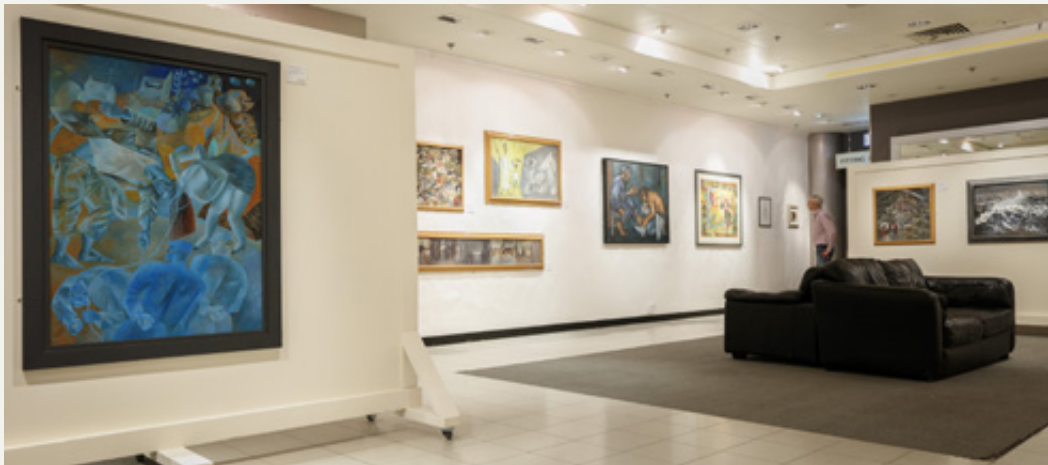


ANNUAL REPORT

*Report for the year
ended 31 August 2018*



Methodist Modern
Art Collection

www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection



During the year September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018, there were six exhibitions of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection: these ranging in duration from four days to ten weeks. Each of these exhibitions had a different title and each had its own approach to the theme ‘Sharing in God’s Mission’. Over 12,000 people visited the three main venues (Solihull, Hull and the Isle of Man). This report provides a description of each exhibition and also aims to give insights into the working of the committee that looks after the Collection on behalf of the Methodist Church.

The longest-running exhibition during the year was ‘Battered and Berthed’. This formed part of ‘Believe in Hull’, the churches’ contribution to Kingston on Hull as UK City of Culture in 2017. The cover pictures and the image above give some idea of the appearance of the display in the Princes Quay Shopping Centre and of the activities that took place within the gallery.

(Front Cover, from top to bottom) ‘Battered and Berthed’: Puppeteer Liz Dorton exploring emotions arising from viewing Edward Burra’s *The Pool of Bethesda*; Works from the Collection particularly well displayed at Princes Quay Shopping Centre Gallery, Hull. (Above) Folk gathered, for a Sunday evening seminar at the Princes Quay Gallery, to consider a specific work from the Collection. Photos: Mark Kensett

WHAT IS THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION?

The Methodist Modern Art Collection comprises paintings, limited edition prints and reliefs. In the early 1960s Dr 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, Patrick Heron and Graham Sutherland.

In more 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.

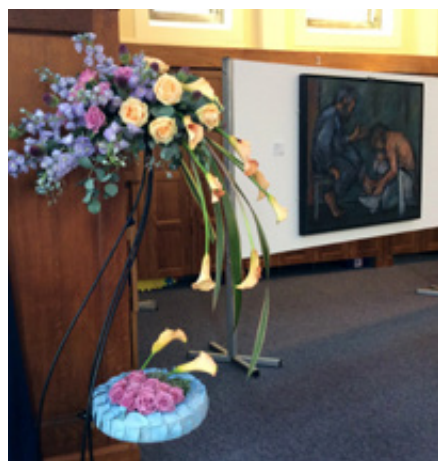
The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian Church in Britain, after the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, and the Church of Scotland. It has more than 4,650 churches and a total membership of approximately 195,000 people. World Methodism is made up of 80 Methodist, Wesleyan and related Uniting and United churches in 138 countries and global membership numbers some 80 million.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE COLLECTION THIS YEAR



