p.54

In this instance, simply a giant picture frame encloses the grate. The frame was initially pine painted white. Directly opposite the fireplace was an identical structure - a framed Margaret Macdonald gesso panel. Originally, a design in leaded glass hung over the fireplace which now cannot be traced and has been replaced by a simple leaded mirror panel.

(iv) Fireplace for the Billiards Room. c1903. Illus. 74, p.55

Ebonised pine is used here with a wrought-iron grate and tiled fire-surround. This is another simple wooden structure but the grate with its tall candle holders is much more elaborate. This is virtually the only design to make such extensive use of ceramic tile, surrounding the grate; in other fireplaces the surround is virtually of plaster or rough cement relieved by inlays of ceramic tile or glass. A virtually identical fireplace was used in the Smoking Room.

4 DOORS

(i) Doors of the Room de Luxe, Willow Tea Room. c1903. Illus. 75, p.56

This is Mackintosh's most elaborate and certainly

his largest design in leaded glass. The wood used is pine which is painted white, the central piece being leaded glass and ornate metal handles. The motif again the willow, with stylised leaves and waving stems, with his favourite motif of the opening rose.

The doorway which, like the panelling and mirrors in the Room de Luxe, has survived and is of special interest not only because of its extraordinary patterns of leaded glass resembling the abstract designs of the ground floor frieze, but on account of the narrow unmoulded architrave that was set, boxlike, at right angles to the wall. This is a feature which became popular in recent years but was rarely seen at the turn of the century and never before in such a simplified form. Mackintosh's objective in using an architrave of this shape was too secure the maximum amount of space for his mirrors to perceive their continuity and at the same time to concentrate interest upon the great double doors.

Other doors that appear in the Willow Tea Room are much more simplified and only adopt the simple square or rectangular motif with inlays of glass in the 'willow' colours. Illus. 76, p.57.

5 Design for Decorative Relief Frieze - Willow Tea Rooms. c1903. Illus. 77, p.57

A series of plaster reliefs formed a frieze along the east and west walls of the Front Saloon. These

panels are one of Mackintosh's most imaginative designs. He turned them into a stylised pattern whose sources are obvious to be initiated, but which at first acquaintance looks like a totally abstract sculpture, nearly two metres high and just over nine metres long. The starting point is the Willow tree but the design develops into an abstract pattern of high relief, the organic origins of which can still be discerned though they are more easily overlooked as one becomes conscious of the intricate patterns of lines in space. Some of the motifs are also repeated in the wrought ironwork of the staircase balusters (Illus. 34, p.23). It is easy to see how Mackintosh might have ruined the final effect of these panels as the original panel designs show roses crammed over the top. This almost certainly shows evidence of Margaret's influence, with her tendency to apply pattern and decoration to every square inch of her work, thus obscuring the structure of her designs. Macintosh finally decided against such surface decorations and the relief was left unpainted. (Illus. 77, p.57)

6 SCREENS Front Saloon - Willow Tea Room. c1903. Illus. 78, p.58.

This screen separated the entrance door from the dinner in the Front Saloon and directed customers to the staircase and the entrance to the saloons at the cash desk. It was about two metres high and like the screen designed for Ingram Street (Illus. 78, p.58), it consisted

of a series of upright wooden panels joined by cover strips, with upper sections of alternate boards replaced by a leaded glass panel. An umbrella stand can also be observed in this photograph.

7 'Baldacchino' For the Front Saloon. c1903. Illus. 79, p.59

This is made up of wood stained dark, surmounted by a metal framework holding a glass vessel.

In the centre of the Front Saloon was a table for four divided and enclosed by a strange structure aptly described by Howarth as a 'baldacchino' (ref. no.). This structure consists of five square posts in the shape of a cross, linked by other square spars, with four carved wooden panels, one on each of the four outer uprights. These panels bear an organic motif, probably signifying the willow leaf, while the whole central unit was possibly intended to symbolise a group of willow trees. On each of the outer posts is fixed an umbrella rack and the framework above carries a wrought iron construction which encloses a large glass vessel in the shape of a giant glass bowl. Fitted into this bowl, which was filled with water, were a series of test tube like flower holders, each containing a single flower. This is not a functional design. It has no other purpose other than decoration - but a spectacular centrepiece which should be considered as much a piece of sculpture as a

piece of furniture.

