

NEWSLETTER

NO.16 — AUTUMN 2016
£1.50 WHERE SOLD

Methodist **Modern**
Art Collection



*The work of our Acquisitions Committee
The Collection back in North Wales
Welsh Artists and the Somme
Expanding our body of Managing Trustees*

DEAR FRIEND

It may not be widely known that, in addition to the rather more high profile exhibitions of the Collection, the practice of facilitating short loans also meets a variety of needs.

From August to October 2015 The Old Rectory, Epworth, historic home of the Wesley family, took some half a dozen works and deliberately interspersed them, throughout the house, within the Old Rectory's own Methodist Heritage Collection. It was felt that this would work to forward the 'Heritage as Mission' objective, using the juxtaposition of the modern images in this cherished period property and thus, in its own way, enhance the Wesley Story.

Another such event, literally a 'short loan at very short notice!', was arranged to mark a notable Bicentenary event at Nexus Methodist Church, Walcot, Bath. The celebrations extended over the entire May 2016 Bank Holiday Weekend, and featured five works from the Collection, all very effectively displayed in conjunction with an elegantly presented Flower Festival and supporting works by Caroline Waterlow, a local artist.

Managing Trustees of the Collection
Dr John Gibbs (Chair/Treasurer),
Revd Graham Kent (Secretary), Bob Williams (Secretary, Friends Group),
Prof Ann Sumner, Meryl Doney,
Sarah Middleton, Paul Bayley

Administrator – Mary Roseweir
Custodian – Dr Peter Forsaith

www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection

Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection
(The Supporters of the Methodist Modern Art Collection)
Patrons: The President of Conference and The Very Revd Nick Bury

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AN APPEAL FOR PROSPECTIVE TRUSTEES

We are at a stage in the increasing public profile of the Collection where we feel it might be an opportune moment to add to our team of Managing Trustees. Expertise in specific areas would be helpful: Finance and Marketing; Social Media; Connections within the Art World – particularly welcome.

If, as a Friend, you would like to know more yourself, or you are in a position to persuade someone who is aware of the Collection, and is well placed to add to our already eclectic mix, then do please, in the first instance, contact me – as per address details in the red panel, on the left. Not being a Methodist is certainly no bar!

— Bob Williams

Front cover: Caroline Waterlow (b. 1951), *The Refugees*, 2006. Oil pastel and ink wash

We have been delighted to have this work tour with the Collection over the Summer and into the Autumn. An evocative image of the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt that is so pertinent to the present time. The artist herself is a Friend of the Collection

Top: Image of Walcot interior
Below: President of Conference, Revd Steve Wild, seen with Revd Rachel Borgars, Minister of Nexus, Bath

A reflection on Eularia Clarke's 'Storm over the Lake'

Our two Eularia Clarke paintings are firm favourites wherever the Collection is shown. Here, Ruth Lewis takes a close look at this work.

Perhaps you've seen the drenched Russell Crowe in the recent film *Noah*; or you will remember TV pictures of last winter's floods or worse the terrible scenes from the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004. Whichever it is, you will understand the horror of drowning or the feeling of being overwhelmed which Eularia Clarke captured in this painting from the Methodist Modern Art Collection. You might think her stimulus was some dreadful life experience but no, apparently she was moved to paint this in 1963, exhausted and demoralised at the end of a term teaching a class of rowdy boys who had obviously got to her.

Teachers will understand! She painted out the experience and wrote that for her it was a "...relief to put Christ in..." the picture. We know the story from the gospels and here Clarke captures the moment of peril very effectively. The sheer greenness of the sea merging to dark green is itself unsettling; the vigour with which the menacing waves are depicted conveys the sense of an overwhelming destructive power; but it is the plight of the desperate disciples which most affects the viewer. Disembodied hands clutch at nothing and the faces, showing the whites of their eyes, remind me of Munch's *The Scream*. Their little boat is being overcome, its mast, furled sail, hull, free-flying chains are all about to break or useless, and its passengers will sink with it. The church has long been portrayed in art as a boat on a stormy sea, particularly so

since the World Council of Churches adopted as its logo, a boat. As an institution in the twenty-first century it is challenged by scientific discoveries, falling numbers, secularization and materialism. Individual Christians too, can find themselves out of their depth through difficulties, discord and tragedy in their lives... and yet: in the left hand corner of Clarke's picture is Christ; one hand firmly on the rudder, the other quells the storm. Around him the sea is calm, the ripples small. On the face of the water, under his hand is reflected a shining white dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, present at creation. 'Peace! All will be well.' Clarke's picture with more than twelve passengers, suggests others share this drowning experience, down the centuries. If that is us now, we may ask – are we like the family in Clarke's painting, huddled together clinging on for life, caring only for ourselves? Are we like the one whose foot is pressed against another in our attempts to survive? Are we like the one who is throwing himself overboard deserting the sinking ship? Or are we looking to Jesus, clutching the rudder he holds? Are we begging for him to rise and still the storm? Are we prepared to draw nearer to the one who might yet save us? 'Peace! Be still.'