Solihull: Come and See

Between September 7 and 30, 2017, an exhibition of the Collection formed part of the 80th anniversary celebrations of Solihull Methodist Church in the West Midlands. Thirteen paintings were hung in the church and the same number in the Courtyard Gallery of Solihull Library, some 10 minutes' walk away. This Gallery is next to the Touchwood Shopping Centre; thus increasing the number of people with opportunity to see the exhibition. The pictures in the church told the story of Holy Week through to Pentecost, while the works in the library included paintings of the Nativity and Jesus' ministry. The organiser, Sue Balmer, describes how, during its first full week, the exhibition was complemented by a flower festival. This was masterminded by Margaret Rumens (a Chelsea Gold Medallist, no less!) who recruited members of Solihull Flower Club and other Midlands flower clubs to interpret the paintings



(Left) Norman Adams *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* with floral arrangement.
(Above) From the 'Come and See' exhibition in Solihull: Ghislaine Howard *The Washing of the Feet* with floral arrangement. Photos: John Handford



The hanging team at Ben Rhydding: Ann Sumner, Barbara Davy (Ilkley Art Club), Peter Bastow and Chris Solomon (Ben Rhydding Methodist Church). Photo: Martin Johnson

in flowers. The word most often used to describe the arrangements was 'stunning'.

Talks on the Art Collection were given by committee member Graham Kent and Custodian Peter Forsaith. A series of four concerts formed another element in the anniversary programme and the fourth of these, towards the end of the exhibition period, carried the title 'Come, See and Hear'. This featured music that was linked to the paintings and attracted an audience of 150. It stimulated a debate as to whether it was a concert or actually an act of worship.

Sue Balmer comments '*Putting on the exhibition was a challenge and took a year to bring to fruition. We had a small planning group who proved to be a magnificent team. Once we started getting our heads around the different tasks, it all seemed to fall into place. The paintings provoked much thought and*

discussion, provided wonderful publicity for Methodism and brought many newcomers into our church. Overall visitor numbers were just short of 3,200. Was it all worth it? Most certainly! I would encourage any church to consider taking on a similar challenge'.

Ilkley : Art of Hope and Reconciliation

Over the weekend of October 4 to 8, 2017, nine pictures from the Collection were displayed at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church and Christchurch in the Grove, Ilkley (Methodist/URC). Organised by Chris Solomon and committee member Ann Sumner, the exhibition was part of the Ilkley Art Trail. At both churches, storyboards explained the overall theme - the sustaining hope that artists found in Christian themes as they recovered from their own experiences of war, whether they had lived through bombing raids



Liane Kensett, the curator of the Hull exhibition outside Princes Quay. Photo: Tony Barker

as children (Elisabeth Frink), served in the army themselves (William Roberts), been a medical orderly (Roy de Maistre), or a child refugee fleeing Nazi Germany (Ralph Beyer). An opening event on 4th October was well attended with over 50 enthusiastic volunteers greeting visitors and distributing information.

At Ben Rhydding, a Sunday morning service inspired by the Collection was led by the Revd Liz Smith and this was followed by an afternoon commemoration of the

100th anniversary of the death of local poet Eric Wilkinson. The event was attended by, among others, Ilkley Grammar School staff and students.

This occasion, linking the Collection to the nationwide WW1 commemorations, brought new audiences into both churches and a new perspective to the curation of the Collection. More than 800 people came to Ben Rhydding over the long weekend.

Hull: Battered and Berthed

Kingston upon Hull was the UK City of Culture in 2017 and as part of 'Believe in Hull', 90 churches worked together to bring part of the Collection into the centre of the city. From October 21 to December 31, twenty eight works were on show in a 'pop-up' gallery in Princes Quay Shopping Centre. As Liane Kensett, the organiser, said *'We wanted to offer people a sanctuary space, particularly in the consumerist and stressful run up to Christmas'*. The title of the exhibition reflected Hull's long seafaring history, with those who worked at sea frequently being subjected to a severe battering by wind and waves. Eventually they might reach a safe berth in their home port.

