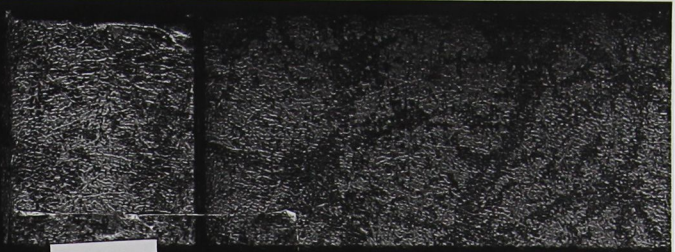
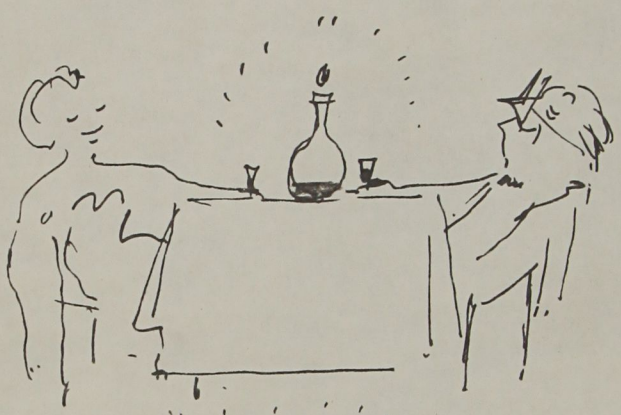


PHOTOS
1970s

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS,
PICCADILLY, LONDON, W1V 0DS
Telephone: 01-734 9052
Cables: Royacad, London



THANK YOU

.... to all at Dorset House who contributed to such a splendid farewell present..... It's beautiful & will be constantly used to drink to the future of you all. My wife & I are very grateful

Hugh Casson.

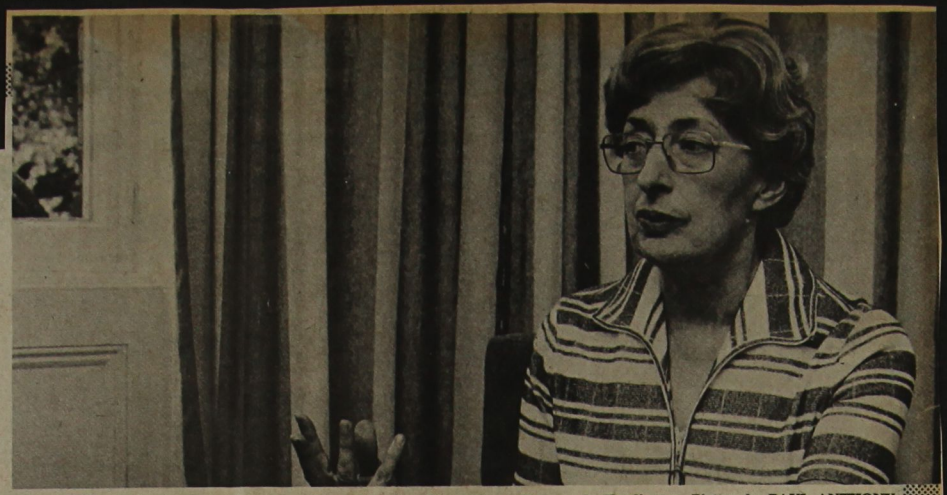
Tea time in the Staff Room

Finalist Students - July 1974 (FGHIJ)

(The first group Miss Collins saw through their training as Principal of Dorset House)

Look out, the Raffia is about!

(AND IT'S THE BANE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS TODAY)



Betty Collins, retiring principal of Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy in Headington. Picture by PAUL ANTHONY.

VALERIE GREEN talks to a woman who helps the healers by teaching creativity.

IN THE common room of Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy in Headington, there is a cartoon showing a man in a hospital bed. He is surrounded, almost drowned, by baskets.

The caption indicates he is a victim of the occupational therapists' secret society . . . the RAFFIA!

It illustrates an image of occupational therapy that the profession has now managed to live down.

Yet as Miss Betty Collins, retiring principal of the college explains: "Perhaps some people were more sensitive about their craft tuition skills than they need have been . . .

"In this press button age, many people have no concept of what it is like to to *create* anything themselves. They push a button and the cooker starts, or the washing machine starts . . ."