8 CLOCK - For the Willow Tea Room. c1903. Illus. 80, p.60

This clock is oak, stained dark, with a polished steel face, brass numerals and glazed door. It does not appear in any of the contemporary photographs but its materials suggest that it was designed for the Billiards or Smoking Rooms or the Back Saloon, all of which had predominately dark schemes of decoration. His one of the most rigorously geometrical pieces designed for the Willow Tea Room, like the order desk chair (fig.). It makes extensive use of the 'square' in its decoration. On the front, the squares are formed by the lattice of horizontal and vertical spars, while at the sides the square takes the form of a cut out in the solid panels. The front is hinged and opens to show shelves, it does not as might be expected from such a long case have a pendulum.

9 CASH DESK - Willow Tea Rooms. c1904. Illus. 81, p.61

The cash desk was situated at the front of the stairs and at the entrance to the ground floor saloons. Accordingly all the patrons of the tea rooms had to pass it on their way out. As in the Ingram Street cash desk, Mackintosh provides the cashier with a lattice work at 90^{0} to the cash tray to give a view of the entrance hall. The desk is almost free-standing with its back to the column at the front of the stairs. Its shape is rectangular and the main elevation is like a high

Mackintosh picture frame, very similar to the frames surrounding the fireplace and gesso panel in the Room de Luxe. This broad frame has a concave, curve and central area - the 'picture' is split by two splat-like uprights which narrow the access to the cashier, between these slats and the frames are fixed ten decorative carvings, scooped out and pierced to resemble stylised 'eyes' from peacock feathers.

10 HAT AND COAT STAND - Willow Tea Room. c1904. Illus p.50.

This is made up of mahogany painted silver with steel hooks and a brass dip tray. Apparently designed some time later than the rest of the furniture for the Willow Tea Room. Although only two stands are visible from contemporary photographs, one on either side of the gesso panel in the Room de Luxe, it seems probable that another two flanked the fireplace on the opposite side of the room.

11 LIGHTING

In observing the furniture and the decorative aspects of these interiors, it is easy to overlook Mackintosh's skillful control of natural and artificial light. In some of the tea rooms he used tightly stretched white muslin window curtains which are excellent diffusers of strong daylight. In front of these he hung rectangular panels of the same material with simple

patterns embroidered by Margaret, probably in the delicate greens and purples they favoured, as in the case of the Willow Tea Rooms.

Since Mackintosh believed in a totally intergrated environment for his architecture and interior designs, so too his light fittings were always designed to suit a particular room or position. The artificial lighting was originally by gas with the customary central ceiling fixture. Several designs for light fittings survive accompanied by notes like "leaded glass in rich colours, glass jewels leaded into reflector; decorated with green beads", but the interiors were photographed before the wiring was completed, therefore very few of the original light fixtures have been recorded. Since their manufacture did not match the skill of their design, very few have survived. Once again, this presented a problem in this research. However, judging from the illustrative designs many (2, pp.50, 51) of the light fixtures appear to be of a stunning simplicity and must have been a joy to behold.

Crystal Chandelier - Willow Tea Rooms. c1903. Illus. 82, p.62.

The Crystal Chandelier for the Room de Luxe in the Wilow Tea Rooms is the only light fixture with any valid references. It must have been the most elaborate lighting fixture designed and aptly so for 'The Room of Good Looks',. Light came from a series of

lamps which were hidden among an intricate cluster of coloured balls, spheroids and globular spheres. These lamps were then either attached to the upper circular rail or pendant. These finishings of dangling pink glass baubles must have been absolutely beautiful when lit.

> In the evening, the light which hangs in the centre of the ceiling, which radiates the light of five electric bulbs, creates softness and beauty by means of the powerful spherical glass structure which encloses the bulbs, and which is composed solely of well placed crystal grapes of varying sizes. At first glance, one is reminded of a Venetian chandelier, but while these masterpieces are meant to illume rooms of majestic splendour, with their brilliant candlelight, the one in the semi-puritan tea room, with its eminently suitable structure seems to laugh in gay and merry simplicity. During the day it almost seems to be trying to disappear, but at night it gathers and spreads the light of the relatively harsh electric bulbs better than any other artistically wrought glass possibly could: it is full and powerful, yet mild.
>
> - Dekorative Kunst magazine -
> p.32 April 1905
> Glasgow's Huntarian Archives.

