

COMBINED ANNUAL REPORT

Reports for years ending 31 August 2021, 2022 and 2023



Cover Image: Professor Ann Sumner and the Revd Sonia Hicks look at Euryl Stevens' *The Raising of Lazarus* displayed at Coventry Methodist Central Hall in September 2021 as part of the *Stories of Change: Hope, Faith and Love* Art Trail (Photo: C Hibbard © TMCP 2021 used with kind permission of Coventry & Nuneaton Methodist Circuit)

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

This report is a compilation of the annual reports of the Methodist Church's activity relating to the Methodist Modern Art Collection for the three years 1 September 2020 - 31 August 2023, which includes the latter part of the 'Rejuvenation Pause' for conservation. This special report marks a change in the timing of the annual report: next year's annual report will cover 1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024.

This combined annual report covers activity relating to the Collection over the long tail of the Covid-19 pandemic and the gradual recovery since, demonstrating ongoing resilience during a difficult period for all. Alongside the uncertainty, delayed exhibitions, and overall challenges of this period, there have also been opportunities, positivity and many achievements.

The end of the 'Rejuvenation Pause'

The 'Rejuvenation Pause', and the continued impact of the pandemic fallout, gave the Management Committee the opportunity to act on a number of recommendations made in the reviews of operation and governance, which were commissioned in 2018. This led to a period of intense activity. We have now completed an extensive

conservation and reframing programme, generously funded by the Methodist Church, to ensure that the works are resilient for touring, and have re-launched the Collection. To support this work, we have entered details of the works on to a Collections Management System (MODES), written key policy documents to bring our processes more closely into line with the nationally recognised Arts Council Accreditation standards, and worked with the Church's Communications team to ensure timely press releases before exhibitions. We hope that those who have visited our exhibitions have been introduced to a living faith, encouraged to open-up dialogues and to see our Collection in new contexts, enhancing their spiritual life.

2021 - The re-launch of the Collection

The re-launch took place as part of Coventry City of Culture UK, in the autumn of 2021, with the *Stories of Change: Hope, Faith and Love* Art Trail. The start date for the City of Culture celebrations was pushed back from May to September, and, initially, there was concern that people would not have the confidence or desire to attend the opening or other events after the pandemic. In fact, the delays gave us the opportunity to build

relationships with local communities, artists and churches across the Coventry & Nuneaton Circuit and with Coventry Cathedral, to understand how borrowers wanted to respond to the Collection, and to navigate the new environment. The launch began with Choral Evensong in Basil Spence's beautiful cathedral, where four of our works were displayed. The Dean of Coventry, the Very Reverend John Witcombe, led the service. The Revd Sonia Hicks, then President of the Methodist Conference, and Barbara Easton, then Vice-President, both shared Bible readings and afterwards they attended a packed, joyous opening launch event with music, dance and poetry at Coventry's Methodist Central Hall. The President spoke of Coventry's long history of renewal after decline, and of her great pleasure at being in the city now known for its diversity, inclusion and youthfulness. The Vice-President, who had accepted the role of patron of our Friends organisation, talked about the great potential to use the Collection in mission. (See below for a review of the exhibition.)

We were also immensely proud to lend works at the same time to Chester Cathedral for an exhibition entitled *Global Images of Christ: Challenging Perceptions*, which reflected the rich diversity of images

of Christ. (See below for a review of the exhibition.)

2022 - our 60th Anniversary year

The Bewdley exhibition, *For all the People*, was originally scheduled for Lent 2020. It finally came to fruition, on the third attempt, in March 2022, following a great deal of hard work and commitment to ecumenical collaboration by the organisers. (See below for a review of the exhibition.)

For the 60th Anniversary of the Collection in 2022, the Management Committee took a new approach to loaning, with individual works being displayed for longer than usual periods at six locations across the country. This allowed deeper engagement with diverse communities. There were also a number of events organised both online and in person, to explore more about the history of the Collection and to maintain its profile and engage with supporters. Loan venues reflected the current strategic goals being pursued by the Management Committee and included sending the *Stations of the Cross* by Frank Roper to Woodhouse Grove School in Apperley Bridge, Yorkshire. This was the first time in over 10 years that these sculptures have been lent out. (See below for further details.)

2023 - a full loans programme

2023 has seen a return to a full loans programme with the ambitious exhibition, *Articles of Faith - Where Our Paths Meet* in Bristol at Victoria Methodist Church, the first inter-faith exhibition of the Collection. Again, there was a really vibrant and engaging launch event, which started at the Royal West of England Academy and then moved on to the church for singing and to hear from the inter-faith partners about how the exhibition had come to fruition. A wide-ranging programme of events accompanied the exhibition. We also lent to a key Methodist Heritage site, John Wesley's New Room (the first-ever purpose-built Methodist meeting

place, today enhanced by a modern museum and hospitality facilities), where a small but powerful exhibition of four works was displayed, *Death to Life: Image, expression & symbolism*. Eleven works from the Bristol shows then went on to Kingswood School, Bath, for their exhibition, *Transforming Lives*, giving students there the chance to engage with and respond

Management Committee members Corinne Miller, Ann Sumner and Verity Smith after hanging works by Frank Roper in the chapel at Woodhouse Grove School, one of the loans made to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Collection.



to some of our best-known paintings. This exhibition coincided with a major Methodist Schools conference, also called *Transforming Lives*, where the exhibition was viewed and discussed by international delegates. (See below for reviews of the exhibitions.)

Over the past three years, and despite the fact that we could not lend the Collection during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Collection has been seen by well over 110,000 people, with many different engagement events, such as workshops, lectures and talks, opening up new conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world. We have found new supporters and friends and raised the profile of the Collection within and beyond the Methodist Church.

The search for a new home

There have been continuing in-depth discussions throughout the last three years about a New Home for the Collection (as a base from which to tour it). This has included establishing clear criteria and entering into broad-ranging dialogue with a variety of potential institutional partners. As yet, we have not found our 'forever home', but doing so remains a key priority. We are hopeful that we will find a new and fulfilling

partnership in the year to come. In the meantime, between exhibitions, the Collection remains safely housed in a secure museum storage facility, and our archive has recently been deposited in the Methodist Archives & Research Centre at the University of Manchester's John Rylands Research Institute & Library.

The volunteer Management Committee

The past three years have been simultaneously challenging and exciting. They have required dedication and huge amounts of precious time from the volunteer Management Committee. I would like to thank sincerely all those who have contributed so generously of their professional expertise to help deliver a unique programme of change and improvement in response to the 2018 governance and practice reviews; to writing our comprehensive new operational policy documents, and to supporting exhibition administration and organisation across the country – all of which is hugely time-consuming.

