

NEWSLETTER

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Methodist **Modern**
Art Collection

FRIENDS OF THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION



New Chair for the Collection

Lord Leslie Griffiths 'In Focus'

'Awakening' – The Collection in the Isle of Man

'Game Changer' – The Collection visits Cromer

EDITORIAL

I have to report, with some sadness, that John Gibbs, our founding Chair of the Methodist Modern Art Collection, is standing down after a remarkable 20 years at the helm. A full tribute to John will appear in the Spring 2019 Newsletter. He will be succeeded by Professor Ann Sumner, a Management Committee member of some years standing.

This Autumn also sees the retirement of Vice-Chair - Meryl Doney, Secretary to the Friends - Bob Williams, and Paul Bayley, all Management Committee Members who, over a good number of years, have given generously of their time to Collection affairs.

The subject of our 'In Focus' feature in this edition is Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port. Known to all within Methodism as a former President of Conference and long serving Superintendent Minister at Wesley's Chapel in the City of London. Noted equally for the wisdom of his words, both spoken and written - (q: "Like most Welshmen, I love talking!") - he is familiar both as a broadcaster and for his monthly column in the Methodist Recorder. Lord Griffiths sits as a Labour Peer in the House of Lords.

The Collection will, shortly, be crossing the sea again to be enjoyed by our European neighbour, the Republic of Ireland, showing for some five weeks at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin.

I am delighted to say that I shall continue in post, in a non-executive role, as Newsletter Editor for a little while yet!

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PROFESSOR ANN SUMNER

Neatly concurrent with her appointment as our new Chair of the Management Committee of the Methodist Modern Art Collection, we congratulate Ann on her election as a Fellow of Aberystwyth University. This is very much in recognition of her contribution to the arts, both in Wales and within the UK, over many years.

Ann's citation reads as follows -

Art historian, exhibition curator and museum director Professor Ann Sumner has been honoured as a Fellow of Aberystwyth University. Professor Ann Sumner serves as an external consultant on the University's School of Art Museum and Gallery Advisory Board. She was Head of Fine Art for Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales from 2000-2007, and Director and Professor of Fine Arts and Curatorial Practice at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham from 2007-12, before being appointed Head of Cultural Engagement at the University of Leeds. Educated at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, she undertook her PhD at Newnham College, Cambridge. She began her career at the National Portrait Gallery in London, and held curatorial positions at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Harewood House Trust and the Holburne Museum, University of Bath. She was recently appointed Chair of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

Professor Ann Sumner was presented by Professor Robert Meyrick, Head of the School of Art and Keeper of Art on Tuesday 17 July 2018.



Prof Ann Sumner being congratulated, on receiving her Fellowship, by University Chancellor, the Rt Hon. Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd. Photo supplied

A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE WORKINGS OF THE COLLECTION

It was felt that the appointment of a new Chair of the Management Committee would prove an opportune moment to launch a full, strategic view of our modus operandi to be undertaken by two professional consultants experienced in the field. Such a review should incorporate both Governance and Practice and be undertaken by someone who understands the practical issues around the Collection's care, conservation and security. The review would reflect the professionalism of the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee in respect of its responsibility for the Collection. This review is now under way with registrar, Chezzy Brownen, appointed to undertake the practice review, and Professor Mike Tooby, of Bath Spa University, to carry out the governance review. There will be a full report on the outcome in the Spring 2019 Newsletter.

Front Cover: Sculptor Peter Eugene Ball with one of his recent works.
Photo: Jane Warner

Contemporary paintings on Christian themes: the Church and the artist

Fifty-five years on, Friends will find it fascinating to read The Foreword that introduced the first ever travelling exhibition of The Collection back in 1963... A mammoth logistical commitment that involved taking the newly designated Collection to approximately 30 different venues countrywide, commencing in Preston in 1963, and finishing in Plymouth almost exactly three years later. There are some interesting observations on the prevailing 'contemporary art scene' of the time, yet the mission statement as to the role of the Collection remains essentially unchanged today... I wonder if any current Friends can recall viewing the works at any of the numerous exhibition sites? Friends will also be interested to know that there will be available, before Christmas, a new, updated edition of 'A Guide to the Methodist Modern Art Collection' for which our new Chair, Ann Sumner, has written an appropriate Foreword.

This Collection of contemporary paintings on Christian themes has been made possible by the generosity of a Methodist layman concerned to do something to bridge the gulf that has existed for centuries in this country between the artist and the Church. Making the Collection has been an exciting and inspiring task, meeting so many artists whose attitude to our project was marked by humility and integrity; but it has been a difficult one, for there is, indeed a gulf. Few front-ranking contemporary artists seem to be interested in overtly religious themes, though they might well rise to them, were they to receive commissions, as we hope they will, from some of our churches. Most popular religious art, whether in Roman Catholic churches or Methodist school rooms and vestries seems to be deplorably bad. We firmly believe that the greatest of all themes deserves the finest artistic expression, and hope this exhibition will indeed bring church and artist closer together to the advantage of both.

These paintings may not be like some of your favourite pictures of Jesus, but are not many of the more popular representations merely negative in character? We do not expect everyone to like all these paintings, but we hope you

will agree there is nothing trivial or weak about them. Surely many of them do suggest something of the power and agony of the Cross; and the artists have not thought only of the face of Christ, but also of His hands and his feet, of what He suffered and of what He did. Try to look at these pictures with fresh eyes and to understand all that the artist is striving to convey. If you do this, we believe you will learn something new about our Lord.