Not quite so important is Charles Rennie Mackintosh's achievement in converting a source of light, in itself ugly, into one of gentle beauty. But it was still impressive and surprising enough considering that it added to the already remarkable excellence of the Willow Tea Rooms.

Unfortunately it has not survived and has been replaced with a much more simple style of light fixture (Illus. 83, p.63) similar to the ones used in Ingram Street (Illus, 42, p.33). They appear in three groups of four with the typical Mackintosh flower bud motif on the side.

12 GRAPHIC WORKS

The ladies room at Ingram Street was advertised on a menu card designed by Jessie King in 1911, which brings me to the subject of Miss Cranston's commissions to women artists. These reflect the convention which tended to restrict women's capacity to make a living from their art to graphic and decorative work. Jessie King, a most successful female 'Glasgow Style' artist, well known as an illustrator, jewellery and pottery designer, did at least four graphic designs for Miss Cranston featuring variously "aesthetic" girls. The most notable was the artistic advertisement for Miss Cranston's new tea rooms at Ingram Street (Illus. 4, p.3) and the back and front of the menu cards. (Illus. 74, p.64)

Margaret McDonald also made a contribution in this

area of design and we know of at least one menu (Illus. 65, p.85) for which she is responsible. It is a striking design recalling the elements of the Dutch Kitchen with its sophisticated black and white chequers and strong spots of red and green. This, was for the White Cockade, one of Miss Cranston's tea rooms at the 1911 Scottish Exhibition.

STENCILLING. Buchanan Street Tea Rooms. C1896.

The craft of stencilling although applied to some extent in all of Mackintosh's tea rooms was used to its full potential in the Buchanan Street Tea Room. These stencil decorations filled the walls of the Ladies' Tea Room, the Luncheon Room and the Smokers Gallery, (Illus. 6, p.5). Certainly the inspiration for the decoration of the Ladies' Tea Room is a drawing entitled 'Part Sean' - Imagined Part, dated April 1896 (11, p.36). This drawing was translated into a frieze of tall figures arranged, not in repetitive rows, but in groups of two facing each other across a stylised tree. These statuesque ladies were dressed in white, their head silhouetted against a gold numbus and their bodies wreathed in tendrils of stylised plants.

Illus. 88, p.66, The trees reappear in the Luncheon Room, arranged in groups of five between the broad pilasters, which are themselves painted with a representation of peacocks. Totem-like, the trees all

look identical but their tops are variations upon the theme of formalized leaves and flowers.

Illus. 86, p. 65 On the top floor in the Smoking Gallery - the trees are rendered even more skeletal, their shape has been reduced to the most basic forms which have been reworked to provide a series of mysterious totems connected by a rippling line. The latter is repeated at a higher level across a circular sun or moon, given drooping eyes, a nose and lips.

The colour was applied in flat graduated washes, but the uneven plaster surface caused the paint to shimmer with light.

Mackintosh rarely worked on this scale again, probably by choice rather than lack of opportunity. His decorative work for the other tea rooms is on a smaller scale, usually incorporating Japanese style lattice work and the Glasgow rose motif. These Buchanan Street decorations relate closely to the designs for posters which Mackintosh produced in the mid 1890's using similar imagery and the same large scale elements.

Like posters these wall decorations were intended to stand out from their surroundings rather than harmonise with them, to make a loud clamour for attention amidst the distractions of the other designers' work (George Walton). In this they no doubt succeeded for people remember Mackintosh's decorations and not the furnishings by Walton.