All the Committee members have worked hard to ensure that we continue to improve our care of the Collection, preserving it for generations to come, that

the Collection reaches diverse communities, that we continue to raise the profile of the Collection and that we build partnerships. In particular, I would like to thank Corinne Miller, Vice Chair of the Management Committee, for her support, and wide-ranging work and commitment, as well as Katharine Farnham-Dear, editor of the Friends' Newsletter and fellow Committee member, for her dedicated work on the production of this three-year report.

Professor Ann Sumner, Chair of the
Management Committee

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE COLLECTION

The three-year period covered by this report provides a challenge in recalling the diverse work and activities of the Friends, as we coped with the easing of Covid-19 constraints and eventual freedom from them, such that exhibitions and other public events related to the Collection were able to resume.

The number of Friends remains just over 110, with the usual small loss of some through death or decisions not to renew each, thankfully, balanced by the welcoming of new Friends. These new Friends

often came to us as a result of the encouragement of existing Friends, or were prompted by visiting an exhibition, or attending a talk such as that given at Epworth by Ann Sumner. We were grateful that over the period, the Revd Richard Teal, Barbara Easton and the Revd Graham Thompson each served as Patron of the Friends during their respective terms as President or Vice-President (as in the case of Barbara Easton) of the Methodist Conference.

The average income over the three tax years from annual



Ian Baker, outgoing
Secretary of the
Friends Association

donations was £3,231, which included an annual average of £536 arising from Gift Aid. This covered the cost of the production of two Newsletters each year, postage and other sundry expenditures, but left a working balance available for other forms of potential support for the Collection.

The return to loaning out works from the Collection provided opportunities to make known the work of the Friends, and our various promotional resources were made available to those interested in supporting the work of the Collection.

Partnerships with a range of individuals and organisations involved in art and religion were fostered and sustained by making sure they were supplied with our Newsletters. Sometimes, on hearing or reading a Bible story referred to in the media, we proactively brought to the attention of the author a work from the Collection on the same theme. More often than not, this resulted

in someone being introduced to the Collection and other works in it. From time-to-time e-letters have been sent to Friends to alert them to a range of other events in the arena of religious art and we know that these have resulted in attendance.

Inevitably, there have been some bureaucratic challenges in maintaining and servicing the Friends. Time was devoted to encouraging donations to be made either by standing order or by BACS in the light of changes introduced by HSBC resulting in charges for cheque-based payments and a new monthly account charge. This reduced our exposure to these charges.

As always, we are grateful to all the Friends whose support goes beyond their regular financial donations to serving as volunteer ambassadors promoting the Collection and its significant value to the mission of the Church.

Ian Baker, Secretary of the Friends

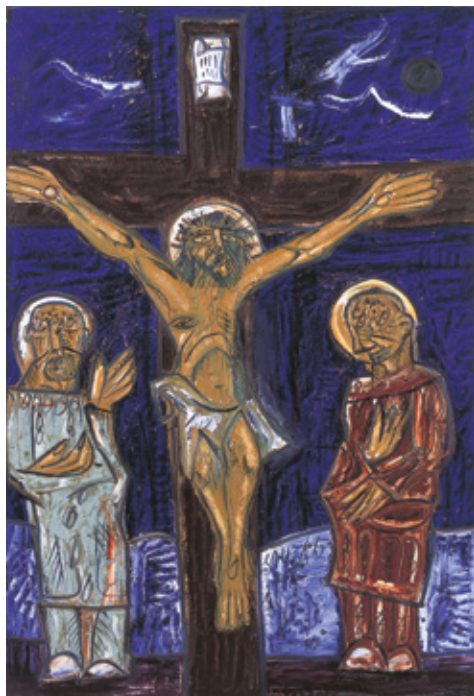
WHAT IS THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION?

The Methodist Modern Art Collection is one of the Church's greatest treasures. It is an outstanding collection of Christian art illustrating the gospel narrative from the Nativity to Pentecost. Over the past 60 years, it has enhanced worship, enthused mission, amazed visitors, inspired poetry and dance, and encouraged many supporters.

The Collection was founded in South Wales in 1962. Post-war Britain was seeing a revival in religious painting as many artists were being commissioned to create works for the churches and cathedrals being rebuilt after World War II. The power of art to engage people at a deep spiritual level was being recognised. The Church of England's commissioning is well known, but the story of the Methodist Church's response to this revival is less celebrated. In Wales, Dr John Morel Gibbs and the Revd Douglas Wollen were inspired by the rebuilding of Llandaff Cathedral completed in 1960, and the commissioning by the architect George Pace of Jacob Epstein, John Piper and Frank Roper.

Dr John Morel Gibbs, a Methodist layman and art collector, realised that many Nonconformists had little appreciation of the insights that contemporary artists could bring to the Christian story. He

decided to create a collection of key examples of British 20th Century art for the Methodist Church that could be toured around the country. He was assisted by his friend and Methodist minister, Douglas Wollen. The works they acquired between 1962 and 1965 became the core of the present Collection and include significant works by Edward Burra, Ceri Richards, William Roberts, Frank Roper and Graham Sutherland. From the beginning, they were far-sighted. They included work by women artists including Elisabeth Frink, Eularia Clarke and Euryl Stevens. And the first painting to be acquired in June 1962, just a month after Coventry Cathedral was re-consecrated, was *The Crucifixion* by South Asian artist, F N Souza. In more recent years, the Collection has acquired more works by world artists, including Jyoti Sahi from India, Sadao Watanabe from Japan and John Muafangejo from Namibia. It continued to expand again from the 1990s, when Dr John Newton Gibbs, the son of the original founder, took over leading the management of the Collection, with works by artists such as Craigie Aitchison, Patrick Heron, Ghislaine Howard, Clive Hicks-Jenkins and Maggi Hambling being acquired. A number of works are by Welsh artists reflecting the fact that our founding fathers lived in Penarth



The first picture in the Collection, F N Souza's *The Crucifixion* © TMCP

in South Wales. Today the Collection comprises more than 50 paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures. The breadth of our Collection has a unique appeal in multi-cultural Britain today and it is a valued key resource for mission and evangelism, whether on a denominational or an ecumenical basis.

The Collection was always intended to tour and the first exhibition, *The Church and the Artist*,

was seen across the country in 1963–5. It continues to travel widely, being shown in town and city galleries, cathedrals, churches, universities and schools (even at an auction house in Yorkshire) over the years. It is also available online.

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian Church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches and the Church of Scotland. It has more than 4,004 churches and a total membership of approximately 164,000 people in Britain. World Methodism is made up of Methodist, Wesleyan and related Uniting and United Churches in 138 countries. Global membership numbers total some 80 million.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Ownership, Care and Development

The Collection is owned by the Methodist Church (Model Trust property). Its trustees are the Methodist Council, the executive of the Methodist Conference, the Church's highest governing body, with responsibility for its care and development being delegated to a Management Committee. The aims of the Management Committee are to care for, develop and promote the Collection, in order to encourage people to enter into conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world and to offer material that can bring new dimensions to study, worship and spiritual life. The vision statement is: 'The Methodist Modern Art Collection – Seeing the Spiritual'.

