

NEWSLETTER

NO.19 — SPRING 2018
£1.50 WHERE SOLD

Methodist **Modern**
Art Collection



New Appointments to our Management Committee
'Art of Hope and Reconciliation' – The Collection in West Yorkshire
'Come and See' – The Collection in Solihull
'Battered and Berthed' – The Collection in Hull

EDITORIAL

We extend a very warm welcome to a number of newly appointed Management Committee members. A little more background on each and every one can be found, facing, on P.3.

Public interest in the Collection will shortly be switching to the Isle of Man where the works will be on show for five weeks, commencing mid-May. The works will be fairly widely dispersed across the island, showing at six different venues, Methodist, C of E and URC premises.

It can hardly have escaped the notice of all lovers of fine art (classical or modern!) that the price achieved at auction, back in November 2017, in New York, for Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* (Saviour of the World) was an astonishing £341 Million. This makes it the only Leonardo painting now held in private hands (There are fewer than 20 fully accredited paintings of his still in existence)... This hammer price shattered all previous ceilings at auction sales, doubling the highest figure paid for a painting. Such an event leaves one with a uncomfortable feeling. What might Christ's view have been on such use of money?

Art Collection Management Committee Members
Dr John Gibbs (Chair/Treasurer), Revd Graham Kent (Secretary), Bob Williams (Secretary, Friends Group), Prof Ann Sumner, Meryl Doney, Sarah Middleton, Paul Bayley, Revd Ruth Gee, Ian Baker, Rebecca Gibbs, Lucy Cleeve, Simon Sorokos

Acting Administrator – Liz Millard
email: artcollection@methodistchurch.org.uk
Phone: 020 7467 5214
Custodian – Dr Peter Forsaith

www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection

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

Bob Williams
Secretary to the Friends of the Collection and Newsletter Editor
11, Late Broads, Winsley,
Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts, BA15 2NW
Phone: 01225 720188
bobandmad.thefirs@gmail.com

Produced by Cultureshock Media
Art Director: Alfonso Iacurci
Designer: Luke Smith
www.cultureshockmedia.co.uk

POSTCARDS

We are pleased to report that the Publishing and Communications Team of the Methodist Church have been working on a newly designed booklet of postcards, featuring 24 of some of the most popular images from the Collection. These will be available, as from 9 April, 2018, through Methodist Publishing (Price: £4.99): www.mph.org.uk (Phone: 0845 0178220). The postcard images can be used, as a valuable resource, by house groups, in worship or, simply, individually, in the traditional manner of communicating with friends.

Once Methodist Publishing have exhausted their current stocks of single image postcards, sold in packs of 10, this new booklet will be the only available source of such images. —Ed

MARY ROSEWEIR

For a number of years, we have had a contract with the Enfield Circuit of the Methodist Church whereby the circuit administrator, Mary Rosewir, has spent an average of four hours a week working on behalf of the Collection. As part of this work, she has organised our committee meetings and written the minutes. Mary retired in August 2017 and new arrangements have since been put in place. Over the years, she developed a very considerable knowledge of the nature and purpose of the Collection and of the work of the Management Committee. Her friendly response to enquiries and her willing helpfulness have been very much appreciated by committee members and exhibition organisers alike. We are delighted that, by becoming a member of our supportive Friends organisation, she will continue to maintain close contact with the work of the Collection.

Dr John Gibbs, Chair of the Management Committee



From the 'Come and See' exhibition in Solihull: Ghislaine Howard, *The Washing of the Feet*, with floral arrangement.
Photo: John Handford

Front cover: Hull's 'Battered and Berthed' exhibition venue, just prior to opening
Photo: Mark Kensett

New faces on the Management Committee team

MR IAN BAKER — SECRETARY ELECT TO THE FRIENDS

Ian Baker has been a Friend of the Collection for several years and is offering his skills to develop the Friends network. Now retired, his career in administration spanned both the corporate and not for profit sectors. His events management has included a major festival service at St Paul's Cathedral for their benevolent fund. Currently a PCC member at St James the Great, Colwall, Ian is keen to sustain the witness of the Collection, being struck by its impact on exhibition visitors. He is already an established contributor to the Friends Newsletter.

