Newberry then set about finding funds for a new building on a nearby site in Renfrew Street for the School of Art. Once the arrangements had been completed, a committee, which included among its members Charles Rennie Mackintosh, for his plans were indeed in a completely new style and were the sort of design that Newberry loved. The design used ideas of the past together with pure Art Nouveau and produced a building which became a milestone of the Modern Movement. It is now regarded as one of the most remarkable structures of its period.

The actual work was carried out in two stages (1898-99 and 1907-09); it is still in use for its original purpose, and can be visited. Mackintosh did not only design buildings; he was a painter and designer as well, and at Glasgow he was one of a group of artists whose reputation soon went far beyond Britain and he was received with much enthusiasm when he visited Vienna.

It was amongst all this activity that Annie French studied and taught, and it is not surprising that many of those in the School of Art were much influenced by Mackintosh's ideas which added so much to the fame of the “Glasgow Style.” Of course, she was but one of a number of women students and teachers at the School, and some of them are still renowned such as the Macdonald sisters (Frances and Margaret), Jessie Newberry and Jessie M. King. Although the artists and designers worked largely for themselves and their friends, some did produce work for enterprising firms. Annie herself drew a number of pictures for use in books. She also had pictures issued as postcards: a local publisher, Alexander Baird & Son, used a number in their “Signet Series,” some of which were helpfully produced for use as narrow book markers. In 1909 she became a tutor at the Glasgow School of Art and continued working there until she moved south in 1924.

Annie married another artist, George Woodcock Rhead in 1914 and moved to London where the couple lived at “Eagles moat,” Trinity Rise, Tufnell Hill, Hendon, which was not only a painter’s studio and stained-glass artist but also an art critic, was older than Annie and had exhibited at the Royal Academy since 1882, but unfortunately he died in 1920 at the age of 63. Nevertheless Annie carried on with her beloved art work and continued exhibiting until 1924. By 1909, she had moved to 1, “Oaklands,” Hayes Lane, Kenley together with one of her sisters, Margaret. Another sister, Agnes, also came to “Oaklands,” which had been built in 1865, was bought by Sir Joseph Lawrence in 1892; he was prominent in the newspaper industry, and from 1901 had been Member of Par-

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the art world was undergoing many changes. Glasgow became an important city for artists and designers due to its wealth and the influence of its habitants who had the courage to pursue new ideas.

Annie French was one of the students at the famous Glasgow School of Art, and later she became a tutor there. In 1914 she moved to London after her marriage to a fellow artist, and in the late 1930s she came to Kenya where she lived until 1954.

Annie French was born in 1872 her father was a strongly well-off to allow her to become an art student. Annie French had shown an interest in art in had already attended art schools, so she was following a growing trend in the family’s pursuits. Annie started at the Glasgow School of Art, the Principal of which, Francis Newberry, actively encouraged the students to follow their own styles. She settled on line drawings, especially of romantic figures and similar subjects. Annie was able to continue in her chosen style throughout her life, largely because she had no real need to create an income from her work.

It was not long before she was noticed in an influential art magazine, “The Studio”, and this may have motivated her to produce watercolour pictures as well as her more usual pen and ink drawings. Her style sometimes recalls that of the Pre-Raphaelites but also, her drawings inevitably for something working in a centre of modern art: a definite Art Nouveau influence. Her pictures were generally of small size, and she drew them first as line drawings and coloured later. Drawings of delicate ladies amongst flowers and woods, were a speciality. She is known for her designed ceramics. The backgrounds were usually highly detailed and full of flowers and other plants. She achieved the delicate tones by using fine pencil lines, dots and hatching, this was work that required lots of ingenuity, time and patience.

Although Annie’s pictures may have been small in size, her work appeared in public exhibitions from as early as 1903; and she continued to show pictures until at least 1929. Over the years she had her work hung in exhibitions in thirteen different galleries including not only the Royal Scottish Acad-emy and the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, but also the Royal Academy in London. This was no mean achievement.

Annie French was especially fortunate to be an artist in Glasgow at that particular time. Although the city was a huge industrial centre producing ships, locomotives, bridges, cranes, pumps and similar machinery, some of its wealthy inhabitants also turned to other matters and became interested in art. This not only encouraged people to pursue stud-

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ANNIE FRENCH

Glasgow Girl

BY KEN HARKIN

An inquiry who stood behind the letters “F.M.K.” reached me some time ago. This firm published art reproductions of famous paintings in wooden frame border design, description in imitated metal plate. Imprinted “DRGM. 238/962” could date from late 1900. With the help of Hans-Straussbuerger “F.M.K.” was identified as F. Manger, Koln, publisher, wholesaler, dis- tributor freizes in “Die Postkarte” (1905). F.M.K. became sole representative in Bremen, Westfalen for all products, and continued at M. Cost, Berlin in April 1908. Printer band later owner of this DRGM pattern I believe, was GEhr. Dressen aus Ascher. Estab in 1900, since 1907 owned by Fritz Beissel and Peter Weisskopf. A firm with 25 to 50 workers, specialized in post- cards until late 1929, in business until 1922 years. They offered these cards also with gelatine finish on picture; plus “Album-Letters” of similar design / make I have not seen yet. All cards halftone printed, average quality, colour of border differs. Also found with logo views inserted. Ils: top left PKM 4026 š Blooms, Am Meer (jv March 1900) / top right: PKM 4026 š Leopold, Paris below left: Museum in Hannover, local publ. Artbile Jum, Below: Almost identical (copied) design “At home in Mexico”, USA, post 1909. Address side layout typical for “II Post Card Co., N.Y.”
Adolf Hitler had managed to become German Chancellor on January 30, 1933 (he had failed to win in 1928 and after the death of Hindenburg became also German president in 1934. A totalitarian regime was installed, controlled by SA (Sturmabteilung = Storm Troopers) and SS (Schutzstaffel). The SA had been the military organized chapter of the NSDAP (National Socialist Party). 200,000 members by 1930 and from that date under direct control of Hitler. The SA head of staff, Röhm and several other leaders were murdered in 1933 on command of Hitler. The SA soon lost most of their influence. Hitler had not to fear any opposition from his own party anymore. He was now the Führer.