Not only were his stencilled murals interesting form an aesthetic point of view, but also as examples of a reinstatement of a neglected and largely dishonoured craft. His ingenious patterns with their ever varying detail, bright colours and absence of hackneyed motifs, gave a sparkle and life to a medium which, by its very nature, lent itself to dull formal repetition. From a technical point of view his work also seemed to have been noteworthy. Gleeson White commented,

> The plaster has been prepared in flat colours of singular quality: whether owing to the surface or to some clever manipulation, the effect is of flat but not even colour with fine texture in it that imparts a surface not unlike that upon the "self-colour" bottles of Chinese porcelain. (25, p. 85-100)

The value of the experiment was emphasised by White who later stated that the work at Buchanan Street Tea Rooms must be regarded as a very important enterprise in the decorative field.

CHAPTER V

BEWLEY'S CAFES

Bewley's Cafes, originally called 'Bewley's Oriental Cafes', have been a popular meeting place for generations of Irish citizens and visitors and is the Irish counterpart to those great cafes that spread throughout Europe after the first introduction of coffee in the seventeenth century.

In the early 1840's Joshua Bewley arrived from England and opened his small tea and cofee shop in Sycamore Alley, beside the Olympia theatre. In due course the first of the three famous city centre cafes, 13, South Great George's Street, was opened in 1894. Initially coffee was sold in small quantities and, to encourage sales, coffee-making demonstrations were held at the back of the shop. Home-made rolls were served with the coffee and thus began the; 'tea room' cafes and bakery. (4, p. 26)

In 1896 the second shop was opened in Westmorland Street, which was followed some years later by the Grafton Street cafe in 1927. These tea rooms were notably warm with pleasant odours of good coffee and honest reliable fare. The decor was in the comfortable Arts and Crafts Movement style, with Oriental undertones. However, while it still appears on the front of the building, the word 'Oriental' has been officially dropped from its name since 1972, as Oriental

vases and ornaments collectively known as 'chinoiserie' have not been sold on the premises since the second World War. Illus.89, 90, p. 67.

STYLE

The major stylistic features of the Bewley's cafes stem from the Edwardian era where Art Nouveau, the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Classical Revival were the main influences on interior design. The effects of the Arts and Crafts Movement can be seen in Bewley's emphasis on simple uncluttered interiors, a natural blending of exterior and interior rectilinear and geometric style of woodwork design, a respect for natural material (mahogany) and an interest in Oriental Art.

High quality wood was important to Edwardians and costly furniture, in this case mahogany, was introduced for contrast of inlays and marquetry. All the solid mahogany used in the Bewley's Cafe fittings were imported from the Ivory Coast.

However, less than two years ago Bewley's of Dublin, was threatened with extinction. Like so many other trading houses of yesteryear, it had fallen victim to changing patterns of retail trading. It may be a compliment to the sense and sensibility of Dubliners that unlike the Cranston Tea Rooms (with the exception of the recently revitalised 'Room de Luxe'), Bewley's has

survived. In 1986, the Bewley's companies, while retaining their own identity, came under the wing of Campbell Catering Group. This enabled Bewley's to undertake a formidable programme of work which was essential to their being able to continue trading.

At this point, I would like to single out the Grafton Street cafe for discussion. It is the most 'artistic' of all Bewley's Cafes, rather like the Willow Tea Rooms (part of the Cranston Tea Rooms). Unlike the Cranston Tea Rooms, which were made up of separate rooms all quite individual in their designs, the three Bewley's Cafes each share the same interior features from mahogany fittings, furniture, tiling to lighting. The Grafton Street premises epitomised the best of these stylistic features.

Since the Campbell Catering intervention the Grafton Street cafe had to be refurbished as the building was in a bad state of repair and did not conform to modern safety standards. The Eastern Health Board required a completely ndew system of ventilation to be installed throughout. Communication between various parts of the building was poor, and much of the space was effectively unusable. Most of the finishes and equipment in both public and private areas had come to the end of their useful lives.

Systems of enclosed fire escape routes and smoke containment had to be grafted into the interior without altering its essential character. The same applied to

incorporating ducts, and air handling of the considerable bulk needed to achieve the required standard of air movement for such large volumes.

The ground floor servery was relocated and re-planned as a 'free flow' system (the queues for the old servery at peak hours used to extend across the bread counter in the shop). The passanger lift was still intact but not functional.