REVD RUTH GEE

Ruth is currently Chair of the Darlington District and formerly served in the West Yorkshire District as a circuit minister and also as Ecumenical Officer and Synod Secretary. Before entering ordained ministry, Ruth had a career in teaching and still enjoys opportunities to follow this aspect of her calling. Ruth is enthusiastic about the Collection and has used it often in worship and in leading retreats and quiet days. She has experienced and is excited by the significant missional opportunities offered by exhibiting the Collection both within the Darlington District and further afield.

Ruth was President of the Methodist Conference (2013-2014) and, until recently, served as Chair of the Methodist Council and remains a member of the Faith and Order Committee and Moderator of the Forum of Churches Together in England.

MS REBECCA NK GIBBS

Rebecca's professional career has embraced management consultancy, computer programming and website design.

Currently, she is carrying this experience forward with a focus on the Arts and engagement. Rebecca is a trustee of the Gibbs Trust, a former Chair of both the Bristol Afrika Eye

Film Festival and the St. Pauls Afrikan Caribbean Carnival Ltd. In 2015 she enjoyed a consultancy role in Community Engagement at the oldest Methodist chapel in the world, The New Room, in Bristol. She is also a practising artist with a small selection of work held in private and public collections.

MS LUCY CLEEVE

Lucy Cleeve is a freelance curator, consultant and producer who has 20 years' experience across the cultural sector for organisations such as Tate Britain, the British Council and Arts Council England. She has a Masters degree from the Royal College of Art and is working towards a PhD thesis examining a post-secular theology of art. She brings extensive expertise to the planning of the tour programme of the Collection and offers experience of fundraising, advocacy and the commissioning of new works.

MR SIMON SOROKOS

Simon Sorokos was a lead organiser of the 2017 exhibition of the MMAC in Canterbury at the city's Beane Art Gallery in partnership with Kent College Canterbury (part of the MIST group of schools) where he is employed as a teacher and Special Projects Manager. He brings vision and expertise for engaging educational institutions more fully with the work of the Collection. He holds a diploma in Art History from the University of Cambridge and is studying for an MSc in Charity Marketing and Fundraising. His network of contacts for work at Kent College include Sotheby's and various universities.

Our new appointments will, between them, enhance the current strengths of the Management Committee in being able to offer further curatorial and networking skills, expertise in fundraising and marketing, an awareness of what social media might bring to the table and an understanding of mission. We extend a warm welcome to them all. —Ed

And a welcome to our new Patron of the Friends Group

MR PHIL ALLISON

Phil is a son of the Manse. In 2003, he launched Cultureshock Media with Tim Marlow (currently Artistic Director at the Royal Academy) and Judy Reed. Fifteen years later, and with Phil still at the helm as CEO, the business has grown to deliver arts and culture information across the international arts scene and across all media platforms. Among his extensive client base he numbers major auction houses, a wide range of international museums and galleries, broadcasting companies, banks and fashion brands. We are constantly appreciative of the fact that, free of charge, he makes available the services of members of his team to design this Newsletter and also the Collection's Annual Report. He looks after us very well and it is by way of a small gesture of appreciation that Phil has recently been invited to join our select group of Patrons.



Phil Allison

Should we get rid of our Eric Gill?

This question is exercising the art world, at many levels, at the current time. And, with a work by Gill in the Collection, we have, in recent months, had the occasional direct enquiry as to our stance over this matter.

The whole sad story of the prevalence of child abuse, both historic and continuing, has rightly led to considerable soul searching. Numerous eminent institutions hold, often extremely valuable, works by artists who might well be described today as 'alternative, sexually deviant or even, downright criminal'. It is a minefield. There are certainly bodies that have ownership of Gill's works that will be deliberating on their strategy, taking note of the opinions of employees, share-holders, supporter groups and external critics. The Tate, with well in excess of 100 works, the BBC, the University of Leeds, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery of Scotland, Amgueddfa Cymru/ National Museum Wales, The Met in New York and numerous other institutions, have all invested in, or been given works by Gill.

We, as Management Committee members, have had opinions expressed to us across the whole spectrum of the argument. My own position is, simply, to pose the question: If public institutions removed their Gill sculptures, drawings and prints from public view, might it not be implicit that they should do the same with their priceless paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio and Michelangelo, all complicit to a greater or lesser extent in what, today, would certainly be termed paedophilia? Personally, I would be bereft if told that one of my all-time favourite works and a painting that speaks to me in a very personal way, Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* were to disappear for ever from its very public display on the walls of the National Gallery - on the strength of exactly the same argument.