Accountability

During the period covered by this report, the Management Committee reported initially to the Strategy and Resources Committee, then to the Shadow Mission Committee and now at least annually to the Mission Committee. Encouraged by the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Management Committee has agreed a Vice Chair, Corinne Miller, who

works closely with the Chair, sharing some of the workload.

Meetings

The Management Committee meets formally three times a year, with one Away Day. Management Committee meetings and working sub-group meetings are currently online with only the Away Day being in person. Following the recommendations of the Governance Review of 2018, three working sub-groups were set up in late 2020 to aid the operational business of the Committee, spreading the workload and making the main meeting agendas more manageable. The working sub-groups are Governance and Fundraising (G&F) (initially convened by Rebecca Gibbs and currently by Ann Sumner); Collections Care, Conservation and Development (CCCD) (convened by Corinne Miller) and Exhibitions and Planning (E&P) (initially convened by Verity Smith). The aim of these groups is to ensure improved management and care of the Collection and to monitor programming, ensuring we meet strategic goals and reach diverse communities. Notes from their meetings are sent to the main Management Committee meetings.

Three Away Days have taken place during this period, one in Coventry

in September 2021, one in Bristol in June 2022 and one in London in June 2023. The Coventry Away Day was attended by the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler and Barbara Easton, then Vice President of the Conference.

Administration

During the period of this report, we also improved our administration for the lending of the Collection. In late August 2020, the consultant registrars, Matassa Toffolo Art Collections Management, were appointed to oversee improvements to our loan documentation as initially recommended in the 2018 Practice Review, with the aim of professionalising procedures around exhibition organisation. They were responsible for initially entering the Collection digitally on the MODES Collection Management System (which is also used by all the key Methodist Heritage sites). It was decided that there would always be two 'Lead Contacts' (or link members) for each loan, one with practical exhibition experience, to share the workload of supporting and advising borrowers.

Strategic Goals

From May 2021, we developed a Forward Workplan to help shape our planning and deal with capacity issues. This was formally agreed in September 2022 and confirmed our key strategic goals, prioritising the following:

- Working with Young People
- Ecumenical interaction
- Reaching broad and diverse audiences
- Promoting the Heritage of Methodism

The London 2023 Away Day focused on our exhibition model and how we might loan for exhibitions and organise tours in the future (mindful of the Methodist Conference's Net Zero commitment, for example), as well as re-considering our strategic goals (which will be confirmed in November 2023).

The Risk Register continues to be monitored, and is another useful tool for the Committee to manage our work, particularly in the light of illness or enforced absence of key members.

Policy Documents

The Management Committee has worked on a series of policy documents that reflect best practice in the museums and galleries sector. These policies were written by relevant Management Committee members with appropriate professional knowledge and experience. The ambition is to meet the nationally agreed 'Accreditation' standard for galleries and museums, administered by Arts Council England. They bring us into line with key Methodist Heritage sites which are all Accredited. This will also direct our work by ensuring the care of the Collection meets industry standards in an open and transparent way. This will help borrowers, who are directed to relevant policies, and will aid the negotiation of a new home with a relevant partner. The policies were peer reviewed by the consultant registrars, Matassa Toffolo. They were then approved by SRC (the relevant committee at the time) in March 2021 and will be reviewed in May 2026.

The policies are available online and are:

- Collection Development
- Collection Care and Conservation
- Exhibition Loans
- Mission and Interpretation

Volunteer Management Committee

The Management Committee has also seen some considerable change in membership, as we have had to say a sad farewell to some colleagues. We wish to express gratitude to Lucy Newman Cleeve, who stepped down in November 2020 having been a member for three years; to Sarah Middleton, a long-standing member of the Committee who has given many years of dedicated service; and to the Revd Ruth Gee, as representative of the Methodist Council on the committee, who brought her enthusiasm and her insights into the wider context of the Methodist Church. Katharine Farnham-Dear and Corinne Miller joined as new Management Committee members in May 2020, with Corinne taking on the role of Convenor of the CCD working sub-group and Katharine taking over as Editor of the Friends Newsletter from Bob Williams in the autumn of 2021. Verity Smith, a freelance museum consultant, was appointed to the Management Committee in January 2021, and efficiently convened the Exhibitions and Planning working sub-group until February 2023 when she regrettably stood down due to pressure of work. Sarah Allard was also nominated to the Management Committee. She is a museum

professional, a former Senior Keeper of Art at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, and currently working at the University of Leicester. She has particularly worked on the Guidance for Borrowers document, which has now been fully reviewed and is available online. We also welcomed the Revd Catherine Hutton to our Committee, nominated by the Methodist Council. Catherine is Lead Minister for Epsom and Cheam Circuit and has already made many enthusiastic contributions to the Committee's work.

The Management Committee members over the past three years and continuing are:

- Ann Sumner (Chair)
- Corinne Miller (Vice Chair) (from May 2020)
- Sarah Allard (appointed March 2021)
- Ian Baker (Friends Secretary until November 2023)
- Katharine Farnham-Dear (from May 2020 and from Autumn 2021 Editor Friends Newsletter)
- Revd Ruth Gee (Representative of Council until September 2021)
- Rebecca Gibbs
- Revd Catherine Hutton (Representative of Council

- appointed autumn 2021)
- Revd Graham Kent
- Sarah Middleton (until February 2022)
- Lucy Newman Cleeve (until November 2020)
- Simon Sorokos (until September 2022)

Considerable time has been dedicated to recruiting four new members of the Committee who have recently been appointed, but not yet approved by Council. There was an excellent response to the advertisements for the roles and we are particularly pleased to have recruited a new Secretary of the Friends who is already shadowing the present incumbent. We have introduced an Induction Programme (which has recently been updated) and an exit interview process.

The Management Committee's work is supported by staff members from the Methodist Church's Connexional Mission Team: Jo Hibbard (Director of Engagement), Liz Millard (Senior Administrator) and since March 2023, Olivia Threlkeld (Heritage & Collections Officer). They attend our meetings and our Away Day.

The retirement of Sarah Middleton cannot pass without paying tribute to her very significant contribution

to the work of the Collection. She joined in 2003 and sustained a valuable contribution to our activities over many years. For instance, she drew to the attention of the Committee to two works which were later acquired and are now hugely popular, John Brokenshire's *Untitled – Pentecost* and Jyoti Sahi's iconic *Dalit Madonna*. She was a guiding force in the production of the highly valued study course 'Creative Spirit' and was involved in 2018 in the Royal Hibernian Academy exhibition in Dublin. The Chair particularly remembers working with her when the Collection was displayed in locations across the Isle of Man in 2018. She more recently took a leading role in writing the Mission and Interpretation Policy document, and remains a keen supporter, lecturing during the 2023 exhibition at Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol.