She thinks that some people receiving psychiatric treatment for neurotic illness might well benefit from discovering how to create something — in other words, from short periods of craft therapy. It might help to ease many of their tensions.

Her successor at Dorset House School is Miss Jean Edwards. She has been doing a special survey of occupational therapy and strongly feels there is a great deal of value in many of the crafts, used in a limited way.

"I sometimes wonder if the rejection of so many craft activities in the early days of occupational therapy wasn't rather like throwing out the baby with the bathwater. In order to try and achieve higher recognition and make sure they were not considered a frivolous profession, occupational therapists might have downgraded basket work, weaving and other crafts, *too* much."

Miss Collins is uniquely placed to offer this evaluation of her profession. She retires as principal of Dorset House after nearly 40 years as an occupational therapist, having served both as a delegate and now as vice-president of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, and having this year been made an honorary fellow of the British Association of Occupational Therapists for services to the profession both here and overseas.

As she recounted her experiences to me, her own very basic realism shone through. So did her dedication. A typical period of her work illustrates the point.

Soon after an initial period of accelerated war time training at Dorset House in Bromsgrove, she was posted to Walsall General Hospital in Staffordshire to rehabilitate injured miners.

"After a while I found that I wasn't going to win their confidence until I had actually been down a mine myself. Luckily my landlord at the time was able to arrange for me to go. Once down the pit, it was the restriction of movement in the work that started to worry me most. The space was so very constricted. In those days men were crawing through tunnels sometimes only two feet high.

"The men who had to 'drive' or push along the coal trucks in the tunnels used their right hand to steady it at the top, and frequently that hand would be crushed between the top of the truck and a sudden bump in the roof.

"After seeing how those men worked, in fact, I could tell from many future injuries I saw, what sort of a job the man had been engaged on down there.

"To try and help the men who had been injured and help them win back their self-confidence I realised that craft work (which we'd been offering at the time) wasn't very apt."

So she started a programme of building work, where the men were able to test out their strength, gain balance and self-confidence, and where conditions were considerably closer to those of their previous job.

From Staffordshire, Miss Collins returned to the Bromsgrove Dorset House for another training period. Then in 1947 she came to Oxford to help create an occupational therapy department at Littlemore Hospital. Here she found the work often consisted of helping people to cope with human relationships.

"The occupational therapist nowadays works in a team headed by a doctor, to help people with psychological problems. The team may include the nurse, physiotherapist, speech therapist, psychologist and social worker.

"And an important group of activities are those which can help patients to communicate — through drama, role-playing, art and music."

After her experience at Littlemore, Miss Collins became assistant director of the Melbourne Training School for Occupational Therapists, and stayed there for three-and-a-half years.

She returned to Dorset House in Oxford as vice-principal in 1954, and became principal in 1971.

"Occupational therapists have moved from a situation where they were simply required to supply activity, to the role of assessment and planning. They play a very big part in assessing the needs of the severely disabled, deciding where physical aids may be necessary and where a person's ability may be built up to manage without aids. Sometimes the therapist has to adapt the environment to the individual and sometimes it is a case of building up the individual so as to be able to cope with the environment.

"We are also becoming more involved in the planning of housing for the disabled. We help architects too in planning housing schemes — not just for the disabled, but for people who may grow old in their own flats, and may not want to move out of them, which means that the flat must be specially designed for them to run easily.

"A great deal of work is now community focused, too. In the last 30 years emphasis in medical thought has shifted from maintaining disabled people in hospitals and institutions to treating and supporting them within the community wherever possible. This means the patient should be competent in matters like housework and cooking."

Now that she has retired from Dorset House, Miss Collins intends to devote more of her time to her work for the scouting movement (she is the holder of one of their Silver Acorn awards). For many years she had been Assistant County Commissioner for Extension Activities, but she has just been appointed District Commissioner of the Headington District Scouts.

"It is usually an appointment held by a man. And I was very surprised at being asked — I didn't think the men would happily accept a woman in that capacity. It's very flattering, and I shall have to start brushing up on my knowledge of scouting as quickly as possible!"

She hasn't entirely relinquished her duties in the occupational therapy profession, however. Next year she is looking forward to attending the international occupational therapists' conference in Israel.

She has already visited Canada, America, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Switzerland and Australia in the course of her work, and has been able to study their different approaches to occupational therapy.