A similar view, from someone closely involved with our Collection for many years, reads: 'I entirely agree: if works of art were to be judged by the artist's sexual behaviour, galleries would have some very bare walls, plus empty bookshelves (no Shakespeare sonnets, and as for Pepys and his servant girls...) and silent classical music concerts. Likewise, should we cease

using the clear and now so familiar Gill (and Gill derived) typefaces that have become integral to all our lives? Then let's not start on drug addiction, financial irregularity... Maybe art is a key avenue to better understanding. What was it Jesus wrote in the sand?'

However, it is only right and proper that the alternative view is represented within these columns. The following communication has been received: 'Did the trustees consider the fact that, as Church, we seek to follow Jesus Christ rather than the world? The assertion that the trustees' decision best reflects the response of national collections in which Gill's work features seems to me to be a poor defence given that this collection represents the Methodist Church's endeavours to enable people inside the church to connect their faith to art. Further, its desire to encourage folk outside the church to consider the Christian message, presented through the medium of art. What message are the Management Committee and, indeed, the Trustees of the Collection intending to send out by retaining this work?'

I can inform Friends and supporters that, after lengthy discussion, the Management Committee has decided to move *The Annunciation* to our Reserve Collection. This reserve collection is maintained for works which are not normally available for exhibition; perhaps because they are too fragile to travel or because they represent a preliminary sketch for a completed work. In this case we will be using the 'reserve collection designation' to indicate to potential borrowers that they should reflect carefully on whether or not it would be right for them to include the work in their exhibition. The Committee has further decided to reassess the situation in twelve months.

— The Editor

Friends of the Collection in focus

OUR FRIEND IN PROFILE IS RICHARD MARTIN

Richard is an alumnus of Kingswood School and Westminster College.

We have all heard about the traveller who, on asking for directions, was advised not to start from hereabouts. My 'journey into Christian art' certainly has something of this tale about it. How did a former PE teacher come now to be 'senior guide' at the wonderful Parham House, East Sussex (in Simon Jenkins' words 'a house of magic'), Vice-Chair of the Storrington Arts Society, the deliverer of occasional talks on Christian art, and now the author of a feature for this Newsletter?

The beginnings of this odyssey occurred, without doubt, during my years at Kingswood School, Bath, where I was fortunate to encounter the remarkable art teacher, Dane Maw, whose impact would I'm sure be firmly recognised by my contemporary there, one Richard Cork. Richard is, of course, well known as an art historian, editor, critic, broadcaster, exhibition curator and not least (to our

constituency of Friends) as the author of the enthusiastic Foreword to the current 'Guide to the Methodist Art Collection'. However, being myself a pupil with very limited personal artistic talent, the decisive moment came when I was invited to revise for my A levels while acting as a room steward for the Methodist Art Collection, on display at Kingswood during the summer of 1963. Those hours spent with these many treasures around me made, with hindsight, a huge impact on one who then had little time for anything other than the next sporting encounter!

I moved on to Westminster College, Oxford, to train to teach PE, an element of my career that certainly brought much satisfaction. Yet even then the Collection continued to pursue me, since a return visit for a reunion brought me once again into contact with the Methodist Collection that, now in a new home, was displayed around the College. I had by this time hung up my boots and was Head of

History at Windlesham House School, where it had become clear to me what a remarkable resource art could be in my teaching of the subject. The National Portrait Gallery became a great resource and over the years, the staff there became sufficiently happy with my competence to allow me to lead my own sessions with my pupils.

As Deputy Head, in charge of daily worship in the school chapel, it is hardly surprising that my interest in Christian art burgeoned in the way it did. Another seminal moment was to come with a visit, in 2000, to the powerful and challenging Image of Christ exhibition, 'Seeing Salvation,' curated at the National Gallery by the legendary Neil MacGregor.

Modern Christian art has continued to thread its way into my journey – Trinity, our local Methodist Church in Storrington, has acquired a marvellous collection of beautifully reproduced John Reilly prints and during a recent Steyning Festival it was an immense privilege to 'sit at the feet' of Richard Harries when he spoke about his own deep encounters with Christian art. I have also been greatly moved by the quality of stained glass work by Sussex artist Mel Howse. Her 2003 window in the Windlesham House Chapel, celebrating the life of long-serving Head, Charles Malden, and the 'Trevor Huddleston' window in the majestic Lancing College Chapel are among my favourites. Her most recent spectacular commission I have yet to see, but it has lately been installed at Otford Methodist Church, near Sevenoaks, and she is now working on a project for Durham Cathedral.

