

NEWSLETTER

NO.14 — AUTUMN 2015
£1.00 WHERE SOLD

Methodist Modern
Art Collection



*The Collection celebrates Half a Century on the Road
Walter Hussey's Legacy at Chichester
The Ahmanson Collection visits the U.K.
The Collection in N. Wales and N. Ireland*

DEAR FRIEND

Following its particularly warm reception in Wrexham, the Collection has continued to make its presence felt in The Celt Belt (I do dislike the use of the word 'fringe' with its connotation of dismissal to the margins!) The works made a real impression in Ballymena, N.Ireland (see report on P.8) and will be returning to Wales, to spend the greater part of the summer months of 2016 in Llandudno.

The recent death of the Revd David Gamble is a grievous loss to Methodism and yet another blow to our Patronal body. A summary of very warm tributes to David appears on p.15.

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BARBARA HEPWORTH

Tate Britain has, throughout the summer and autumn, been paying its own tribute to the work of one of the great sculptor-artists of the 20th Century. The late Dame Barbara Hepworth's work quite simply exemplifies Modernism. Forty years after her untimely death my admiration for her mastery of such a range of materials remains undimmed. A fresh look at those extraordinary surgical series of drawings, the monolithic Guarea wood carvings (*Corinthos*, *Palagos*, *Epidaurus* or the stringed *Delphi*) and the cluster of bronze castings that constitute the *Family of Man* marching, in situ, down the grassy incline at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, never fail to send a tingle down the spine.

There was a clear, indelible relationship between Hepworth's artistic and religious development. In her own words – 'A sculpture should be an act of praise, an enduring expression of the divine spirit'. Lucy Kent's excellent contribution to the Tate catalogue, entitled 'An Act of Praise', makes it very clear that, for Hepworth, form was not simply a theoretical concern but a search for spiritual harmony, for the transcendental within the nature of things. It is interesting to reflect on the fact that, for Hepworth, both Christian Science and Anglicanism, in various combinations were, at differing points in time, of immense philosophical importance to her.

INTRODUCE A FRIEND

Can you persuade a friend to become a Friend of the Collection? We are enormously grateful to our loyal core of Friends but, with ever increasing expenditure very much in mind, we are keen to increase our numbers. The Secretary is always delighted to receive new Applications! The appropriate forms are, of course, available at exhibition sites – or may be downloaded from the website (Friends of the Collection section).

www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/the-methodist-art-collection/friends-of-the-collection

Front Cover: Barbara Hepworth (1903–75)
Madonna and Child 1953. Oil and graphite on panel.
The Ahmanson Collection. © Bowness

Enhancing the Collection

The usual means by which the Trustees add to the Collection is through purchase. If a work is offered as a gift, the normal response is to say that the Trustees do not accept donations, as a necessary defence against the Collection losing the quality and focus for which it has become recognised. However, from time to time, we are offered the gift of a work that we are delighted to accept.

In our next issue we will feature an account of the pictures that we have acquired through gifts. In the meantime, however, we illustrate the topic by reference to the stencil print *Christ enters Jerusalem* by the Japanese artist Sadao Watanabe (see illustration), which was the first of two works we received from the Roman Catholic priest Father Bruno Healy through the good offices of Revd The Lord Leslie Griffiths. The gift was made when Father Bruno left his parish in London to become a hermit in a remote part of North Wales. That was eight years ago and he was in the news last winter when he was interviewed about his vocation by Eddie Mair of the BBC (A recording can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04pr5gf)

Sadao Watanabe (1913–96)
Christ enters Jerusalem 1982. Stencil.
From the Methodist Modern Art Collection



The Custodian of the Collection

A Work in Focus

**CUSTODIAN OF THE COLLECTION,
PETER FORSAITH, NOMINATES HIS CHOICE**

WE PROFILE PETER FORSAITH



I don't particularly like the term 'custodian'; it smacks of keys and jailers. However, it was my suggested title so I'm stuck with it! People used to refer to my role as the 'curator' of the Collection, but a curator makes executive decisions about a collection and individual works: I don't. If you want to be technical, the trustees are the

'curator' of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

What I do is to have responsibility for the Collection when it is not out on exhibition, but in store at Oxford Brookes University – an arrangement which goes back over 15 years. This is a rather more extensive role than just checking that the pictures are behaving themselves while in a locked store together. It also means dealing with the logistics; transit to and from exhibitions. So we need to be sure that transport is suitable: although the works now all have their custom-made cases, care still needs to be exercised when loading and unloading, how they are stowed on the vehicle, proper security. Probably travel is the biggest risk to the pictures, which is why the trustees now expect to use carriers with expertise in moving art, using vehicles with air-ride suspension and climate control as well as alarm systems.