THE LIFT Illus. 91, p.68

The lift machinery was entirely renewed, but the splendid old mahogany and glass lift car was retained and restored. While the Cranston Tea Rooms boasted incredibly elaborate staircases, Bewley's had this magnificent old world lift. New service lifts (clad in old Honduras mahogany panelling)', were relocated at strageic points bring all parts of the building into effective use.

This allowed the ground floor mezzanine, which was used for offices and storage to be brought into use as a waitress service cafe. The windows at this level were reglazed to allow a pleasant outlook to the street. The structure of the mezzanine, (Illus. 92, p.69) was found to be inadequate in design for this use and a new steel structure from basement foundation was introduced. This is concealed inside the original mahogany posts cladding and the fire quality stained glass balustrade was restored.

FIREPLACES Illus. 93, p. 70

Fires burn in open fireplaces, which have been retained, and in the basement and the first floor they are restored where they had previously been removed. The fireplace in the illustration is fitted out in solid mahogany with decorative copper panels incorporating Art Nouveau plant motifs, however, the fireplaces in Bewley's as a whole are all of a similar style and differ greatly from the various designs employed by Mackintosh in the Cranston Tea Rooms. Each of his fireplaces were designed with a particular room in mind, each fireplace being individual.

The basement self-service cafe, which can be entered from a stair near the lift or directly from Johnson court, is now known as the Joshua Room. On an early drawing, from chauvinistic times it is labelled "mens' cafe" - The old segregation of the sexes for which tea rooms had catered so comfortably broke down after the Second World War.

The repositioning of the servery in the ground floor cafe had improved the perception of the two major volumes which made this handsome space. The first of these contains what was to be one of the largest roof lanterns in Dublin (Illus 94, p.70). The laylight of this had been replaced with stained glass which exactly reproduces that in the vertical kerbs of the fanlight and original mezzanine balustrade.

LIGHT FIXTURES

Many of the light fixtures used in the Bewley's cafes have strong links with the Edwardian centre bowl. Bowls of cut alabaster were set into decorative brass or bronze mounts and suspended on chains for use as centre lights in Edwardian times. Bewley's have adopted this style of lighting as it diffused light and reflected it on to the ceiling adding to the 'cosy atmosphere' Bewley's is famous for today. However, the bowls used in Edwardian times were much more elegant in often shallower and more subtley curved. The glass-bowls of the 1930's which would be the dating for the light fixtures in Bewley's are a lot more bulky in appearance. These bowls appear to be about fourteen inches in diameter and made of flakestone glass. They are fixed to the ceiling by a metal ceiling plate with three hooks and a centre hole for the flex (Illus. 94, p.71).

In the entrance hall to the main cafe of the Grafton Street cafe one can also find a chandelier, the only one to be found in any of the cafes. Illus. 96, p.71 Chandeliers were often sold for domestic use in Edwardian times. Here the flex was run through the various levels and allowed to drop several inches to the suspended inverted light fitting and glass shade. This chanedlier was designed so that the light was projected downwards, again creating atmosphere. In comparison to Mackintosh's crystal chandelier it is quite ordinary, the chandelier in

the 'Room de Luxe' being very much 'designer'. The light it emitted was somewhat 'rosy' in comparison to the simple yellow light in the case of Bewley's, however, there is a light fixture in Westmoreland St cafe which is quite similar and Art Nouveau in style.

STAINED GLASS

The other large volume of the ground floor of the Grafton St cafe contained six notable Harry Clarke stained glass windows. Two of these at the end of the cafe have been boldly moved 2.4 metres forward to enable an escape stair to Swan yard to be inserted.

A profile of Harry Clarke in the Irish Times, 7 Jan. described where work was proceeding in the first of these six decorative windows for the rear of the cafe it was written in the :

> Another delightful window of a different type almost completed, is destined to remain in Dublin in a business house, where Dublin's citizens will have frequent opportunities of seeing it. It consists of minute decorations of country life, butterflies of vivid blue, red birds, pale shells and flowers.