We have no doubt that there are many lamentable gaps in our Collection (*Still the case today although, thankfully, rather fewer! Ed.*). Some great works of art we could have secured only a few years ago have now found a home in galleries and churches. For there is, indeed, a new and favourable wind blowing - witness the Cathedrals at Llandaff and Coventry, where great modern works of art draw and inspire more worshippers than many of our sermons and much of our music. Some critics may think we have included too few non-figurative paintings but this is not for want of trying to find suitable works. It may well be that the Christian religion, essentially historical and incarnational - "the Word was made flesh" - is not properly expressed in abstract art. We were on the point of taking our courage in both hands and commissioning a painting in the life of Jesus, say the Sermon on the Mount or the Marriage at Cana, by a young 'pop' artist, when our time was up. In their sometimes trivial work we may see the beginnings of a return to a serious figurative art for the nineteen sixties. Perhaps we can add to the collective works as they go on their two-year tour. To turn to a very different kind of work, we have every hope that Mr. Graham Sutherland will have a painting ready for us before the exhibition has reached half way.

It will be apparent that there is nothing 'denominational' about this exhibition, and we hope it will bring pleasure and stimulus and inspiration to our fellow-Christians in all the Churches, and to many other visitors who do not go to Church at all.

Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port in focus

By any standards, mine has been an unusual life. I was born and raised in Burry Port, a small town in Carmarthenshire that nestles by the fishing-boat-bobbing sea half way between where the poet Dylan Thomas was born and where he lies buried. Poetry was my first love – all those words so carefully polished and lovingly put together, like colours on an artist's palette ready to be turned into pictures, capable of wafting us into other worlds, heightening our awareness of realities beyond and beneath the reach of our senses. From my earliest years, despite growing up in one room in a brickyard, with no books around me and sometimes no idea where the next meal was coming from, I somehow found myself captivated by words, their colours and shapes, their stories and energies, their personalities too.

My education opened so many doors for me. Degrees from the universities of Wales, Cambridge and London came in due course. Fellowships and honorary doctorates, baubles and titles too – arrived in a steady succession.

In 1970, recently married to Margaret, we found ourselves heading for Haiti, the experience above all others that changed my life and opened my mind to the power of visual art as a tool for living. Haitians have been famously described as “les miséreux de la terre” – the wretched of the earth. That may be true as a description of their physical circumstances but it doesn't touch the qualities of their innermost selves. I stood in awe of the way they seemed able

to express these depths through art – their painting carries their sense of wonder and joy. I saw art at work, releasing submerged and suppressed energies as it liberated the soul to soar. It was certainly much more than mere aestheticism.

My ministry has been in or around London since our return in 1980 – I've served eight circuits and we've lived in thirteen manses. Our 21 years at Wesley's Chapel were so fulfilling – it was a source of great joy that a liberal, open,

questioning, pastoral ministry (“wishy washy” to some of course) saw our membership rise from 204 to 460. I am a preacher and a broadcaster. I expect my words to paint pictures, to conjure up images, to convey colour and shape.

Since my retirement, I've found myself in a new role. I'm Opposition Spokesperson (in the House of Lords) for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and also Shadow Minister for Wales. To sit down from one's ministry and then become a Minister has

brought a strange twist to the story of my life. I'm loving it.

Margaret and I are in the fiftieth year of our marriage. She is a truly extraordinary woman. Our three children – Tim, Jon and Ruth – have become our best friends as, indeed, have their spouses – Dru, Susanna, Bunna, Judith and Nico (yes, two of them have been married twice!). And, to cap it all, we've been blessed with two grandchildren – Tammy and Thomas.

— *Deo Gratia*



Lord Griffiths (Far L) seen here at the Opening of the 'Picturing Faith' exhibition, in Canterbury, in January 2017; one of a number of such events that he has graced with his presence over the years. Photo: Martin Cox

Lord Griffiths' choice



Sadao Watanabe (1913-96), *Christ enters Jerusalem*, 1982. Print

Father Bruno Healey is a dear friend, a Roman Catholic priest, who has followed his vocation to be a hermit. He lives in seclusion in North Wales and our occasional meetings are filled with joy. To sit with him at Mass is such an eye-opening and heart-lifting experience. We may have different views about the way bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ but we both agree that this simple liturgical act turns time and space into something well beyond either of them.

When Bruno ended his parish ministry, he left a number of artefacts and paintings to our Methodist collection at Wesley's Chapel. One of them, *Christ enters Jerusalem* by the Japanese artist Sadao Watanabe, is a particular favourite. I could explain my affection for this picture by describing the materials and the processes employed by the artist – they leave a result that looks so fresh and (almost) 'home made'. Or the overall impression – the picture carries a riot of detail with branches and garments strewn along the way, a doleful donkey and some unexpected birds, Zacchaeus perched anachronistically on a very delicate branch, and the figure of Jesus set on facing down his enemies and facing up to the supreme challenge of his life. It's an arresting picture full of colour and life.

My reason for choosing it here is that I had the pleasure of seeing it on my office wall for almost a year as we awaited the finalising of the deal that would take it into the Methodist Collection. A whole year of its company. It continued to draw my attention, to ask questions of me, to fill me with delight and to drive me into contemplative mode, right to the end.

Indeed, I handed the picture over to the Trustees of the Methodist Modern Art Collection with some resentment. This picture had become my friend. It had to be torn from me. Whenever I see the Collection on show now, I invariably head for this Japanese masterpiece and greet it warmly and with great affection. And I offer it my sympathy too. When it hung on my office wall it greeted me in all its innocent beauty. Now it's been framed and I'm not at all sure it looks happy in its new dark green apparel. But that probably says more about my philistinism than anything else. Or my jealousy perhaps - I really didn't want to let it out of my sight. Ah well! I hope it brings the same joy to others as it brought to me."

AWAKENING

Six Methodist, URC and Anglican venues in the Isle of Man
13 May-17 June, 2018

Astonishing how, on a 2D surface you get a 3D story!