I also often deal with conservation. With the frequent handling and hanging which this Collection undergoes, some deterioration or slight damage is almost inevitable. Exhibitors are expected to check the works against the Condition Reports on unpacking, during the exhibition, and repacking. That way the trustees can know if there is any remedial work required, which then has to be done while the works are in store between exhibitions. It may be some suspected flaking from a paint surface, a work on paper has slipped slightly in the mount, or a frame needs attention. For this we generally use a local picture conservator and a framer, both of whom are on the Conservation Register, so skilled professionals.

Unfortunately, when the Collection is with us, it isn't currently possible to exhibit it. For a start we have nowhere suitable to hang, nor is there the time (or space) to unpack the pictures. Such is the pressure on space that currently some of the larger works are stored in a nearby specialist repository. So please don't think you can come to Oxford and see the Collection when it is here.

Being 'Custodian' of the Collection is only part of my job: I look after a dozen other Methodist-related special collections: art, archives and a library. Several of the collections relate to late-twentieth century Methodism; the papers of Donald English, Bill Gowland and (recently) from Colin Morris as well as the Avec Consultancy and Oxford Institute. This has been a period of denominational decline and cultural change: but while traditional forms of mission may have all but disappeared, the place of art has blossomed. The Centre holds several other art collections, including those from the pre-Raphaelite associate (and Wesleyan) James Smetham, and pictures which were formerly at Methodist Church House in London.

As 'Research Fellow' for the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History the focus of my work is both my own studies and supporting those of others. So there are people who come to use the archives and library; perhaps they are writing a local church history, or chasing up an ancestor who was a Methodist; perhaps they are researching for a book or a research degree (including our own research degree students).

I describe myself as a historian of religion, culture and society in eighteenth-century Britain. I have written and published on the evangelical vicar of Madeley, Shropshire, John Fletcher, who was an associate of the Wesleys. My main current research is on images of John Wesley, which are legion – how did they come about, and why, and how to make sense of them? An article of mine on Wesley sitting for Joshua Reynolds (six sittings but no portrait – it's an intriguing story) should appear at about the same time as this Newsletter, in the 'British Art Journal'.



Ghislaine Howard (b. 1953).
The Washing of the Feet 2004.
Acrylic on canvas. From the
Methodist Modern Art Collection

I remember the first time I saw Ghislaine Howard's *The Washing of the Feet*. It was at a small exhibition where it was not supposed to be hung as it was in transit from the artist to Oxford with other works. So I was not expecting to see it. It took my breath away at the time, and still does.

It is partly the colour and the composition. My interest in art is what I call 'the depiction of the human form'. The juxtaposition of the two figures, one angular, geometric; the other rhythmic, flowing; connected but not quite touching. The colour and texture of the paint: I wish I could run my hands over it!

But every time I see it I have to remind myself that the seated figure, dominant, hand raised almost as in

blessing (another ambiguity, benediction or protest?), is the disciple, and the crouching servant boy is the Christ. His are doing hands.

Around the time I first saw this, I was leaving the church – for a number of reasons. This picture reminds me that Christianity is bigger than church. It is a way of living; it is the vitality and sacrifice of service which are at its heart, head down and getting on with it. I wonder what Pope Francis would comment on this painting?

THE COLLECTION ON ITS TRAVELS...

'HEAVEN AND EARTH'/'NEFOEDD A DAEAR'

Wrexham (19 January – 26 March 2015)

Working in partnership with Glyndwr University, 40 works from the Collection were exhibited between the University's Oriel Sycharth Gallery and the town centre Methodist Church early in 2015:

"The whole programme was entitled 'Heaven and Earth' because it was a deliberate exercise in crossing boundaries," explains Revd Richard Sharples who coordinated the project. "As a Circuit it was an exercise in evangelism, using the arts as a language common to both church and unchurched people alike."

The key foundation for the project was a good relationship with the University. This was built up through Chaplaincy at the Art and Design Department, and then added to by the vision of Estelle Thompson, now Head of Media, Arts and Design:

"I was thrilled at the opportunity to have such first rate works in the gallery," recalls Prof Thompson, "and Richard's enthusiasm for the project was infectious."

One of the great benefits of working with the University was the quality of publicity; especially the poster and printed programme. From the beginning three strands to the project were envisaged: the exhibition itself, together with a schools and an events programme. To tie in with the usual period at the University, the events programme stretched over ten weeks, and included poetry, worship, workshops, devotional meetings, conversations, seminars, and a range of music: choral, classical and folk. It was the breadth of this which was perhaps most remarkable.