— Ruth Lewis (Middlesbrough & Eston Circuit). Reproduced, with permission.



Eularia Clarke (1914-70), *Storm Over The Lake*, 1963. Oil. From the Methodist Modern Art Collection

Friends of the Collection

A work in focus

**FOUNDING FRIEND AND CONSULTANT TO THE COLLECTION,
TIM EGAN, NOMINATES HIS CHOICE**

OUR FRIEND IN PROFILE IS TIM EGAN



Tim Egan, seen here opening an exhibition, in Bradford-on-Avon, in 2012

After 12 years in diocesan, local government, company and police archives, I joined the National Museum of Wales in 1986 and almost immediately found myself in Yokohama, couriering a 'Museum Masterpieces' show to Osaka, via Tokyo. Thus, slowly, a second career as a museum registrar became all embracing until eventual, voluntary severance in 2009. I subsequently became a member of the Advisory Committee of the Centre of Methodism and Church History at the Westminster College Campus, Oxford Brookes University which is, of course, currently home to the Methodist Modern Art Collection when not on tour.

My earliest encounter with the Collection was in early 1990 when I was invited by its then chair, Dr. John Morel Gibbs, to view the works at Southlands College, Wimbledon, which had provided a home to the Collection since 1978; this with a view to exhibiting the Collection at Turner House, Penarth, a satellite branch of the National Museum of Wales. Considerable conservation work was required prior to the opening of this show under the title 'The Church and the Artist', as an integral part of the 1990 Penarth Christian Arts Festival.

Following the Collection's move to a further new home at the Methodist Division of Education and Youth in Muswell Hill, North London, I maintained my contacts, helping, in the mid-1990s, with the installation of the works for an exhibition at Winchester Cathedral. Subsequent to my retirement from Amgueddfa Cymru I was delighted, in 2010, to be asked by the present Chair, Dr. John Gibbs, to act as Conservation Advisor; this with a view to making a detailed survey of the entire Collection. Not surprisingly, after twenty years of travelling, recommendations had to be made regarding essential restoration, re-glazing and the design of suitable travelling cases. Some works still had standard glass in the frame, there were a multiplicity of different packing cases and all frame backs were peppered with holes after repeated installations and 'de-hangs'.

I continue to enjoy a deep interest in the Art Collection, its past and future exhibitions and am much looking forward to viewing it in the magnificent surroundings of Bath Abbey, in October.



Frank Roper (1914–2000) *The Deposition*: No. XIII, 1963, from a set of *Stations of the Cross*. Aluminium (lost wax casting)

My choice of work is the Frank Roper relief: *The Deposition* (Jesus taken down from the Cross), no. xiii in the sculptor's set of *Stations of the Cross* originally commissioned for St. Saviour's, Splott, Cardiff. Unlike the Graham Sutherland *The Deposition* in the Methodist Modern Art Collection, which is more properly an 'Entombment', the shocking and highly emotive scene here is truly a 'Deposition'. The figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are emphatically 'supporters' of the Figure of Christ which Joseph is reverently letting down from the Cross, to be received by a grieving Nicodemus.

This may be an unusual, yet is surely an inspired, choice for a Methodist art collection and not only to be appreciated in Anglo-Catholic circles. All four reliefs were shown, over Holy Week 2011 at the Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol, as part of a city wide series of small themed exhibitions looking at different interpretations of *The Stations of the Cross*. Their impact on the mere visitor was memorable and on the worshipper there, no doubt immensely spiritual. Now considered too fragile for regularly touring, Victoria Methodist remains their adopted home.

Roper, a student of Henry Moore's, has had a special appeal for me since first encountering his sculpture in my student days in Durham. On moving to Penarth in 1986, I found his work in many Cardiff locations, in the Glamorgans and even as far north as Abergavenny. However, the greater part of his work in one location can be found in Llandaff Cathedral where, along with John Piper, Patrick Reyntiens, Alan Durst and Jacob Epstein, he was one of the artists commissioned by architect George Pace to beautify the Cathedral following the wartime devastation of 1941. This work (and its fellow reliefs) has now been patinated significantly since casting in 1963 and the former, bright aluminium is now mellowed to a more sober tone, particularly appropriate to the solemn narrative which they illustrate.

REFRESHING THE COLLECTION: NOTES FROM THE ACQUISITIONS GROUP

One of the exciting features of the Methodist Modern Art Collection is its ability to add new pieces, continually refreshing the exhibitions mounted by borrowers around the country. Since 2000 we have purchased or acquired some 14 works, bringing the total to 55, with a value of just over £2 million pounds. This valuation is chiefly due to the artistic acumen of the founders, in acquiring works that have appreciated substantially over time. Today we need to raise funds in order to obtain new works.

