

# NEWSLETTER

NO. 34 – AUTUMN 2025  
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Methodist **Modern**  
**Art** Collection

FRIENDS OF THE METHODIST MODERN ART COLLECTION



*Farewell to Professor Ann Sumner*  
*Another new acquisition*  
*Art Trail at Bradford City of Culture*  
*Co-curated display at Ditchling Museum*  
*3Gen again*  
*New reproductions resource*

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to a bumper edition of the Friends Newsletter. There is so much that we wanted to share with you this time that we needed extra pages to do so. This means extra thanks go to Fonz and his team at Cultureshock Media.

We are saying goodbye to our Chair, Professor Ann Sumner, who is certainly going out on a high with the groundbreaking co-curation project at Ditchling, and the Art Trail for Bradford City of Culture, both of which are covered in this Newsletter. Ann has been an incredibly dedicated and hard-working Chair, and we will miss her immensely.

Katharine Farnham-Dear



### Management Committee Members

Katharine Farnham-Dear, Dominic Harbour, the Revd. Catherine Hutton, David Maddock (Secretary, Friends Group), David McEvoy, Beth McIntyre, Corinne Miller (Vice-Chair), Peter Shears, the Revd. Adam Stevenson. In attendance: Jo Hibbard (Director of Engagement), Liz Millard (Collection Administrator), Olivia Threlkeld (Heritage & Collections Officer).

### Patrons of the Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection

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### Liz Millard - Administrator

Phone: 020 7467 5214  
email: [artcollection@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:artcollection@methodistchurch.org.uk)  
[www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection](http://www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection)

### David Maddock - Secretary to the Friends of the Collection

30 Kingsmead Road,  
Knighton  
Leicester LE2 3YB  
Phone: 07800 981262  
email: [friendsofmmac@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmmac@gmail.com)

### Katharine Farnham-Dear - Newsletter Editor

Phone: 07908 843589  
email: [KatharineFD@aol.com](mailto:KatharineFD@aol.com)

Produced by Cultureshock Media  
Art Director: Alfonso Iacurci  
[www.cultureshockmedia.co.uk](http://www.cultureshockmedia.co.uk)

Front cover: (L to R) The Revd. Richard Andrew President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd. Kerry Tankard Chair of the Yorkshire West Methodist District, Professor Ann Sumner Chair of the Management Committee and Verity Smith Faith & Arts Development Lead for Bradford 2025 standing in front of John Reilly's *Cain and Abel* when launching the *Everything is Connected* Art Trail at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church.

# NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

We are delighted to announce two new appointments to the Management Committee.

### Beth McIntyre

Beth is an art historian and accomplished curator with over 20 years' experience working as Senior Curator at the National Museum of Wales and as a Freelance Curator and Museum Consultant. She is currently consulting with Guys and St Thomas' Foundation advising on their large and varied art collection and also for a private collector of Picasso. She is based in South Wales. Beth has known of the Methodist Modern Art Collection for many years, and has extensive knowledge of some of the artists in it. Her specific experience of supporting groups to co-curate exhibitions and her approach to curating accessible and inclusive exhibitions will be of particular value to the Management Committee.



Beth McIntyre

### Dominic Harbour

Dominic is an accomplished curator and educator with over 25 years' experience working in the heritage and Creative Health sectors. His previous exhibitions and projects have involved a wide range of partners including the NHS, The Arts Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, and The Church of England, along with a number of major international museums and art collections. He currently works as Relationship and Development Manager with the national charity Paintings in Hospitals, to co-produce exhibitions and creative activities with service users and staff in multiple health care settings throughout the UK.

Dominic first encountered the Methodist Modern Art Collection in 2013 when, in his role as Marketing & Development Director at Hereford Cathedral, he organised a large exhibition of many works from the Collection under the title *Risen: Art of the Crucifixion and Eastertide*. He is looking forward to using his experience of curating displays outside conventional gallery spaces to assist borrowers and to engage more people to interact creatively with our artworks.



Dominic Harbour (left) working with one of his day hospice patients, with Paintings in Hospitals



# A View from the Chair

Professor Ann Sumner

Many thanks to David and Katharine for inviting me back to focus on my last months in post writing as the out-going Chair. I have to say these have been the busiest months of my whole tenure as Chair with some truly memorable moments and a number of long-term projects coming to fruition.

When I last wrote, I was just about to lecture at Kirby Stephen Methodist Church. What a wonderful experience that was for myself and the Secretary of our Friends David on a beautiful spring day! It was such a pleasure to see our first bespoke curated small exhibition in place and to be welcomed by the Revd. Stephen Radford and church members. It's a beautiful church to lecture in and to view all the responses to the Collection. Then we had a real treat as we were able to see a local school visit organised by Andi Taylor of the Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union. The enthusiasm of the young school children was amazing and the creative works produced so thoughtful. It was really impressive overall seeing the way the whole community had engaged with the Collection and Stephen's interpretation and David McEvoy's new biography of de Maistre.

A major part of my work with the Collection has been engaging with communities and seeing our works in new and meaningful ways, provoking dialogue and discussion, exploring the Gospel stories and our Methodist Heritage. Since May 2022 I've worked closely with the Methodist Survivors Advisory Group to discuss the future of our small watercolour Eric Gill's *Annunciation*. These discussions developed into a genuinely co-curated exhibition project, with a small group of survivors working closely together in partnership with Ditchling Museum of

Art + Craft to produce one section in the *It Takes a Village* exhibition. This was a truly inspiring project led at every stage by the survivors. We returned the Gill to our website with their insightful interpretation. After a considerable volunteer commitment for myself and the co-curators, it was a significant moment to see the exhibition come to fruition. At the public opening in early July we were delighted to have with us the Revd. Helen Cameron, recent President of Methodist Conference, whose support throughout has been tremendous. Then I visited Ditchling, with the co-curator group later that month for us to reflect together. Seeing their responses to their section of the exhibition focusing on Gill's daughters, was really rewarding. My thanks go to the Director Steph Fuller and Joleene New the curator at Ditchling for their support and partnership working and to Kate Little, Safeguarding Survivor Lead Officer. I wrote an editorial piece for the July issue of the *Museums Journal* on the learning taken from this project. The exhibition was also covered by the *Guardian*. I hope we will work with more museums in this way exploring new research and co-curating with community groups. When Gill's work was returned to the website with a biography that acknowledged his abuse of his daughters, we also uploaded the newly researched Artist Lived Experience Biographies which I worked on with David McEvoy. I hope you will all have the chance to read these and learn more about the diverse and fascinating artists represented in our Collection. We also hope their lives will help stimulate future community engagement drawing upon their experiences and working with specific groups.



Exhibitions always take a long time to plan, and it was just over two years ago that we started to discuss an Art Trail during Bradford 2025 City of Culture, working in partnership with the Yorkshire West Methodist District. Initially discussions were with the District Chair the Revd. Kerry Tankard and the Revd. Ned Lunn of Bradford Cathedral, who were interested in showing our two South Asian works. Then I began talking to South Square Centre in Thornton about focusing on works by women artists in the Collection, and finally with Ben Rhydding Methodist Church. I was delighted too that Woodhouse Grove Chapel got involved. In January 2024 Verity Smith was appointed as Faith & Arts Development Lead for the District and you can read her exhibition report on page 16. We were particularly honoured to welcome the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd. Richard Andrew, to an amazing weekend of openings in early September. He is also, of course, a Patron of the Friends and he spoke warmly about the Collection at each venue. Creative Writer in Residence Becky



Dr. Alice Correia and Professor Ann Sumner in Conversation about F. N. Souza at Bradford Cathedral

Cherriman also read her new poetry beautifully. I was particularly honoured to be given the opportunity to reflect on Graham Sutherland's *Crucifixion* for the ecumenical service at Bradford Cathedral on the Sunday evening. There was also the most imaginative use of the Collection images in bars and cafes on North Parade, including on beer mats and menu cards, and a great end to the celebratory opening weekend with hymn singing at the Peacock Bar.