"I think the UK is well to the fore, however, in most of its thinking about rehabilitation.

"When occupational therapy first started it was mainly directed towards alleviating boredom and maintaining morale among the war wounded. Where possible it was used to provide special sorts of exercise. But the only sorts of activities available in war time were craft activities, such as making baskets, leather work and weaving.

"However, weaving is stilll very useful in occupational therapy because looms can be adapted so as to provide many different varieties of movement — they're even used today to help strengthen the arms of athletes who need rehabilitating. I know it would be possible to have them lift graded weights instead, but you can only sustain interest in lifting weights for so long, whereas if you are interested in making a rug, say, you go on past the stage of boredom or fatigue.

"I think one of the chief culprits we must blame for occupational therapy still being stuck with the basket-weaving image is Punch magazine. Whenever occupational therapists are mentioned, they always produce a drawing of a little man in bed surrounded by baskets, piling higher and higher . . . !"

Making things — it's a way of life . . .

19.3.1976

The house was full of the nutty, warm smell of new bread. This was absolutely right, because making things — pictures, fabrics, clothes, or bread — is a way of life for Margaret Bialokoz Smith.

Born in Poland just before the war, Margaret was brought up with art.

"We had very few toys and very little space to play in Poland during and after the war. Paper and pencil or crayons kept us happy for hours. My mother encouraged me to draw; she always said that any letter I sent should be decorated."

After studying in Gdansk — art and chemistry, "I loved the colours, but I wasn't very scientific," Margaret came to London to study dress design at the St Martin's School of Art.

To earn extra money while she studied, Margaret designed and made skirts for a wholesaler: "It was real sweated labour; I used to get five shillings for a lined skirt."

When she had finished her course, she went to teach in Bristol, and met her first husband, Dr George Bialokoz, a fellow-Pole and a lecturer in engineering.

He had been in the Polish air-force during the war, and had settled in Britain. They moved to Oxford, and she fell in love with the place. The colours and textures of stone buildings are endlessly fascinating to her, and have inspired some of her best work.

In Oxford, she brought up her two children, working only in the spare moments that a housewife and mother has, but always experimenting with new materials and different crafts. In 1968, her husband died; two years later she married Neil Smith, who is an adult education organiser.

Margaret and Neil share a strong social awareness. She thoroughly enjoys her part-time teaching of occupational therapists at Dorset House, and through it has come to consider the therapuetic aspect of art— and means of helping people to combat the stresses of our restless society.

What worries her is that there is so little real art to be seen away from galleries. This, in turn, means that there is far too small a market for the professional artist.

"I would like to earn my living doing what I am good at, what I've been trained to do — like most other people, doctors, carpenters, engineers. But the majority of professional artists have to earn their living by teaching or in some job unrelated to art, and practise their real skills in their spare time. This is wrong for them, and for everyone else. Art should be part of our everyday life. We should see it in shops, public buildings, hospitals, waiting rooms, in the street."

Margaret tells me that in France, Germany, Canada and Scandinavia it is customary for one to two per cent of the cost of any new public building to be spent on the work of artists and craftsmen. As a result, original art is incorporated in the fabric of towns and cities, in a way that does not yet happen here.

"This makes art economically viable for many more artists, and also means that many more people can see and enjoy original creative work. Just look into shops and offices as you walk along any street in Britain. So often, you will see blank walls, functional furniture, only a pot plant or a poster to relieve the severity.

"Shopping centres could have ceramics or sculpture to give them colour and life. Long, dull corridors in hospitals could be art galleries. There could even by a picture to look at in a dentist's waiting room, instead of endless magazines.

"We are busy making our children aware of art in schools, but then it stops dead. Some of them may never see an original painting again. The boom in reproduction is all very well, but we shouldn't go on living off the past. If new artists have no stimulus to work, there will be no heritage for us to pass on."

It's typical of Margaret Smith that, instead of talking about herself, she should talk about the problems of all artists. But her own work is eminently worth talking about. She is an expert in tie-dyeing and batik; she designs and makes most of her own clothes, often using fabrics dyed by herself. She makes wall hangings in batik — the process whereby hot wax is used to mask certain areas of the fabric during dyeing to produce the design.