I am writing as a member of a small acquisitions group, tasked by the trustees with finding and recommending new works to augment the Collection. Our criteria are relatively simple. We are looking for works by known modern and contemporary artists, which explore

aspects of the life of Jesus, his stories and teaching. We are particularly interested to find subjects that fill gaps in our coverage of this narrative. I'd like to single out three recent examples that demonstrate some of the different ways in which works are acquired.

The late Craigie Aitchison is best known for his many paintings of the Crucifixion. A set of four major paintings entitled *Calvary at Truro Cathedral* were the first to find a home in a church, and a work from his *Crucifixion* series hangs behind the altar in the chapter house of Liverpool Cathedral. After his death in December 2009, his gallery mounted a retrospective exhibition of his work. We were drawn to two pieces in particular, a small painting of the crucifixion, the

last he worked on, and the very striking, hand coloured etching 35/50, *Pink Crucifixion* of 2004. With the advice of gallerist Terry Danziger Miles, we were able to purchase this for the Collection.

By contrast, we were able to work directly with artist Maggi Hambling, to purchase a painting from her celebrated *Good Friday* series. Each year for nearly 25 years, she has set aside this day to produce a work in memory of her late mother, and the paintings range from figurative to near abstract. We were invited to her studio in west London in order to discuss which of the available works would fit best with the Collection. We chose *Good Friday (Walking on Water)* 2006. It combines the artist's fascination with painting the sea in all its moods, with the compelling story of Jesus' appearance to the disciples, and walking across the stormy water of Galilee. Our discussions showed that Maggi Hambling is deeply conscious of the myriad biblical references to water, from the first chapter of Genesis through to baptism. And, inevitably, her experience of the power of the sea played its part. She is not a card-carrying believer, but describes herself as an 'optimistic doubter'. She says, "Each wave can be seen as a self-regenerative force, untamable by man, but speaking of the power of God."

The acquisition of Clive Hicks-Jenkins' acrylic painting, *Christ writes in the dust – the woman taken in adultery* is the exciting story of a new commission. It owes its origin to the wish of two benefactors to sponsor a work to mark a special anniversary in their lives. They were particularly drawn to this subject because it demonstrates

'Maggi Hambling is deeply conscious of the myriad biblical references to water, from the first chapter of Genesis through to baptism'



the readiness of Jesus to reinterpret, or transcend the strict rules of his day. They discussed this aim with the trustees, and the artist Clive Hicks-Jenkins was recommended. Described as "one of the most powerful figurative painters in Wales", his interest in narrative painting began when he produced a series of works in response to fragments of a Tuscan altarpiece at Christ Church, Oxford. When approached, he responded with enthusiasm and produced an extremely insightful and innovative work.

These are just three examples, but there are many other ways in which we can enrich the offering to our borrowers. Most recently an anonymous donor has given *The Empty Tomb*, 2012, a watercolour by Richard Bavin, in memory of the late Revd Geoff Cornell, a much-loved trustee of the Collection.

Other pieces have come to us from individual art lovers, or from their estates. Most of the early acquisitions were of modern British works, but more recently we have expanded our remit to include artists from the world church. And we are actively looking at screen-based work and new media. So if you have ideas, let us know. We'd be very pleased to hear from you.

— Meryl Doney

For a fascinating insight into the thinking and process of an artist undertaking a commission, take a look at Clive Hicks-Jenkins' artlog, at: www.clivehicksjenkins.wordpress.com/2012/11/10/anatomy-of-a-painting

Left: Maggi Hambling *Good Friday (Walking on water)* 2006. 2006. Oil on board

Right: Clive Hicks-Jenkins *Christ writes in the dust – the woman taken in adultery*. 2011. Acrylic on panel



Craigie Aitchison *Pink Crucifixion*, 2004. Etching

THE COLLECTION ON ITS TRAVELS

PASSION IN PAINT

Lincoln Cathedral
8 February – 2 April 2016

Given two years of detailed planning the partnership between the Cathedral and the Diocese of Lincoln produced an end result that drew much admiring comment. Visitor numbers gave cause for real satisfaction: 10,003 registered visitors viewed the works over the five week period.

The Chapter House proved an ideal venue for the exhibition and the expertise provided by the city's Collection Gallery, in curating and hanging the art works, was greatly appreciated.

An allocated budget of some £22,000, together with the tenacity of a strong Steering Committee, guaranteed the successful promotion of the Methodist Collection in Lincoln. The commissioning of a short 'taster' film, made available as a DVD ahead of the Opening, proved very popular and undoubtedly had a positive effect on the eventual footfall. This remains available on the 'Art Collection Resources' page of the Collection website www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection.