Friends of the Collection

The Friends Newsletter continues to be a key tool for engagement with Friends and supporters, and an effective vehicle for maintaining profile within the Methodist Church and beyond. Katharine Farnham-Dear's editing of the recent issues has been excellent, encouraging varied contributions, ensuring that all

exhibitions and events are promoted beforehand, and reviewed afterwards as well, and covering other interesting developments in the world of religious art.

Ian Baker will shortly be stepping down from his position as Secretary of the Friends, which he has undertaken with dedication and tremendous attention to detail, nurturing key relationships throughout the Church and beyond, as well as with our Friends themselves. He has supported the Newsletter with proof reading and distribution. He will be much missed by us all and we wish him well in his retirement.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE COLLECTION AND LOANS OF WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION 2021-2023

2021

COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE ART TRAIL

*Stories of Change: Hope,
Faith and Love*
*Unique Moments of Healing and
Contemplation*
4 September – 3 October 2021

In Autumn 2021, following our major conservation programme and the review of our exhibition administration, 35 carefully selected works from the Collection were exhibited across churches in Coventry in the form of an innovative

Art Trail. This re-launch of the Collection during Coventry's City of Culture year came to fruition after many months of careful planning amidst the uncertainty of the final pandemic lockdown.

Opening the Art Trail with works in the iconic Coventry Cathedral, amongst its outstanding masterpieces of 20th century religious art, was particularly appropriate. The commissioning of art for the cathedral and the formation of our Collection formed part of the same revival of religious painting in post-war Britain. The inspiration that John Morel Gibbs and the Revd Douglas Wollen found



Balsall Common Methodist Church hosting Art Trail of Collection's paintings in 2021

in Coventry Cathedral is something on which the Committee has been focussing in the period covered by this report. (It was only one month after the re-consecration of Coventry Cathedral that they purchased the first work of art for the Collection in June 1962.)

The Art Trail began in the centre of Coventry before moving out beyond the city centre to other churches in the Coventry & Nuneaton Methodist Circuit. This enabled community engagement in rural areas and city suburbs, as well as in inner-city locations, and allowed relationships to develop with those hosting the Trail, reflecting how they responded to the works at a time of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Parallels came to mind between the current time and the post war period. The Trail was curated to provide spaces for reflection and healing, contemplation and prayer at that time of recovery. It highlighted how the Collection speaks to people about contemporary issues.

After viewing key works at the Cathedral and Methodist Central Hall (where artists in residence responded to our works, including poet Emilie Lauren Jones), visitors moved on to see paintings in Methodist churches in Earlsdon, Balsall Common and Fillongley (a LEP, local ecumenical

partnership). There, themes emerged not only around the peace and reconciliation for which Coventry is renowned, but also green issues, city mission, multiculturalism, and the refugee crisis. Wherever possible quotes were included in interpretation from local church members or clergy, reflecting contemporary stories of change and messages of hope, faith and love. Many of our newly conserved and re-framed works looked brilliant and attracted much comment.

There was a wide ranging events programme. For instance over the weekend of 11/12 September there was enthusiastic and thoughtful engagement by the Representative Synod at Coventry Central Hall, led by then Committee member, Sarah Middleton; while Balsall Common hosted a creative textile session, organised by the Solihull Creative Textiles group, and artist Jayne Good led a fascinating workshop in oils at Fillongley. Ann Sumner gave an interview for BBC CWR (the radio station for Coventry and Warwickshire) that Sunday morning and delivered a lecture on 29 September at Central Hall.

On Tuesday 28 September 2021 Ann Sumner hosted an 'In Conversation' event with John Neilson, the author of the book

The Inscriptions of Ralf Beyer in the nave of the Cathedral. Their discussions focused in particular on the Cathedral's *The Son of Man* is come Tablet of the Word and the Collection's preparatory drawing for that work, which was loaned as part of the Art Trail. Later, Sarah Middleton represented the Collection at Coventry City of Culture's FAITH event, a joint project between local faith leaders and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

We worked closely with the Coventry & Nuneaton Methodist Circuit on this Trail, and special thanks go to the Revd Stephen Willey and Christine Welham there. Sincere thanks also to Asha Eade-Green and her team at Coventry Cathedral.

Visitor figures: Coventry Cathedral: 11,400, Methodist Central Hall: unavailable, Balsall Common: 170+, Earlsdon: 300+, Fillongey unavailable.

3GEN 2021

29 - 31 October 2021

Shortly after our Coventry exhibitions closed, we lent for the first time to 3Generate, the Methodist Church's children's and youth assembly. Five pictures from the Collection were sent for display at Birmingham's NEC. The theme for 2021 was 'In Tune' and during the weekend over 600 4 to 23-year-olds and their youth leaders explored what it meant to be in tune with each other and with God. The pictures were hung in the designated Art Space, each interpreted with a 'big question' to stimulate conversation around them in line with the theme of the weekend. The young people were encouraged to 'be inspired and then create (their) own masterpieces'.

Visitor figures: 750 young people and 250 leaders attended 3Gen 2021.

Jo Hibbard discusses John Reilly's *The Raising of Lazarus* with one of the young people at 3Generate 2021 © TMCP 2021



2021 LOAN TO CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Global Images of Christ:

Challenging Perceptions

25 September – 30 October 2021

This loan came at a time when world events, including the Black Lives Matter movement, were challenging us to think how we might respond to and value diverse communities. This fascinating exhibition, organised by Chester Cathedral in partnership with the Diocese of Chester's Board of Social Responsibility, brought together some 40 artworks that reflected the rich diversity of images of Christ that bring meaning to faith for so many. As one of the most important collections of religious art, the Methodist Modern Art Collection, was delighted to be represented with six works:

- *Nathaniel asleep under the tree* by Mark Cazalet
- *Fool of God – Christ in the Garden* by Mark Cazalet
- *Our God for all people or Judas Iscariot betrayed our Lord for R 3.00* by John Muafangejo
- *Noli me tangere* by Roy de Maistre
- *The Supper at Emmaus* by Roy de Maistre
- *People visit the Stable* by Sadao Watanabe

The exhibition was presented at various locations around the glorious red sandstone medieval Cathedral and cloisters, which had been dramatically lit for the occasion.

Visitor figures to the cathedral during the period of the exhibition: 27,850.