But painting is still her first love, though even for this she constantly experiments. She is planning for an exhibition in the autumn, and will certainly be showing some pictures where she has combined wool strands to outline the figures with oil paint. In a canvas called Ritual Fire Dance, the flowing figures are

Margaret Bialokoz Smith sewing (above). She wears a dress which, like many of her own and her family's clothes, she dyed and made herself. Below, Margaret works on some batik, a method of design using hot wax to mask areas of cloth. Giving someone a present in her family, says Margaret, means putting time and effort into making it, not buying one.

Outside Wolfson College yesterday: (from left) Sir Philip Powell, Sir Hugh Casson and Mr Hidalgo Moya — Sir Philip's partner in Powell and Moya.

Why the public don't like us — architect

PUBLIC DISCONTENT with architects has never been so vocal or so constant, Sir Hugh Casson, chairman of the Royal Institute of British Architects' awards committee, told guests at a Wolfson College ceremony in Oxford yesterday.

He was presenting RIBA awards to those concerned in the building of Wolfson in Linton Road, the largest residential college for graduates in the country, which was officially opened in November last year.

Sir Hugh said that to the public, as non-architects, those who put up buildings were anonymous and impossible to influence.

president of Wolfson, Sir Isaiah Berlin — Sir Henry said the college's success lay in its combination of an academic community and human relations enjoyed in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

"If Wolfson turns out to be the last college built in Oxford it is a fitting culmination to six centuries of magnificent architecture," he said.

"However, the principal reason for this disenchantment is that architecture is the most accurate mirror you can find of the values of the society for which it is built," he said.

"Deep down we dislike and fear the values of our society and we vent our despair and hatred upon the buildings that express them.

He presented the RIBA awards to Sir Philip Powell, of Powell and Moya, the London-based architects of the college; Sir Henry Fisher, President of Wolfson; and Mr John Watts, representing the builders, Shepherd Construction Ltd.

Well built

Wolfson College was described by Sir Hugh as having "a marvellously robust directness of expression scaled to human needs and touched occasionally by that fantasy and magic that makes all the difference.

"It is beautifully sited and splendidly built" he said.

Sir Hugh welcomed the increase in new university buildings. "I would like to get rid once and for all of that ludicrous, sentimental idea that because one is a student one must be an elitist and live in an old building."

Addressing the guests — including the first

Obituary D. T. 11.11.76

DR ALICE OWENS

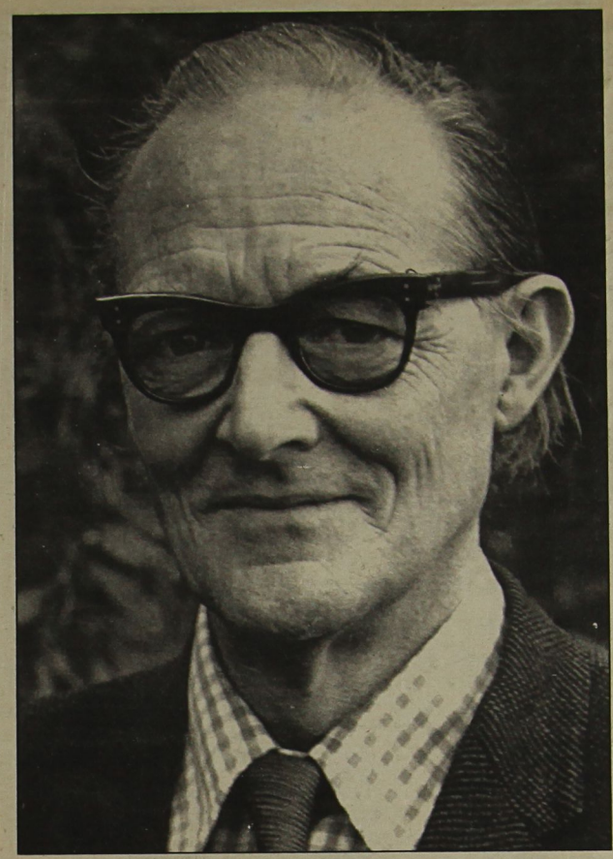
Dr Alice Constance Owens who has died at Prescot, Lancs, aged 70, was a pioneer of occupational therapy in the early 1930s. She collaborated with Dr Elizabeth Casson to open Dorset House, Bristol, the first occupational therapy school in England. She later moved to Chester mental hospital where she opened an occupational therapy demonstration department.

She was chairman of the Association of Occupational Therapists from 1935 to 1941, and a founder member of the association. Later she became secretary of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, and represented the profession on the World Health Organisation.