Four years ago, at Ellesmere Port, my wife and I first set eyes on the Methodist Modern Art Collection and were instantly convinced that we should move to bring it to the Isle of Man. With the circuit firmly behind the project, and support from the Anglican diocese, it was agreed to do so at a time which would include the TT fortnight in May/June, when the island's population of 85,000 swells by 40,000 (and 12,000 motorbikes!), with visitors from many parts of the world. This presented a unique opportunity to share the Christian story with a wider public.

We felt it appropriate to divide the Collection among four main venues where the use of multiple locations would facilitate much wider involvement and support. Our three professional curators, Mary Gulland, Henry Uniacke and Petrina Kent assigned artworks to each venue, acknowledging special requests for particular works.

Preparation and raising awareness was key. A training day for leaders and others gave Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee member, Sarah Middleton, an opportunity to speak about using the Collection in worship and how best to focus upon the Creative Spirit resource. A local radio station ran regular reports and interviews during the months leading up to the exhibition, and a series of 'Pause for Thought' interludes, during the exhibition, in which several Steering Committee members spoke about a work which they found particularly meaningful.

The exhibition was formally opened, at Promenade Methodist

Church, Douglas, by the island's Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Gozney. Those present included community leaders, musicians – and cruise ship visitors! A young local composer, Tim Price, produced a powerful piece of music inspired by Richard Bavin's *The Empty Tomb*. Other main venues were the newly refurbished Methodist Church at Colby, the Methodist Church at Ramsey, and Peel Cathedral. Two paintings formed part of a quiet space in the United Reformed Church in Douglas, near the TT grandstand, and two others were displayed at a rural Methodist Chapel, Ballagarey.

Welcomers were on hand at each venue. Among the comments, lodged in the Visitors' Books, were... *'Amazed, challenged, in awe - but blessed'; 'Astonishing how, on a 2D surface you get a 3D story'; 'Thank you for the opportunity to see Jesus in a different way.'*

As well as the opportunity to worship in what became an 'art space' at each venue, a wide range of special events were organised on a local basis. They ranged from a manga drawing workshop (a genre for the Collection's managers to consider?), through 'artist in residence' days and musical recitals, to a festal evensong on the first Sunday at Peel Cathedral, with the Rev. Graham Kent preaching. We welcomed some 5,000 visitors, including a few school groups, over the five-week period. Many had no connection with a church.

It is too soon for a comprehensive assessment of what the benefits have been, but it has certainly helped to turn the minds of a number of us towards our calling to share in God's mission. Local preachers and worship leaders have testified to the impact that the exhibition made on them. (One member of the Steering Committee described it as the most exciting thing to happen to him in sixty years of being a Methodist!) We feel that we should now explore further ways in which we might use the arts to communicate the Christian story. Who knows what might result...?

- Tim Grass

I was particularly pleased to see the Collection so innovatively displayed across five venues when I visited for the dismount of the works. Reading the lesson at the final evensong at Peel Cathedral surrounded by the Collection was a memorable moment and seeing the display at the charming rural Methodist Chapel at Ballagarey was truly inspiring. Undoubtedly attending the Local Preachers evening meeting was a highlight of my visit too, and hearing there of the real impact the Collection had made on the island. Huge thanks in particular to Petrina, Mary & Henry who were such dedicated curators and to John Binns for his involvement.

— Prof. Ann Sumner



(From top) Methodist Art Exhibition Flyer; The Manx 'Hanging and Dismount' team hard at work. From left to right, Henry Uniacke, Christopher Stokes, Mary Gulland, Kenny Stokes and Petrina Kent. Photo: John Gulland

GAMECHANGER

Cromer, Norfolk
6-17 August, 2018

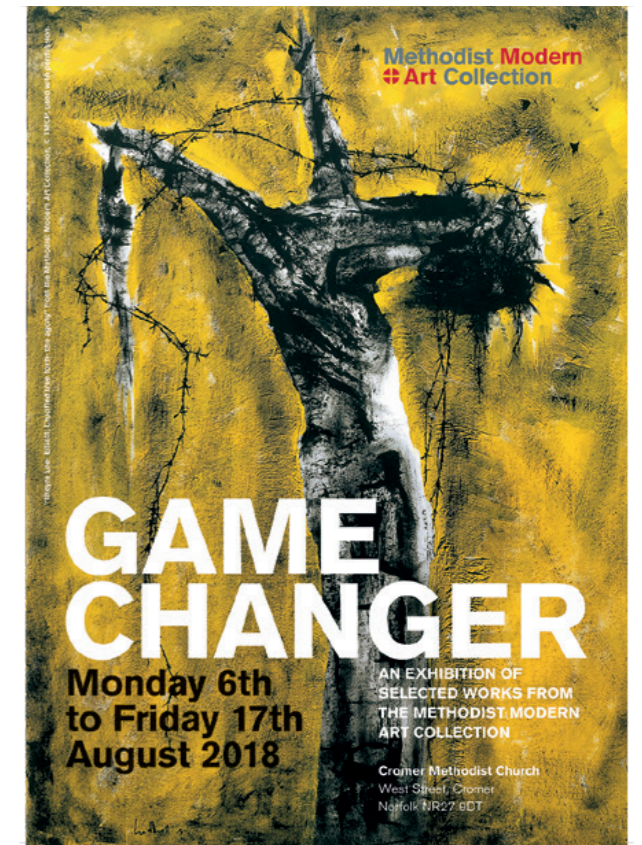
'Some of the images make me feel urghh, others make me feel abhh!!'

