

Methodist **Modern**
+ **Art** Collection

ANNUAL REPORT



Report for the year ended 31 August 2013



All images from the Collection used here - © TYCP

WHAT IS THE METHODIST COLLECTION?

The Methodist Modern Art Collection comprises paintings, limited edition prints and reliefs. In the early 1960s John Morel Gibbs, a Methodist layman and art collector – realising that many Non-conformists had little appreciation of the insights that contemporary artists could bring to the Christian story – decided to create a collection of prime examples of such work that could be toured around the country. This he did, with the help of Methodist minister, the Revd Douglas Wollen. The works they acquired became the core of the present Collection – described as “the best denominational collection of modern art outside the Vatican”. The Collection includes leading names from the British art world of the last 100 years, such as Edward Burra, Elisabeth Frink, Eric Gill, Patrick Heron and Graham Sutherland.

In recent years the Collection has acquired works by artists from the world church, including Jyoti Sahi from India, Sadao Watanabe from Japan and John Muafangejo from Namibia. Still expanding, works by artists such as Craigie Aitchison, Peter Howson, Susie Hamilton, Clive Hicks-Jenkins and Maggi Hambling have been acquired, and today it comprises 50 paintings, prints, drawings, relief and mosaic works. The Collection is valued as a key resource for mission and evangelism, whether on a denominational or an ecumenical basis.

The Collection, in whole or in part, is available as a touring exhibition, and has travelled widely, to town and city galleries, cathedrals, churches and schools, showing at four to six venues a year. When not on tour, the Collection is stored under the care of a custodian at the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University.

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian Church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, and the Church of Scotland. It has more than 6,000 churches and a total membership of approximately 330,000 people. There are Methodist churches in nearly every country in the world and global membership numbers some 70 million people.

— Opposite

F.N. Souza (1924-2002), *'The Crucifixion'*, 1962. Oil.
From the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

As reported, under 'Care for the Collection', this painting has been subject to conservation work over the past year.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE COLLECTION THIS YEAR

In the Image

Between Sept 22nd and October 27th 2012 the Collection was at Wesley Church Centre, Chester, forming a major event in the church's 200th anniversary celebrations. As Andrew Herbert, the Mission Development Officer, makes clear in the final report, the vision was to bring the paintings into a busy, city-centre Church with its café, play area, fair trade shop, crèche and meeting rooms in such a way that a wide section of the public would be encouraged to engage with modern art and to reflect both spiritually and theologically on its subject matter. To this end a programme of 10 events was arranged, together with a workshop programme for local schools.

A well-qualified steering group began planning for the exhibition nearly two years beforehand: the contribution of Professor Maureen Wayman, retired professor of Art and Design at Manchester Metropolitan University, and Professor Neil Grant, Head of Fine Art, Chester University was particularly welcome, not least in ensuring that the exhibition comprised a coherent selection of works from the total number available.

About fifty people attended the launch and the exhibition was formally opened by the Right Revd Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester. The Secretary to the Trustees, Revd Graham Kent, spoke as did a number of others. A particularly memorable

contribution came from Diana Barbour of Bolesworth Castle. A modern art enthusiast and collector, Diana was astonished to see Ceri Richards' *'Supper at Emmaus'* on display as she thought it was hanging on her wall at home when she left for the launch! She soon realised that she owns a different but very similar painting by the same artist.

Because of the layout of the centre, it was difficult to separate those who were visiting the exhibition from those passing through but it is calculated that there were about 1,360 serious visits, a number of which were repeats. The majority of people came from the local area of Chester, Cheshire, Wirral, and North Wales. However some church groups came from a considerable distance, including Leek and York. A group also came from U3A in Ellesmere Port. Comments were almost entirely complimentary.

The programme of events was very varied and attendance generally ranged from 25 to 50. Two events that went particularly well, involved artists with work in the Collection. Thus Clive Hicks-Jenkins was in conversation about his painting *'Christ writes in the Dust'* with David Clough, Head of Theology at the University of Chester, and Ghislaine Howard was in discussion about her painting *'The Washing of the Feet'* with Revd Dr Trevor Dennis, formerly Vice-Dean at Chester Cathedral.