Five hundred schools' packs, intended for Primary, Secondary and Special Needs use, together with 5,000 copies of a specially produced Lent study booklet for local churches, were widely distributed; the booklet a joint initiative by the Rt Revd Christopher Lowson, Bishop of Lincoln and the Methodist Chair of District, Revd Bruce Thompson. The availability of the usual supporting material was obviously appreciated, with

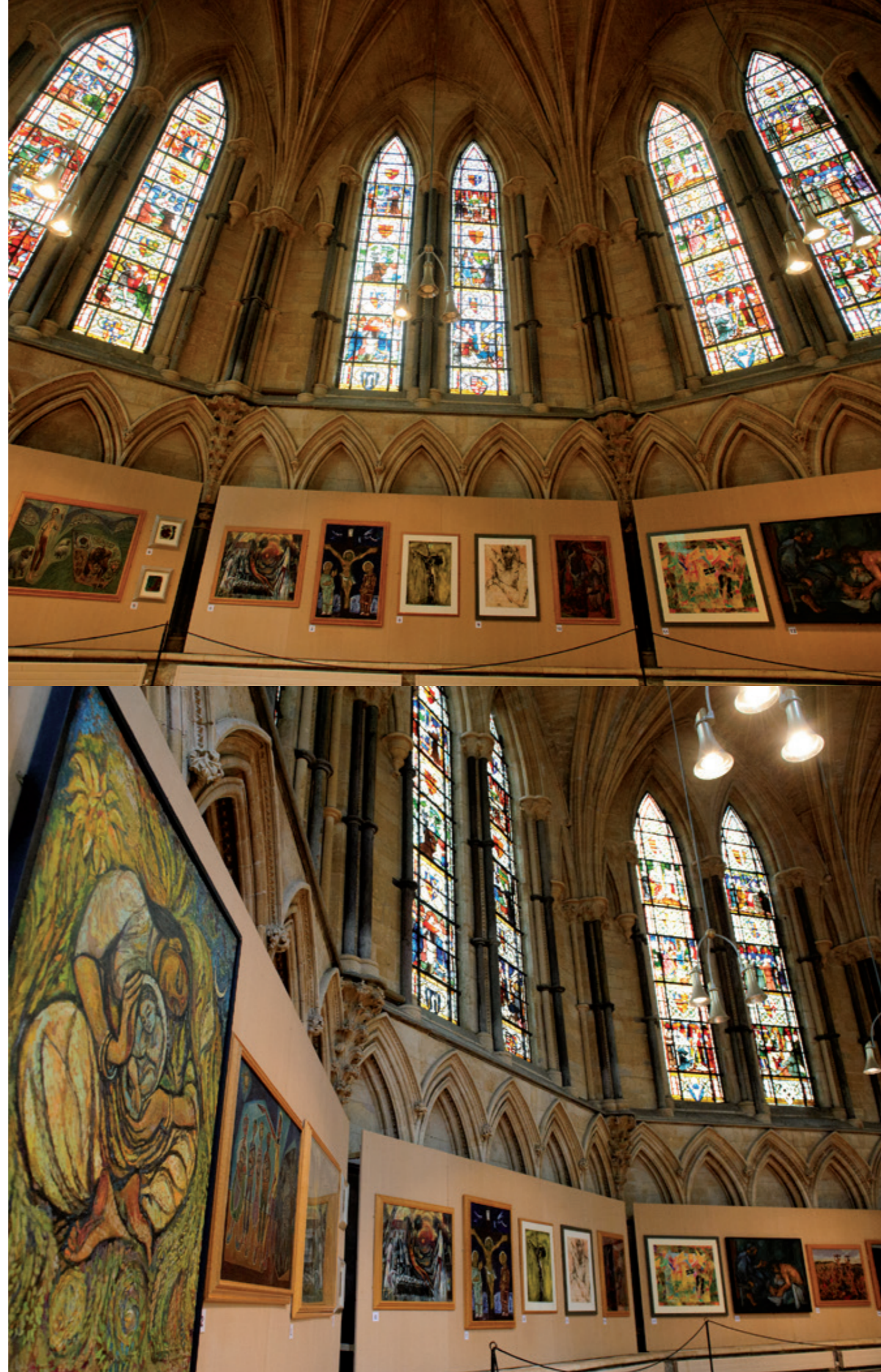
500 copies of the popular 'Guide to the Collection' and 1,800 postcards sold. Copies of the 2014 Annual Report and current Friends' Newsletters were also available to visitors.

A programme of speakers during Lent was not hugely attended but much appreciated by the listeners each week. Guest speakers included Art Historian, Dr Jonathan Koestle-Cate, Sec. of Trustees Revd Graham Kent, the Revd Bruce Thompson and Nottingham Trent University Chaplain, the Revd Dr Richard Davey. There was also an opportunity to promote the first of an intended series of Focus Groups, initiated by the trustees of the Collection.