2022

BEWDLEY EXHIBITION

For All People

26 March - 24 April 2022

The long awaited Bewdley exhibition involved seven churches from six denominations (as Bewdley's Churches Together) emphasising their commitment, and that of the Management Committee, to ecumenical work. They suffered two Covid-related postponements and the organising committee in Bewdley admitted they found it very hard to gather the mental, emotional and physical energy to make a third attempt to mount the exhibition. However, with the help of Management Committee Lead Ian Baker, they did so and said they experienced 'a truly blessed time'.

The exhibition was staged at the attractive Wyre Forest Gallery, Bewdley Museum, and welcomed



The pictures at Bewdley provoked a lot of conversations (Photo courtesy of Margaret Ashmore)

more than 2,000 visitors. The visitors' book recorded some moving comments: '*The Washing of the Feet* has moved me to tears'. 'In these troubled times such works provide consolation'. 'What wonderful foresight to amass this collection'. 'A feeling of being held by the Christian narrative in this intimate space'. 'So much more vivid and alive than looking at a small print'. 'During this time of commercial Easter indulgence this is perfect for Maundy Thursday and Holy Week'. 'How lucky

Bewdley is to have such a wonderful exhibition'. 'A spiritual journey; thank you Bewdley for allowing this opportunity to witness such power to lead our thoughts to Easter'.

During the exhibition the stewards noticed that, in contrast with the way people often behave in an art gallery, pausing occasionally but spending little time with most exhibits, visitors to this small gallery spent their time slowly moving from picture to picture and pausing for some time in front of each one and truly engaging with the works.

The organisers were glad to liaise with the local Church of England primary school who made the

exhibition part of their work in school. Just before the end of term most of the children walked down the hill to the museum and - a few at a time! - came into the gallery to look at the pictures and fill in their worksheets. Adults who were there during the school visit were surprised and impressed by the children's complete concentration and engagement with the pictures. Without any preconception engendered by the modern art label, the children were excited and impressed. One onlooker said with some surprise, 'They saw things in the pictures I hadn't seen'. After their visit the children produced their own artwork which was later on show in St. Anne's Church.

Alongside the exhibition there was a series of workshops, talks and reflections designed to educate and challenge, a long with Sunday evening services throughout Lent when all the Christian churches in the town came together to celebrate the profound truth that art does not favour any one way of worship, but encompasses all of faith. From the Elim Pentecostal church joyfully celebrating the Michael Edmonds' *Cross over the City*, to the Roman Catholic *Lectio Divina* based on Roy de Maistre's *Noli me Tangere*, the ecumenical gatherings were greatly enriched by such diversity of worship.

Visitor figures: 2,220.

3GEN 2022

30 September - 2 October 2022

Continuing to ensure that we work with young people and to build on our partnership with 3Generate, in October 2022 we again lent a number of works from the Collection for display at the Birmingham NEC. This event was attended by even more delegates than the previous year with almost 1200 children and young people and over 450 leaders. Six paintings were selected for loan, working with the Church's Children & Young Peoples' Advisory Group.

'Sim specs', which replicate a number of visual impairments, also allowed visitors to see the works of art as people with different sight conditions might see them. (The facilitators were briefed to help the children and young people to 'see differently' and to understand that visual impairments impact on life in many different ways and that this activity only provided a limited understanding of visual impairments.) Fortuitously, one of the volunteers who helped was a former ophthalmic nurse. One respondent said: 'When I put on the glasses the picture was not as clear visually, but was just as clear understandably!'

Visitors were invited to respond to the pictures and questions about

what they could see and to fill out labels that could be tied to chains suspended beneath the pictures. These proved popular. Many respondents saw parallels between the images and contemporary life (such as the war and refugees from Ukraine), and it was clear that art can help people of all ages to think deeply about current issues. Corinne Miller led the organisation for this event with commitment and zeal.

Visitor Figures: 1,650 people attended 3Gen.

60th anniversary Methodist Modern Art Collection 1962–2022

60th ANNIVERSARY LOANS AND EVENTS 2022

2022 marked the 60th Anniversary of establishing the Collection. It has always been a loan collection, with works being shown both in galleries and in diverse venues including small rural communities and larger urban areas. Taking faith to the people like this is very much in the spirit of early Methodism, when John Wesley exhorted Methodists to spread the good news, 'Take it out! Take it out to the people!'

To celebrate 60 years of collecting and art-based activism, works from the Collection were loaned to six venues across the country during 2022. The selected venues demonstrate the current strands of work being pursued by the Management Committee.

Working with children and young people, we contribute to events such as 3Generate. In addition, four aluminium reliefs from a set of *Stations of the Cross* by Frank Roper were displayed at Woodhouse Grove School, Apperley Bridge, Bradford, part of the family of Methodist Schools. We were delighted that the school wished to display these works in the chapel where pupils could engage with them as part of their education, as they had not been shown for a number of years. To complement the loan, Ann Sumner gave a talk in the School Chapel about the life and work of the artist. This was subsequently expanded into an article in the Newsletter. The School Chaplain, the Revd Rob Drost, also wrote an article for the Newsletter emphasising the various ways in which different school year groups had interacted with the sculptures in the context of different lessons as well as through services in the chapel. Revd Rob also wrote about the works for *the connexion* magazine.

Paintings from the Collection have frequently been used as a resource for ecumenical interaction. As part of our 60th Anniversary celebration we once again lent a painting to Coventry Cathedral, where *Good Friday: Walking on Water, 2006* by Maggi Hambling created a striking entrance to the Chapel of Unity. Opened in 1962, the same year that the Methodist Modern Art Collection was founded, Coventry Cathedral is the outstanding example of the post-war movement that promoted the relationship between art and faith.

Creating opportunities for dialogue within local communities, both within the Methodist Connexion and with the wider community, means that each year the Collection is actively used by diverse local groups. For the 60th Anniversary *The Five Thousand* by Eularia Clarke and *The Elements of Holy Communion* by Jacques Iselin were lent to Shieldfield Art Works (SAW), Newcastle and to Balsall Common Methodist Church respectively.

At the heart of this Collection is Methodism. The loan of the watercolour *Crucifixion* by Welsh artist Michael Edmonds, to y Gaer, Brecon, where it is displayed alongside his watercolour of the Brecon Beacons, reflects the Welsh origins of the Collection. Meanwhile

the painting *Christ Writes in the Dust - the Woman Taken in Adultery* by Clive Hicks-Jenkins was shown at The Old Rectory Epworth, where it was part of the Women in Methodism display. Ann Sumner gave a free online talk at The Old Rectory in November 2022. To ensure maximum accessibility, it was signed by a BSL interpreter and almost 50 people joined from across the UK. Ann outlined the early history of the Collection and described how it has developed, contextualising the acquisition of the Clive Hicks-Jenkins work. A recording is now available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViiuKsxuArU>

Also as part of the 60th Anniversary celebrations, Ann Sumner interviewed John N Gibbs, the son of the founder of the Collection, John M Gibbs. This was written up in two successive Newsletters, the first focusing on the foundation and early years of the Collection, and the second on John N Gibbs's time as Chair of the Committee. Covid prevented John N Gibbs attending an in-person event with Ann Sumner at Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol in the Autumn of 2022, but his brother James Gibbs attended in his stead.