A work in focus

RICHARD MARTIN'S CHOICE

become a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

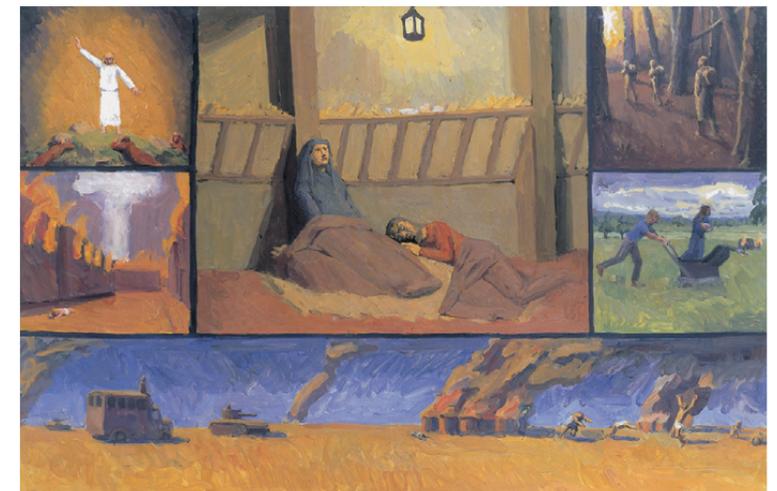
Together with another MMAC work, Graham Sutherland's *The Deposition*, painted immediately after World War II and redolent of those dreadful concentration camp images, *Nativity polyptych* remains equally disturbing in this 21st century world of ours; for alongside the naturalness of the stable scene depicting a radiant Christ-child with his gently resting parents, the other elements in Hoyland's predella focus on more distressing aspects of the story. Those who felt that a Massacre of the Innocents by nuclear war had disappeared from the possible evils that one nation might wreak on another have been disabused of that belief, after listening to the boasts of Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump. The themes of raging warfare in the wider predella panel and the mid-right panel depicting Christ with his parents as refugees, fleeing persecution and worse, echo

today as one ponders on the suffering of the Rohingya people in Myanmar or the similar fate of those trapped in the never ending fighting in parts of the Middle East. In the top right corner of Hoyland's painting there are Wise Men shown as backpackers travelling through dangerous-looking woods and I wonder what guiding star they would be following in this day and age? There appear today to be so many false prophets dispensing fake news...

I am particularly pleased to be able to feature Richard Martin in this edition of the Newsletter. His thoughts link so very well with the report, in our Spring 2017 Newsletter, of Prof Ann Sumner's excellent presentation, to members of the School, in the Kingswood Theatre. Ann is, of course, a fellow alumnus of Kingswood and it was good to hear her remind the young people of the part played by their school in the evolving story of the Methodist Modern Art Collection. —Ed



(Above) R. Martin. Photo: Sam Pells; (Left) The Charles Malden Window, Windlesham House School Chapel. Photo: Richard Martin



Francis Hoyland (b.1930), *Nativity polyptych*, 1961. Oil

THE COLLECTION ON ITS TRAVELS

COME AND SEE

Solihull Methodist Church and the Courtyard Gallery, Solihull Library
7—30 September 2017

*‘Was it all worth it?
Most certainly!’*

Solihull Methodist Church celebrated the 80th anniversary of its building in June, 2017. Revd Ken Howcroft, our minister, suggested that we could mark the occasion by bringing the Methodist Modern Art Collection to Solihull – quite a challenge!

We displayed the paintings, not only in the church but also the Courtyard Gallery of Solihull Library, so that it would reach a larger number of people. The Courtyard Gallery is adjacent to the Touchwood Shopping Centre so more people were likely to see it rather than make the special trip to the church, although only 10 minutes’ walk away.