Over the last five years the Community Matters Cafe that operates out of Cromer Methodist Church has served more than 14,500 bacon butties and two course meals to the homeless, lonely and financially stretched. In addition to the gift of good food, visitors to the cafe are offered friendship, signposting to other agencies and practical support. This project was the inspiration for arranging for a number of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection to be exhibited both in the church and cafe. I chose the title 'Gamechanger' to reflect the engagements that the volunteers have with cafe clients, with many of the chosen works relating to the stories of life changing encounters that Jesus had with folk on the fringes of society. I also felt that the title would draw a broader spectrum of interest than simply the Church when one considers that the introduction of the Christian faith was the greatest 'Gamechanger' in human history, whether one is a believer or not!

We purposely sited works to offer a Christian narrative from the *Dalit Madonna* through to Brokenshire's *Untitled (Pentecost)* and chose works of service and support, such as Howard's *The Washing of the Feet* and Reilly's and Clarke's differing interpretations of the feeding of the five thousand, to show in the Community Cafe itself. We had three fabulous acts of worship, including the admission of a local preacher where we related the entirely subjective production of a painting to the equally personal, but Spirit led, art of preaching. There were also three equally stirring evening conversations: 'Let's talk about religious art' with Phil Barratt, 'Miracles

in Art' with Ros Peedle and 'Burra and the pool of Bethesda' which I led. Many people found Burra's work difficult to like but all agreed it transfixed them so an enquiry into the man seemed appropriate. And what an interesting man he turned out to be; so talented despite his physical incapacities. One observer wondered if Burra heard the Bible story and rejected the question from Jesus 'Do you want to be healed?'

More than 700 people visited the exhibition - from as far as Holland, Paris and Gravesend - as did those who regularly attend the Cafe. I was delighted that our choices prompted many deep and wonderful conversations between people of faith and of none, which clearly demonstrated the Collection's aim of inspiring and enabling encounters with Christ through image. One local artist said "This is the first serious art exhibition I have seen in the twenty years I have lived in Cromer" but perhaps my favourite comment was made from one elderly visitor "Some of the images make me feel urghh, others make me feel abhh!!"



Game Changer Exhibition poster

We are indebted to the Management Committee of the Collection, the North Norfolk Methodist Circuit, Chris Hamilton-Emery of Salt Publishing, our discussion leaders and the 55 tireless exhibition volunteers.

- Revd Sharon Willimott, Superintendent Minister.

It was indeed very clear that it was the Community Matters Cafe venture that inspired the North Norfolk Methodist Circuit to borrow a selection of pictures from the Methodist Modern Art Collection and to choose those that clearly reflected some of the life changing encounters with Jesus by those on the fringes of society. The exhibition continued the long tradition of inspiring titles by calling it 'Gamechanger' and with subtle nuance in World Cup year. I made two visits in the first week and was impressed with the warm welcome offered by their stewards. All involved deserve our thanks and congratulations.

— Ian Baker, Management Committee member

EXPERIENCING RESURRECTION

St. Giles' Church, Oxford
14 April – 20 May 2018

'There was no such thing as an empty tomb...'

It was well worth making the journey over to Oxford, on 26 April, both to hear Nick Mynheer's illustrated talk entitled 'The Empty Tomb' and view a selection of his works displayed around the walls of St. Giles. This small exhibition also included works by Anglican Priest/ artist, Robert Wright (who featured in the 2013 'Risen' exhibition at Piano Nobile and Monnow Valley Arts), and one work loaned from the Eularia Clarke Trust.

Nick set us all thinking by proclaiming that, in his view, there was no such thing as an 'empty' tomb.

For him there always has to be a presence, invariably in the form of a light source: the radiant light of God. His small painting, *The Empty Tomb*, which echoes the title of his talk, features the rising sun illuminating the tomb, bathing it in early morning sunlight. Thus, not empty at all. In his painting, *Angels at the Tomb*, we see a similar dramatic effect, where two angels, themselves, generate an immensely strong light source. Hans Holbein the Younger's *Noli me tangere*, mentioned in the report on 'Charles I, King and Collector', has a similar marked emphasis; the interior of the tomb radiates an ethereal light, revealing two angels blanched by the sheer intensity of the light.

Nick also shared with us the very personal view that working on his own version of *The Empty Tomb* had proved particularly challenging, taking him longer to complete than any other recent work.

Three other works in the exhibition caught the eye – *The Touch*, in a triptych format, illustrating various noli me tangere moments, and a beautifully lit sculpture – *The Entombment of Christ*, revealing the clear wound marks on the one visible hand and foot. It seemed to suggest that the viewer is also positioned in the sepulchre, looking out. Finally, a brilliantly composed *The Walk to Emmaus* with its enclosing curves portrayed through the strong hands of the, as yet, unrecognized figure of Christ – and in the roadside trees was, for me, the star work of the show.

One can clearly understand where Nick, the artist, comes from when he says – 'I am not a biblical illustrator; I respond to Scripture'.

— *The Editor*



The Walk to Emmaus, Nick Mynheer (b.1958).



Nick Mynheer, *The Entombment of Christ*

ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD

CHARLES I, KING AND COLLECTOR

The Royal Academy
27 January – 15 April, 2018

The 'Charles I, King & Collector' show, with its myriad treasures, primarily from the Northern and Italian Renaissance, will certainly prove to be one of the exhibitions of the year. What a Collection, all notionally in the ownership of one man! Titian, Mantegna, The Younger Holbein, Brueghel the Elder, Tintoretto, Gentileschi, Giovane, Bernini and, of course, those 'twin giants' Peter Paul Rubens and Court Painter Anthony Van Dyck, taken together, formed an impressive archive by anybody's standards. Its acquisition, dissolution and reassembly, for the purpose of this, unique exhibition is a remarkable story in itself.