She received her doctorate for research in the psychological field, and assisted the Medical Research Council on many research projects. She was appointed an M B E in 1959.

LOOKING BACK

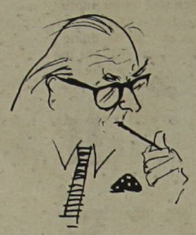
An exhibition now showing at the Royal College of Art commemorates Sir Hugh Casson's 22 years as head of the Department of Interior (now Environmental) Design. Sir Hugh talks to Peter Murray



INTERIOR Design as a discipline did not exist in Britain until Sir Hugh Casson set up the School of Interior Design at the Royal College of Art in 1952.

After 23 years, Sir Hugh is retiring. He hands over his chair in July to John Miller — of Architects Colquhoun and Miller. To commemorate his retirement, the students of his department, now called the School of Environmental Design, are organising an exhibition of the work of past students.

The exhibition has a period title, *Look Back In*. However, Sir Hugh does not look back in anger, but more with optimism and encouragement at the changes during his period of office.



"The main difference that has taken place in twenty years", he says, "is the loosening of structured courses. When I first came here, Wednesday was a half day, when people were supposed to play football —it was just like school!

"Courses were written out and consisted of a series of exercises and a programme of lectures. Gradually, this began to disintegrate under student pressure—throughout the university world. Lectures became denigrated as a way of disseminating knowledge.

"Here, we have always stuck very closely to the tutorial system. We have a good staff/student ratio of about 1/7, and we have always kept to part-time teaching."

Other major changes include the broadening of interests of the students, and the fact that students coming to the college are better read, better educated and more self sufficient.

As its name suggests, the area of study of the School of Environmental Design is much wider than mere interior design, and although it does not produce architects as such, it fills a very real gap in architectural education of this country.

"After the Oxford Conference on arthitectural education" says Sir Hugh, "it was decided that architecture should be a university level exercise with strong mathematical and physical science content. This resulted in a rather over-impersonal, over-scientific attitude, which wouldn't have mattered if it didn't mean that it kept a lot of non-mathematicians out of architecture.

"I wouldn't have been able to become an architect now, because I would never have got through that net.

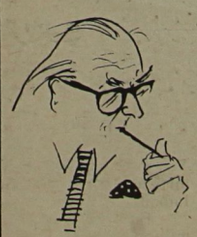
"I regard this college as a sort of safety net for those people who provide a sense of richness and drama to the environment. All those things that architects tend to despise these days as not coming out of the computer programme." Or, as Lord Esher puts it, people who "have leavened the lump of contemporary architecture with an immediately recognisable element of individual flair and humane imagination."

Nevertheless, there have been moves for many years to create a Department of Architecture in the RCA. Was Sir Hugh disappointed that he did not have his own fully fledged school of architecture?

"No, I'm quite happy about it I was never all that keen on the idea. I wanted to catch and train people with much broader interests than one would be able to do in a school of architecture — people interested in theatre, landscape and jewellery.

"But John Miller is a very good architect and it may well be that he will want to do more architecture. He is bringing in Ken Frampton as senior tutor who is a non drawing board man and will give useful intellectual weight which the school hasn't had from me because I'm essentially a non-theorist.

Even so, many students from



the school move into architect-style jobs when they leave. "We did a survey which showed that a number have gone off on their own, starting small design studios.

"They don't actually build buildings, but they have done an awful lot of conversions. One of our students did about 20 large cinemas, dividing them into four smaller ones. Others have gone into BBC TV design, some into theatre design, but the highest proportion has gone into architects' offices working on interior design."

After his retirement, Sir Hugh will be able to devote more time to his practice. He is a great believer in teachers being able to practise what they preach, and in fact, most of the teaching in the school is done by part-time tutors, for the most part practising architects. How does Sir Hugh manage his various jobs?

"My teaching and other aspects of college life take up just two days a week, my practice two days a week and my non-paid work — Fine Art Commission, RIBA Council, Royal Mint Advisory Committee, Council of the National Trust—takes up the rest.

"These committees tend to accumulate. The number one does is ludicrous, but they are such enormous fun. In fact, you lose quite a lot of work by sitting on committees. Everybody thinks that you gain, but you are specifically forbidden to do work for the institutions you advise.