Many cities and towns, large and small all over the German Reich from 1938 - 1939 incl. Austria, the Sudeteland (bombed) and the Führer. Adolf Hitler was given the freedom of the city or town, and streets, places etc. were named after him. As there were not always new streets available, usually streets were renamed. This is documented on post-cards. Of course not all German communi- ties participated in this renaming craze. Depended on the local influence of the NSDAP and whether Hitler ever visited the place. Many cards with Hitler streets on dis- appeared were destroyed immediately after the breakdown of the Nazi regime, end of WW2. No one wanted to be reminded of this dark chapter of German history. Streets were given the old names again, or new ones. Today you do not find that many old cards with Hitler streets etc mentioned anymore. Cards with few prints but the former name still read- able can be said as hard to find. Here a small selection with street names on picture side.

View from the city of Konstanz / Bodensee. A lucky find with later added imprint "now Hitler Strasse". B/W collotype printed by E. Piskaus, Leipzig with glossy finish. No pub listed, not p/a.

The city of Chemnitz, Saxony, had also an Adolf Hitler Platz. Again there is no publisher’s name imprinted. Not p/a. B/W collotype printed (card no. 9664 in picture) with glossy finish. Deckle-edged. The entire card has a certain ‘prestige look’, popular from the mid 1930s on. It was named ‘Bromide (photo) Imitation’.

I have several more cards with Adolf Hitler streets, places, ring roads etc, but with caption found on address side. Also several multiview cards where the small caption is very difficult to read; almost hidden. I guess many cities thought it would be better to have the Führer’s name somewhere displayed officially, to avoid problems with the Nazis. However, I have never seen a blind alley named after Hitler.

Both views below were published by Franz Mörtl Vienna XIX. The place is named Fischtitz, believed to be somewhere in former Austria. The left shows the Adolf Hitlerplatz (sic) with office and sausage flag of course. The other view puzzles me a bit. ‘Straße der SA’ = SA street. The only I have found with SA mention. Thought they had lost powers. Perhaps soon renamed into SS street! Strange place indeed!

But after his death in 1945, his fine large home lay empty for some years until it was converted into flats. At that time, it must still have been a rather splendid place in which to live, and inevitably Annie French would surely have produced pictures of it and the grounds. The French family stayed there throughout the Second World War and it was not until the 1950s that anything happened to make any change necessary. But then Margaret died (in 1952), and Agnes had an accident from which she did not recover dy- ing in 1954. This probably prompted Annie to move to Jersey where she had relatives, a sister-slaw, Jasmine (Lady French), and a nephew Eric. Annie lived there until she died in her early nineties in 1965. It may be that one day someone will recall the French sis- ters’ days at ‘Oldlands’ or in Jersey, but we do know a little of Annie’s later years from letters she wrote from jets in the late 1950s; she herself was keen on reading (especially of biographies) enjoyed the companionship of her family very much, and was interested in its ancestral connections with the Gordon family. She was not a supporter of gambling or the football pools, or of the ‘Women’s Lib’ of those days. We can assume that her life at Kenley was based on the same sort of things, and she must have retained her love of art, for an album exists from the Kenley years which she filled with her delicate pic- tures of even smaller size, perhaps, than her earlier works.

In retrospect, it is probably true to say that Annie French was less important an artist than some of the other ‘Glasgow Girls’, but nevertheless her work was obviously popu- lar enough at the time, and has certainly become so again in recent years. Neverthe- less it is difficult to establish how much of her work still exists; it is obvious to many people who saw to it that anything unwanted was destroyed and perhaps we should not be surprised that so few pieces can be traced today. The Glasgow Museums and Art Gal- leries do have a number of her works, and ‘The Daisy Chain’ can be viewed at the Print Room at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Of course, other pictures are privately owned. The once common postcards are rarely en- countered today.

> “The Daisy Chain” – a picture made originally as a book illustration; it is drawn in ink on vellum, size 18.2 cm x 37.3 cm – with the permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

We have been able to include reproductions of the portrait of Annie French and of some of her pictures mainly thanks to the kindness of museums.

> “Woman and Boy” – from one of Annie’s late scrapbooks. Reproduced with the permission of the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries.

> Untitled Art Nouveau postcard depicting a lady holding a bird together with plants in containers. Published by Alexander Baird & Son as number 1022 in their “Signed Se- ries”. Posted in Manchester in 1905. From a private collection.

> Untitled Art Nouveau postcard showing a lady reading a book, unusually an indoor scene, she is surrounded by typical Art Nou- veau decorations. Published by Alexander Baird & Son as number 1017 in their “Signed Series”. It is described as a “Book Post Card” and was meant to be used as a bookmark. This copy was posted to Westgate-on-Sea in 1904. From a private collection.

ANNIE FRENCH - GLASGOW GIRL

The Postcard Album #20

SOURCES:

BROOKS, Graham (ed.), 12002 Kenley, Bourne Society.


THE POSTCARD ALBUM #20