Visitor figures: Epworth: 2,000 Y Gaer: 8,428, Balsall Common: 1,340, Coventry Cathedral: 49,518, Woodhouse Grove School: 1,515 plus 750 for weekly assemblies.

2023

LOAN TO VICTORIA METHODIST CHURCH BRISTOL

Articles of Faith - Where Our Paths Meet
20 February – 8 April 2023

This exhibition had also been delayed due to Covid.

Articles of Faith was a groundbreaking exhibition because works from the Collection were shown with art and artefacts from other faith traditions and curated around the universal themes of hope, suffering, hospitality, relationship and mystery, justice and peace, life and death, text and story, compassion and service – an innovative, inclusive and inspiring approach.

The exhibition built on Victoria's existing partnership with their neighbours, the Royal West of England Academy and the University of Bristol's Music Department, and provided an opportunity to develop new relationships with the Bristol Hindu Temple, a nearby Hebrew (Orthodox) synagogue, and the Muslim Chaplain and students at Bristol University's Interfaith Chaplaincy. Impressively, almost everyone at the church was involved in some way with the exhibition.

The aim was to reflect a common human spirituality, opening up conversations and dialogue. This ambition chimed with the vision for the Collection – 'Seeing the Spiritual'. Victoria's Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim partners all lent to the exhibition as the project developed and all contributed to a lively programme of events put together by Jane Stacey and the planning group.

To encourage as many school-aged students as possible to engage with the exhibition, an art competition

Pictures from the Collection on display with artefacts from other faith traditions at Victoria Methodist Church 2023



was organised. Six local schools, catering for different age groups, took part and all the entries were displayed in a parallel exhibition in the undercroft of the church. There were many thoughtful and thought-provoking images relating to the themes of the exhibition.

On Saturday 18 April, people from the church, the Bristol Hebrew Orthodox synagogue, Bristol University Islamic Society, the Royal West of England Academy of Art and the Management Committee of the Methodist Modern Art Collection came together to celebrate the opening of the exhibition and speak about their hopes for it. The event, hosted initially in the splendid newly refurbished galleries at the Royal West of England Academy (thanks to the auspices of the Director Alison Bevan) and then at Victoria Methodist Church itself, was a night of great celebration, enthusiasm, music, visual delight and animated discussion. It was clear that this was a project that had already forged relationships and brought communities together. As the Revd Richard Sharples, the minister at Victoria who had the driving vision and passion for this exhibition, said, 'Conversations are the essence of relationship'.

Alongside the exhibition, there was a series of events, concerts, talks and workshops. Four keynote

speakers were arranged jointly with the Ecumenical Lent Conversation team, and the talks were well attended. A dialogue was held between two members of the Gibbs family whose father/ grandfather had established the Collection, and two guided meditations took place on selected works led by Richard Sharples. Concerts were given by university musicians and an evening by the performance poet Harry Baker brought in a different audience. The church and its interfaith partners facilitated three sessions on Sharing Sacred Texts, comparing themes in the Qu'ran, the Torah and the Bible. Workshops on Arabic calligraphy and Jewish storytelling included sessions for children and complemented a children's craft workshop.

'An Indian Experience' began with a Hindu blessing, followed by a meal, dancing displays by children and adults, and the modelling of saris from different regions. It was lovely to see young people both performing and in the audience. The final event on Good Friday was 'At the Foot of the Cross', an evening of dramatic readings and music directed and performed by the Victoria community and friends.

Visitor figures: 1400 during exhibition opening hours, augmented by 1,000 attending events outside those hours. Estimated total: 2,000.

LOAN TO JOHN WESLEY'S NEW ROOM BRISTOL

*Death to Life: Image,
expression & symbolism*
18 February – 8 April 2023

In contrast to the size and scope of Victoria's exhibition, during Lent 2023 a small reflective exhibition was hosted by John Wesley's New Room Museum in Bristol. It brought together four different depictions of the Crucifixion from the Collection by contrasting twentieth century artists. It aimed 'to evoke a sense of discovery through meaning, expression and symbolism', and visitors were invited to 'examine each [painting] and explore Biblical evidence about what took place', then choose from a selection of words that best described their response to the paintings. The exhibition was skilfully hung and lit to show the works to the full advantage.

Events that accompanied the exhibition included an exhibition private view where guests from both faith and arts backgrounds, including friends, supporters and partners could enjoy the display and benefit from networking opportunities. In addition to this, a special morning was dedicated to the presentation of the exhibition to volunteers. One commented, 'I never imagined art

would engage me at a spiritual level'. As part of the What's On programme, the New Room were delighted to host Ann Sumner to give a talk on the history of the Collection. Their regular Friday lunchtime Communion service added another moment during each week to stop and reflect on how themes of faith within art can generate a spiritual response.

Visitor figures: more than 400 people visited the gallery whilst the exhibition was there.

LOAN TO KINGSWOOD SCHOOL

Transforming Lives
19 April to 11 July 2023

After the two exhibitions in Bristol closed, 11 key works travelled to nearby Kingswood School in Bath. Their exhibition coincided with the school's 275th anniversary programme and the *Transforming Lives* IAMSCU Methodist international educational conference. The carefully selected works reflected key stories from the life of Jesus Christ that have continued to transform lives across the generations, as well as exploring the themes of service, diversity and inclusion that are at the heart of Kingswood today. It was not the first time some of the works have been at the school - the full Collection was

Ann Sumner lecturing about the Collection at Kingswood School



housed there in the late '60s and early '70s. A successful launch event was attended by 30 guests included the headmaster, deputy-head, head of art, school archivist, alumni, local clergy, Ann Sumner, Barbara Easton, two deputy lord lieutenants (one of whom was an alumnus of the school), art dealers and those with connections to local museums and galleries. An events programme was organised, which was open to the public and attracted many ecumenical attendees, including an illustrated talk by Ann Sumner in May 2023 exploring the history of the Collection and focusing on key works on loan to the school, followed by an opportunity for questions and a chance for the public to see the exhibition. Several school assemblies focused on works in the Collection and it featured in tours of the school during the special alumni Association Day in June, to mark 275 years of Methodist education. Local art groups and church groups visited too, and it is believed around 2200 people

saw and engaged with the art in some way during the three months, with several students writing detailed and thoughtful reviews.