Unsurprisingly, the exhibition featured a wide range of both secular and religious works. Among the latter, familiar New Testament events, re-told by the skilled, painterly hands, represented in Charles' Royal Collection, included Giovane's (1548-1628) particularly dramatic *Conversion of St. Paul* c.1590-95, from the Prado, hung here as a companion piece with the rather graphic *Triumph of David* (over Goliath). Also on view were four, from a series of ten, of the Mortlake Tapestries: *Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, *Death of Ananias*, *The Blinding of Elymas* and the *Sacrifice at Lystra* – all woven between 1630-1641, based on designs by Raphael. The history of the cartoons is an interesting one. Originally commissioned by Pope Leo X, in 1513, as designs for a cycle of tapestries, actually woven in Flanders, and set to embellish the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel; an expensive exercise in itself (costing the Vatican more than five

times the amount paid to Michelangelo for the decoration of the Sistine Chapel ceiling!). For the next century the cartoons were passed around weavers workshops in Brussels. In 1623 Charles I, avidly in pursuit of the best of European art, discovered seven of the cartoons in Genoa and bought them, as a job lot, for £300. James I had established England's first Tapestry Workshop in 1619 which in turn led to Charles commissioning his own set of tapestries from the Rubens cartoons. The cartoons came to be regarded as valuable works of art in their own right. William III had them displayed in a specially designed gallery at Hampton Court Palace. They finally ended up, on Queen Victoria's instruction in 1865, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where they are still housed today.

Seen from the stance of devotees of the Methodist Modern Art Collection it is always of interest to remind ourselves how some of the major artists from the Classical Era approached the key Gospel Stories. Have their paintings, in whatever way, influenced contemporary interpretation of those same, well-known events – i.e. our works by Roy de Maistre and Ceri Richards? The R.A. exhibition featured two such works by giants of both the Northern and Italian Renaissance: *Noli me tangere* 1526-28, by Hans Holbein The Younger, and Titian's *Supper at Emmaus* c.1534. Holbein (c1497-1543) gave us a fine composition, in brilliant colours... Calvary in the middle distance, off left, and a fully illuminated tomb, bottom right, lead the eye into centre stage where a suitably startled Mary forms the main focus together with Christ gesturing her to keep her distance. If you have never previously had reason to compare this painting with a remarkably similar and

very striking work, painted in 1656, by Laurent de La Hyre, then I would encourage you to do so. Veronese's 1528 painting of the same subject is another masterpiece. The Titian (1488-1576), probably the most highly valued work in Charles' Royal Collection, with its focus on Christ revealing his identity, to two of his followers, at mealtime, clearly echoes the composition of Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated *Last Supper*, showing Christ blessing the Elements. Again, among many contenders, probably only rivalled by Caravaggio's wonderful 1601 composition, in the National Gallery.

— *The Editor*

GRAINS OF TRUTH

Victoria Methodist Church,
Whiteladies Rd, Bristol
4 - 29 June, 2018
David Moore/ Richard Smith/
Santiago Bell 1932-2005/ Angela
Dewar & Arun Weys...

'Moore has matured over the years in an atmosphere in which it is necessary to speak truth... both unto power and unto the complacent.'

Santiago Bell makes powerful political statements in the Grains of Truth exhibition that was showing at Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol over the month of June this year.

Santiago Bell? A Chilean artist, whose name indicates his Spanish and Scottish heritage, was a regional 'steward' under Salvador Allende, and

friend and follower of Paulo Freire. For him, as for Chile, everything changed with the 1973 CIA-backed coup that ousted Allende and ushered in Augusto Pinochet's reign of terror.

Bell (1932-2005) was among the many thousands detained. He was held in solitary confinement and tortured until, partly thanks to Amnesty International and to his Scottish ancestry, he was released and able to join other Chilean intellectuals in exile. Many others were not so fortunate. After initially settling in Cambridge, Bell left what he considered sterile the banks of the River Cam for London, finding inspiration in the life that flowed through Limehouse and the Isle of Dogs. For nearly a decade, he offered multipurpose art workshops in Tower Hamlets as part of an innovative recovery programme. In his 'spare time', he explored his experiences under the boot of the Pinochet regime. His powerful *Anonymous Prisoner* - or *Anonymous Hostage*, as it is identified at Victoria - and his *Torture Chair* are just two of the works on display that grew out of this engagement. Both make strong statements in the Bristol

setting. While working at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre, Tower Hamlets, Bell, a Christian Socialist, influenced many, including the Revd. David Moore, the Methodist Minister stationed nearby at the Bow Mission. Moore has said that he only went along to Bell's first session because he was afraid there would be an empty room if he wasn't there! Attending the class gave a new direction to his ministry.

Speaking to members of the congregation after the service at Victoria Methodist Church on Sunday 2 June, Moore informed us that being taught to carve by Bell had 'opened his eyes'. What he came to see is apparent from the work on show and, since he himself curated it, in the 'Grains of Truth' exhibition as a whole. Now a supernumerary, Moore has exercised a remarkable ministry in wood and, more generally, through inviting the Methodist Church to recognise how it can speak through the arts. Using skills acquired in his maturity and realised in a triptych, *Jonah*, Moore tells the story of his journey as a Methodist minister and embodies the narrative in a solid but legible form.

Moore's own praxis evolved, through an apprenticeship to Bell, into working on polychrome carvings in collaboration with illustrator/ scientist/ artist Richard Smith. In the convention of painted carvings, 'Smith 'n' Moore' have created a series of striking works, some of which engage with the magic realism of the New Testament while others reach out to comment on contemporary political issues.

The exhibition includes carvings that will undoubtedly shock some among the membership of Victoria. Methodist congregations are used

Beyond' (2012), and the titles hint at the challenges they threw down.