Harry Clarke designed these windows between 1927-8 and took great trouble over them, particularly (Illus. 97, p.72)

the four showing the Orders of Architecture in which Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite columns are adorned and topped by vases full of flowers. The black leafy tendrils disguising the leads are interspersed with exotic birds, butterflies, flowers and marine creatures acided against a lightly painted clear background, as though suspended in a parchment solution. The black lacey borders punctuated with small beads of colour are echoed in the two other windows of the scheme overlooking Swan Alley. The simple abstract treatment is particularly effective in its restaurant and their style is firmly based in the Arts and Crafts Movement where as Mackintosh's stained glass windows in the 'Room de Luxe' are based on simple nature motifs originating from Art Nouveau.

FURNITURE

The unique high-back upholstered settes have also been restored in recent years. These red velvet wall to wall couch seats give the room a homely feel and recall the couch seating of the Billiards Room in the Willow Tea Rooms. Although not of the same style, their function is similar.

The familiar 'Bentwood chair' (Illus. 97, p.72) is found in all the Bewley's Cafes. They are a successful innovation in chair design, started by Michael Thonet in the late 1880's. They are structurally simple and easy to

manufacture. Using a steam power, he bent beechwood to the required shape and used cane work and plywood for the seats. The vigorous free curves of the Bentwood furniture draws inspiration from the curves of Chinese furniture. These chairs found favour for their lightness and grace in cafes and that is why they are still produced today and have continued in use by Bewley's. They are practical and functional, unlike the Cranston Tea Rooms where the chair became a formal decorative and sometimes experimental feature, innovative in design but in most cases impractical and structurally weak. The Bewley's furnishings are bound by the 'traditional' Arts and Crafts ideals, whereas Mackintosh moved more towards 'modernist' ideas.

FRENCH DOORS

The first floor of tahe Grafton Street cafe has a continuous wall of french doors opening onto a balcony over Grafton Street (Illus. 101, p.74). These seem to be Bewley's answer to Mackintosh's panelled screens. Until recently, one of these french doors was overlapped by a modern servery. The kitchen and servery for this level have now been relocated at the rear adjoining the stair and liftwell leaving an interrupted volume extending right across the Grafton Street frontage. Original early electroliers have been reused here. In contrast to the familiar bustle of the cafes, the density and furnishing is lower and the seats more commodius.

A neglected, but nonetheless well-proportioned room with arched windows at second floor level has been restored as a function room.

The former chocolate factory, at first floor level over the ground floor cafe has been laid out as Bewley's museum for the Millennium. This contains a fascinating range of artifacts associated with Bewley's since its foundations, including a number of shop fittings salvaged after the Westmoreland Street fire in 1977, including Oriental vases and the like.

FACADE. Illus. 98, p.74

Of all the shop frontages on Grafton Street, the Bewley's facade of 78-79 Grafton Street is by far the most elaborate facade, it is all too easy to imagine that the average person on the street would not notice the effort put into this design due to the nature of the width of the street. It was designed in connection with the reconstruction of the premises in December 1925 (Illus. 98, p.73), by Messrs Miller and Symes, popular architects at the time. They also prepared plans for the balcony and thrust out lavatory at the premises. The balcony front was formed of Biarcola with granolithic concrete backing and the balustrade was made of bronze.

In its overall design concept, it appears to have connections with the Edwardian free style architecture of the early 1900's. In Illus. 100, p.74, competition

designs for 1909 shops and offices of Ferro-concrete by C. F. A. Voysey, one can see the resemblance in style, both facades seeking an architectural expression suitable for a new type of structure - the cafe.

The decorative features of the facade make use of mosaic, in a flower motif repeated along the sides, up to the first floor and across, meeting at the central 'wings' - Oriental in origin, similar to the idea of using the 'peacock' for imagery. Illus. 99, p.73.

MOSAICS : Illus. 100, p.74

Mosaic is also used extensively as floor covering though now many of these are worse for wear. At the front entrances of all three cafes there is more mosaic work incorporating the Bewley's name, in a palace script typeface adopted as the Bewley's logotype. There is also a Peacock mosaic at the front entrance to the Westmorland Street cafe which was installed in the 1930's. It is a typical Oriental style pattern in pieces of six colours, laid in fan shaped sections inside a border. The Cranston Tea Rooms never incorporated mosaic in any form or fashion, the chequered borders of the Willow Tea Room facade and the chequered features of the Dutch Room in the Ingram Street Tea Rooms is as close to mosaic as Mackintosh gets.

