

Update on the purchase of a painting by Sir Henry Raeburn

Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

1 June 2004

Purpose of report

- 1 To update the Committee on progress on the purchase of a painting by Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823).

Main report

- 2 At the last meeting on 2 December 2003, the Committee considered a painting of *Sir James Stirling* by Sir Henry Raeburn. Stirling was Lord Provost of Edinburgh for three periods, 1790-92, 1794-96 and 1798-1800. The painting is a striking 50 x 40 inch portrait dating from about 1795, which shows Stirling seated with the Bridewell Prison designed by Robert Adam in the background.
- 3 The Committee approved the seeking grant-aid of 50%, from the National Fund for Acquisitions and other appropriate grant giving bodies.
- 4 An initial application was made to the National Fund for Acquisitions but was put on hold due to the lack of money in the financial year 2003-04. It was suggested that the application should be held over until the start of the current financial year in April 2004. This having been done, a response is now awaited from the NFA. Informal advice has been given that the maximum grant that may be offered is likely to be 25% or £10,000.
- 5 The Committee of the Friends of the City Art Centre and Museum considered the painting at a recent meeting and has generously offered a grant of £5,000 towards the cost of the painting.
- 6 An application was also made to the National Art Collections Fund, whose committee considered it at a meeting in early 2004. Unfortunately the application was not successful and no grant was offered.
- 7 The one remaining grant giving body that might support the acquisition of this work is the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF supported the purchase of the painting *Piebald Driving* with a grant of 30%. It is suggested that an application is made to the HLF with the outcome reported to the next meeting if an answer has been given.

- 8 The painting is now in Edinburgh and the expert opinion of curators and scholars knowledgeable about Raeburn's work will be sought.

Recommendations

- 9 Continue to pursue the acquisition of the painting *Portrait of Sir James Stirling* by Sir Henry Raeburn by making an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Herbert Coutts
Director of Culture and Leisure

Appendices	N/A
Contact/tel	Ian O'Riordan 0131-529 3955
Wards affected	City Wide
Background Papers	The Jean F Watson Bequest files are held by the Museums and Arts Division