City of Culture volunteers, dressed in their iconic turquoise and pink, encouraged visitors into the exhibition, and volunteers from the 'Believe in Hull' team welcomed them, providing information about the exhibition. 'I Spy' quizzes were given to younger visitors and, most importantly, everyone was given two buttons: a dark button to be placed below the image that most evoked a sense of feeling 'at sea', or being unsettled by the story being told (their 'Battered' painting) and a light button to be placed under the painting that made them feel safe or gave them a sense of belonging (their 'Berthed' picture). The most frequently chosen 'Battered' pictures were Burra's *Pool of Bethesda* and Clarke's *Storm over the lake*, while the most popular 'Berthed' pictures were the *Dalit Madonna* and *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*. The exhibition deliberately contained

few written words: *'We wanted to trust the Holy Spirit to do any interpreting that was required!'*

To tie in with late night shopping, performances were offered at what was called "Arts House". *'Local musicians, puppeteers and story-tellers came to fill our Thursday evenings, together with more renowned performers like story-teller Bob Hartman and musician Dave Bainbridge. At other times, community and faith leaders gave talks, led workshops, and helped create the space to encourage consideration of the various works of art, reflection on 'the refuge of our own home berth' and what the Advent season means to us, individually, as well as a community'*.

With over 4,000 visitors, plus those who came as part of booked visits, popped in for the live "Arts House", or attended Sunday evening reflections, the 'Believe in Hull' volunteers were kept very busy. *'We know that the Good News that there is a harbour in the storm, a place to belong, and an ancient story of present hope reached many people'*.

Bristol: From Suffering to Sanctuary

From Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, 2018, until February 28, four works from the Collection formed part of a powerful exhibition in the newly-refurbished Victoria Methodist Church. Graham Sutherland's *The Deposition* is known to have been influenced by photographs of Buchenwald and other concentration camps, and this work was complemented by Francis Hoyland's *Nativity Polyptych* with its focus on refugees and asylum seekers, Nicholas Mynheer's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* and Jyoti Sahi's *Dalit Madonna* (Dalit being a reference to 'Untouchable'). All four paintings had been captioned with additional commentaries by students at the neighbouring Bristol School of Art. The exhibition also featured poems and paintings by Abdullah Bash, an Iranian refugee living in Bristol, and photographs by Jackie Morgan relating to the present situation of Coptic Christians in Egypt.

On January 27th itself, there were two performances by members of the church family of the children's opera *Brundibar* (originally put on in the Theresienstadt Concentration camp) and three speakers described their experience in Bristol as refugees from Iran, Iraq and Albania. This was followed by a meal prepared by Bristol Hospitality Network. Together it was an excellent example of what a church can do to encourage inclusion and dialogue through the creative arts, conversation and food.

Isle of Man : Awakening

Between May 13 and June 17, 2018 the Collection was on show at six venues across the Isle of Man. With the Methodist District fully behind the project, and with support from the Anglican Diocese, it was decided to hold the exhibition at a time which encompassed the TT fortnight - when the island's population of 85,000

swells by 40,000. It was felt that this offered a unique opportunity to share the Christian story with a wider public.

The use of multiple locations increased involvement and support. The main venues were Promenade Methodist Church, Douglas, the newly refurbished Methodist Church at Colby, the Methodist Church at Ramsey, and Peel Cathedral. Two paintings formed part of a quiet space in the United Reformed Church in Douglas, near the TT grandstand, and two others were displayed at a rural Methodist Chapel, Ballagarey. The three professional curators, Mary Gulland, Henry Uniacke and Petrina Kent assigned artworks to each venue, acknowledging special requests for particular works.

Good preparation was seen to be the key to success. At a training day for leaders and others, committee member Sarah Middleton presented ideas on using the Collection in worship and talked about how to make the best use of resources such as the 'Creative Spirit' study material. Manx Radio ran regular reports and interviews during the months leading up to the exhibition, and, while the exhibition was on, carried a series of 'Pause for Thought' interludes. In these, local steering group members spoke about particular works in the Collection which held a special meaning for them.