I'd like particularly to highlight the co-curation at Ben Rhydding where a small group from the membership chose the theme of *Peril!* and selected works they felt reflected the perilous state of the world today from political instability and wars to the environmental emergency. Their observations and reading of our paintings were fascinating and they worked closely with local artists David James, Juliet Gutch and Vanessa Thorpe who produced responses to works, as well as commissioning the Pinsuti Chamber Choir to create an extraordinarily rich concert. Their work with school children was also

exemplary with the children's responses hung as if on washing lines around the church. Artist in Residence, Imogen Joyce and Creative Writer in Residence, Becky Cherriman worked across the venues running workshops and events and there was a vibrant programme of lectures and talks. I would like to thank David Maddock for organising my final Friends' lecture as Chair at Bradford Cathedral on 10 September and to thank Corinne for her kind introductory tribute. It was so lovely to see so many there and to welcome back former Committee members too. Another memorable event at the Cathedral was the *FN Souza: In Conversation* between myself and Dr Alice Correia, a scholar and art historian who has made a particular study of F N Souza's interest in Christian imagery. For all those who battled through Storm Amy on 3 October it was a stimulating and wide-ranging discussion which shed much new light on his life and benefitted from Alice's deep knowledge and understanding of Goa and Souza's career. My final contribution was a

lecture at Ben Rhydding in October on *The Bible in Art* which is the subject of my forthcoming book, then it was lovely to be able to contribute to the closing Prayers and Reflective Meditations. There were some surprises too, for instance when I went to hear the Revd. David Halstead preach inspired by Ghislane Howard's *Washing of the Feet* and he unveiled his very own personal 'copy' in acrylic which he's been working on for many years. Overall nearly 3,000 people enjoyed taking the Art Trail, attending events and experiencing the Collections in new locations. I'd like to thank all those who contributed to the hanging and take down of the works, the interpretation, and the many volunteers who gave of their time and energy so generously. Becky Cherriman's concluding poem *The Exhibition Speaks (Wisdom)* captured so beautifully the overall experience for all those involved. For me it was an amazing way to end my years as Chair.

Finally, I'm really delighted to welcome another two new volunteer Management Committee members, Dominic Harbour and Beth McIntyre. Both have extensive exhibition and curation experience which will be invaluable, and I was delighted to undertake their induction training at Kingswood School, Bath, where we were joined by Peter Wakelin. I wish them the very best as they begin their new terms with the Committee and thank all my Committee colleagues and Connexional staff for their dedication to the Collection and their support over the past seven years. It has been a pleasure to work with you all and I will miss you!

# *A View from the Secretary to the Friends*

David Maddock



David Maddock, Secretary to the Friends

The impact of recent small-scale exhibitions is worth noting. Less can be more it seems, especially in terms of selection and the capacity of individual works to engage the audience.

*It takes a Village* is perhaps the most immediate case in point (see page 13) but let's consider *Revelation!* at Kirkby Stephen (14 – 18 April 2025) about which the Revd. Stephen Radford writes on page 12, and the Southwark Cathedral loan (5 March – 18 April 2025) (reported in the Spring Newsletter) which saw Norman Adams' primitivistic face of Christ, *Behold the Man*, positioned on an easel in front of the magnificent High Altar.

Different as these two settings were, they drew their respective audiences into a meaningful encounter with the Easter story conveyed through the

familiar imagery of Christ washing the disciples' feet, the bread and wine, noli me tangere (touch me not), the supper at Emmaus, or, in the case of Southwark, the Man of Sorrows. Somehow, such time-honoured iconography retains the power to move contemporary people whether they live in rural Cumbria or metropolitan Southwark.

It is not surprising that one of the Management Committee's aims is to use the Collection to facilitate outreach to diverse communities. Yet this can be difficult to achieve in practice, particularly in the case of small or geographically hard-to-reach communities, because of the resources required to host an exhibition, especially the cost of transportation. One solution undergoing trial is the 'pre-curated' package: a selection of works with

accompanying story boards that can bring a narrative to life - the Passion of Christ in the case of Kirkby Stephen, who pioneered this experimental approach - or some other theme of contemporary relevance.

The pre-curated package is only one answer to the question of access, but it represents a realistic option for potential borrowers who might otherwise struggle to host an exhibition. A further development of the idea would entail a travelling exhibition which could be hosted at a succession of venues before its eventual return to base thereby simplifying the organisation process for borrowers and reducing transportation costs.

The new reproductions resource, *Pictures for our Times*, explained by Corinne Miller on page 23, might offer another answer.

On a different but not entirely unrelated matter, if you are not already a member of the Friends and would like to support the ongoing care and development of the Collection as a member, please contact me at [friendsofmmac@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmmac@gmail.com)



# Professor Ann Sumner In Focus

As Ann stands down from the Management Committee, I asked her about working with the Collection over the last two decades:

## How did you first become involved with the MMAC?

I was first told about the Collection at school at Kingswood in Bath back in the late 1970s and was aware that at the time it could be seen in Methodist Schools. Then, in 1993, when living in Farnham, I was asked by John Newton Gibbs, who worshipped at the same church as me, if I would help hang works from the Collection for an exhibition at The Maltings there. That was the very first time that I hung the paintings, something I have done many times since! I was so impressed by the quality of the works and the exhibition was amazing. Then, in 2004, I worked with my colleague Helen Waters on an exhibition curated by Peter Wakelin at the National Museum of Wales, where I was by then Head of Fine Art. It was called *An Art Accustomed Eye – John Gibbs and Art Appreciation in Wales 1945 – 1996*, an incredibly important exhibition about the founder of the Collection. This reignited my interest and the following year I joined what was then the Trustee body.

## What changes have you seen since you became Chair?

There have been a lot of changes! First of all our governance was reviewed and we became an official Management Committee of the Church with new Terms of Reference and three working sub groups, completely changing the way we operated. Then, we reviewed our procedures and administration, hopefully making our forms easier to complete and giving more easily accessible information online for potential borrowers. A major programme of conservation and re-framing of works took place during our Rejuvenation Pause transforming the visual appearance of many works. We also

bought new traveling cases to protect our works better in transit. Finally, we wrote new strategic policies to help us move forward with a long-term vision.

We've also had a lot of changes on the Committee, with shorter terms of office, and it has been great to work with so many enthusiastic volunteers who have chosen to serve during the last seven years, all bringing different skills and experience. I'd like to thank all my colleagues for coming on the journey of change with me!

## What challenges have you experienced?

The most obvious challenge has been the impact of the Covid pandemic which impacted our programming, causing exhibitions to be delayed. However, this pause did enable us to carry out conservation and review our administration, as I mentioned earlier, so we could re-launch after the final lockdown in Coventry as part of the City of Culture. During lockdowns new ways of working developed such as online Zoom meetings. These are now a vital part of the way we function, but it has been challenging getting used to meeting less frequently in person, especially when we are inducting new members to the Management Committee. So we have worked hard to meet whenever we can and build strong working relationships, with welcoming induction procedures.

Another challenge, of course, has been finding a new home for the Collection. I dedicated much time to pursuing this, so it is disappointing to be standing down without it being resolved. Our latest discussions with Kingswood School, where the Collection was originally housed at Summerhill, have been promising after many disappointments with other venues.

## What are you most proud of?

I'm very proud of the new approach to curating the Collection, working closely with borrowers and nurturing partnerships. Some long-term projects such as the Eric Gill *Annunciation* co-curation with the Methodist Survivors Advisory Group have been really rewarding, developing over many years and resulting in a partnership with Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft. I'm also very proud of the research I've done on the history of the Collection contextualising its development in 1960s Post-War Britain, considering the influences of Llandaff and Coventry Cathedral on our founding fathers. It has also been important to work on the artist biographies with our colleague David McEvoy, and to have these lived experience biographies up on the website now. This has also involved working with other art historians such as Dr. Nima Poovaya-Smith and Dr. Alice Correia on a detailed study of F. N. Souza, whose *Crucifixion* was the first work to enter our Collection. It was also really rewarding seeing the programme of conservation and re-framing coming to fruition. We are enormously grateful to the Church for supporting this work. Those paintings were transformed and preserved for generations to come. My colleague and Vice Chair Corinne Miller played such a key role in organising this with Liz Millard and I'd really like to thank them both. Finally I'm delighted to see the appointment of our first Writer and first Artist in Residence for the Art Trail *Everything is Connected*. Hearing Becky Cherriman read her opening poem at Ben Rhydding was really moving. I'd like to thank to the Gibbs Trust for supporting this.