"The biblical world view is that earth and heaven are mingled," reflects Richard Sharples, "as God labours to bring about a new creation, the first fruit of which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So we've had an Orthodox Priest helping us reflect on art as a window on God in the University Gallery, and we've had John Wynn Owen, of the Royal Society for Public Health, pointing to the significance of the arts for health and well-being down at the Church."

One of the regular features of past exhibition programmes has been 'A Conversation with the Artist', and for Wrexham this was Welsh artist, Clive Hicks-Jenkins, whose work *Christ writes in the dust* is one of the most recent additions to the Collection. Clive in fact stayed for three days, during which he led workshops for students from a local secondary school and college.

"We were rather disappointed with the take-up from Primary Schools, with a total of just six different sessions taking place", admits Richard, "but to come into the Church and find it full of school children, all engaged with the paintings through conversation and role-play was wonderful!"

The Church saw nearly 1,000 visitors to the exhibition, with a similar number at the University. To this needs to be added a further 600 people who attended one of the 20 plus events that made up the 10 week programme. A team of 46 Stewards, from inside and outside the Church, welcomed people at both Church and (on Saturdays) at the University.

"One of the things that has particularly delighted me," comments Richard, "was the involvement of many students from the University's School of Art and Design; hanging the exhibition, stewarding it and working with schools."

At an early stage of planning the absence of resources in the Welsh language was noticed. Thus began a journey

of discovery, the result of which was a brand new bilingual resource, written by Sarah Middleton, Trustee of the Collection: 'The Methodist Modern Art Collection in Wales'. The booklet charts the links between Wales and the Collection and is now available along with the other resources for future exhibitions in Wales. All publicity was in Welsh and English, and the programme featured a few Welsh language events which were sponsored by Synod Cymru, the Welsh language district of British Methodism.

And the legacy? The Circuit has made 2015 their 'Year of the Arts', with the encouragement for each church to hold one event which will use the arts as a way of engaging in mission with their local community.

Richard concludes "My hope and prayer is that the future will see a continued mingling of heaven and earth as the Church is increasingly used as an arts venue, as faith and spirituality continue to find expression at the University, and as the University and Church find new ways to work together. All this, in the context of a thriving, happening, creative community here in Wrexham, as people from outside and inside the Church explore faith and meaning through the language of the arts..."

And to God be the glory!"

— Richard Sharples



METHODIST RECORDER

Friends who are readers of the Methodist Recorder may well recall, in the 20 February edition, the excellent coverage given to the 'Heaven and Earth' show in Wrexham. Contributed by the Revd Mandy Briggs, the double page spread included illustrations of a number of key works from the Collection, together with a very moving admission by the curator, Richard Sharples, that he first stumbled across the Collection, almost by chance, at Greenbelt and the profound experience had reduced him to tears.

COMMENTS FROM THE WREXHAM VISITORS' BOOK

-
- "What a privilege!"*
-
- "Beautiful and striking; I'll be back for another look."*
-
- "Loved this Collection. It helps contemplation."*
-
- "I am so glad I made the effort to come and see the exhibition."*
-
- "A remarkable and interesting exhibition."*
-

Below: Revd Jennie Hurd, welcoming folk to the opening, on behalf of the two District Chairs
Bottom: Meryl Doney in conversation with Clive Hicks-Jenkins. Photos: Eve Sharples





Photos: Christopher Neeley
© Mid & E. Antrim Borough Council

BALLYMENA WELCOMES THE METHODIST ART COLLECTION AS PART OF ITS 'YEAR OF THE ARTIST' CREATIVE CITIZENS PROGRAMME

Ballymena (10 May – 18 June 2015)

This was a groundbreaking experience for the Collection, crossing the Irish Sea for the very first time.

The central venue for the display of the Collection was the Braid Arts Centre but with an active and visible partnership with nine local churches representing the Ballymena Inter Church Forum. The Braid has a fine interior, particularly its elegant theatre. As the accompanying images make clear, the building enjoys airy and well-lit gallery spaces. The team responsible for the hang should be congratulated on a wonderful job done enabling the 1,500 visitors, over the five-week period of the exhibition, to enjoy a memorable viewing experience.