The exhibition was formally opened at Promenade Methodist Church by the island's Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Gozney. Those present included community leaders, musicians – and cruise ship visitors! A young composer, Tim Price,



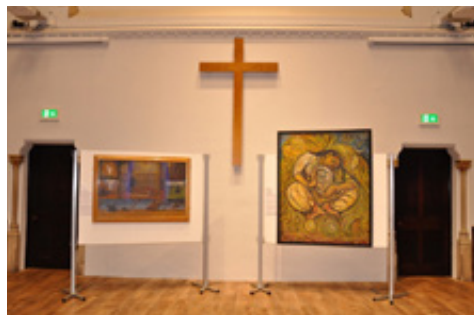
The Manx 'Hanging and Dismount Team'. From left to right, Henry Uniacke, Christopher Stokes, Mary Gulland, Kenny Stokes and Petrina Kent. Photo: John Gulland

produced a powerful piece of music inspired by Richard Bavin's *The Empty Tomb*. Once the exhibition had opened, 'welcomers' were on hand at each venue. As well as the opportunity to worship in what became an 'art space', a wide range of special events were organised on a local basis. They ranged from a 'manga' drawing workshop to 'artist in residence' days and musical recitals. At the first Sunday evensong of the exhibition at Peel Cathedral, the Revd Graham Kent, from our Management Committee, preached and, at the final one, newly-appointed Chair of the committee, Ann Sumner, read the lesson.

Some 5,000 visitors, including a few school groups, were welcomed to the exhibition over the five-week period, many of whom had no connection with a church. Dr Tim Grass, one of the organisers, comments, *'The venture has certainly helped to focus minds on our calling to share in God's mission. Local preachers and worship leaders have testified to the impact that the*



(Top) Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol: 'Concentration Camp' scene from the Opera Brundibar. (Above) Francis Hoyland's *Nativity Polyptych* and Jyoti Sahi's *Dalit Madonna*. Photos: Bob Williams

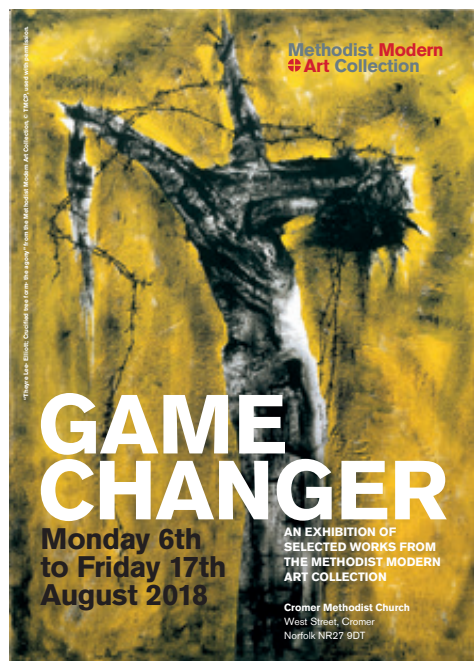


exhibition has made on them. One member of the steering group described it as the most exciting thing to happen to him in sixty years of being a Methodist! We feel that we should now explore further ways in which we might use the arts to communicate the Christian story. Who knows what might result...?’

Cromer: Gamechanger

For the last five years the Community Matters Cafe at Cromer Methodist Church in Norfolk has been serving bacon butties and two-course meals to the homeless, lonely and financially-stretched; visitors are also offered friendship and practical support. From August 6 to 17, 2018, cafe and church were home for a display of 15 works from the Collection. The Superintendent Minister, The Revd Sharon Willimott, commented, *‘With many of the pictures relating to the life-changing encounters that Jesus had with people on the fringes of society, the title ‘Gamechanger’ was chosen to reflect the encounters that the volunteers have with cafe clients.’*

In the church, the artworks offered a Christian narrative from the *Dalit Madonna* through to Brokenshire's *Untitled - Pentecost*, while in the Community Cafe they provided a focus on service and support - for example Howard's *The Washing of the Feet*. Sharon Willimott continues, *‘We had three remarkable acts of worship, one including the commissioning of a new local preacher, in which we related the art of producing a painting to the equally personal, but Spirit-led, art of preaching. There were three equally stirring evening conversations: ‘Let’s talk about religious art’*



Game Changer Exhibition poster

with Phil Barratt, ‘Miracles in Art’ with Ros Peedle and ‘Burra and the pool of Bethesda’ which I led. Many people found Burra’s work difficult to like but all agreed it so transfixed them as to demand an investigation of the story so portrayed.’