SNOB SHELTERS: Illus. 100, p.75

In the early days of the Grafton Street Cafe snob

shelters were a common feature introduced to allow for privacy. One of the finest examples can now be found in the Bewley's museum on the first floor. They were fitted into the cafe in such a manner as not to clash with the existing decor. This particular example is made up of two large stained glass screens similar to the style of the glass work of the skylight which is quite Art Nouveau in style. Stained glass provided a dimmer atmosphere, allowing for peaceful secluded coffee drinking. These glass panels were fabricated from wood en frames, engrved glass and wrought iron. They were treated in a decorative manner to sympathise with surroundings.

These snob shelters defeated the need for supervision, which prompted Bewley's to do away with them. This is an example of how excessive design and crafting of a fitting rendered its usage impractical.

In Illus. 103, p.76 one can see a cosy corner in Miss Cranston's first tea rooms, the Crown Tea Rooms, Argyle Street. It is made of ornate wooden columns, woven panelling, and heavy curtains - very different to the snob shelters of Grafton Street cafe but they served the same purpose.

CASH DESK

Another antiquated feature of Bewley's Cafes is that of the lovely mahogany fronted cash office where customers used to present their bill before leaving. As a

result of people slipping past the cash desks, more convenient cash desks with double sided paying features were installed in central passage areas.

However, long before these measures the old style manual silver plated register (Illus. 104, p.77) was repalced by modern high tech. registers to keep up with the times.

Finally, in a scrupulous attempt to retain as much of the old style as possibe the lettering on the signs such as 'Salad' and 'Confectionary' which hang over the self-service counters were done in solid brass. Other details like the wallpaper were also chosen with particular care and attention to incorporate an Oriental-style atmosphere. The wallpaper designs used have a Japanese feeling: the Japanese singing bird on a perch, an Oriental female figure in traditional dress incorporated in a lattice bordering, (a feature to which Mackintosh paid particular heed). However, this paper as wall decoration does not compare to the high standards of stencilling applied to the walls of the Buchanan Street Tea Room which must have dazzled customers.

CONCLUSION

Mackintosh's ability as a designer lay in the happy synthesis he was able to achieve within the architectural schemes of the tea room; the same praise can be sung of Bewley's Cafes which are outstanding for their 'completeness' of style.

Mackintosh furniture designs had a functional simplicity that would look modern today. Although the execution of his designs was fairly crude, the refinement of his proportions is without parallel. Most notable, perhaps, were his experiments with the 'chair', not so much as a creation to sit on , more as a means of personal visual expression. The spartan beauty of his lofty ebonised oak ladderback chairs rivals his more precious silver painted highbacks. These stark highback chairs were often criticised as being uncomfortable. Being hardly suited to tea room use they are more a sculptural statement of design theory. Mackintosh's sense of abstract form is so powerfully expressed in the stark interiors of the tea rooms, yet they remain immensely human, nature being his source of inspiration. He was able to apply minimal decoration with maximum effect. The simple chequer insets of mother-of-pearl on the extended barrel-back armchairs created for Miss Cranston are characteristically discreet, yet refined.

The Cranston Tea Rooms illustrate Mackintosh's insistence on creating the total environment. If he were to build a tea room, then every detail down to the tea spoons would come under his consideration. Each set of tea houses were different; so too were many of the rooms within, an experimentation with 'styles'.

The concept of the total work of art, where parts are organically integrated into the whole and where the functional content is in harmony with aesthetic form. This hampered by the parameters of costly interior design, could not help but prove to be a liability when anything like commercial exploitation of it was attempted. The all-embracing newness of Mackintosh's tea room interiors, with their authentic aestheticism, was not something that contemporary furnishing firms in Glasgow wished to risk replicating. Therefore, the withdrawal of Miss Cranston's patronage in 1917 marked the end of the creation of these innovative works of art. So too, the lives of the existing tea rooms was relatively short lived.

However, the restoration to tea room use Mackintosh's, piece de resistance, the 'Room de Luxe' at the Willow Tea Rooms of Sauchiehall Street, perhaps symbolises a change of attitude which hopefully might see the restoration of the 'complete' Willow Tea Rooms as a National Movement.

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