A well-attended opening heard words of welcome, and an appreciation expressed to the Organizing Committee, from Councillor Billy Ashe, the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim and the Revd

Peter Murray, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

It was particularly pleasing to see some 2,500 folk engaging with the associated Art Trail Programme. Nine powerful paintings, from the Collection, were distributed across the nine churches involved. The selection was made as follows: Ghislaine Howard's *The Washing of the Feet* at All Saints Parish Church, Jacques Iselin's *The Elements of the Holy Communion* at Ballymena Methodist Church, Michael Edmonds' *The cross over the city* at First Ballymena Presbyterian Church, Norman Adams' *Christ's entry into Jerusalem* at Gracehill Moravian Church, John Reilly's *Cain and Abel* at High Kirk Presbyterian Church.

They're Lee-Elliot's *Crucified tree form – the agony* at St. Patrick's

Church of Ireland, Roy de Maistre's *The supper at Emmaus* at St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, Broughshane, Eularia Clarke's *Storm over the lake* at Wellington Presbyterian Church and Peter Rogers' *The ascension* at West Presbyterian Church.

In all, 126 'Arts Ambassadors' were trained, as volunteers, for a variety of supporting roles, the majority as exhibition stewards. Certificates of Appreciation, in recognition of their endeavours, were presented to each and every one. A wonderful idea!

— Bob Williams

PRESENTING THE COLLECTION OVER THE YEARS

Each new venue for the Collection has, quite rightly, elected to present these treasures within a theme that is appropriate to a particular focus on particular gospel stories, the local geographical location/ community or, indeed, the season and the Church's year. It is interesting to look back on the ever-growing list of exhibition titles selected.

One cannot help but remark upon the somewhat restrained and 'safe' exhibition titles chosen for exhibitions back in the 1960s gradually giving way to more creative – dare one say catchy – titles, even resorting to alliteration and rather clever puns!

September 2015 marks the anniversary of the closing date of the first, extensively travelled, two-year tour of 'The Church and the Artist' exhibition. This was an extraordinary undertaking, organised by Douglas Wollen and attracting some 107,000 visitors at 30 different venues throughout England and Wales. Thus it would seem an appropriate moment to celebrate this 50-year land-mark by listing the remarkable and varied titles thought up by exhibition curators, and their planning committees, over the last half century.

This is not a specifically chronological list but we do believe it to be complete. Where titles chosen appear very similar, each version appears within this list. Remarkably few titles have been repeated 'verbatim'. In this instance, a title is mentioned only the once.

If you have good reason to believe that there might be the odd omission from this list do, please, let me know!

— Ed.

THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION ON TOUR

The Church and the Artist
Christian Art of the Twentieth Century
The Image and the Word
Light of the World
(name of wider exhibition)
Images of Grief and Glory
The Divine Muse
The Imagined Word
Modern Visions: Christ and the Artist
Seeing and Believing – Art in the City
Searching in Faith
Modern Miracles
What's in the frame – Canvassing
Spirituality
An Art-Accustomed Eye
(name of wider exhibition)
Faith and the Artist
The Altered Image
Stations of Suffering and Sorrow
Celebrating together
Faith in Art
On the Spiritual in Art
Matters of Life
Aspects of the Passion
The Colour of Love
A Brush with Faith
Painting the Passion
Seeing the Story
Glimpses of Glory
Modern Christian Art
Visions
Face2Faith
Seeing and Believing
Sharing Stories: Discovering Faith
in the contemporary world
(name of wider exhibition)
Presence of God in Art and
in the Landscape
(name of wider exhibition)
Glory in our Midst
PassionArt
Feed your Spirit
Crucifixion in British Art

The Collection: Highlights and
New Works
Behold the Man
Brightest and Best
Art and Soul
Come and See
Journey with Jesus
Imagining Easter
Jesus in the Everyday
Shadows of the Divine
Art and Soul
Visible Faith
The Sacred and the Modern
Christ in the Everyday
In the Image
Risen!
Word in Frame
Faith in Focus
Along the Way
Seeing is Believing
Artists of Faith
War, Peace and Reconciliation
Heaven and Earth
Ballymena welcomes the Methodist
Art Collection (within 'The Year
of the Artist' Creative Citizens
Programme)



The poster used for the 'Heaven and Earth' exhibition: Wrexham 2015

ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD...

ERNST BARLACH'S MAGDEBURG MEMORIAL

In June I realised an aspiration of 55 years! Before going to University I spent six months in Frankfurt-am-Main and, while there, was deeply impressed by an exhibition of drawings, prints and sculpture in wood and bronze by the expressionist artist Ernst Barlach*.