Taking place over the holiday period, more than 700 people visited the exhibition – some coming from as far away as Holland and Paris. Sharon Willimott concludes, *‘The works prompted many deep conversations both with people of faith and with people of no faith; this exemplifying the Collection’s aim of inspiring and enabling encounters with Christ.’*

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The owner of the Collection is the Methodist Council but responsibility for its care and development is devolved to a Management Committee. The aims of this committee are to care for, develop and promote the Collection, in order to encourage people to enter into conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world and to offer material that can bring new dimensions to study, worship and spiritual life. The vision statement is: ‘The Methodist Modern Art Collection - Seeing the Spiritual’.

The committee normally meets three times a year – two of these meetings are at Methodist Church House in London. As foreshadowed in the 2017 Report the year saw some major changes in terms of the composition of the committee. It was announced in the autumn of 2017 that Dr John Gibbs would be standing down as Chairman and, under the auspices of the Connexional team, the post was advertised and interviews were held. Professor Ann Sumner was offered the position and she took over as Chair in mid-July; John Gibbs remaining on the committee for the time being. Also during the year, advertisements were placed and interviews held for a number of other places on the committee. Ian Baker was appointed to take on the role of Secretary to the Friends Group, with his predecessor Bob Williams continuing in an ex-officio role as Editor of the Friends Newsletter. Simon Sorokos and Lucy Newman Cleeve were also appointed to

the committee while Paul Bayley stood down. Tributes to retiring members of the committee can be found in the Newsletters.

Two other appointments were made: Rebecca Gibbs (as a member of the Gibbs Family Trust) and the Revd Ruth Gee, a recent Chair of the Methodist Council. The Revd Graham Kent, Sarah Middleton and Meryl Doney continued on the committee, supported by Jo Hibbard (Director of Engagement) as a representative of the Connexional team and the Collection Custodian Dr Peter Forsaith (Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History). Profiles of the new recruits to the committee can be found in the Spring 2018 edition of the Newsletter and of all current committee members at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/introduction/mmac-management-committee/>

Since Sept 1 2017 part-time administrative support for the Collection has been provided from Methodist Church House by Liz Millard. As senior administrator for Mission and Advocacy in the Connexional Team of the Methodist Church, Liz has much relevant knowledge and experience and we are immensely grateful for her contribution to our work. In addition to the presence on the committee of Jo Hibbard and Liz Millard, we have maintained close links with Martin Ashford, Head of Mission and Advocacy and with the Revd Canon Gareth Powell, Secretary of the Methodist Conference.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE DURING THE YEAR

Financial position

The Methodist Church provides a budget to cover expenses such as the cost of Management Committee meetings and the initial visit to possible exhibition venues. The Church also pays the insurance premium. Funds for the care and conservation of the Collection and for the production of new interpretative material etc. come 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 a statement of the account is presented at the end of this report.

Monies obtained or donated specifically for the acquisition of new works are held in the same fund but monitored separately. No works were purchased during the year.

We are indebted to members of the Finance Team at Methodist Church House for their assistance with our financial affairs. Thanks to the help and support of Phil Allison of CultureshockMedia, we do not have to pay design costs for either the Annual Report or the Friends Newsletters.

Reviews of the work of the Collection.

There has been a recognition that, as it is 20 years since the Management Committee was established, it would be appropriate for an assessment to be conducted into its structure and *modus operandi*. With the arrival of a new Chair, this seemed particularly timely and during the summer of 2018, two reviews were initiated; the cost of these being covered by budgets held by the Mission and Advocacy Cluster of the Connexional team, supported in part by a grant from the Gibbs Trust. One review is into the governance and strategy of the Collection and the other into the practical matters of collection care and exhibition organisation. The reports and their recommendations will be considered in next year's Annual Report.