Overall, I have to say that I think I am most proud of the new ways in which we now look at the Collection,

*Peril!* at Ben Rhydding - Peter Bastow's interpretation of *Rest on the Flight to Egypt* by Nicholas Mynheer. An example of engagement with the Collection by the local community, an approach encouraged by Ann Sumner

Professor Ann Sumner  
lecturing at Kirkby  
Stephen Methodist  
Church Spring 2025



whether through our work at 3Gen, or the responses of borrowers at Coventry as they came out of the Covid lockdowns, or looking at our Gill work with the MSAG.

### **Can you tell us about some of the most memorable exhibitions/events you have been involved with?**

My goodness there are so many! It really is hard to say. One of the earliest exhibitions I led on was the *Wondering Soul* Art Trail across Leicester in May 2019. There was an excellent opening ceremony at the Cathedral. I remember a really imaginative dance response to the paintings by students from De Montfort University. It is always good to see how the Collection can inspire artistic responses. And I remember how striking Jacques Iselin's *The Elements of the Holy Communion* looked dramatically hung over the Communion table in the Cathedral. I have been hugely fortunate to have attended opening events across the country from Eastbourne to Kirby Stephen. I was also particularly pleased that we were able to open the Art Trails across Coventry in 2021 and in Bradford in 2025 supporting the

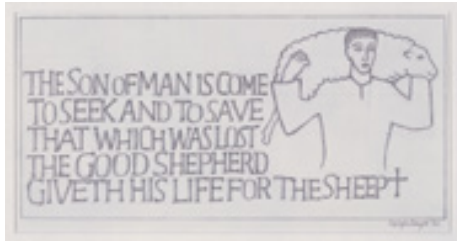
UK City of Culture programming. In Coventry I remember in particular interviewing John Neilson about his new book on *The Inscriptions of Ralph Beyer* in the Cathedral. That was a totally fascinating discussion in the most amazing architectural setting. More recently in Bradford there were several events that were memorable, but perhaps one of the most fascinating was the Pinsuti Chamber Choir's *May Glory Shine* response to the works on loan to Ben Rhydding. The careful pairings of paintings and music was fascinating, from Haydn's *Der Sturm* and Eularia Clarke's *Storm over the Lake* to Gabriel Jackson's *The Christ-child* and Hoyland's *Nativity Polyptych*. Finally, I'm delighted that our first smaller curated package exhibition was such a success at Kirby Stephen in April. It was a real pleasure to visit and lecture there and see the brilliant community commitment to the exhibition.

### **What are your hopes for the MMAC in the future?**

I hope that my colleagues can build on some of the co-curating approaches we have developed together, exploring with borrowers how our paintings speak to them today, how they interpret them and the dialogues they inspire. The ideas explored at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church around the theme of 'Peril' were thought provoking and they worked with local artists David James and Juliet Gutch on creative dialogues and responses. I also hope that some of the research for the artists' biographies will encourage new themes to be developed with borrowers looking at the lived experiences of these artists and how they came to these subjects. I hope we can be really creative in the future and that more Artist Residencies can support us as we seek to reach the broadest audiences. And, of course, it is my greatest wish that the Collection finds a new home where it can really flourish. I'm just sad that all my efforts on this did not come to fruition and hope that my successors will take it forward.

# Ann Sumner's Choice of artwork

*The Son of Man is Come* by Ralph Beyer



It's hard to be asked to select one work – I love the Ceri Richards' *Supper at Emmaus* with its vibrant blues and yellows, but then again there is something so simple and beautiful about Ralph Beyer's *The Son of Man is Come* – that image of Christ as the Shepherd carrying the sheep takes one back to the simplicity of the images in the catacombs in Rome where it was a common motif. Our small, almost low-key, drawing was displayed in Coventry Cathedral's vast nave back in 2021 next to the monumental sandstone panels, the *Tablet of the Word* for which it is a study, with its idiosyncratic lettering.

Ralph Beyer was born in Berlin in 1921 and came to London as a refugee aged just 16. His Jewish mother was incarcerated in Auschwitz, where she died in 1945. On arrival he initially studied with Eric Gill in High Wycombe before becoming a student at the Central School of Arts and Crafts and Chelsea School of Art where he was taught by Henry Moore. At the outbreak of World War II Beyer was sent to an internment camp in Liverpool and later joined the Pioneer Corps in France and then the British intelligence services as a translator. While he was in the internment camp he met the architectural historian Nicholas Pevsner. It was Pevsner who later in the early 1950s introduced him to the architect of Coventry Cathedral Basil Spence. The commission must have been poignant for this German artist whose family home had been bombed in Berlin and whose

mother had died so cruelly. Although Pevsner had recommended him, Beyer was little known as a letter carver at the time and was establishing himself as a stone carver. Spence recalled meeting Beyer and early discussions about his lettering: 'Ralph Beyer is a diffident and humble person, though a most sensitive carver of letters... We agreed that the letters should not be stereotyped Roman or Gothic or any other letter but should be 'felt' – some irregular and some smaller than others, but each one a piece of incised sculpture in its own right'.

Our sketch is one of the later designs Beyer submitted, dated to 1961, with the larger scale of lettering requested by Spence. When he first started carving the *Tablets*, with his young assistant Watson, there was only a tarpaulin to protect them from the weather as the roof had not been completed. It took on average ten days to carve each panel. He reported that initially there was some anti-German feeling towards him on site. Beyer's work at Coventry has been called 'communicative sculpture' and listening to John Neilson, himself a letter carver, made me appreciate Beyer's work so much more. It is the contrast too between our small work and the vast sandstone Tablet in the Cathedral, that appeals to me. Our work seems so personal, while the final panel is such a major public work of art – inspired by those catacombs in Rome which coincidentally Beyer's father, an art historian, wrote about.

I like the direct link this drawing has to Coventry Cathedral which was so inspirational to the Revd. Douglas Wollen. He referenced it in the first catalogue of the Collection written to accompany the Collection's initial national tour. Working on Beyer's biography recently for the website made me think about his freely composed

lettering and the influence of David Jones on his lettering, rather than Eric Gill with whom he had studied briefly. I have learnt more about his career and that he produced the lettering on the memorials of Edith Sitwell in Northamptonshire and of Noel Coward in Westminster Abbey.

I'm selecting this work in memory of my mother who was so very ill during the Coventry exhibition and who always understood about my work and dedication to my role as Chair in which I've been honoured to serve for the past seven years.

## POETRY INSPIRED BY THE COLLECTION

As mentioned by Ann, we were delighted that a Writer in Residence was appointed for the *Everything is Connected* Art Trail. Here, we share the poem Becky Cherriman read at the opening event:

### Love Triumphant at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church

Here, where doors open with unfurling leaves,  
where a cradle rolls out children born in the affectionate regard of all hearts.  
Here, where an organ mourns those who went to war,  
and angels wait with wings on their throats  
behind glass fogged like doubt,  
where marks on stone, which seem to tally every prayer,  
remind that for each smoothed to silk,  
there are many more battered and marked,  
and all hold up the whole.