A team of a dozen people with the necessary experience and confidence met to plan and deliver workshops for key stage 2 pupils. School visits lasted two hours and involved four paintings chosen as milestones in the Easter story: *'Christ's*

Entry to Jerusalem' by Norman Adams; *'The Washing of the Feet'* by Ghislaine Howard; *'The Mocking of Christ'* by Peter Rogers' and *'The Supper at Emmaus'* by Roy de Maistre.

The team knew that the Bible stories relating to these images would be unfamiliar to many children, and decided to tell the story for each workshop in different and imaginative ways. They used drama, tableau, audio and video respectively for the selected images. In addition to the narrative, each workshop was designed to stimulate 'wondering' and reflecting, with carefully chosen open questions. Time permitting, they then introduced a theme to which the children could relate: celebration; status/importance; violence/bullying and hope for the future.

In total about 670 children aged 7-11 from 13 primary schools attended 16 sessions. Feedback was universally very positive, including that from some staff and accompanying adults who admitted to feeling unsure about coming to an art exhibition in a church but left feeling very positive about the visit.



School pupils at the Chester exhibition with a jigsaw reproduction of De Maistre's *'The Supper at Emmaus'*

Risen – Art of the Crucifixion and Eastertide

Between early February and late April 2013, Rupert Otten of Monnow Valley Arts organised an exhibition under this name, which involved nine key pictures from the Collection together with 21 other modern or contemporary works by artists known for their interest in Christian themes. These latter works were all for sale. From 7th February to 2nd March the exhibition was shown at Piano Nobile Gallery in Holland Park, London W11, in co-operation with Dr Robert Travers, and from 23rd March to 21st April it was at the Monnow Valley Arts Gallery, Walterstone, Herefordshire.

Once the basic outline of 'Risen' had become clear, John Gibbs, Chairman of the Trustees of the Collection, who has a long association with Monnow Valley Arts, offered to organise a series of satellite exhibitions in the vicinity of the Monnow Valley Gallery with the idea that, in addition to being valuable in themselves, these would help to draw attention to the main exhibition. Working closely together, Rupert Otten and John Gibbs came up with a number of potential venues in neighbouring Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, and the outcome of this venture is described below.

Rupert Otten comments 'For the main exhibition, we issued a fully-illustrated 60 page catalogue with a short foreword by Sister Wendy Beckett'. We also wrote the text for a poster and a leaflet announcing our exhibition and the satellite exhibitions. Posters and leaflets were sent to all the participating venues and distributed by Hereford Cathedral to 2,000 people on their mailing list'.

The works looked superb at Piano Nobile and there was a well-attended launch with the official opening being conducted, most effectively, by Revd the Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port. Subsequent visitor numbers were more than satisfactory and the Gallery arranged a special viewing, after the official ending of the Exhibition, for members of the London District Ministerial Synod held at nearby Notting Hill Methodist Church. The quality of the works in the Methodist Collection was regularly remarked upon – indeed the Gallery owner, who is a dealer, suggested a number of purchasers for our works! A report in the Church Times by Nicholas Cranfield drew attention to the interplay between works from the Collection and other works by the same artists – Mark Cazalet and Roy de Maistre in particular.

The works also looked magnificent at Monnow Valley. The paintings from the Methodist Collection were hung in chronological order in the main gallery space, starting with the William Roberts 'Crucifixion' and ending with John Brokenshire's 'Untitled: Pentecost'. All the other works were hung in a lower gallery or in an artist's studio across the courtyard.

Rupert Otten comments further: 'We were delighted with visitor numbers which totalled 497 during the four weeks we were open. The number would undoubtedly have been higher if the weather had not been so bad (the opening by the Very Revd Michael Tavinor, Dean of Hereford was nearly cancelled due to heavy snow!). Many of the visitors came from some distance, including South Wales, Birmingham, and

Buckinghamshire, and many were visiting two or more of the venues. John Gibbs spoke to a group from the Powys Art Fund and Revd Nicholas Lowton, vicar of the Black Mountains benefice, led a meditation. There were groups from local churches and communities: in particular Leintwardine filled all the seats in the community minibus to come and see the exhibition'.