During the exhibition, an exciting opportunity for cross-fertilisation found fruition. Collection trustee Ann Sumner chaired a day conference called 'Twenty First Century perspectives on Murals and Art for Public Spaces.' Organised in partnership between the University of Lincoln and The Collection, Lincoln, this brought together speakers from across the art world and education sector, exhibition visitors and members of the general public.

The keynote speaker was German artist Lothar Götz whose work on display at The Collection was inspired by the Duncan Grant murals in Lincoln Cathedral. Conference members walked over from the gallery to the cathedral during the lunch break in order to see the remarkable Grant murals and the Methodist works in the nearby Cathedral Chapter House.

Grant, a leading member of the Bloomsbury Set, was commissioned in 1953 to decorate the Cathedral's Russell



Works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection in the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral.
Photo: Chris Vaughan/Chris Vaughan Photography

Chantry with a set of murals depicting St Blaise, the patron saint of wool workers. In 2016 Lothar Götz was commissioned to produce a new mural inside a 1:1 scale reproduction of this chapel. This was shown at The Collection alongside Sutherland's *Deposition* and Beyer's *The son of man is come*. The latter, by Ralph Beyer, a refugee from Nazi Germany, depicts Christ carrying a sheep upon his shoulders. It was a study for one of the *Tablets of the Word* at Coventry Cathedral.

Amongst those giving lectures on this initiative, and facilitating conference discussion groups was Simon Martin, Artistic Director of Pallant House, Chichester. He is a Trustee of the Charleston Trust (the Sussex house where many of the Bloomsbury Set gathered) and spoke about how Walter Hussey brought modern art into churches, including work by Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and John Piper.

The conference (hosted at The Collection, Lincoln) was an impressive bringing together of artists, curators and historians to provide a context for Grant's Lincoln murals and Götz's response, looking at both their heritage and their significance today. The conference also explored more widely the commissioning and role of contemporary art in public spaces, whether sacred or secular.

— *The Editor. (Compiled from information supplied by the Revd Dr Terry Nowell and Sarah Middleton)*

Lincoln Diocese has, most generously, made its excellent Primary, Secondary and Special Needs Schools' Packs available to the Collection administrators, as a valuable resource for future potential borrowers.

'Here were images of joy, pain, violence, and peace, filling the space with colour and light'

VISIONS OF THE SACRED

*Ealing Green Methodist Church
9 April – 22 May 2016*

We were not sure what to expect when the articulated lorry full of crated paintings pulled up outside Ealing Green Church on 6 April, 2016, a Wednesday morning. On the Monday we had received and set up two dozen large wooden display boards in the newly refurbished sanctuary, while a willing team of volunteers set to, giving them two coats of white emulsion.

A scale model of the exhibition had looked utterly reasonable back in March, but now with the boards in situ the floor space seemed to shrink visibly. Suddenly the project of preserving sightlines for the organ and choir, pulpit and table without either crowding works or isolating them looked daunting!

Most importantly, we wanted to curate the experience of these works of art: we wanted the succession of images to reveal the themes slowly, intentionally drawing a visitor into a sense of the sacred as he or she moved into the sanctuary. Alongside which, the usual busy life of an urban church building would continue. I began to understand our link MMAC trustee's laughter when I had reported that all our plans were set and squared away: 'Don't worry, by all means plan, but everything changes during installation.'

In came the crates, and the paintings emerged. *The Dalit Madonna*, *The five thousand*: here were images of joy, pain,

violence, and peace filling the space with colour and light. Striking just the right balance between encouragement and direction, our link trustee spent the full day working both with us and the specialist installation team from C'ART. We did not get there on the first arrangement, but then suddenly everything fell into place. It took about six hours of experimentation and elbow grease, but by the end of the day we had an exhibition remarkably close to the scale plan, and ready to receive visitors.

Ealing Green Church had finished a major refurbishment in November 2015, and its exhibition 'Visions of the Sacred' launched the new building in the local community. The church had wanted to do something explicitly confessional to open its space, yet wanted to draw in those who did not think of themselves as interested either in art, or the Christian life.

With that in mind we felt that the Christian mission of this exhibition was not so much about asking visitors to appreciate the art (though many did), but about the ways in which we allowed the images to link to our thinking about current events and the life of our city... What would it be to read a story of refugees drowned in the Mediterranean, set against Maggi Hambling's picture of Jesus calming the storm?... How would the deep blue and frozen moment of violence in Clive Hicks-Jenkins *Christ writes in the dust* make us feel about reports of so-called 'honour killing'?

Whether people identify as religious or not, there are moments even in our

image-saturated life when public opinion coalesces around a picture: a child's body on the beach, men raising a flag at the end of a battle, one person standing in front of a tank. Our hope in the exhibition at Ealing Green was that the works of art with which we were living during those six weeks would serve as moments like this from the life of Jesus. How would our shared response coalesce around these images?

We found in conversation that the works challenged us directly about our public responsibilities: How would we act, if someone was being hurt?... How would we behave towards strangers?... When have we acted selflessly together to do something kind?... What has this to do with following Jesus Christ?