Here, where some evenings  
the sun through glass is so bright  
we await a house for it to go behind,



# NEW ACQUISITION

The new *Three Kings* print on display at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft as part of the *It Takes a Village* exhibition (Photo: Katharine Farnham-Dear)

where nails recall those ancient nails,  
rustured with Christ's blessed blood,  
where ghosts of Bible moths in  
canonical black  
crowd round the Pentecostal flame,  
where sewers together sow  
hues like wheat or grapes  
into a spectrum of hope and  
love triumphant,

here, I meet a man who tells me he's  
curious to feel  
how the space will be changed by what  
we bring here,  
and I gaze up at all these  
touching arches,  
think isn't that what it is all about,  
how we work to shoulder the perils,  
these structures we build,  
hold together our understanding  
of the heavens,  
how we change this earth  
and one another  
with what we bring, by being here?  
Because everything is connected.

*Becky Cherriman in response to the  
Methodist Modern Art Collection  
Art Trail, Everything is Connected,  
Bradford 2025.*

Poet Becky Cherriman



**We are delighted to report another new acquisition for the Collection, one made possible by Hilda Stevens's generous bequest to the Friends. Here, Peter Wakelin, Management Committee member and author of *Hill-rhythms: David Jones + Capel-y-ffin*, writes about a new work.**

One of the most distinctive and unexpected works in the Collection is the woodblock, just 8cm wide, engraved a century ago by David Jones. Not a finished artwork but a milestone on the journey to making one, and a beautiful and fascinating object itself. Now the Collection has a copy of the final work, a small print titled *Three Kings*.

Jones spent over a decade at art school and on the Western Front before studying wood engraving with Desmond Chute at Ditchling. This involved making fine cuts in wooden blocks, then inking the surface to take an impression. Within a few years Jones had produced some of the century's greatest wood engravings.

This career turning point coincided with his stays in the Roman Catholic artistic community at the former monastery of Capel-y-ffin, high in the Welsh Black Mountains. He arrived at Christmas 1924, aged 29, and spent over half of the next two years there. Its landscape resurfaced in his imagination for the rest of his life. He recognised this new beginning and, returning to his parents' home in April 1925, burned almost all his preceding work.

Jones liked to print engravings to give friends over Christmas. *Three Kings* was made at Christmas 1926/7 when he was experimenting with the greater pressure of an intaglio press. This allowed him to print ink from the engraved cuts rather than the surface of the plate so that the lines appeared as black on white; the opposite of his earlier wood engravings.



It is fascinating to compare the final *Three Kings* with the block, reversed in tone and composition. Jones probably made only a few impressions, but after he died in 1974 Douglas Cleverdon commissioned prints from the original blocks for his catalogue and portfolio *The Engravings of David Jones*. Our new acquisition is a printer's proof.

The exotically attired magi bow their crowned heads as they tread the long path through mountains and woods echoing Capel-y-ffin towards Jones's vision of Bethlehem under the star. The words from Isaiah 60:6 were sung in carols: 'All shall come from Sheba' bringing gold and frankincense. A wounded tree foreshadows the Crucifixion and recalls Jones's experiences of the destruction of men and nature in the Great War.

Owing to eye strain and bouts of post-traumatic anxiety and depression, Jones struggled increasingly with the intense concentration engraving required. After the 1920s, though he always kept his inks and chisels and continued to paint and write, one of Britain's greatest printmakers never worked in the medium again.

*Peter Wakelin*

# Tributes to Professor Ann Sumner

## CORINNE MILLER – VICE CHAIR

Ann became the Chair of the newly re-constituted Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee in 2018, succeeding John Newton Gibbs. Yet her involvement with the Collection's management stretches back well over two decades, having served as member on its predecessor committees.

With the current constitution limiting tenure to a maximum of 12 years, we mark not just the end of Ann's formal role, but the close of an era defined by deep commitment and longevity.

Ann's long-standing association with the Collection - and her profound understanding of its power to inspire - will be sorely missed. The depth of experience Ann brought to our deliberations, especially in curating and interpreting the Collection, is irreplaceable.

It is nearly impossible to distil two decades of leadership, scholarship, and creativity into a short tribute, but I

will do my best to share the breadth and depth of Ann's work on behalf of the Collection.

Ann's curatorial expertise has shaped some of our most memorable exhibitions:

In 2017, *Hope and Reconciliation* at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church and Christchurch, Ilkley, drew on her local knowledge to engage the wider community. Next, *Battered and Berthed*, an innovative exhibition staged in a vacant shop in Hull's Princes Quay Shopping Centre during its City of Culture year, set a precedent for showcasing the Collection in cultural capitals - bringing religious art into the heart of public life and offering space for spiritual reflection and wellbeing. Then in 2018, she led the team behind *Awakening* on the Isle of Man, followed in 2019 by *Wandering Soul*, a challenging multi-site exhibition in partnership with Leicester Cathedral.

After the disruption of lockdown, Ann helped us re-emerge with *Stories of Change: Hope, Faith and Love* in Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit (2021), part of Coventry's City of Culture programme. In 2023, she poured her energies into *Articles of Faith – Where Our Paths Meet* working with the Revd. Richard Sharples at Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol on our first multi-faith exhibition. She also brokered and supported satellite shows at the New Room and Kingswood School, Bath. Most recently, in May 2024, she oversaw *New Vision* at Emmanuel Church, Eastbourne, marking the opening of a new church with a powerful display of the Collection.

Beyond exhibitions, Ann has tirelessly strengthened the infrastructure that supports the Collection. Shortly after becoming Chair, she initiated Governance and Practice Reviews that now guide our work with renewed professionalism.

In 2018 when Oxford Brookes University could no longer house the Collection as it had done since 1998, Ann took on the immense challenge of relocating it to commercial storage. Even during lockdown, she pressed forward, securing funding and overseeing the 2019 Rejuvenation Pause which saw the Collection conserved and reframed to the highest standards.

She championed improvements in documentation and led the development of a suite of policies now published on our website. The Management Committee has an operational as well as a strategic role and under her leadership a range of working groups was established to share responsibilities across exhibitions, collections care, management and development.

Central to Ann's practice has been a commitment to audience engagement and widening access. Her exceptional authoring skills were deployed in a new illustrated catalogue *Seeing the Spiritual* in 2018, and posters and postcards were produced. All have extended the reach of the Collection.

Ann's wide professional networks have brought countless benefits. Her strong ties with the Gibbs family and the Welsh art scene have deepened our understanding of the Collection's origins. Her 2019 lecture at Victoria Methodist Church, featuring an interview with James Gibbs on behalf of his brother John, remains a vital account of our early history.

She has led the Management Committee with distinction—



Ann Sumner at the relaunch of the Collection at Methodist Central Hall, Coventry City of Culture 2021 (Photo: C Hubbard © TMCP used with kind permission of Coventry and Nuneaton Methodist Circuit)



organising Away Days in Bristol, Coventry, and London, and managing the demanding day-to-day administration in collaboration with the Connexional Team.

I would like to end with some recent projects which I believe reflect Ann's personal strengths and that will be her enduring legacy:

She initiated the addition of short lived experience artists' biographies to our website, showcasing her love of art and scholarly rigour.

*It Takes a Village*, currently on show at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft, includes a groundbreaking co-curated display developed over three years with survivors of abuse. This sensitive retelling of the lives and creative careers of Eric Gill's daughters, Petra and Elizabeth, speaks to Ann's integrity, empathy, resilience, and belief in art's potential to create spaces for healing and reflection.

And finally, as the Collection's lead for its contribution to Bradford 2025, Ann once again spearheaded a high-profile multi-site Art Trail. Not content with simply showing the Collection, she secured funding from the Gibbs Family Trust to support interpretation, including an artist and writer in residence. Audience engagement is central to her curatorial practice. She worked with her community at Ben Rhydding to create the exhibition *Peril!* encouraging the worshipping community, and local professional artists to respond to the artworks. The resulting exhibition was a powerful exploration of a theme affecting many people, offering a chance for reflection, while references to the local landscape gave the show site specificity.

The past seven years have brought immense change, with new ways of working and the challenges of a national lockdown. Through it all, Ann has led

with professionalism, clarity of vision, and unwavering sincerity.

As Charles Wesley wrote, she is one who "laughs at impossibilities, and cries, 'It shall be done.'" We have followed where she has led, and we thank you, Ann, for your leadership, and your example.