Resources and Publicity

'A Guide to the Methodist Art Collection' is a key resource. Fully illustrated, it contains descriptions of all the works as of its 2010 publication date, together with an appropriate Bible passage. During the year, and in conjunction with staff at Methodist Church House, work was begun on a new edition, this to include the works acquired since 2010. It will be published under the title 'Seeing the Spiritual'.

A highlight was the production, in conjunction with Methodist Publishing, of a new booklet of postcards: this containing 24 pictures from the Collection. The works are arranged in terms of the Christian story, rather than, as in the Guide, by artist. It is proving to be very popular.

Ten works from the Collection were used to illustrate the widely-distributed A6 booklet 'Waiting in Wonder: Nine days of prayer'. The booklets were produced by the Methodist Church to support the global prayer movement: 'Thy Kingdom Come - pledge2pray'.

Friends of the Collection

Friends Secretary, Bob Williams writes, 'It is encouraging to report that a total of 20 new Friends registered in the current reporting year, our best 'trading year' since the launch of the Friends Group in 2008-09. Once again, a number of generous donations have been received, some as a direct response to viewing works at specific exhibition venues. We are, as always, enormously grateful.

An invitation extended to the Revd Loraine Mellor, President of the Methodist Conference 2017/18, was acknowledged and graciously accepted. The President's response included an expression of warm good wishes to the Management Team in their continuing endeavours. I am also delighted to report that, over the past couple of years, awareness of the Friends Group has most certainly been raised by increased coverage in the Methodist Recorder, with excellent descriptions of the exhibitions at Bath Abbey, Haywards Heath, Hull, St. Paul's Cathedral (the loan of the Souza *Crucifixion* painting, to mark the 70th Anniversary of Indian Independence) and the 'Suffering to Sanctuary' event at Bristol Victoria Methodist Church. We were also appreciative of the opportunity to provide



The new set of 24 postcards. Photo John Gibbs

a full page response to the anonymously-posed question, in the 'Letters' section of the Recorder 'Why a Methodist Art Collection?'

A new edition of the generic leaflet – 'Befriend the Collection', featuring the smiling face of Liane Kensett, curator of the 'Battered and Berthed' exhibition in Hull, was commissioned and ready for use by mid-May.

The Friends Newsletter (illustrated in full colour and coming out twice a year) plays the vital role of keeping the Friends of the Collection apprised of developments. It also has an invaluable PR role for the Collection as a whole. All copies of the Newsletter back to Spring 2013 can be found on-line at www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/introduction/friends-of-the-collection/

Relationships with other bodies

Our links with Oxford Brookes University are maintained principally via our Custodian Peter Forsaith. We also have close links with Mrs. Susan Howdle who 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 the Methodist Conference and which oversees Methodist interests on the site.

Through the interest and expertise of our committee members we have contacts with many related organisations. These include 'Art and Christianity' and 'Artserve'.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The programme of exhibitions for the year Sept 2018 to August 2019 is an exciting one with exhibitions in Winsford (Cheshire), Dublin and Leicester.

The early autumn will see the publication of the new Guide to works in the Collection (see under Resources and Publicity).

The very important reviews of our organisation and effectiveness will be completed and brought to the Committee for consideration and action. The recommendations in them will inform discussion with the leaders of the Methodist Church. There will also be much focus on the question of securing a long term home for the Collection.

— John Newton Gibbs
(Chair until mid-July 2018)

March 2019

METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION

Income and Expenditure Account

	Year ending 31 Aug 2017	Year ending 31 Aug 2018
INCOME (£)		
Sales of literature, loan fees, grants and donations	19,215.98	5,576.00
Interest	36.59	52.97
Total	19,252.57	5,628.97
EXPENDITURE (£)		
Production of interpretative material, conservation work	6,986.86	10,520.64
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(12,265.71)	(4,891.67)
Balance B/Fwd 1 Sept	10,215.45	15,107.12
Balance C/Fwd 31 Aug	23,481.16	10,215.45

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/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/ or search under 'Methodist Modern Art Collection').

Alternatively, contact the administrator at the following address:

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London
NW1 5JR

Email: artcollection@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5214