Hereford Cathedral was involved as a 'satellite' venue from an early stage. Nine pictures were selected and, most unusually for a cathedral, were secured directly to the walls. Two special Eucharists were held, one before and one after Easter. Canon Sandy Elliott commented 'With the works being located in various parts of the building, there was a wonderful opportunity for pilgrimage, singing as we walked from painting to painting'. The bread and wine were consecrated and distributed under Jaques Iselin's 'Elements of Holy Communion' in the south transept. The Cathedral arranged a bus trip to the other venues with leadership and interpretation being provided by the Very Revd Nick Bury, the former Dean of Gloucester Cathedral and a Patron of the Collection's Friends Group.

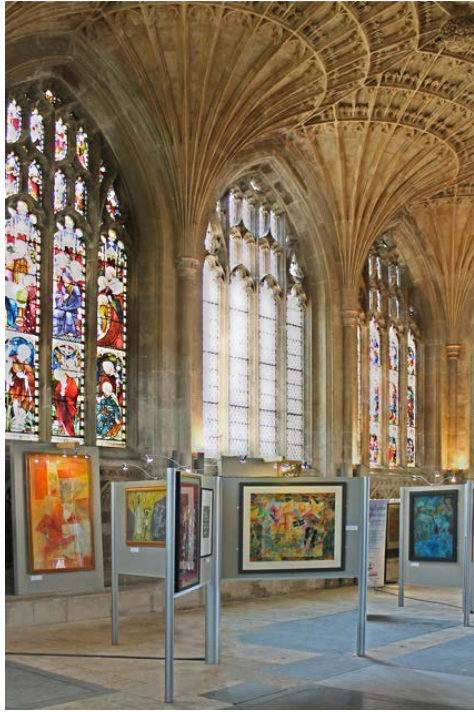
At St John's Methodist Church in Hereford, Revd David Meacham reported that the Church was delighted to have six works from the Collection on display in the foyer. 'The presence of the pieces led to students from the Hereford College of Art using them to stimulate their thinking for their own exhibition on 'Belief'. A group of primary school children also viewed the pictures and were inspired to do their own work back at school'.



Works from the Collection in Hereford Cathedral

Thirteen of the smaller works were displayed at Castle Street Methodist Church in Abergavenny. The exhibition was open for 20 hours per week with over 40 people being involved as stewards. For much of the time live music was provided by a rota of organists and a flute player: There were approximately 300 visitors and some 150 took part in a vote for favourite picture: Eularia Clarke's 'The Five Thousand' being declared the winner. There was a launch event, which included a powerful address by the Superintendent Minister, The Revd Cathy Gale, and various groups viewed the exhibition or used individual works as the basis for prayer and meditation. For a number of reasons, the exhibition in the north aisle at St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny, ran for a shorter period than the others. Here nine works were hung by Artworks on panels provided by the firm.

Commentaries on these exhibitions ranged from coverage in the local press, 'Artists take a fresh look at the Easter Story' in the Hereford Times, to 'Spectacular Modern Art in Herefordshire' in the Art of England magazine and an article in the Church Times by Katy Hounsell-Robert - 'Welsh borders Feast of Art'.



— Top
‘Word in Frame’ exhibition in the New Building at Peterborough Cathedral

— Above
Revd Peter Hancock and the Right Revd Donald Allister

Word in Frame

Some 38 pieces from the Collection were in Peterborough Cathedral between June 8th and 30th 2013. The exhibition was arranged by Churches Together in Central Peterborough, a group of city centre churches, in partnership with Vivacity Peterborough (the local not-for-profit organisation which manages cultural and leisure facilities on behalf of the City Council) and the Methodist churches of the city. Ian Cornall, leader of the exhibition planning committee, has described how the works were placed in the magnificent fifteenth century “New Building”: “This area features fan vaulting by John Wastell, (the architect responsible for King’s College Chapel at Cambridge) and with good natural light and plenty of space, it formed an ideal setting for the exhibition’.