### JOHN NEWTON GIBBS - FORMER CHAIR OF THE MANAGING TRUSTEES

My first encounter with Ann was in 1993 when, following the revitalisation of the Collection by my father, John Morel Gibbs, for an exhibition in Penarth, it became, once more, available for loan. Under the aegis of the Farnham Council of Churches, I initiated a showing at the town's Community Arts Centre 'The Maltings.' Ann was living in Farnham with her very young family and holding the post of Keeper at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Getting the best out of a team of enthusiastic but inexperienced volunteers, she created a most effective and evocative display across a range of gallery spaces.

Our paths crossed again in the early 2000s when I had removed to South Wales, by this time Chair of what was then called the Managing Trustees of the Collection. Ann had taken up the position as Head of Fine Art at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff where, inter alia, she had a key role in the creation of an important exhibition on the work of the 18th century landscape artist Thomas Jones. The book that accompanied the exhibition, for which she was a key author, is a work of major significance. I asked her if she would make her expertise as curator and art historian available to our team and she readily agreed. Although the demands of her career were considerable,

she provided valuable input over the following years. From this eventually came her engagement with the work and purposes of the Collection which have been so effectively described above by Corinne Miller.

I would like to mention just one more of my many stimulating connections with Ann. This was in 2011, during the period when she was Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham. On behalf of the Trustees, I had arranged for Clive Hicks Jenkins to create the much-admired work *Christ writes in the Dust, the Woman Taken in Adultery*, this resulting from a golden wedding commission by the Revd. Dr. John Taylor and his wife Margaret. With Ann's encouragement and facilitation, the work was received into the Collection at a ceremony at the Barber, which was conveniently located for the Taylors and for many of their friends. It was a memorable and inspiring occasion.

Ann Sumner interviews author John Neilson about Collection artist Ralph Beyer in Coventry Cathedral in 2021 (Photo: Coventry Cathedral, used with kind permission)



# Exhibition Reports

## REVELATION! – KIRKBY STEPHEN METHODIST CHURCH – EASTER 2025

The context of, and a key element in, this first ever ‘small’ rural Methodist Modern Art Collection exhibition was that it was hosted in Kirkby Stephen Methodist Church – a galleried chapel and architectural gem – in the Eden Valley, Cumbria. One of the first things people commented on was the building itself, then the sense of it being a sacred space, where they engaged with the artworks which focussed on Easter and the Resurrection.

We hosted three original paintings, two depicting the Supper at Emmaus – one by Ceri Richards and one by Roy de Maistre – showing the moment of recognition of the resurrected Jesus by two of his disciples. These two paintings were originally created in a competition for an altar piece for the chapel at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. These were hung on either side of our pulpit in Kirkby Stephen. The third painting was de Maistre’s *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not), which depicts another moment of divine revelation when the risen Christ appears to Mary Magdalene,

one of Jesus’s closest followers, outside the empty tomb.

One of the thrills of hosting this exhibition was to display the two de Maistre works which are not often seen in public. The exhibition enabled a large audience to interact with them with over 600 visitors, including over 100 children from local Primary Schools. Andi Taylor from the Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union, enabled the children to explore the artworks before creating their own ‘cubist’ pieces of modern art! (See the picture)

We also hosted two full-size reproductions of paintings from the Collection: *The Elements of the Holy Communion* by Jacques Iselin, a modern symbolic painting which brought the narrative into the present day, linking the Passion with the celebration of Communion and the breaking of bread (in this case a baguette, which caused much comment!); and *The Washing of the Feet* by Ghislaine Howard, which represents the moving scene from John’s Gospel where Jesus, in an act of love and humility, washes His disciples’ feet. John records that Jesus ‘knew that His hour had come and loved them to the

end’ and this act gives them (and us) an example to follow.

The paintings and reproductions were supplemented by a PowerPoint slide show of a further 16 works from the Collection and a small guide which allowed visitors to sit, reflect and engage with the artworks. Many sat and watched the presentation two or three times. The images spoke powerfully to members of the Memory Club (who visited during their regular meeting) and also to the young people in the local Scout Group (visiting after their sleep-over!).

The hosting of the exhibition was undertaken by local chapel members with help from other Circuit chapels and from other denominations in the Churches Together in Kirkby Stephen & Area.

People commented on the sense of wonder and calm, which was a real blessing. Visitors travelled from all over the North of England and beyond as the exhibition was timed to coincide with the Kirkby Stephen Easter Transport Rally, which attracts thousands of people over the Easter weekend. Normal Easter services continued in the chapel with Maundy Thursday Holy Communion, a Good Friday ecumenical service followed by a Walk of Witness, and Easter Sunday Holy Communion (including the decoration of the Cross). These services were deeply enhanced by having the paintings as a focus for meditation.

A particular blessing was the wonderful times with the local school



Andi Taylor of Northern Inter-Schools Christian Union leading a primary school workshop at Kirkby Stephen





Artwork created by children in response to works on display at Kirkby Stephen

## DITCHLING MUSEUM OF ART + CRAFT JULY 2025–MARCH 2026

Friends will be aware that since July a number of works from the Collection have been on loan to Ditchling Museum as part of the exhibition *It Takes a Village* featuring a display curated by the Methodist Survivors Advisory Group (MSAG). The exhibition has been so well received that it is being extended until mid March 2026. The loan is the culmination of many years of work by the Management Committee, led by Professor Ann Sumner, who writes below.

Eric Gill's *Annunciation* is a small watercolour (9 x 7 cm). It probably dates to about 1912 and was acquired for the Methodist Modern Art Collection to fill a gap in the Biblical narrative of subjects portrayed by our works. It was created by Gill as a private rather than a public work, to project using a mirrorscope, as part of his family/village entertainment at Ditchling, hence the reversal of the text.

Back in 2017, at the time Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft mounted *The Body* exhibition, works from the Collection were shown at Haywards Heath, in the *Walking on Water* exhibition. There was much discussion then about our ownership of Gill's work and a decision was made not to lend it to the Haywards Heath exhibition and to take it off the website, out of the touring collection and into the reserve collection.

How to curate Gill's work has been a question for museums, galleries, churches and cathedrals, since the truth of Gill's family life became widely known, specifically the sexual abuse

children. Their amazing powers of observation let them see things many of the rest of us had missed! Their spiritual interaction with what they saw and felt in these Modern Art works was inspirational – bringing to life *Revelation!* – the wonder and glory of Jesus Christ!

To supplement the exhibition, flower arrangements on the Communion Table and around the church matched the colours of the paintings. There was a display illustrating a series of Church Bible Studies that had been held through Lent, using various artworks of Bible events. There were also displays from the local Creative Writing Group, with a powerful painting by a local artist entitled *The Reunion of Christ with the Father*.

We are grateful for the tremendous support of the Management Committee – including the lecture by Professor

Ann Sumner, and the curating work by Corinne Miller and David Maddock – who guided us and blessed us. We thank Jo Hibbard, Liz Milland and the team at Methodist Church House for their support in preparing the graphics and artwork for the booklet, explanations and displays.

Finally, a huge thanks for the tireless work and support from the members at Kirkby Stephen Methodist Church.

Try *Revelation!* in your area – it could be a life-changing event for ALL!

*The Revd. Stephen Radford, Minister of Kirkby Stephen Methodist Church*



Eric Gill's *Annunciation*

of his daughters and sister, revealed in Fiona McCarthy's 1989 biography. *The Body* exhibition opened up discussions anew, although there was no first-hand consultation with survivors of such abuse for that exhibition.

Looking back now at the 2017 decision to take our Gill out of circulation, it may have felt as if we were trying to shut down discussion. That's certainly how the MSAG members saw things when, in 2022, I approached the group about the future of the work. This had come to the fore again following damage to Gill's *Prospero and Ariel* sculpture on the iconic BBC building. By continuing to keep it out of view, or considering measures such as lending it long term to another institution, we were effectively not acknowledging ownership of it, "sweeping it under the carpet", as the MSAG put it, much as child sexual abuse had been for so long.