I soon learnt that Barlach, who became a pacifist following his experiences in the First World War, was noted for a remarkable Memorial to the misery and dreariness of that war in the Protestant Cathedral at Magdeburg, the state capital of Saxony-Anhalt. In 1960 this lay deep inside what was then East Germany and no opportunity for pilgrimage existed. Time passed and it is now 25 years since reunification brought East and West Germany together. However it was only this year, when travelling in the area, that my wife Liz and I found ourselves within striking distance of Magdeburg and were able to visit the magnificent early-Gothic cathedral.

The 'Gefallenen-Ehrenmal', carved in 1929, was created from three upright barks of oak, and comprises three enigmatic German soldiers standing behind a cross, each with a half figure in front of them.

It is generally agreed that the young man in the large coat on the right is a fresh recruit, someone who does not know what he is letting

himself in for. The older man on the left is a veteran doing his duty, stoically weathering the storm, and not asking about the whys or wherefores.

In the middle is a tall man with a bandaged head and wide eyes. But can he see through them? Has the spark been extinguished by the horrors he has witnessed or, as some suggest, has he surmounted his awful experiences and is able to look to the future? The three huddled shapes below are easier to interpret. They comprise a widow covering her face in despair, a skeleton wearing a German army helmet, and a man (based on Barlach himself), a gas mask on his chest, who closes his eyes and shuts his ears to the horrors of war.

The sculpture now has an honoured place in the North Transept and is a focus for peace and reconciliation, as it was in the years running up to the collapse of the Iron Curtain. However soon after it was first put into the Cathedral it became the subject of criticism from increasingly militaristic elements in the population. The Church leaders did not stand out against this and the sculpture was removed as 'degenerate art'. It could well have been destroyed, but, fortunately, friends of the sculptor were able to hide it until after the Second World War when it was returned to the Cathedral.

Ernst Barlach, who remained under attack until his death in 1938, is now a revered figure and you can visit his studio in the town of Gustrow (also in former East Germany) where,

in the local Cathedral, you can find another of his war memorials, the bronze *Hovering angel* which is suspended above the font. The story of this sculpture is equally if not more remarkable and is described by Neil Macgregor, Director of the British Museum, in his wonderful Radio 4 series 'Germany: Memories of a Nation' (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04k6tvb). As he says there Barlach believed that it was the purpose of war memorials to provide opportunities for 'Erinnerung und innere Schau' – recollection and inner reflection.

— John Gibbs

* (The Rough Guide to Germany describes Barlach as the 'finest artist no-one knows outside Germany')



Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection

'STILL SMALL VOICE': BRITISH BIBLICAL ART IN A SECULAR AGE (1850-2014)

The Wilson: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (17 January – 3 May 2015)

I very much hope that a number of our Friends were able to visit the Wilson Gallery, in Cheltenham, in the early part of this year. For adherents of our own Methodist Modern Art Collection the opportunity to compare it with the work of British artists, represented in the Ahmanson Collection (making its first ever visit to these shores) would certainly have struck a chord.

With its home in Los Angeles it really is quite remarkable that these two niche Collections, selectively assembled over many years, some five and a half thousand miles apart, should be so similar both in their constituency and ethos.

The exhibition was certainly strong on its Mother and Child images predominantly in the shape of the work of three sculptor/artists. A *Madonna and Child* bronze maquette (1950) by Jacob Epstein, a terracotta maquette (1943) by Henry Moore and a stunning oil and graphite drawing on panel (1953), by Barbara Hepworth, would grace any collection (see Front Cover). The Hepworth was, in fact, a preparatory study for a work in bianco del mare limestone, executed in the same year and gifted to St. Ives Parish Church in memory of her son Paul Skeaping who was killed that year on active service with the RAF. The drawing is very much in the tradition of Byzantine religious icons so readily identifying, as it clearly does, with maternal sorrow.

Stanley Spencer is also well represented in the Ahmanson Collection, with no fewer than six paintings and drawings at the Wilson. Other well known names on show were Peter Lanyon (*Calvary*, oil on masonite 1958), Keith Vaughan, Graham Sutherland and Sidney Nolan, qualifying as an 'adopted Brit'. Beautifully lit, and centrally placed in one of the two galleries given over to the show, was a classic Eric Gill carved piece in Bath stone, *Christ of the Sacred Heart*. Red pigment had been used to emphasize the stigmata.

Finally, underlining again the inescapable echoes of the Methodist Modern Art Collection, were two powerful paintings by Edward Burra – *Agony in the Garden* (1938–9) and *Coronation of the Virgin* (1950–52), both executed in watercolour, gouache and graphite. A distinct case of déjà vu was experienced when viewing the print, from an etching, No. 31/50 of Craigie Aitchison's *Pink Crucifixion* (2004), both on the wall and as the flag-ship image for the Wilson's exhibition poster widely distributed around the town. No. 35/50 has, of course, in recent years, proved an enormously popular addition to the Methodist Modern Art Collection.