Ian Cornall continues ‘Financial support was received from the sponsoring organisations and also from Network Peterborough. The exhibition was manned by volunteer stewards from the city centre churches and the Methodist circuit. Labour for construction of exhibition panels and mounting was provided free of charge by local firm NB Joinery and contributed in no small measure to the success of the exhibition. We are grateful to all these supporters and to the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, where the exhibition took place’.

‘The opening of the exhibition on June 6th was an enjoyable occasion, attended by Revd Peter Hancock, Chair of the Methodist Northampton District, Right Revd Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough and Cllr

Marco Cereste, the Leader of Peterborough City Council, as well as by partners, sponsors and volunteers. Other events held in association with the exhibition included an Art Celebration service and the one-person play “Impossible God” performed by Mark Topping. A visit by artist Mark Cazalet, whose works *‘Fool of God (Christ in the Garden)’* and *‘Nathaniel (asleep under the fig tree)’* featured in the exhibition, was greatly appreciated by an audience of around fifty people to whom he gave an “artist’s interactive tour of the Collection”, picking five works and helping us to interpret and appreciate them’.

‘It was not possible to count the exact number of visitors to the exhibition but, based on sales of catalogues, we estimate around 500. This includes many who came specifically to see the Collection and some cathedral visitors who were attracted to the exhibition once there. People expressed appreciation of all the art works, including three recent additions to the Collection. Maggi Hambling’s *‘Good Friday (walking on water)’* attracted appreciative comment from almost everyone, while Clive Hicks-Jenkins’ *‘Christ Writes in the Dust’* also drew much attention. Reaction to Craigie Aitchison’s *‘Pink Crucifixion’* was rather mixed. Jyoti Sahi’s *‘Dalit Madonna’*, which we had chosen to feature in our publicity for the exhibition, was, as always, much loved’.

Jesus Christ: the One for others

From 11th to the 26th of August, nine works were displayed in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. The title linked in to the theme of the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies which was held in the College from the 12th to the 19th August. The display boards that were used had been constructed by the college for an exhibition earlier in the year of the work of Nick Mynheer (who is represented in the Collection by *‘Rest on the Flight into Egypt’*). These ‘fit’ into the north transept, a relatively quiet part of the Cathedral. The natural light was inadequate and lighting was borrowed from Nick Mynheer.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers who may have viewed the exhibition. During the period over 31,000 people paid to enter Christ Church, most of whom would have visited the Cathedral. In addition about 2,000 people attended services. Perhaps some 2,000-3,000 paid some attention to the exhibition, and probably 5-10% of these viewed it closely. The greatest impact and appreciation was probably among the volunteer cathedral stewards.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The owner of the Collection is the Methodist Council but responsibility for its care and development is devolved to a team of curatorial trustees. The trustees normally meet three times a year – twice at Methodist Church House in London, and once at Oxford Brookes University.

THE TRUSTEES

The aims of the trustees are to care for, develop and promote the Collection, in order to encourage people to enter into conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world and to offer material that can bring new dimensions to study, worship and spiritual life.

The trustees as of 31 August 2013 are: Dr John Gibbs (Chairman and Treasurer), the Revd Graham Kent (Secretary), Bob Williams (Secretary, Friends Group), Paul Bayley, Meryl Doney, the Revd Geoff Cornell, Sarah Middleton and Professor Ann Sumner. Collection Custodian, Dr Peter Forsaith (Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History) attends meetings.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE DURING THE YEAR

Financial position

The Methodist Church provides a budget to cover the cost of trustees' meetings and the Secretary's expenses. The Church also pays the insurance premium.

Monies required for the care and conservation of the Collection and for the production of new interpretative material etc. comes from the income generated from the loan fees, sale of publications and so on. This income is held in a special fund at Methodist Church House and administered by the Trustees. Because of a significant requirement for conservation work on several of the paintings and because of investment in new travel cases there was a substantial spend during the year, resulting in a reduction in the balance carried forward from just under £21,000 on August 31 2012 to approximately £11,200 on the same date in 2013.