Consulting the MSAG and being guided by their thoughts and opinions, resulted in a new clear pathway – fully acknowledging our ownership of it, returning it to the website with interpretation reflecting survivors' voices and then seeking to lend it again. As one survivor Sarah put it, "discussing sensitive topics such as abuse can be challenging. Traditionally, people have tended to avoid the subject, conceal it, or overlook the perpetrator's actions by focusing on their positive accomplishments. As survivors, we saw the Gill painting as an opportunity to change this narrative. Instead of hiding it, we wanted to use the artwork to start

conversations about abuse, acknowledge the victims, confront historical abuse, and discuss its intersections with faith." The museum and heritage world sometimes refers to this approach as 'retain and explain'. The Management Committee supported the 'retain and explain' proposal put forward by survivor Fiona and initially the group discussed using the work in Safeguarding training.

The initial co-curation focused on re-interpretation of the Gill, looking anew at how the group saw and interpreted it in the light of what they knew about his behaviour towards his daughters. Their observations were hugely insightful. One of the group noted: "The Angel Gabriel appears intimidating, looming over Mary into her personal space – in her actual bedroom. Mary is kneeling, submissive, controlled – there is only a small window and no escape, suggesting sexual posturing".

Meanwhile, a new partnership with Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft was developing. We approached them to explore the potential of loaning our *Annunciation* to them and developing a co-curation project working with the MSAG, in the context of a wider exhibition entitled *It Takes a Village*, to give scope to contextualise our Gill watercolour within his family life. In particular, we explored the lives of Gill's daughters, with the MSAG selecting works and developing interpretation that focused on their stories and later lives, included their own childhood drawings and some of Gill's portraits of them.

As part of research for that exhibition I went with one survivor, Vivien, and Kate Little, Safeguarding Survivor Lead Officer, to look anew at the microfiches of Gill's diaries (the originals are now held in California) at the Tate Archive, London. We wanted to consider entries that might shed more light on the date of our *Annunciation*, more about the mirrorscope/lantern shows, and to check the references to the abuse of his daughters in McCarthy's book. Vivien had volunteered to accompany us and our work was intense, looking through a mountain of material that shed light on all aspects of Gill's family life. During a break in the Tate café, I asked Vivien, whose lived experience gave a such a valuable perspective, about the impact of reading these entries on her, knowing myself how shocking I had found some. She responded, "Although I knew that Fiona McCarthy had got her information from his diaries, I was still shocked by how casually he treated the abuse he carried out. For instance, a typical entry in his diary would read '– Met with..... to discuss painting. Worked on ..... painting. had sex with [daughter's name], had dinner, bathed with [sister's name], bedtime.' This totally disgusted me, especially when I hear people say 'Oh but he was a brilliant artist and you have to separate his life from his art' – NO – that's why celebrities get away with abuse. Perpetrators have to be exposed for what they are and Gill's casual attitude to his appalling crime increases it ten-fold."

Due to Vivien's own personal experience we decided not to show one famous wood engraving of Gill of his daughter Petra, *Girl in Bath* (1923), given the age Petra was when portrayed. This made us all think about this familiar image in a different light and the 'blank frame' displayed instead,



speaks volumes to a new way of looking and interpreting Gill in the context of his abusive relationship with his daughters and sister. Vivien explained: “This picture was produced without the consent of the subject, in a very abusive position. Anyone actually displaying this image (and others in the same vein), without the permission of the subject, is re-abusing the subject. Only one complaint was received from a reporter because - in his words - ‘we had not had the courage to display his famous nude pictures’, whereas what we felt we had done was to have the courage to celebrate the survivor rather than the abuser.”

During the co-curation project, working with the Ditchling team and the MSAG, we have all learnt much and especially about listening to the voices of those who have experienced such abuse. It was illuminating and moving. Their voices shine through in the interpretation they have co-curated, emphasising Gill’s daughters Petra and Betty not as child victims but as successful, creative women who went on to have meaningful and

successful lives. The project has resulted in new understanding and new ways of looking at Gill’s work, working in developing relationships, friendships and partnerships for the future. Co-curation will hopefully be a key part of the work with the Collection going forward, listening to the voices of those who have relevant lived experience.

*Professor Ann Sumner*

On 4 July I was privileged to attend the opening of *It Takes a Village* at Ditchling. The CEO of the Museum, Steph Fuller, thanked Ann and paid tribute to the Survivors saying, “They put it together; we just made it work”. The event was attended by former President of Methodist Conference the Revd. Helen Cameron, reflecting the importance with which this project is viewed by the Church. I personally found the way in which the Survivors’ voices were foregrounded very moving, and this enabled me to view our *Annunciation* from a new perspective.

*Katharine Farnham-Dear*

**Finally, we would like to share with you some of the encouraging visitor feedback we have received over the summer:**

“Well done for addressing the thorny issue of Gill with compassion and respect for survivors”

“Thank you for a powerful and very well presented and thought through section of the exhibition relating to Eric Gill”

“Beautifully and sensitively curated”

“Well done for tackling a very difficult topic in a sensitive way”

“The issue of Eric Gill and abuse of his daughters was well dealt with and addressed”

“I was so pleased to see the exhibition addressed the issue of Eric Gill’s abusive behaviour. I felt not only was this very well done, but also an opportunity to learn from survivors and honour their voice. Thank you. I imagine that the discourse was really challenging and must have taken a lot of commitment to the process and outcomes.”

The empty frame foregrounded the Survivors’ perspectives  
(Photo: Jo Hibbard)



Professor Ann Sumner, the Revd. Helen Cameron, and Steph Fuller at the opening of *It Takes a Village* (Photo: Jo Hibbard)



## EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED - MMAC ART TRAIL AT BRADFORD CITY OF CULTURE 2025

I'm delighted to write this summary of the *Everything Is Connected* Art Trail of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC) that were showcased across the Bradford District.

As part of the City of Culture 2025 celebrations, five venues in the region (Bradford Cathedral, Ben Rhydding Methodist Church, South Square Centre and St James Church both in Thornton, and Woodhouse Grove School) displayed a total of twenty-three works between them, as well as artistic interpretations within their local communities under the umbrella title. All venues had their own theme which they chose to fit their choice of artworks.

Under the guidance of the MMAC, and the Yorkshire West Methodist District, the venues invited and coordinated the display of works from local professional artists, children, organisations and individuals who felt called to respond creatively to the main exhibition.

This was a wonderful opportunity for recent acquisitions to the Collection to be on public display for the first time – Ben Rhydding Methodist Church were delighted to host *Preaching* by George Walsh, and *Love Triumphant* by John Reilly, under their theme of *Peril!: Exploring People, Environment and Faith in Times of Peril*. It was a privilege to include the Pinsuti Chamber Choir's concert at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church in the exhibition programme of events. Their performance of works in response to the exhibition at that venue was attended and very warmly received by 100 visitors. Thank you to Christopher Solomon and local

businesses for helping to organise and fund the event.

The initiative to have a series of reproductions of some of the Collection's artworks displayed in more unexpected formats at six bars and cafes in the city centre was very effective. Visitors enjoyed collecting coasters at each of these venues and engaging with the unusual display of these artworks. There was an amazing energy and spirit to end the exhibition launch weekend, with drinks and hymns in the Peacock Bar in Bradford city centre, while the Revd. Graeme Dutton

compered the evening in a celebratory manner. We were fortunate to host the President of the Methodist Conference 2025-26, the Revd. Richard Andrew in the District for the first part of the launch weekend. He was warmly welcomed at Ben Rhydding, both Thornton venues and participated in the city centre faith trail that culminated at Bradford Cathedral on the afternoon of Saturday 6 September.

On behalf of the venues, and Vanessa Thorpe, our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator, I must say a



Clive Hicks-Jenkin's *Christ Writes in the Dust - The Woman Taken in Adultery* on display at St James's Church Thornton. In the foreground are Imogen Joyce (Artist in Residence) and Becky Cherriman (Creative Writer in Residence). (Photo: Izzie Holmes)



Reproduction of *The Dalit Madonna* on the wall of the Peacock Bar in Bradford.



huge thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time to steward at and enable the opening of venues, promote the exhibition and support creative activity over the months. On a personal note, I've had several conversations with and received many positive comments and reflections from visitors which has been a real joy and will stay with me for a long time.