Over the course of the exhibition, nine groups organised private use/visits, including one visiting youth group from the French Reformed Church who slept overnight in the church, sleeping bags beneath the art! Over 230 individuals visited 'off the street' while the church was open, with many offering strong responses in the guest book and spending long minutes engrossed in a single painting. Some were glad of a listening ear over a cup of tea while others, clearly, wanted to be left undisturbed. An online self-administered volunteer rota worked surprisingly well, and we never struggled to staff the exhibition but for one day.

The exhibition also hosted a 200+ person 'Messiah from Scratch', with a full orchestra and singers raising money as they rehearsed and performed; local artists visited and regular worship thrived. Within the Circuit we also used the exhibition for local preacher training and offered children's activities and non-traditional worship in and amongst the exhibition. Part of the preparation for this exhibition had been a Circuit-wide worship series during summer 2014 called 'Picnics and Storms,' using a different

image from the MMAC each week, and this has now been made available to download as individual acts of worship or a complete series, from the Methodist website. We were also delighted to host our local MP and Mayor, along with trustees of the Collection, for a Reception with a talk about the public role of church, and public role of art.

Ealing Green had a budget of £5,000 for the whole exhibition, and came in only a little under with the major and worthwhile expense, not surprisingly, being specialist delivery and installation. Ours is neither a wealthy church nor circuit, but to stimulate creative work in 2013 each church was offered a one-off 'Talents' grant to spend in any way it decided, and this was Ealing Green's choice. While certainly this project was over three years in the planning and required a major input over the six-week period of the exhibition, it has raised our expectations of what our role in the community might be, and been well worth the effort.

When the same crew returned from C'ART to take down and crate the paintings in May, amidst the relief of a

work complete, there was real sadness to see these images leave our space. For any church or group planning an exhibition – be brave and have a go!: the Art Collection is an extraordinary resource for our local churches, the trustees offer excellent practical support and advice, and the exhibition will exceed any expectation you have.

— *The Revd Dr Jennifer H. Smith*

Thank you Jennifer for this fascinating insight into 'the A-Z' of how a suburban church set about revealing the treasures of the Collection to the folk of West London. It will certainly make interesting reading for other intending borrowers who may be a little cautious about taking the plunge! Ed.

Left: Ready to hang at Ealing Green... Photos supplied
Right: 'Messiah from scratch' performed amid the works from the Collection



ART AND FAITH

Llandudno

24 June – 3 September 2016

Back in early 2015 we had just started to think about what we might do to celebrate St John's Methodist Church's 150th anniversary. Somebody got to hear that Wrexham were hosting the Methodist Modern Art Collection and the light came on. "If they can do it, so can we!" Visiting the exhibition there, "Heaven and Earth", reinforced our resolve as we were prompted into thinking how the Collection might best be presented in our home town, so very different from Wrexham. Llandudno is a seaside resort, packed with holiday-makers in the summer season. And our church is right on the main shopping street – surely we could manage to persuade a few people to come in and take a look round?

We were reasonably confident. After all, we were used to opening up our church every summer for anyone passing by who wanted to pop in for a quiet moment with God or to look round our beautiful building. All we had to do was open up as usual in July and August and they would come in, wouldn't they? And if we just added on a few more weeks at the front we would overlap with the end of the school term so we could squeeze a few class visits in as well.

But as the date got nearer the scale of the whole thing started to loom large. What on earth had we been thinking? How could we cope with a ten week exhibition using only volunteer stewards? What did we know about art, modern art especially? The comments of a few of the less adventurous church members didn't help either. But it was too late now – we had committed ourselves.

Fortunately for us, we had a very capable partner in the shape of Llandudno's MOSTYN art gallery. Once they understood what the Collection was all about they committed their support and their gallery location alongside St John's. The curator and team threw themselves into making sure all the vital actions were undertaken professionally. Everything from choosing the pieces to hanging and de-installing the exhibition was done with their help. We would have been in the dark without them.

Alfredo Cramerotti, curator at MOSTYN, chose the title and the headline image, Craigie Aitchison's *Pink Crucifixion*. Some of our church members were horrified at first but, of course, he had made the right choice. It was impossible to pass by without being arrested by the shocking pink of the marketing posters and leaflets...

It was not the aim of the exhibition to attempt to get people interested in the art world through high-brow events. Rather, it was our aim to reach out to everyone attending the premises or walking past the church – residents, holiday-makers, shoppers, children, concert-goers and regular worshippers were all in our sights.

We held a special preaching series, with every invited preacher being asked to preach on one of the pictures in the exhibition. One preacher, Rev David Halstead, was even inspired to do his own version of one of the paintings (*The Washing of the Feet*, Ghislaine Howard.) Our discipleship groups used the pictures as discussion-starters. There was musical accompaniment at lunchtimes. Our twice weekly male voice choir concerts were enhanced by the presence of the artwork and all our choirs were briefed on the exhibition so that they could comment and encourage viewing at the interval. Even the hirers of the



premises, using the church for their own concerts and events, were briefed on the exhibition, and all were kind enough to promote it within their programmes.

