

Interviewee: Douglas Hall with Matilda Mitchell (Hall)  
UoS Dates: n/a  
Role(s): First Keeper of the National Gallery of Modern Art and had considerable involvement in the art collection at the University of Stirling.  
DH married Matilda Mitchell, qv



## Interview summary:

### *Summary of content; with time (min:secs)*

**Start 00:43** – Tom Cottrell was an enthusiast for art, particularly contemporary and recent art. He thought it would be part of the education of Stirling students to be familiar with art. Pathfoot was a good venue with its well-lit and wide corridors.

**01:42** – DH was summoned by Tom Cottrell who had already formed a collection on his own but wanted advice on getting a mural in the dining room. He asked Matilda Mitchell to get in touch with DH as he was Keeper of the Gallery of Modern Art. DH is glad the University still shows the mural. It was never popular amongst students as it was constructivist with no figuration. [*Mural* by Mary Martin now in the Crush Hall].

**03:29** – Never had much of a mandate to help curate the university collection but friendships with Matilda Mitchell and Tom Cottrell helped him influence the collection. Often works that could have been admitted to the gallery but weren't for one reason or another would be sent to Stirling by DH if he thought they would fit in.

**04:17** – Wasn't involved in obtaining the Fergusson collection

**05:05** – Was a member of the Arts Council and was on the Exhibitions Committee. This meant he could keep an eye on the movement of exhibitions and could suggest Stirling as a location. The university had the money to spend on art. Tom Cottrell had committed spending 1% of capital expenditure on art which would be split between buying and exhibition. When the MacRobert opened it had its own exhibition budget.

**07:00** – DH did an exhibition in the MacRobert of 12 sculptures of men and woman, twelve approaches to the human frame, named *12 Years of Mankind*. Catalogues still exist of these exhibitions.

**08:28** – DH was asked to join the Art Committee at Stirling and worked alongside Matilda Mitchell, Tom Cottrell and Tommy Dunn. Was involved in acquiring the Justin Knowles sculpture, two steel strips – pure abstraction – now beside the loch


**09:37** – Tom Cottrell was central to art at Stirling. It's essential to have those at the top on your side.

**10:10** – Relationship with Demarco's gallery was difficult. Matilda Mitchell and Tom Cottrell knew Ricky. Borrowed larger works of art for the Pathfoot building to begin with but they went back to him as Stirling acquired its own art.

**11:15** – It was understood from the beginning that it would be a contemporary collection. Seemed natural as the buildings on the wonderful site were modern in design.

**11:50** – DH pushed the Hepworth sculpture in the university's direction.

<b>12:05</b> – MM first met Cyril Gerber at a party following the gifting of the Fergusson collection. The University got one or two exhibitions through him but most exhibitions came via the Arts Council or DH. Rosemary Muir-Wright, the founding lecturer in the Fine Art Department, used exhibits in her teaching.
<b>13:09</b> – The Arts Council gifted pieces to Stirling when it was dispersing its collection.
<b>15:26</b> – DH tried to promote artists through Stirling, it was similar to placing an exhibition in a commercial gallery. Doesn't remember giving any talks or lectures but probably did once or twice. MM remembers DH coming to speak about the sculpture exhibition <i>12 Years of Mankind</i> .
<b>16:48</b> – There was an annual lecture that accompanied an exhibition. Andrew Forge gave a lecture on <i>Painting and Perception</i> , DH on <i>12 Years of Mankind</i> and Roland Penrose lectured brilliantly on <i>Illusion and Reality</i> . There are catalogues and photographs for these exhibitions.
<b>20:45</b> – DH wonders who carries the torch for art at the university now. AS thinks Jane Cameron and her four employees but there isn't a lot of money behind her. The current Principal is appreciative of the collection. Without DH sending things to Stirling it wouldn't be where it is now
<b>23:12</b> – Tom Cottrell believed in the value of art and having good things to look at. There was a huge exhibition of tapestries in the main foyer of the MacRobert. As Keeper, DH appreciated it when artists would tell him they had been influenced by exhibitions he had facilitated.
<b>[Ends 26:10]</b>

<b>Interview No:</b>	SURSA OH / 053	<p><b>SURSA</b>  <b>University of Stirling</b>  <b>Stirling</b>  <b>FK9 4LA</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:info@sursa.org.uk">info@sursa.org.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.sursa.org.uk">www.sursa.org.uk</a></p>	
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