As with previous City of Culture locations, we were delighted to welcome a more diverse audience and visitors from outside the District, some of whom were discovering Bradford and the surrounding area for the first time. It was a privilege to host several different groups and organisations across the venues, including a city-centre based ESOL class, and an art group at Huddersfield Mission. It was a pleasure to have had wider engagement

with several circuits around the District, supporting them with related activity around the exhibition, and to speak to some of those who attended September's District Synod held at Woodhouse Grove School.

A real highlight of the project was enabling an Artist Residency and a Creative Writer Residency, a first for the MMAC and generously funded by the Gibbs Trust to whom we are grateful for their enthusiasm and encouragement. It was wonderful to work with the hugely talented Imogen Joyce (artist) and Becky Cherriman (creative writer) on a programme of events and activities that ran alongside the exhibition. Imogen created a tapestry of each venue capturing elements of their respective themes and artworks which the venues now own as a lasting memento of the project.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to all at the Connexional Team, the MMAC Management Committee and across the Yorkshire West Methodist District for their input into this project in a variety of ways. I am deeply grateful to you all for helping to make this special project a success.

*Verity Smith*  
Faith & Arts Development Lead –  
Bradford 2025  
Yorkshire West Methodist District

*Everything Is Connected ran from 5th September to 12th October 2025 at several venues across Yorkshire West Methodist District as part of Bradford City of Culture 2025.*

## THE MMAC AT 3GEN 2025

3Gen is an annual gathering for young Methodists held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. This year's event ran from 3 to 5 October. Each year the Methodist Church youth reps are invited to choose artworks from the Collection for display and discussion at 3Gen. This year they chose *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* by Norman Adams and *Israel, Jews, Christians, Heathen, Our God for all People* by John Muafangejo. Both works proved to be very popular and highly topical.

The theme of this year's 3Gen was *Journey of a Lifetime* and Management Committee members Olivia Threlkeld, Corinne Miller and Peter Shears were present all weekend, talking to children and their accompanying adults about what they could see in the artworks and exploring how the images related to the theme of journeying. The team ran workshops, invited children and adults to express their thoughts about the artworks and publicised the Collection. Olivia, Peter and Corinne met representatives from across the Connexion and spent time explaining how artworks could be loaned and exhibited. There was a great deal of interest in the Collection, with lots of circuit representatives keen to find out more about it and how to use it for mission and outreach.

In workshops held directly in front of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* the team invited a diverse audience of children, teenagers and adults to spend time reflecting on the painting in silence before exploring questions such as 'what stories are being told here?' and 'where is God in this picture?'. Flags feature prominently in the artwork and



Peter Shears discusses Norman Adams' *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* with young people at 3Gen

discussion of flags and what they signify in the world today, who they include and who they might exclude, touched on topical issues of national identity. The flags in the Adams seemed to many of those attending to express a Christian message of unity and celebration rather than hostility and division. In the words of one of the young people, "this painting... shows that flags can be used to celebrate diversity rather than division, which is how we seem to be using them in England at the moment." It is always intriguing to hear how those attending 3Gen perceive the artworks in new and insightful ways. One of our

visitors wrote that the Adams "shows people crying blood.... I think this was to emphasise how negatively people feel for being excluded on account of something they cannot control, like their ethnicity." Such discussions enabled many of the young people to talk openly about their concerns about intolerance and prejudice.

Reflection on the Muafangejo linocut focused on similarities and differences between the two artworks and this led to some intriguing and thought-provoking observations. The way eyes are represented in the linocut inspired some very insightful comments,





Artworks made at 3Gen

many of which focused on the way Muafangejo uses eyes and eye-shapes to suggest God's vision of unity for all. In the words of one visitor, "this artwork represents community; no matter what your race. Jesus is for all of us."

There was then an opportunity for children and adults to design and create their own flags, decorated with designs intended to unite rather than divide.

The Sunday morning worship sessions invited children and adults to create their own responses in watercolour to the Adams and in charcoal to the Muafangejo. The concentration, care and thought with which people of all ages

responded to the challenge of expressing what they understood as the 'big ideas' arising from their encounters with the artworks and from their reflections on the theme of *Journey of a Lifetime* led to the creation of some very powerful pieces (see photo above).

This year's 3Gen proved to be a very successful means of engaging large numbers of children and adults from across the country with two of the Collection's most thought-provoking artworks. The MMAC team ended 3Gen confident that the weekend had brought the Collection to the attention of a very diverse audience,

and inspired reflection and discussion from a Christian perspective on issues of great concern to people of all ages in Britain today.

*Peter Shears*

## SEEING THE SPIRITUAL

### Professor Ann Sumner's final Friends' lecture as Chair of the Collection

On 10 September the Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection hosted a Reception and Lecture in the de Lacey Centre at Bradford Cathedral where Jyoti Sahi's *Dalit Madonna* and F. N. Souza's *The Crucifixion* were on display as part of the *Everything is Connected* Art Trail.

Drinks and nibbles were served before guests were ushered into the Cathedral's small Holy Spirit Chapel

where the two paintings were displayed. They were beautifully lit, and enhanced by the labels of Dr. Nima Poovya Smith, an authority on South Asian Art noted for setting up the Transnational Gallery at Bradford's Cartwright Hall.

Following welcomes and introductions, Corinne Miller took the opportunity to deliver a warm tribute to Professor Ann Sumner (see page 10) marking this, her final Friends' lecture as Chair of the Collection. Ann then gave an authoritative and wide-ranging lecture on the Collection's origins and subsequent development. On this occasion, she emphasised

the international dimension of the Collection and drew particular attention to Souza's *The Crucifixion* which had been acquired in 1962, well before the artist's recognition in the UK.

We were delighted to be joined by former Trustees of the Collection, the Revd. Graham Kent and Janet Shott. Our thanks go to David Maddock and Canon Ned Lunn of Bradford Cathedral for organising the event and the Gibbs Trust for funding it.

*David Maddock*



(Left to right) Janet Shott,  
The Revd. Graham Kent,  
Professor Ann Sumner,  
Corinne Miller, David  
Maddock, Katharine  
Farnham-Dear



# OBITUARY OF THE REVD. DAVID JOHN MOORE

We are greatly saddened to report on the passing, on 19 June, 2025, of the Revd. David Moore. In addition to a lifetime of Methodist ministry, which took him to Cymmer (South Wales), Bristol, London's East End and, latterly for many years as a key member of the Ministerial Team at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes, David also found time to make his considerable curatorial skills available to the Methodist Modern Art Collection. He oversaw or contributed to the hang at a number of exhibition sites across the UK: Taunton, Sudbury in Suffolk and Blackheath in London, to name but a few.

David was, himself, a skilled practitioner in wood carving. He had been inspired to sculpt partly through his encounter with the Chilean political artist, Santiago Bell. David launched a pivotal arts event for the Connexion in 2004, which he called 'Colloquy' (meaning 'conversation'). It was opened at the Methodist Conference venue of Loughborough University, bringing together new acquisitions to the Collection (the *Dalit Madonna*, *Rest on the Flight to Egypt* and

*Untitled- Pentecost*) along with works by other contemporary artists, poets and musicians. His own idiosyncratic painted carvings were expounded upon, in theological conversation, alongside those of other wood sculptors. The latter included Santiago Bell whose collection David went on to show two years later at Colloquy Birmingham (venue: The Custard Factory), as part of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer tribute, and the visit of the Collection to the nearby Waterhall Gallery, Birmingham Museum and Gallery.

In June 2018, the superb *Grains of Truth* exhibition at Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol, afforded another opportunity to see what emerged from the remarkable collaboration between Moore and Santiago Bell; a show described at the time in a review by James Gibbs, as remarkable 'sermons in wood'.