Visitor figures: 2,200

2023 LOAN TO Y GAER (BRECKNOCK MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY)

*Hill-rhythms David Jones +
Capel-y-ffin*

1 July – 29 October 2023

From July to October 2023, the Collection's *Three Kings* woodblock by David Jones is on loan to the exhibition *Hill-rhythms David Jones + Capel-y-ffin* at Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery, y Gaer, Brecon. Jones (1895 -1974) described his time in this Welsh hamlet in the 1920s as 'a new beginning' after his devastating experiences in World War I. The woodblock perfectly fits this theme, seeming to show the Magi journeying through those mountains. The exhibition brings together around 70 works by Jones, including loans from Tate, National Museum Wales and the National Library of Wales. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Rowan Williams opened the exhibition.

Visitor figures are unavailable as the exhibition is ongoing.

OTHER USES OF THE COLLECTION DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REPORT

While the original works in the Collection have been used for in person exhibition loan, reproductions (from the online gallery or as posters) have also been widely used in a variety of activities supporting the mission of the Church. These include:

- The magazine *In Touch* produced by the Huddersfield Circuit,
- The 'Walking with Micah' project,
- The 2022 CCA Lent project (which reached 56,000 subscribers),
- The Church's Christmas 2022 resources 'There is Room',
- An innovative Easter Art Trail at Leeds Docks,
- Sonnets published on Twitter (as it was then called) and YouTube by the Revd Rachel Parkinson in Lent 2022, who also led a series of mini retreats based around works in the Collection and
- A series of art workshops at Thirsk Methodist Church.

The Management Committee have been inspired by Thirsk's initiative to secure funding to make available high-quality reproductions of the Collection with supporting interpretation (see Plans for Future Periods).



Delegates at Conference 2023 at the stand encouraging the curation of 'mini exhibitions' using magnetic images of the Collection.



The Revd Denise Williamson and co-facilitator Simon Williamson and some participants at the *Faith as Art* workshops at Thirsk Methodist Church with some of the work they produced in response to the Collection.

The potential of the Collection was showcased on a shared stand with Methodist Heritage at the Methodist Conference in 2023. This resulted in several useful conversations with potential additional volunteers for the Committee's working groups and about future exhibition opportunities.

CONSERVATION

Our 'Rejuvenation Pause' for re-framing of works and an extensive conservation programme, funded by the Methodist Church, was completed in May 2021. After many years of touring, it was vital that conservation took place to deal with condition issues and provide suitable frames and travelling cases to protect works and enable them to continue to tour. Works conserved and re-framed in the latter stages of the project included Francis Hoyland's *Crucifixion polyptych*, Peter Rogers's *The Mocking of Christ*, Dennis Hawkins's *Pentecost 1*, John Reilly's *The Healing of the Lunatic Boy*, Mark Cazalet's *Nathaniel asleep under a fig tree and Fool of God*, William Roberts's *The Crucifixion*, Patrick Heron's *Crucifix and Candles: Night 1950*, John Brokenshire's *Untitled (Pentecost)* and Michael Edmonds's *Cross over the City*. Our thanks are extended to the conservators, Ruth Bubb for the oil paintings, Louise Vaile for the works on paper and Misa Tamura (at Restore) for the three-dimensional Edmonds. We are also grateful to Liz Millard and Corinne Miller for the administration and organisation of this programme, which came about after a detailed conservation survey identifying required actions.

The final stage of this programme involved new bespoke travelling

cases for many works to protect them when touring and to accommodate their new frames. These cases were commissioned in summer 2021. The Collection was transferred into the new cases in two stages, which were completed in May 2022. Fitting the works into the cases with technicians at the secure storage facility brought to a close a two-year period of conservation, re-framing and re-casing that will ensure the protection and longevity of the Collection when touring, enabling it to play a key role in the mission of the Church. These cases were successfully used to transport the works for the exhibition that took place over Lent and Easter 2022 in Bewdley. A small number of works still require new cases such as Frank Roper's sculptures, and these will be dealt with in due course.

This programme of work has been a considerable achievement for the Management Committee who want to express heartfelt thanks to the Methodist Church for supporting this crucial programme. Conservation and re-framing will be an on-going process in future, monitored by the CCCD working sub-group through the new rigorous condition reporting system now in place, involving precise checking of works on arrival and departure from loan exhibitions and taking action when required.



The newly conserved *The Cross over the City* by Michael Edmonds on display in Coventry in 2021

ARCHIVES

The project to bring our archives together in one place has also been taken forward. Archives held at Methodist Church House, and material held by individual Management Committee members past and present has now been deposited with the John Rylands Research Institute & Library at the University of Manchester. A template was circulated to those who held archive material and a timetable was drawn up to undertake this complex task. An initial sift took place to remove duplicate records and box lists are being drawn up. The remaining boxes of records will be transferred from secure storage in the autumn 2023 and the documentation will start in 2024, as part of an ongoing programme to review what is held in store and to reduce it, where possible, to minimise storage charges. The archive now joins other Methodist Heritage collections held at the University of Manchester. Thanks go to Corinne Miller for leading on this project.

RESOURCES AND PUBLICITY

Following the success of *Paintings Poems and Prayers for Holy Week*, our online resource for Lent 2020, the Management Committee produced an online resource for use at Christmas 2020. *Paintings Prayers and Christmas Carols* paired eight pictures from the Collection with words from *Singing the Faith*, the current authorised hymnbook of the Methodist Church in Britain. Thanks go to Laurence Wareing, editor of the website *Singing the Faith Plus*, who worked with Management Committee member Katharine Farnham-Dear on this project.

Our biannual Friends Newsletter continued to be published, with Katharine Farnham-Dear taking over the role as editor from Bob Williams. It remains a key tool for raising the profile of the Collection and connecting with our Friends and supporters.

Management Committee chair, Ann Sumner, wrote the text for the printed resources, including interpretation and wayfinding, for the art trail for Coventry City of Culture *Stories of Change: Hope, Faith and Love* (2021); this text was also available online.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Management Committee member Verity Smith wrote an article for the Autumn 2022 edition of the Social History Curators Group (SHCG) News on the 60th Anniversary loans and adapted it for a piece for the Religion, Collections & Heritage Network's (RCHG) blog.

In 2022 and 2023, *ArtServe* magazine featured articles about the Collection by Committee members Sarah Middleton and Katharine Farnham-Dear.

Both *the connexion* magazine and *Methodist Recorder* featured articles about the Collection, with the 60th Anniversary making the front page and a middle-page spread in autumn 2022.

Representatives of the Collection became members of the Religion, Collections and Heritage Group, a new Specialist Subject Network, convened by the National Gallery's Howard and Roberta Ahmanson Research Fellow in Art & Religion. The new network has a blog and a growing series of resources. It is developing a training programme, exploring a mapping project to reveal where religious collections are to be found, and has organised its first conference. It is hoped that the Management Committee's engagement will raise the Collection's profile and encourage new partnerships.