Monies obtained or donated specifically for the acquisition of new works are held in the same fund but monitored separately. There was no money available for acquisitions during the current year. However during the summer, the Trustees were able to raise funds for the future through the sale of a picture at auction. This, a 1959 oil painting 'Road with Grocery Lorry' by John Bratby, a key figure from the British 'Kitchen Sink School', had been given by John Morel Gibbs and his wife Sheila to Wesley College, Bristol during the 1980s. In 2010, the Methodist Church decided to close the College and over the next few years its contents were dispersed. The last Principal, Revd Dr Jonathan Pye, passed the painting on to the Trustees of the Collection in the understanding that, because the subject was entirely secular, they

would sell it to raise funds for relevant acquisitions. Contact was established with Sotheby's and the auction house generously offered to sell it without charging a seller's commission. It was included in a July sale and raised £7,500. This sum was not credited to the fund until after the beginning of the new financial year.

Links with the Methodist Connexional Team

Our principal links are with the Revd Gareth Hill, the Head of Mission and Advocacy and his team, most notably the members of the Communications Office. Our secretary, the Revd Graham Kent, maintains links with the Revd Gareth Powell, Assistant Secretary of Conference and Head of Governance Support. We are indebted to members of the Finance Team for their assistance with our financial affairs.

Administrative support

A Connexional Grant of £4,000 provides administrative support for the trustees. The trustees have an arrangement with the Enfield Circuit of the Methodist Church, whereby the circuit administrator, Mary Roseweir, spends an average of four hours a week working on behalf of the Collection. Mary has a considerable knowledge of the nature and purpose of the Collection, and of the work of the trustees. She makes arrangements for the trustees meetings and writes the minutes. In addition funds are sometimes used for short-term contracts in support of the trustees' work.

Care for the Collection

In 2011, Tim Egan, formerly the Registrar at the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff, prepared a document describing the condition of each work in the Collection, its frame and, where relevant, its glazing. He also made recommendations for bespoke travel cases, where these did not exist. Since then a small working group has taken things forward liaising with a number of conservation specialists, often via Pete Goodridge of the South Wales firm Artworks.

The much admired 'Untitled: Pentecost' by John Brokenshire had previously been unglazed and the frame was very shallow. It needed expert attention in the form of cleaning, paint consolidation and a little retouching. The back of the canvas was re-tensioned and the work was then reframed and glazed in non-reflective acrylic. Among the most important works in the Collection are two paintings of the Crucifixion. One is by the Vorticist William Roberts, dating to the early 1920s and for many years owned by the painter Augustus John (see Front Cover). The other is by the Indian Expressionist artist F.N. Souza, painted in 1962. The latter needed a new backboard and both were fitted with non-reflective acrylic glazing.

For some years, high quality heavy-duty travelling cases have existed for 22 of the works. During the year cases were manufactured for most of the other works: the aim being to produce serviceable cases that would be robust but be less heavy than the existing ones. With the help of Pete Goodridge a number of designs were examined. In the event double sleeves of strong cardboard were used for eight of the works and 9mm plywood with strategic reinforcement at the corners for 14 of them.

Resources and Publicity

The fully-illustrated 'A Guide to the Methodist Art Collection', published in 2010, continues to sell well, as does the DVD/CD and study booklet 'Creative Spirit' which focuses on eight works from the Collection and is intended for leaders of worship, house and other groups. A limited stock remains of the scholarly 'Catalogue of the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art' by Roger Wollen. This was published by the Trustees in 2003 and provides a remarkable insight into the history of the Collection up until 2000. All these publications, along with several sets of postcards, have been available for purchase from Methodist Publishing at Peterborough. However towards the end of the year, new arrangements were in train for the Methodist Publishing list to be available via 'Norwich Books and Music'. Further details can be found at www.methodistpublishing.org.uk

Trustee Sarah Middleton, in her capacity as a Methodist District Training Officer, was commissioned to write a piece about the Collection for 'Deepening Discipleship'. This is a Connexional website with short, thought-provoking articles. In her article, 'Praying with Art', Sarah outlines ways in which 'Creative Spirit' has and can be used. Click on the link below and go to the Prayer section - www.methodist.org.uk/deepening-discipleship/spiritual-practices/devotion/resources.