Sarah Middleton and the Revd. Graham Kent, both former members of the Management Committee, attended the July Thanksgiving Service for David at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone. Small carvings by David had been brought up to the front of the

church by those who'd been blessed by his treasured gifts. These were placed alongside his favourite drink and his West Ham United shirt!

Another, largely unsung achievement forever linked with David, was the concept of 'Crisis at Christmas'. Back in 1967, together with a network of London East End homelessness activists under the leadership of Bill Shearman, David was among those who hatched a plan to launch what has grown into a major UK charity - CRISIS, which now raises over £66 million annually, with more than 674 employees and 4,323 volunteers.

David's creative work will live on, hopefully to be enjoyed by a wider public. The words of Barbara Hepworth also spring readily to mind - 'A sculpture should be an act of praise, an enduring expression of the divine spirit'. Most certainly that is so in the legacy that David leaves with us.

Our sincere condolences go to David's wife, Dorothy, daughter Sarah, son Tim and their families.

*Bob Williams and Sarah Middleton*



The late David Moore with  
Sarah Middleton (Photo:  
Jane Stacey)

# COLLECTION FAVOURITE INSPIRES NEW COMMUNITY ARTWORK

*The Five Thousand* by Eulalia Clarke was used as the focus of a community art project in the Staffordshire Moorlands this summer. 'The Bigger Picture' project involved re-creating the painting by Clarke and enlarging it to 112cm x 104 cm.

This was done by dividing a poster of the image into 182 squares of equal size - 3cm x 3cm. These 'tiles' of the image were given to participants to reproduce onto a square of card 8cm x 8cm. The larger completed card tiles were then pieced together to produce the final image.

The card tiles were from offcuts of white mounting board and the frame and backing for the image were constructed from brown cardboard boxes due for the recycling bin. So it was very eco - friendly! The medium used was pencil crayons.

The Methodist Modern Art Collection's poster of *The Five Thousand* was a talking point around which the bible story was told. Involving people in creating the 'Bigger Picture' meant

their artwork became part of the bigger story too.

The finished creation is a really joyful mix of colour, texture, skill, patience, ability and flamboyance. This reflects the age range and art experience of those who coloured a square for 'The Bigger Picture'. Some participants declared they had no ability at all, or 'hadn't picked up a crayon since primary school'. Others who were reluctant at first asked to do some more squares as they enjoyed the artistic experience. The ages taking part ranged from nine to 90!

The demographic of those who participated completely reflects the variety of people so quirkily painted by Eulalia Clarke in her picture. It is a joyful and interesting picture to look at and it engaged spiritual and artistic responses at many different levels.

The project started at the Endon Well Dressing Festival at the end of May. It was then taken to local Rural Church Coffee Mornings, to The Leek and District County Show at the end of July



The Revd. Denise Williamson

and then it was completed at a Circuit Service in mid-August.

The completed 'Bigger Picture' will be on display at Endon Methodist Church where many people from the Community Cafe took part and also at Trinity LEP in Leek.

*The Revd. Denise and Simon Williamson. Staffordshire Moorlands Circuit, Chester and Stoke District.*



The Bigger Picture takes shape



# PICTURES FOR OUR TIMES – A NEW INITIATIVE

For over sixty years, the Methodist Modern Art Collection has inspired people wherever it has been exhibited. Increasingly, however, it has become clear that many have encountered the works through reproductions used in worship and reflection. These reproductions have proven to be a vital means of sharing the Collection more widely.

*Pictures for Our Times* is a new initiative developed by the Management Committee. This boxed set comprises ten reproductions of selected works from the Collection, chosen for their resonance with contemporary societal concerns and their ability to connect with a diverse audience.

An accompanying booklet offers a history of the Collection, brief introductions to each artwork, suggestions for further exploration, and practical ideas for using the reproductions in worship and mission.

The project was launched on 5 September at the Lakeside Creative Arts Centre in Newmillerdam, when the President of Conference, the Revd. Richard Andrew visited the recently refurbished and reconfigured chapel. Housed in the former Newmillerdam Chapel, the worshipping community at Lakeside is using the creative arts to



The Installation of Pictures for our Times at Lakeside September 2025  
(Photo: Corinne Miller)

engage local people and provide a space for spirituality and well-being.

Ten boxes have been distributed to pilot the use of reproductions, and over the coming year, we will be building a community of users to share insights and help shape future editions.

The boxes have been placed in a variety of contexts across the country, including Huddersfield Mission, Wesley College in Dublin, South Wales, where the Tongan fellowship congregation will use the resource, Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism and the Staffordshire Moorlands Circuit, where the Revd. Denise Williamson now serves. Denise and her husband Simon led a series of inspirational workshops using reproductions from the Collection as a starting point (reported in the Newsletter for Spring 2022) and



Creative Arts Coordinator, Shelley Wison opens the Pictures for our Times box at Lakeside (Photo: Corinne Miller)



The Revd. Richard Andrew, President of Conference and Corinne Miller, Vice Chair of the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee at the *Our Story Your Song* event at Lakeside Creative Arts Centre, 2025  
(Photo: Colin Ride)

those 'Faith in Art' sessions at Thirsk Methodist Church informed the development of *Pictures for our Times*.

We offer *Pictures for Our Times* as a resource for spiritual growth, communal reflection, and creative engagement and hope it will continue to inspire and connect people in meaningful ways.

We are deeply grateful to the Sister Gwen Appleton Trust for funding the creation of this new resource.

*Corinne Miller*

# FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

## LENT 2026

*From Darkness .... To Light* is the title chosen for an exhibition of 25 works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection next Spring in Guildford. The exhibition sets the scene by showcasing some aspects of Christ's ministry and, staged during the final part of Lent, focusses on Christ's journey to the Cross, Resurrection and Pentecost.

The host will be St Mary's mediaeval church in Guildford which has been a joint Methodist and Anglican place of worship for the last 12 years and is probably one of the oldest buildings housing Methodist worship. St Mary's is itself an historical gem well worth a visit and worshippers there are thrilled to add the exhibition to its c.1,000 years of history.

The exhibition will run from 9 March to 5 April 2026 and the stunning works on display will include ones from Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, Patrick Heron and Maggi Hambling. As well as public opening and group visits, special events are being planned, including Professor Ben Quash in conversation with the Revd. Karen Case-Green about the Collection.

Laura Moffatt, Director of Art + Christianity, will be speaking at another event, planning to bring some new contemporary art into dialogue with the works in the Collection, using some examples from A+C's 2026 competition for art in sacred spaces.

A series of poems has been specially written by accomplished poet Dr. Alwyn Marriage to complement each of the works on display. There will be a special evening when Alwyn will be reading some of her poems alongside music from well-known cellist Annalies Scott.

More music will come from a performance by the In Nomine singers, conducted by Sebastian Forbes.

During the exhibition, each of St Mary's regular Thursday lunchtime Lent reflections will be inspired by one of the paintings. Holy Week activities will be greatly enhanced by the presence of this inspirational art

*Full details of the events and opening times will be published when finalised at MMAC 2026 — Holy Trinity & St Mary's Guildford.*

*To be placed on a mailing list for updates or to make other enquiries, please e-mail [MMAC2026@htsmguildford.org.uk](mailto:MMAC2026@htsmguildford.org.uk)*

## LATER 2026

Vice Chair Corinne Miller is part of a team planning a tour of Scotland for works in the Collection in summer/autumn 2026. Further details will follow.

We also plan to return to 3Gen in October 2026.

## 2027

The Management Committee is supporting the team at **Wallingford Methodist Church** as they plan for an exhibition of works from the Collection during spring 2027. This is intended to coincide with Oxfordshire Art Weeks. Further details will follow.

The committee is also supporting a team at **Saint Mary's church in Marlborough** as they plan an exhibition during autumn 2027 entitled *Picturing the Word*. This is intended to coincide with the Marlborough Literary Festival. Further details will follow.

We also plan to return to 3Gen in October 2027.



St Mary's Church, Guildford