A detailed Forward Workplan has helped guide the Management Committee's planning over recent years. While it was a considerable amount of work for the Chair to put this together initially, it has been invaluable in monitoring work, achievements and capacity.

New Management Committee members

Our first aim in the autumn of 2023 is to welcome and fully induct the new members of the Management Committee, once their nominations have been approved by the Methodist Council, so that they feel fully supported as they come on board. We are aware that there has been much change and that our four new members will benefit from a comprehensive induction programme. We have proposed to co-opt a further member to assist with the writing of the new artist biographies, working closely with the Chair and the Editor of the Newsletter. Details of our new committee members and their areas of interest and focus for the Collection will appear officially in our next annual report.

3Generate 2023

In October 2023 the Collection will be present once again at '3Gen', with an exciting new digital installation and interpretation programme. Planning has been extensive for this

as we grow our partnership with the Connexional Children, Youth & Families team through 3Generate and seek to reach more young people through the innovative interpretation of the Collection.

Large scale exhibitions

Two large scale exhibitions are planned for 2024.

From 1 March to 7 April, 25 works will be on display at the Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City under the title *Deepening the Mystery - 'unexpected treasures' of art.*

Then in May and June, the newly built Emmanuel Church in Eastbourne will host works in an exhibition *New Vision* reflecting the coming together of four churches. Both will include a full supporting programme of events to engage the community.

Curated packages

As we consider the future lending of the Collection, we are mindful of the Climate Emergency and are thinking of new models of lending including developing the curated 'packages' initially recommended in the Governance review by Mike Tooby in 2018.

UK City of Culture- Bradford 2025

Work has already begun on planning for a potential showing of the Collection in the next UK City of Culture, Bradford 2025. The Chair is leading exploratory discussions, including conversations with the District Chair and Bradford Cathedral. The intention is to build on the inter-faith multi-cultural work which was so inspiring in Bristol. A steering group for the loans is being planned and there is a recognition that this City of Culture offers us much potential to work with diverse communities and young people in new and innovative ways. Further ahead, a potential tour of Scotland is under consideration.

Audience Development plan

A new Audience Development Plan will be written in the near future ensuring that we work with a wide range of communities when we lend the Collection.

Reproduction packages

The Management Committee have secured a grant from the Sister Gwen Appleton Trust to produce packages of high-quality reproductions of themed sets of the works. These could then be used by venues that do not want to stage large or long running exhibitions (instead using one work in worship for one Sunday,

for example, or staging small ‘pop up’ exhibitions in pubs, cafes or schools) or do not have the financial resources to borrow the originals. It is hoped this will allow the Collection to reach new audiences. We are developing these packages working with the University of York’s Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture. They will be piloted in the near future and, hopefully, used in the Bradford City of Culture community engagement programme.

Church at the Margins

The Management Committee hopes to work with the Methodist Church’s ‘Church at the Margins Practitioners Network’ to use works from the Collection to nurture new Christian communities amongst economically marginalised people.

Website

Work on our website is progressing with new biographies being written about the artists represented in the Collection to reflect the context of their lives and how this impacted their art. Currently led by the Chair, a brief has been written for the project which will see long-term changes to the way we present our works online. This includes uploading the works to the Art UK website. The new volunteer co-opted member is giving his time

to write these to enable us to explore new themes and subjects when we lend the Collection.

Communications

A new Communications Strategy is also being developed in parallel with Methodist Heritage. Hopefully, internal relationships with Methodist stakeholders will be nurtured, including further aligning our work with Methodist Heritage, and working with their key sites, developing relationships with Methodist Schools through MAST and MIST, with Methodist Women in Britain, and ensuring that our activities are clearly highlighted online and in social media.

New Home

The Committee will continue to focus on securing a suitable long-term home for the Collection; this search is being led by the Chair supported by the Connexional Procurement team. The complexities of finding a new home have been made clear over the last three years with a great investment in time and energy in scoping potential new homes. This will be built upon to ensure that the Collection does eventually find the appropriate partner, which will bring huge benefits for our future work.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A volunteer Management Committee manages the conservation and touring programme of the Methodist Modern Art Collection on behalf of the trustees, the Methodist Council. The chair, vice-chair and members of that committee are supported for the equivalent of one day per week by a dedicated, employed officer in the Methodist Church's (Connexional) Staff Team, plus incidental support from other teams such as Administration, Communication and Publishing Services. Olivia Threlkeld was appointed as Heritage & Collections Officer in November 2022. She took up her post in March 2023, and has been involved in the practicalities of the Bristol and Bath exhibitions this year.

Since 2019/2020, the Methodist Church has allocated revenue funds annually in the Connexional Central Services budget for the operation of the Collection: £6,720 for the work of the Management Committee (e.g. travel and accommodation for members to support the local church organisers of exhibitions, for committee meetings, and for member recruitment); and £22,120 for operational costs, such as storage of the artworks between exhibitions, and handling and transport for exhibitions organised by the Management Committee. In addition, the Collection

was recently re-valued, and the Methodist Church's fine art insurance policy, which covers the Collection for all risks in storage, transit and on show, was appropriately updated. The premium is paid from elsewhere in Connexional Central Services budget.

In 2019, the Methodist Council approved a proposal for an extensive programme of conservation, reframing and re-casing the Collection over two years 2019 – 2021. This was funded by a significant capital investment in the Collection of around £95,000 from the Methodist Church, and a generous grant of £8,000 from the Gibbs Family Trust. The Trust have since provided a further £3,000 for work on the Collection's archive.

In June 2022, the Management Committee made a successful bid to the Sister Gwen Appleton Trust for £7,788 to support a number of small development projects. These are ongoing and include creating and piloting the use of high quality reproductions of the artworks, and offering small, curated packages of the artworks, to reduce the burden on those borrowing the Collection to manage their interpretation.

The Management Committee are grateful for donations from Friends and other supporters of the Collection. Friends receive a

regular Newsletter and invitations to private views and events associated with exhibitions of the Collection. Income is generated from the Collection through loan fees and the reproduction of images of the artworks for publication outside the Church. This income is used for the development of the Collection.

Jo Hibbard, Director of Engagement,
Methodist Church Connexional
Mission team

Professor Ann Sumner, Chair,
Methodist Modern Art Collection
Management Committee, presents
this report and wishes to thank the
following people for their work in
producing it:

Sarah Allard
Management Committee member

Margaret Ashmore
Bewdley Churches Together

Ian Baker
Secretary of the Friends

Katharine Farnham-Dear
Management Committee member

Corinne Miller
Vice Chair, Management Committee

Jane Stacey
Victoria Methodist Church

The Revd Katy Thomas
School Chaplain Kingswood School

For an update on the locations of future exhibitions and for information about borrowing the Collection please visit our website at

www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection

or simply search
'Methodist Modern Art Collection'

Alternatively, contact the Administrator at the following address:

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