The Wilson Gallery exhibition poster

Opposite left: *Christ in Gethsemane* 1919 (Print included in the 1960 exhibition in Frankfurt)
Photo: John Gibbs

Opposite right: *Gefallenen-Ehrenmal* in Magdeburg Cathedral 1929
Photo: John Gibbs

'Hussey's patronage of the arts was legend...'



Above: Chichester Cathedral's Memorial Plaque to Dean Hussey

Left: Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) *Portrait of Dean Walter Hussey* 1965. Pallant House Gallery (Hussey Bequest, Chichester District Council, 1985, Chichester. UK.) Photo: Stephen Head. © Estate of Graham Sutherland

Graham Sutherland is credited with a handful of very fine portraits of the great and the good; all executed as figurative art in direct comparison to his signature style of natural abstraction with which he established his reputation as the outstanding painter of his generation. These include images of *Somerset Maugham* 1949, *Lord Beaverbrook* 1952, *Dean Walter Hussey* 1965, and a *self-portrait* of 1977. Perhaps the best known of all was the 1954 seated figure of *Sir Winston Churchill*, commissioned by both Houses of Parliament. All these works succeeded brilliantly in capturing both a physical likeness and acknowledged characteristics of the sitter, not least in

the remarkably strong pose adopted for the Dean Hussey portrait, above, thought to be unfinished.

In Churchill's case, the stark realism was perhaps a little too pronounced in that it came to a sad end at the hands of Lady Churchill who, reputedly, banished it to the wood shed before, eventually, ordering its destruction; an infamous case of cultural vandalism. She considered that it showed WSC as a man very much alone in his wilderness years rather than that of a leader who had brought the country through the darkest of times.

CHICHESTER AN OPPORTUNITY LOST, OR A STEP TOO FAR?

DEAN HUSSEY'S EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY AND PLANS FOR A BRAVE NEW SCULPTURE REMAIN FRUSTRATED

Picking up again on the theme explored in our Spring Newsletter of 2013, looking at contemporary art in sacred places, one is reminded of art historian Kenneth Clark's description of Walter Hussey as 'the last great patron of the arts in the Church of England'. During his twenty-two years as Dean (1955-77), Walter Hussey commissioned many of the 20th century artworks for which Chichester Cathedral is now famous.

These, of course, include a stained glass window by Marc Chagall, a stunning high altar tapestry by John Piper, Sutherland's painting *Noli Me Tangere* (in the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene), sundry aluminium sculptural fittings (lectern, candlesticks and communion rails) by Geoffrey Clarke and works by Ceri Richards and Cecil Collins. Hussey's love of the arts also led him to work with William Walton and commission Leonard Bernstein to compose his *Chichester Psalms*. In addition to regular worshippers, some 200,000 people visit the Cathedral each year, where they are able to enjoy Hussey's legacy and other works free of charge. Hussey's own very impressive personal collection was left to Pallant House Art Gallery where it remains accessible to the viewing public. Clarke studied at the RCA 1948-52 and also taught there 1968-73.

A ten year series of six works commissioned for Coventry Cathedral included a Crown of Thorns and Flying Cross. For Chichester, he created the Altar Rails and Candlesticks (1960-62), the Pulpit, as shown (1966) and Lectern (1972).

In more recent times it is reassuring to know that Walter Hussey's influence lives on. Late in 2011 Jaume Plensa was declared the winner of the Dean Hussey Memorial Commission. Plensa, a 58 year old Catalan, is perhaps better known in his native Spain and in the U.S.A. and France although his 2003 sculpture of a human head - *Dream*, at 20m high, for a hilltop site near St. Helens was widely featured in a series on newly commissioned sculpture on Channel 4. Most recently, in the U.K., his work was extensively viewed (some 250,000 visitors) in a wonderful exhibition that ran until late January 2012 at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Declared one of the Sculpture Park's most popular shows yet, the exhibition featured an extensive range of sculptures



Top: John Piper (1903-92) *Tapestry* 1966
Below: Geoffrey Clarke (1924-2014) *Pulpit* 1966. Cast Aluminium

Jaume Plensa's work seen at the YSP, 2012



within the parkland landscape together with a series of deeply moving gallery installations. Encouraging silent contemplation as well as physical and sensory exploration, Plensa's work examines the joy and contradictions of the human condition.