One of the challenges was to raise the money to stage the exhibition. We obtained a number of generous grants and organised four concerts. On the church anniversary weekend in June the Solihull Methodist Community Choir led by our own organist, Peter Farndon, performed ‘Anno Domini’, a choral work that follows the events in the Bible to the present day. This was followed by a cream tea in the church, recently renovated with the installation of chairs. In July Dan Jarvis (an up and coming star from Solihull, now working in the West End) and friends performed songs from West End shows and in September Nigel Ogden (the Radio 2 organist – ‘The Organist Entertains’) gave an organ recital. On the last day of

the exhibition Peter Farndon organised a further concert, with the title ‘Come, See and Hear’, when he chose musical pieces to link with the paintings. All the concerts were wonderful and the final concert, attracting an audience of 150, becoming a grand finale that was so well received that it led to a debate as to whether it was a concert or actually an act of worship? Talks relating to the Art Collection were given by Management Committee Members, Revd Graham Kent and Dr Peter Forsaith.

Each venue featured 13 paintings. In the church we had those that told the story of Holy Week through to Pentecost. In the library we included paintings of the Nativity and Jesus’ ministry. The highlight of our supporting programme was a Flower Festival during the first full week. 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 in flowers. The word most used to describe the arrangements was ‘stunning’. One example was that the pink roses that were used to represent the water in the bowl in the ‘Washing of the Feet’ painting by Ghislaine Howard’ were the variety called ‘Cool Water’.

It has to be said that, in spite of our best efforts in providing press releases, the response of the local media was disappointing, although an honorable mention should go to Clare Balding for giving the event a mention on her Radio 2 Sunday Morning programme.

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 who had to work very hard but, once we started getting our heads around



(Top) Jacques Iselin, *The Elements of the Holy Communion*, with floral arrangement; (Above) Norman Adams, *Christ’s entry into Jerusalem*, with floral arrangement. Photos: Both John Handford

the different tasks, it all seemed to fall into place. The paintings provoked so much thought and discussion, provided wonderful publicity for Methodism and brought many newcomers into our church.

Overall visitor numbers of just short of 3,200 was, in itself, rewarding. Was it all worth it? Most certainly! I would encourage any church to consider taking on a similar challenge.

— Sue Balmer

As the accompanying photographs show, the way that the highly original floral arrangements complemented the works of art, gave the exhibition, at both venues, an extra dimension. Warm congratulations to the various Flower Clubs involved. —Ed

ART OF HOPE AND RECONCILIATION

Ben Rhydding Methodist Church and Christchurch on The Grove, Ilkley (Methodist/URC)
4—8 October 2017

As part of the Ilkley Art Trail 2017, nine pictures from the Collection were displayed at two locations in the Yorkshire spa town. The theme was the impact of WWI & II on the lives of the selected artists. The showing coincided with commemorations at Ben Rhydding to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Capt. Eric Wilkinson, who was killed at the Battle of Passchendaele on Sunday, 9 October, 1917. Wilkinson went to Ilkley Grammar School and later taught there. A volume of his war poems was published shortly before his death, at the age of 26. The majority of the paintings were displayed at Ben Rhydding where the 1950s stained glass window by Harry Stammers *A Sower Went Forth to Sow*, was incorporated into the display. Stammers contributed to the famous Airmen’s Chapel at Lincoln Cathedral.

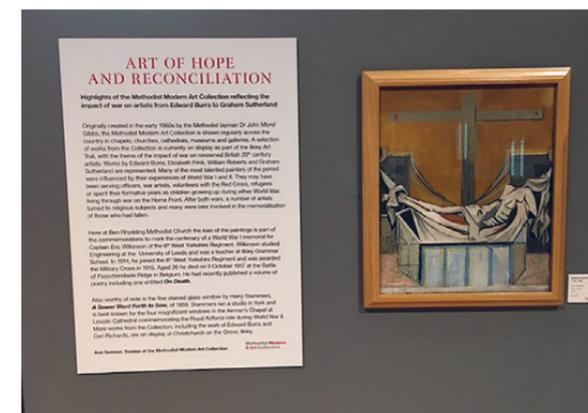
At both churches, storyboards explained the overall theme of the exhibition - the hope artists found in Christian themes as they recovered from their own experiences of war, whether they had lived through bombing raids as children (Elisabeth Frink), served in the army themselves (William Roberts), been a medical orderly (Roy de Maistre), a child refugee fleeing Nazi Germany (Ralph Beyer) or who had witnessed conflict as an official War Artist (Graham Sutherland) and how their experience of war had influenced their art. Graham Sutherland’s *Deposition* was inspired by a booklet of harrowing images of the Nazi Holocaust

showing victims of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April 1945. An opening event on 4th October was well attended. 53 enthusiastic volunteer stewards greeted visitors and distributed the information ‘hand outs’. The Visitors Book revealed that audiences came from the Wirral, Lytham St Annes, Manchester and York with most from Ilkley, Otley and Leeds, all giving positive feedback.