'Grains of Truth', a thought-provoking title itself, evokes various levels of response and picks up several themes from Moore's earlier exhibitions. In curating it, he has brought together work by, for example, Arun Weys and Angela Dewar, and offers the visitor a chance to 'catch up' with, or 'nail down', the pervasive influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The exhibition includes four pieces directly linked to the German theologian whose writing provides a dialogue with the work and whose spirit

to the exhibition are invited to seek out the reminders in Moore's work of, for example, burnings at the stake, the Chilcot Report and the outrages perpetrated at Abu Gharib.

At one point during his Sunday afternoon reflection, Moore remarked on the earthiness that, he thought, Chilean artists acknowledged more easily than British Methodists. The 'earthy' element in the work on show has elicited knee-jerk reactions and there are some who would like to follow Pope Innocent X in placing fig leaves over whatever they consider



Old friends David Moore and Sarah Middleton, at the Exhibition
Photo: Jane Stacey



Santiago Bell's *Jesus in the Church*



David Moore's *Mary Magdalene as a witness to the Resurrection*



Santiago Bell's *Anonymous Prisoner*

to listening quietly to white-haired ministers in pulpits, and not used to being confronted with ideas expressed in the physicality of wood. Especially when it is clear, that, the wood has been through the hands of a carver whose eyes are open to the world and who has learned to see life steadily and see it whole. Moore has matured over the years in an atmosphere in which it is necessary to speak truth... both unto power and unto the complacent; he has moved beyond being squeamish and beyond what he would regard as false modesty. While exercising his new ministry in wood, in London, Moore curated a number of exhibitions. Major ones include 'Resisting Tyranny' (for the Bonhoeffer anniversary, 2006), 'Torture and Mutilation', and 'Reaching

pervades the space. The exhibition is full of acts of resistance, some thunderous, some witty, some subversive. In other words, 'spokes of various designs are jammed into wheels of different sizes'.

The conviction that art has a role in society and that a Christian has an obligation to engage in political activity can be followed through from work to work, and artist to artist. Underpinning all is the writing of the German opponent of Nazism, and first among equals, is the Chilean teacher/artist who responded creatively to Pinochet's reign of terror. Bonhoeffer and Bell were clearly brothers under the skin, and Moore himself makes a third, committed artist, prepared to challenge through making challenging allusions. To see how this works, visitors

obscene or unfit for public display. However, as Bonhoeffer, Bell and Moore remind us, the real obscenities are acts of cruelty, suppression, exploitation and inhumanity and there are not enough fig leaves in the world to cover those. Bell, an artist in his 'spare time', spoke out against the removal and reverent seclusion of art from the world. He hoped that exhibitions of his work would be 'events', and handed down instructions to visitors that included: Don't stare, demand explanations, engage in conversation, take photographs, have a cup of tea, and discover the solidarity of having opinions. These remarkable sermons in wood are accessible for most of June.

— James Gibbs

**GRAHAM SUTHERLAND:
BENEATH THE TAPESTRY**

Coventry Cathedral
29 June – 4 August, 2018

This interesting little exhibition opened with a talk by Ben Quash, Professor of Christianity and the Arts, in the department of Theology and Religious Studies, Kings College, London.

Those of you familiar with Sir Basil Spence's Coventry Cathedral will know that he sought out several high-profile artists of the time whose works he felt would both complement, and be an integral part of the fabric for the new Cathedral. We, of course, have our own small link with this initiative in that the Collection features a Ralph Beyer pencil drawing of 1961, *The son of man is come*, commissioned by Basil Spence for one of eight large stone blocks – *The Tablets of the Word* – placed around the nave walls of the Cathedral Church of St. Michael. Beyer persuaded Spence to accept texts in freely composed lettering, with no two letters being identical.

The symbol of The Good Shepherd is, of course, widely to be found in early Christian sculpture and in inscriptions, notably in the Roman catacombs, which had a profound influence on the style of lettering adopted by Beyer.

The recent exhibition, 'Graham Sutherland: Beneath the Tapestry' gave rightful prominence to the foremost of Spence's artists. In 1944, Sutherland took what was the first step towards 'creating a Crucifixion of a significant size' when he started work on a painting for Walter Hussey, the then vicar of St. Matthew's, Northampton. That same painting, completed in 1946, joined the famous tapestry, *Christ in Glory in the Tetramorph* in the Lady Chapel, with the exhibition further enhanced by the loan of the artist's *Noli Me Tangere* (also a later Hussey commission) from Chichester Cathedral. There were, in addition, three large, preparatory cartoons for the Tapestry Commission and various studies from private collections.

Our 1947 oil painting, *The deposition* might, indeed, have further enhanced this unique coming together of significant images of key moments in salvation history.