"Anybody who is on the Fine Art Commission loses thousands of pounds worth of work. Often, we say to somebody with some awful scheme 'You'd better have a consultant, and they ask 'Who?' and you say 'Anybody but those in this room'."

Having a knighthood—which Sir Hugh received for his Festival of Britain work — is not always an advantage. "I got my knighthood very young — I was 40 — and everybody thought I was a tiny bit grand. But the office was still doing attic conversions for Uncle George, and people used to think 'I can't ask him.' So I did have a bit of trouble at first.

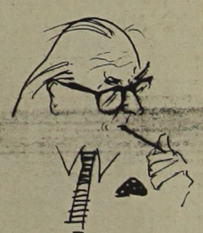
"I remember George Brown was very sweet when the Festival job came to an end. He was Minister of Works at the time, and he rang me up and said 'If you are on your uppers let me know because the Ministry could pass some work your way'.

"He said he knew what it was like when you've just left a Government job—which of course directing the Festival of Britain was."

Casson, Conder & Partners' practice work is holding up well despite the economic situation. The office employs around 30 staff and at the moment they have enough work, "so we won't have to sack anybody". They are working on the competition-winning scheme for the Civic Hall at Derby, on the Head Office for Smiths in Fetter Lane and on the Educational Centre at London Zoo.

Other work includes planning consultancy. Sir Hugh was appointed as consultant to Bath by Sir Donald Gibson, and remained there until Roy Worskett took over.

Bristol is another, and tougher, job. "Bristol is much more political. There are great long gaps in appointments,



long periods when there is nobody there to take any decisions. They have had a tough time. They were the first people to rebuild their city, and they did it wrong. Everybody came to Bristol to see how *not* to do it They had this big road programme, then everybody started wondering if roads were the right solution, so they got it half built, and now they are hanging around for transport studies."

But Casson accepts such vicissitudes philisophically. He believes that there are certain problems that just don't have solutions, "and one mustn't fret that they don't," he says.

"In Moscow for instance, which is a lovely clean city with few motor cars, it's perfectly easy to solve the problems if you say that nobody can have a motor car. But you've only solved that problem by creating another one of restricting people's freedom."

Undaunted by these urban conundrums, Sir Hugh looks *forward* in an optimistic mood. "Architects *have* to be optimistic. It's such a bloody awful slow game getting a building up. Unless you are spurred on by enormous natural optimism, I don't think you would survive. Do you?" □

Miss B. E. G. Collins receiving the award of Honorary Fellow of the British Association of Occupational Therapists, from Lord Byers, President, at the First European Congress of Occupational Therapy, Edinburgh, May, 1977.

Sir Hugh Casson, 65, pictured last night after he had been elected President of the Royal Academy.

Sir Hugh Casson is new President of R.A.

18.2.76

SIR HUGH CASSON, 65, the architect and former Professor of Environmental Design at the Royal College of Art, was elected President of the Royal Academy by his fellow academicians in London yesterday.

The Queen, as Patron, Protector and Supporter of the Academy, was told and was "graciously pleased to approve the new appointment," said Mr Sidney Hutchinson, secretary of the Academy.

Sir Hugh, 20th President and first architect to hold the position since Sir Albert Richardson in 1954-56, succeeds the late Sir Thomas Monnington.

He received 37 votes, more than twice as many as his other rivals combined, who collectively polled 14. They are believed to have included Sir Frederick Gibberd, 68, the architect and Mr Frederick Gore, 62, Head of Painting at the St Martin School of Art, London.

First ballot victory

The new president was elected on the first ballot—the first time this has happened in living memory.

He was Director of Architecture for the Festival of Britain in 1951 and is well-known to the public through his architectural and design work. A member of the Arts Council he is also a trustee of the British Museum.

He said afterwards he felt honoured and humble at being chosen and said there were lots of "absolutely smashing" things on the way.

Questioned about the Tate Gallery and its controversial pile of bricks sculpture Sir Hugh said the Tate was dealing in "frontier country" and areas of taste which were not yet established.

Its directors and trustees could not risk missing anything but they might buy a dud. Everybody was dealing with subjective judgments. The Tate storeroom was full of pieces of sculpture and pictures temporarily out of favour.

..... and thank you
very much for your
kind wishes.

HC.

Thank you — & Great Hour!

HC

Miss Collins' Farewell Luncheon - 1977