Sadly though these plans for Chichester Cathedral remain just that – plans on 'permanent hold'. His remarkable design, entitled *Together* for an imposing new sculpture for the very heart of the Cathedral would have offered a huge scope for teaching, mission and engagement with many different constituencies and individuals. It was intended that the sculpture be suspended in the central aerial space between transepts and nave. It was to be in the shape of the hand of the resurrected Christ, raised in a gesture of blessing and formed from a 'cloud of letters', including characters from eight different alphabets/ languages: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Cyrillic, Arabic, Hindi, Japanese and Chinese; a metaphor for the diversity of peoples, origins, cultures and backgrounds that comprise humanity. Plensa's proposal drew imaginatively on Biblical themes; for example, the hand evokes images of the Tower of Babel (Genesis, Ch.11), where human diversity results in mutual incomprehension.

The alphabets are a clear echo of NT references to the description of Jesus as the 'Word made flesh' (the opening chapter of John's Gospel) and the beginning of the Church at Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit enables each member of a multi-lingual crowd to hear in their own language (Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 2). The gesture of the hand also communicates the forgiveness and blessing at the heart of the Resurrection, connecting these beautifully with priestly gestures during the service of Holy Communion.

The commission was launched back in 2009, and was timed to mark the centenary of Walter Hussey's birth (1909–1985) The commissioning process was long and

careful. In 2009 the Cathedral engaged the arts consultancy Modus Operandi and five artists were invited to compete for this prestigious commission: Dorothy Cross, Antony Gormley, Ana Maria Pacheco, Mark Wallinger and Jaume Plensa. The brief asked for a contemporary interpretation of the resurrected Christ and called for the work to 'inspire a sense of contemplation and engage the imaginations of all who visit the Cathedral...an artwork that expresses new life, transformation and hope'.

The material of the three dimensional sculpture was to have been constructed from stainless steel with a matt finish, an appropriate material for its strength, durability and lightness. The size of the sculpture was intended to be approximately 2.5 – 3m high, the exact scale to be determined following a scale model installed in the space. In terms of construction, the plan was for the stainless steel laser-cut letters to be welded one by one around the shape of a solid, carved model. On completion, the lettered 'skin' would be separated from the model and the welding reinforced; the surface of the sculpture would then be finished and coated prior to installation.

A quote from the then Dean of Chichester Cathedral, the Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling: 'The Hussey Memorial Commission has been a fascinating and challenging process, and a great responsibility. We have tried to foster the unique spirit of this Cathedral, with its contemporary art in an ancient setting, for which Chichester has become known all over the world. All modern art is controversial: each of Walter Hussey's commissions aroused great passions at the time, but they have, without exception, become greatly loved. Jaume Plensa's design is undoubtedly modern, but it has great beauty and spiritual depth, and will provide rich opportunities for teaching and reflection on the great themes of the Christian faith'.

Frustratingly, in March 2012 The Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, after initially encouraging the project, developed cold feet and belatedly refused permission for the sculpture on the grounds that it would detrimentally affect the immediate vision one would have on entering the cathedral. In my opinion, a great shame. A re-submission was made late in 2012 and again refused. Three years on we still await news as to whether the CFCE might, eventually, soften their stance. It will be so very sad if this is destined to become THE most exciting piece of 21st C. Christian sculpture not to take its place in an English cathedral with such an admired history for engaging with the contemporary.

As a footnote to this focus on Chichester Cathedral, and the contemporary works housed therein, I offer you some words of Tim Egan (Friend and, for many years, conservation adviser and enthusiastic supporter of the Collection). This is a brief extract from an acclaimed Paper of his, entitled 'Graham Sutherland O.M.: Church Artist and Man of Fire':

'Hussey's patronage of the arts during his Deanery was legend, and the Cathedral now boasts modern treasures by John Piper, Ceri Richards, Marc Chagall as well as Sutherland - and Bernstein and Walton have also composed music for its choir. I had the good fortune to attend the Cathedral's Ninth Centenary Festival Eucharist on the 15th June 1975, and seated at the back of the nave witnessed the procession of clergy led by Archbishop Donald Coggan, wearing lurex copes designed by Ceri Richards (looking a bit 'Star Trek') slowly processing up the nave to the sanctuary dominated by Piper's dorsal tapestry. It was an unforgettable experience'.

*** Log on to the Chichester Cathedral website (Hussey Memorial Commission) to view an excellent short BBC South Today TV feature and interview with the current Dean.