But how on earth were we going to find the resources to pay for it and steward it?

Circuit and District were kind enough to give us grants towards the cost but the grant we have perhaps been most delighted by is that from Cytun (Churches Together) in Llandudno. To know that we are supported and encouraged by our Christian neighbours has been wonderful. We have seen support both from our Cytun friends and our Circuit churches through the offer of stewards week after week throughout the course of the exhibition – we must have had well over 70 different people volunteer to help in this way. It has been a privilege to see their commitment and unflagging enthusiasm.

So what have we observed during the ten weeks of the exhibition?

The aim has been simple yet profound – to enable encounters with God. And we have seen it happen time and time again:

- People have engaged with God through the art itself, pondering

the pictures and the biblical stories behind them.

- Others have been affected by the church as they have come in from a busy shopping street and into the calm and Spirit-filled atmosphere of the sanctuary. Many left prayer requests on our prayer board or placed a shell on our prayer beach.
- Finally, the gentle yet enthusiastic welcome of our stewards and their willingness to engage with those coming into the church to whatever level they have wanted, has been much appreciated by many.

Having just spent the last few days taking the pictures off the church walls, filling the holes and packing everything away on to the van, we are tired but satisfied. To have hosted over 18,000 people to the exhibition across the two sites, with over 17,000 visitors to St John's itself has been immensely satisfying. A fair number were, of course, 'returnees' for a second look – or our regular summer concert-goers, enjoying their music in an auditorium richly enhanced by the paintings. Nevertheless each and every visitor was greatly valued.

The church looks horribly empty and bare.

But not to worry, we are now working on our 150th anniversary celebration weekend and after that it will be time to prepare for our week long Christmas Tree Festival. And several people have already made suggestions for what we can do next summer...

We've got a taste for offering hospitality in the name of God and we don't intend to stop now!

— Revd Beverley Ramsden,
Minister St John's

Trustees Bob Williams and Sarah Middleton were present and spoke at the Opening Evening, Sarah providing an interesting discourse on the background to the production of the dual language booklet, 'The Collection in Wales', this being available once again, in Llandudno, following its launch for the 2015 visit of the Collection to Wrexham. Sarah also gave a well-received Saturday afternoon talk entitled 'Changing Perceptions' which traced the development of the Collection. We very much enjoyed our time in Llandudno, viewing a very professional hang at both St. John's and Mostyn, attending a couple of the excellent Choral Concerts which are always a feature of the Summer Programme at St. John's, and, contributing in a small way to Sunday Morning Worship. Ed.



Top: Revd Bev Ramsden, trustee Sarah Middleton and newly enrolled Friend of the Collection, Revd Peter Jennings discuss *The Cross over the City*, at Mostyn

Below: Director of Mostyn, Alfredo Cramerotti, extends an Opening Evening welcome to his gallery, the second venue for the 'Art and Faith' exhibition in Llandudno

ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD...

'WAR'S HELL!' THE BATTLE OF MAMETZ WOOD IN ART

*Amgueddfa Cymru/ National
Museum, Cardiff*
30 April – 4 September, 2016

This very moving and thoughtfully curated exhibition set out to explore, 100 years on, the human response to this key engagement within the Somme offensive. Its aim was to recount, through art, poetry and relevant documentation, the events of July 1916 pertaining to the heroic efforts of the 38th (Welsh) Division to wrest control of Mametz Wood from the Germans.

The title of the exhibition can be found in Robert Graves' powerful and emotive poem, 'A Dead Boche'. Graves, together with fellow Royal Welsh Fusilier and war poet, Siegfried Sassoon, had experienced the battle first-hand and was in fact badly wounded and, at one point, actually pronounced dead.

The influence of David Jones (1895–1974), another well-known artist and poet, with strong Welsh connections, was much in evidence both in the art works on display and through the available sound track of his epic poem 'In Parenthesis', based on his first seven months in the trenches, including his part in the assault on Mametz Wood. Jones was to suffer two nervous breakdowns in the years after the War. Poet, author and arts programmes presenter Owen Shears, whose own 'Mametz Wood' poem of 2005 is a fine work in its own right and also featured in this exhibition, considers that 'In

Parenthesis' was the most interesting piece of writing to come out of WW1.