A major development during the year was the publication of the 2012 Annual Report, as this marked a revolution in the public profile of the Collection!

The high quality design and publication values are the result of an extremely generous commitment of time and effort by Phil Allison, Managing Director of Cultureshock Media, a firm which promotes the visual arts at the highest level. Trustee Bob Williams worked most effectively with Phil and his team on this project and Bob describes the companion publications – the new Friends Publicity leaflet and the professionally designed Friends Newsletter later in this Report. Sufficient copies of the 2012 Report were produced for it to be widely distributed at the Methodist Conference in Central London in June and many expressions of approval have been received. It is available on the Methodist Church website (www.methodist.org.uk/media/922600/mmac-annual-report-2012-0713.pdf).

Friends Group

The Secretary to the Friends, trustee Bob Williams, reports: 'Our membership remains static at 56 but the subscription income received, together with the occasional generous donation (virtually all Gift Aided), remains an invaluable source of funding'.

'Our recently established links with Phil Allison and his team at Cultureshock Media have proved more productive than we dared hope. In addition to the 2012 Annual Report mentioned above, CSM have handled the design and printing of a new Friends Membership Leaflet and the first of a 'new generation' of Newsletters (both in hard copy and e-news format). This has been undertaken



The Annual Report, Friends Newsletter and Friends Membership Leaflet

on extremely generous terms, with the promise of as much professional advice and assistance with a new 'Brand outlook' as we need. All our publications now bear a Methodist Modern Art Collection logo very much in keeping with the times'.

Relationships with other bodies

Most of our exhibitions are organized on an ecumenical basis, giving us contact with many denominations. Through our Trustees Meryl Doney and Paul Bayley, we have good contacts with a number of relevant bodies. Paul Bayley is the Art in Churches officer for Art and Christian Enquiry. His job is to encourage artists and church communities to curate and exhibit

works of art in places of worship. Fraternal Links are maintained with Artserve, the charity that supports the use of all creative arts in worship.

Our links with Oxford Brookes University are maintained via our Custodian Peter Forsaith, although meetings with other key members of the university are arranged from time to time. We have been very pleased to welcome Mrs Susan Howdle to some of our meetings. Mrs Howdle is a member of the Board of Governors of the university and also represents the Westminster College Oxford Trust (WCOT), a body which is appointed by Conference and which oversees Methodist interests on the site.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

We have an exciting programme of exhibitions planned for the year Sept 2013 to August 2014. This includes an autumn exhibition of most of the Collection in Salisbury that is being organised by Churches Together and will be divided between The Young Gallery and Salisbury Cathedral. Then in Lent there will be an exhibition at Trinity Methodist Church on the Wirral.

With the help of the team at Cultureshock Media we will be exploring a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the profile of the Collection.

In the autumn, as part of the process of assessment and future planning, there will be a Vision Day for the Trustees organised and coordinated by Ann Sumner and Sarah Middleton.

Finally, the sale of the picture by John Bratby, as described under 'Financial position', does give us some funds for acquisitions. However, when adding to the Collection, the Trustees need to be mindful of the restricted conditions for storage at Oxford Brookes when the Collection is not on tour.

John Newton Gibbs (Chairman)
March 2013

METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION

Income and Expenditure Account

INCOME (£)	Year ending 31 Aug 2013
Sale of literature, loan fees, grants and donations	6,024.70
	217.48
Total	6,242.18
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EXPENDITURE (£)	
New travel cases and Conservation work	16,040.12
Surplus for the Year	(-9,797.94)
Balance B/Fwd 1 September	20,974.56
Balance C/Fwd 31 August	11,176.62

For an update on the locations of future exhibitions and for information on borrowing the Collection please visit the Art Collection pages of the Methodist Church website (www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/creative-arts/the-methodist-art-collection or search under 'Methodist Church Art Collection').

Alternatively, contact the administrator at the following address:

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020 8886 8067
or e-mail methodistart@yahoo.com