OBITUARY NOTICE

It is with much sadness that we have to report the passing of three of our Friends – Mr Tony Middleton and Mrs Margaret Naish, both founder members of the Friends' Group following our launch in 2008. Also, in July of this year, the Revd Dr David Calvert, who had held a number of prestigious Methodist and educational positions both here and abroad. We offer our sincere condolences to David Naish, Sylvia Middleton, Barbara Calvert and their families.

We are also greatly saddened to have to report the death, in early September, of another of our Patrons, the Revd David Gamble. David was, of course, President of Conference in 2009 and did much to champion the work of the Collection. The Revd Steve Wild, President of the Conference, and fellow Patron of the Methodist Modern Art Collection, is quoted thus - "He has served his Lord and the Methodist Church in a wonderful way using his gifts to the full. David was a man who relished life and loved every day." The Revd Gareth Powell, Secretary of Conference, added his tribute - "David will be remembered not least for his commitment to making the Church a safer place. David knew God's love and he proclaimed God's love in all of the varied tasks that Methodism required of him. He enriched our connexional life and was a pastor to many." The Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, writes - "David was an outstanding leader within his own Church and across the churches. He brought gentleness and a gift for friendship to his ministry, alongside formidable skills as a theologian and a builder of vision and consensus. His many friends in the Church of England will be saddened by his death. We give thanks for his life and witness in the hope of the resurrection and pray both for his family and for the Methodist Connexion which he served." Again, we offer our deep sympathy to David's wife, Liz, and the family.



David presiding at Communion in Bristol Cathedral, at the welcome service for the Revd Jonathan Pye, Chair of the Bristol District, August 2015. Photo: The Revd Chris Dobson

FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2015

15 August – 31 October

Epworth

Epworth Old Rectory, 1 Rectory Street,
Epworth, Doncaster DN9 1HX

Part Collection

Contact: Gillian Crawley, 01472 872268

Email: curator@epwortholdrectory.org.uk

www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk

Advent

West Yorkshire

Airedale Methodist Circuit

Part Collection

Contact: Revd Ruth Crompton,

01535 652353



Ernst Barlach *Gefallenen-
Ehrenmal* memorial 1929
(detail). Photo: John Gibbs

2016

8 February – 2 April

Lincoln

The Chapter House, Lincoln Cathedral,
Minster Yard, Lincoln LN2 1PX

The Usher Gallery, 1 Danes Terrace,
Lincoln LN2 1NP

Contact: Revd Terry Nowell,
01522 754254

terry@nowell-family.me.uk

(tbc) 9 April – 22 May

Ealing

Ealing Green Methodist Church

(in Ealing Trinity Circuit, W. London)

Contact: Revd Dr Jennifer Smith,
020 8579 8114

jennifer.smith@methodist.org.uk

24 June – 3 September

Llandudno

St John's Methodist Church/Mostyn
Gallery, Llandudno

Contact: Revd Beverly Ramsden,
01492 877799

bev_ramsden@Hotmail.com

3–31 October

Bath

Bath Abbey, Bath BA1 1LT

3 - 31 October

Contact: Revd Stephen Girling,
01225 422462

missioner@bathabbey.org

2017

14 January – 23 April

Canterbury

Beane Art Gallery, in conjunction
with Kent College

Contact: Revd Dr Paul Glass,
01227 785204

pglass@kentcollege.co.uk

(tbc) May – July

Bury St Edmunds

Revd Mark Howarth, 01284 755375
rectornorthburyteam@btinternet.com

(tbc) August

Haywards Heath

Contact: Nicola Sheldon, 01444 412927
nicola.sheldon@yahoo.co.uk

(tbc) Autumn

Farnham, Surrey

Revd Conrad Hicks, 01252 690940
Hicks5ireland@hotmail.com

(tbc) September - December

The Methodist Church in Ireland

2018

Mid-May to late June

Isle of Man

(tbc)

Rome and Geneva

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE WITH YOU...

‘There is another danger...that of talking baby language. To see the way some of our best church and cathedral builders decorate their work with nursery emblems, golden stars, chubby Christmas angels, lilies, lambs and shepherds, insipid sculptures and paintings of a silly, false naivety, one wonders in what world they live. The men who came home from the war, and all the rest of us, have seen too much horror and evil; when we close our eyes terrible sights haunt us; the world is seething with bestiality; and it is all man's doing. Only the most profound, tragic, moving, sublime vision can redeem us. The voice of the Church should be heard above the thunderstorm; and the artist should be her mouthpiece.’

— *Walter Hussey, Dean of Chichester and significant patron of the arts within the Anglican Church (mid-20th century)*