It was, perhaps, the David Jones connection that was of special interest here. His delicate and highly detailed ink, pencil and watercolour drawings prepared as Frontispiece and Tailpiece for his published version of 'In Parenthesis' captured the essence of this whole exhibition: A Frontispiece showing a wounded and semi-naked soldier hopelessly ensnared on the barbed wire, and a Tailpiece inspired by the biblical allusion to the scapegoat that was despatched, with the sins of the world, into the wilderness, transposed by Jones into the Lamb of God left wounded in a No Man's Land of wire and blasted trees. Also by Jones, related works included *Christ before Pilate* (watercolour and pencil), with the two soldiers guarding Christ shown wearing WW1 helmets. Similarly, *Christ Mocked*, is an extraordinary piece painted directly onto the wooden wall panels of the Guild Chapel of Saints Joseph and Dominic, in Ditchling. Subsequently cut out of the wall and now in the safe-keeping of Cardiff's National Museum, one is left with the uneasy feeling that, as with the Elgin Marbles, such an act would be entirely unjustifiable today.

Other artists to feature were Eric Gill (1895–1974), Muirhead Bone (1876–1953) who was actually our very first officially appointed war artist, contributing a number of field sketches on this specific, intense theatre of war, and Margaret Lindsay Williams (1888–1960) with her expansive canvas

entitled *Care of Wounded Soldiers at Cardiff Royal Infirmary*, depicting an area later to be named the Mametz Memorial Ward. The largest painting on show was the enormous and rarely seen oil by Christopher Williams (1873–1934) *The Charge of the Welsh Division at Mametz Wood* c. 1917, which was commissioned by David Lloyd George when Secretary of State for War and subsequently spent some years on the walls of 10, Downing St. It expresses, in pretty stark detail, both the horrors of war and the heroic hand-to-hand fighting by the Welsh Division.

Another poet whose work appeared writ large on the walls of the gallery was Harry Fellows, remarkable in that it was initially penned virtually in the heat of battle, with Fellows engaged with a burial party. He returned 68 years later to add the final eight lines. Hence the title 'Reflections on two visits to Mametz Wood'. His ashes are interred in Mametz Wood.

— *The Editor*

David Jones, *Christ Mocked* c.1923.
Oil on tongue and groove board

'The influence of David Jones was much in evidence, both in the art works on display and through the available sound track'



FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2016

6 – 31 October

Bath

Bath Abbey, Bath BA1 1LT
Contact: Revd Stephen Girling,
01225 422462
missioner@bathabbey.org

2017

14 January – 23 April

Canterbury

Beaney Art Gallery, 18 High St.,
Canterbury CT1 2RA
in conjunction with Kent College
Contact: Revd Dr Paul Glass,
01227 785204
pglass@kentcollege.co.uk

22 June – 16 July

Haywards Heath

Haywards Heath Methodist Church
RH16 3DN in conjunction with
Haywards Heath URC RH16 4LQ
Contact: Nicola Sheldon, 01444 412927
Nicola.sheldon@yahoo.co.uk

5 September – 3 October (tbc)

(Part collection)

Solihull

Solihull Library Courtyard Gallery,
Homer Road, Solihull B91 3RG
Solihull Methodist Church,
Blossomfield Road, Solihull B91 1LG
Contact: Sue Balmer
suebalmer162@btinternet.com

November – December (tbc)

Hull

2018

Rome (tbc)

Methodist Church & (provis.)
Anglican Arts Centre

Geneva (tbc)

World Council of Churches

May – June

Isle of Man (tbc)

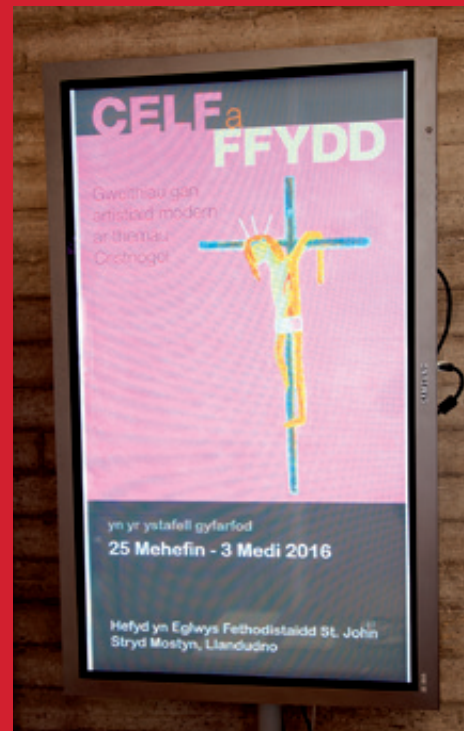
18 June – 29 July

Bury St Edmunds

St. Edmundsbury Cathedral,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1LS
Trinity Methodist Church,
Brentgovel St., Bury St. Edmunds IP33 1EB
Revd Mark Howarth, 01284 755375
rectornorthburyteam@btinternet.com

October – November (tbc)

Dublin



The Welsh version of the Art and Faith poster adopted for Llandudno, here shown back-lit at Mostyn

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE WITH YOU...

*'Art washes away from the soul the dust
of everyday life'*

— Pablo Picasso