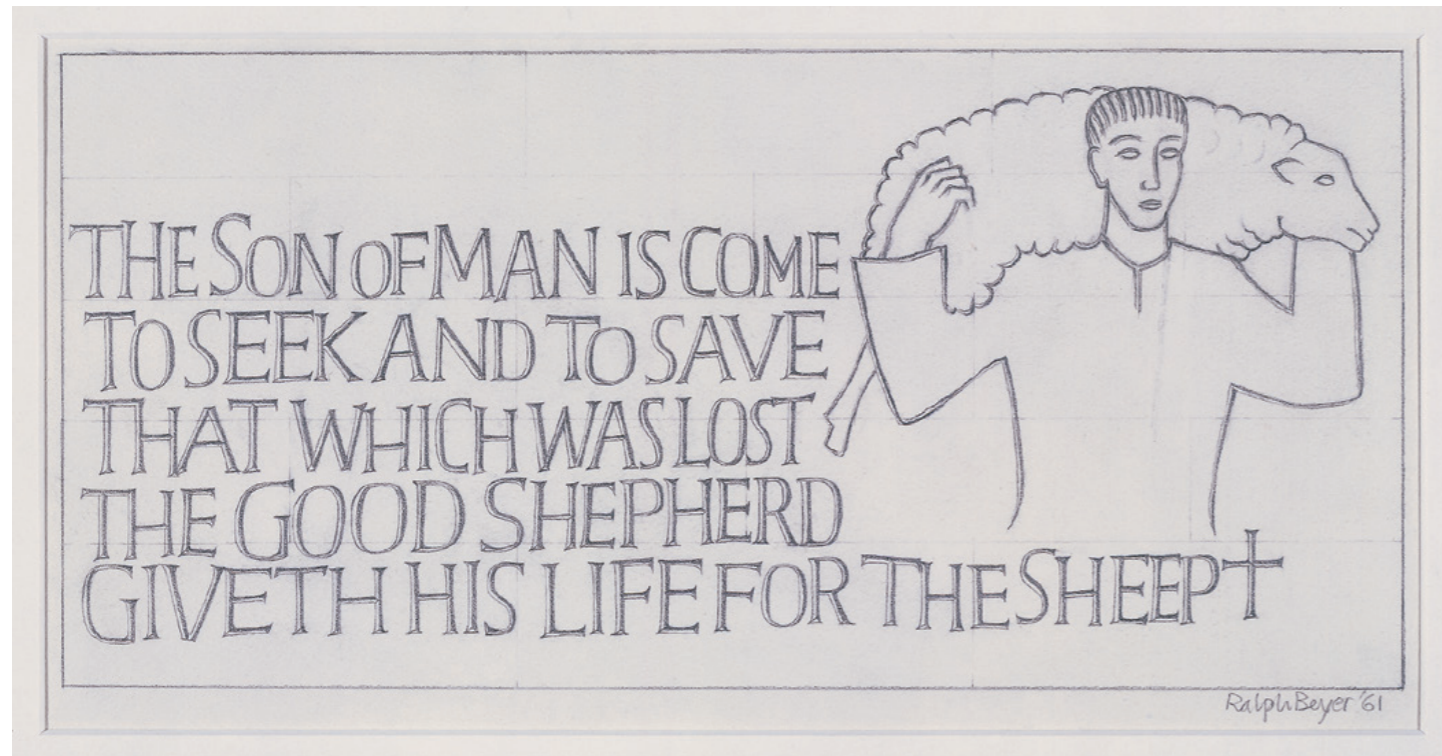
It is interesting to trace other influences which might well have played on Sutherland's imagination as he worked on both paintings and the tapestry: Picasso's 1932 *Crucifixion* drawings (in turn inspired by the Grunewald *Isenheim Altarpiece*, in Colmar – and also on paintings executed by his friend and contemporary, Francis Bacon). How often, in the history of art, we see such a 'nod of respect' for what has gone before...

— The Editor

CERI RICHARDS: LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL



The reredos and tabernacle, Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. Photo: John Gibbs.



Ralph Beyer (1921-2008), *The son of man is come*, 1961. Pencil

Completed in 1967, Liverpool's Catholic Cathedral – the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King has, over the years, attracted a degree of good-natured ribbing for what in the 1960s has to be described as its bold and challenging architecture. Its citizens, many of Liverpool Irish descent and employing typical dry humour, fondly refer to it as 'Paddy's Wigwam' or 'The Mersey Funnel'.

For those with more than a passing interest in contemporary religious art, it is a venue of some interest. Our newly retired Chair, Dr John Gibbs, has very recently visited the Cathedral and was greatly taken with Ceri Richards' work there and kindly supplies the featured photograph. 'Well worth a visit to view, if you happen to be in Liverpool' is his advice!

You will find, within its walls, work by John Piper CH (another partnership, much as in Coventry's Cathedral, with Patrick Reyntiens,

which produced a further stunning stained glass installation – in the tower of the Metropolitan Cathedral). Also to be seen is an altar crucifix by Elisabeth Frink and a delightful small statue, *The Risen Christ*, by the late Arthur Dooley (1929-94). Dooley was an interesting character. A native of Liverpool, a Catholic and a card carrying member of the Communist Party, he has work in both Liverpool's cathedrals, the Walker Art Gallery and, interestingly enough, another sculpture, *The Resurrection of Christ* on the exterior walls of Prince's St. Methodist Church, Toxteth. This is a metal and fibreglass construction dating from 1969 and recently renovated. The sculpture caused something of a local storm back in the '60s as it was a Black Christ that Dooley chose to depict.

However, it is the reredos and tabernacle, 1966, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Cathedral, by Ceri Richards CBE., (1903-71) that really catch the eye. The reredos and

tabernacle, together with Richards' triangular stained glass windows, which so effectively illuminate the Chapel, were conceived as a single triptych, abstractly flowing one into another.

Ceri Richards, a prize winner at the 1962 Venice Biennale, was an artist who experimented with the challenges presented by Surrealism, Cubism and Abstraction who also found inspiration in subject matter that derived from both a love of poetry and music. He produced a body of work clearly inspired by Dylan Thomas. Similarly, his series of paintings of sunken cities reference Debussy's musical compositions. And, of course, we are privileged to have, in the Methodist Modern Art Collection, his lovely working drawing (for the St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, altarpiece), *The Supper at Emmaus*, 1958.

— The Editor

HOMELESS JESUS



Bronze of Homeless Jesus. Photo: Dave Ellison, Alamy Images

A bronze of *Homeless Jesus* was installed and unveiled on 24 April, 2018, outside St. Ann's Church in Manchester City Centre.

The bronze by the Canadian sculptor, Timothy Schmalz, depicts a figure lying asleep on a park bench. Its pierced feet indicate that it is, indeed, Jesus. Also, this work fits well with the tradition of encouraging the exposure of contemporary art in the city.

At its unveiling, by Dave, one of the City's homeless inhabitants, the sculpture was blessed by the Rt Revd David Walker, the Bishop of Manchester, who reminded those attending that *'Jesus is very explicit in the Bible – when we offer or refuse care to those in need, we will be judged as though he himself were the needy person before us'*. At its unveiling, the Revd Caroline Wickens, the Methodist Superintendent

Minister of the Manchester Circuit, offered the thought that... *'This sculpture is a tangible reminder that the work goes on towards the day when there are no longer homeless people in this city.'*

But, until then, this sculpture will serve as a tangible reminder that, among them, we find Jesus'. Church of England leaders hope that the poignant symbol will challenge the public to reflect and act on Manchester's growing homelessness crisis. Rough sleeping in Manchester has increased by 40% in just 12 months. Thus it is encouraging to read that Manchester's Mayor, Andy Burnham, has recently launched an appeal that aims to find a bed, within the City, for every rough sleeper this winter. Supporting this initiative is Manchester City FC captain and Belgian international, Vincent Kompany. He will be donating the

entire proceeds, from his forthcoming long service Testimonial Match, to the Mayor's Greater Manchester Homelessness Fund; a fine gesture from an admired member of a profession so often maligned as money grabbing.

Bronze casts of this near life-size sculpture have been installed in cities around the world, including Toronto and Glasgow but Manchester's is the first in England. Readers may recall that, two years ago, Methodist Central Hall had a similar request surprisingly rejected. The intention had been to install a version outside the church premises, facing the Houses of Parliament. The decision did not reflect well on Westminster City Council.

— The Editor

PETER EUGENE BALL – SCULPTOR

'If Peter Ball, the most cheerfully down-to-earth of men, is at all mystified by the way his career has developed, he would do well to remember that God has a sense of humour.'

Peter Eugene Ball (b.1943) has to be regarded as one of the major figures, in the world of contemporary religious art, in the late 20th/early 21st Century. A lifelong passion for Celtic and Romanesque carvings clearly shows through in his own work. He has, this October, just been the subject of a major exhibition in Romsey Abbey, which presented the latest collection of his wide ranging sculptural output, the culmination of two years' work, in a beautifully presented exhibition. Images of women featured strongly in this show, reflecting both the place and legacy of women in the history of the Church and the arts and the fact that St. Ethelthaeda is one of the Patron Saints of Romsey Abbey.

Ball has always enjoyed working on both sides of a clear divide, on the one hand, his religiously inspired pieces – resulting in commissions for over 70 installations, completed over the past 40 years, in cathedrals and churches across England and Wales – and on the other, work of a secular nature. These latter pieces are invariably quirky and readily raise a smile, the result of his experimenting with different materials, often found objects directly associated with his penchant for beachcombing. His sculpture is mainly figurative, with



Two of Peter Eugene Ball's recent works seen at Romsey Abbey: On the left, *Romsey Madonna* and, on the right, *Standing Madonna*. Photo: Jane Warner

recycled bits of timber his preferred material, often partly covered in copper or pewter, embellished with silver or gold leaf. A quote from that eminent Medieval Art Historian, the late Dr Pamela Tudor-Craig, sums up the character of this sculptor very succinctly: *'If Peter Ball, the most cheerfully down-to-earth of men, is at all mystified by the way his career has developed, he would do well to remember that God has a sense of humour.'*

Peter Ball enjoyed his first one-man show at the long gone Marjorie Parr Gallery, in the Kings Rd., back in 1967. (Marjorie ran two highly successful galleries, the London gallery for some 12 years and, rather more briefly, another in St. Ives). He has, over the years, exhibited extensively in the UK, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and the USA. He first crossed my personal

radar when I stumbled across his *Blessed Virgin and Child*, 1997, in Holy Trinity, Blythburgh ('The Cathedral of the Marshes'), in Suffolk.

His works can be seen, amongst others, in the Cathedrals in Portsmouth, Lichfield, Derby, Winchester and Southwell Minster, where there are no fewer than four pieces in place – *Pieta*, *Light of the World*, *Ecce Homo* and a very dramatic and well lit *Christus Rex*. He is the subject of two books: 'A Kind of Madness' by Inga Gilbert and 'Icons of the Invisible God' with an introduction by Richard Davey. I would also strongly recommend a ten minute film, on YouTube, in which the sculptor talks in a wonderfully revealing manner about how his working life has evolved over the years.

— The Editor

FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2018

14 November - 21 December

Royal Hibernian Academy

Dublin Contact: Neil Payne, 00353 87 2557578

Email: nhpayne@hotmail.com

By way of introducing interested parties to this forthcoming exhibition - 'Faith and the Artist' - there is, already posted, a comprehensive exhibition website; one of the very best of its kind. Well worth a look: methodistartdublin.ie

2019

29 April - 9 June (open to public

Thurs 2 May - Sun 9 June)

Leicester (5 venues inc. Cathedral and Launde Abbey)

Contact: Bethany.Piggott@LecCofE.org (Also: Revd Fran Rhys fran.rhys@methodist.org.uk)

(tbc) September/October 2019

Windermere, Cumbria

Contact: Revd Martyn Coe, 01539 533223

Email: unitedchurch@btinternet.com

2020

(tbc) 21 March - 19 April

Bewdley, Worcestershire

Contact: Jim Ineson, 01299 405645

Email: jim.ineson@gmail.com

SEEING THE Spiritual



A Guide to the Methodist Modern Art Collection

We are delighted to give Friends a first sight of the cover to the newly revised edition of 'A Guide to the Methodist Art Collection', hot off the press!

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE YOU WITH

'Art class was like a religious ceremony. I would wash my hands carefully before touching paper or pencils. The instruments of work were sacred objects to me.' —Joan Miró