Ann Sumner, a Management Committee member, lectured on the history of the Collection, explaining the impact on its founder, John Morel Gibbs of both World Wars. His own father died in action in WWI and he, himself, was a conscientious objector in WWII. On 8th October a Service inspired by the Collection at Ben Rhydding was led by Rev Liz Smith. That afternoon a commemoration of the life of Captain Wilkinson took place, celebrating his poetry, and attended by Ilkley Grammar School staff and students. A moving exhibition of artwork and poetry by Ben

Rhydding Primary School, put together by Roger Davy, was also on display and a further commemoration with them, on the Monday, saw the church packed with participating children, and their parents. The exhibition was made possible by generous support from Churches Together in Ilkley, sponsorship from a local company, Servicepower and generous donations by two local benefactor couples. We are grateful to all who helped us bring the Collection to Ilkley, whether as volunteers or donors. The exhibitions and events programme linking the Collection to nationwide commemorations, marking 100 years since WWI, brought new audiences into both churches and a new perspective to the curation of the Collection.

Chris Solomon and Ann Sumner, Exhibition organisers at Ben Rhydding.



(Top) 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; (Bottom) Graham Sutherland’s *The Deposition* on display at Ben Rhydding Methodist Church with introductory storyboard. Photo Ann Summer

BATTERED AND BERTHED

Princes Quay Shopping Centre, Hull
21 October—31 December, 2017

'We wanted to offer people a sanctuary space, and trust the Holy Spirit to do any interpreting that was required.'

During our year in the spotlight as the UK City of Culture 2017 'Believe in Hull', a collection of 90 churches across the city worked together to bring part of the Methodist Modern Art Collection into the centre of the city. Hull's long seafaring history is celebrated and reflected in the city's unique culture; those who worked at sea were frequently subject to a severe battering by the wind and waves.

The City of Culture volunteers, dressed in their iconic turquoise and pink, encouraged visitors into the exhibition, and volunteers from 'Believe in Hull' welcomed them, providing information about the exhibition. 'I Spy' quizzes were given to younger visitors and, most importantly, 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).

By creating a pop-up gallery in the middle of one of the large shopping centres in the very heart of Hull, we managed to provide a counter-cultural space, particularly in the consumerist and stressful run up to Christmas. The shopping centre itself has had a difficult time economically, and is just starting to find its feet again. The Visitors' Book reflects how people appreciated not only the amazing work they found within the exhibition but also the space to 'be'.

During the season of Advent, we traditionally explore stories of waiting, of hope, and of home, our personal 'berth', and reflect on a birth for a new family in a place far from home. In the Battered and Berthed exhibition we offered a varied programme of guided visits for groups. To tie in with late night shopping we offered live performances at what we called "Arts House". Local musicians, puppeteers and storytellers came, together with more renowned performers like Bob Hartman and Dave Bainbridge, to fill our Thursday evenings as people popped in to see what was going on.

Local community and faith leaders gave talks, led workshops, and helped create reflective space to encourage

us in considering the various works of art, to reflect on 'the refuge of our own home berth' and what the Advent season means to us, individually, as well as a community. The exhibition deliberately contained few written words; we wanted to offer people a sanctuary space, and trust the Holy Spirit to do any interpreting that was required. With over 4,000 visitors coming in over the days we were open to the public, plus those who came as part of booked visits, popped in for the live "Arts House", or Sunday evening reflections, we were busy people. We know that the Good News that there is a harbour in the storm, a place to belong, and an ancient story of hope that we can be part of, has reached many people in Hull this last Christmas. The photograph below shows folk gathered for one of our Sunday evening sessions to consider one specific painting together, and sing a few alternative carols ('O broken town of Bethlehem, Your people long for peace...' proved a particular favourite).

— Liane Kensett

So many interesting new initiatives here. Well done Liane and your team! However, once again it is sad to have to report that the uptake from local schools in the Hull area was very limited with many reporting that the cost of transporting pupils to the exhibition venue was prohibitive. —Ed

FROM SUFFERING TO SANCTUARY

Victoria Methodist Church, Bristol
27 January—28 February, 2018

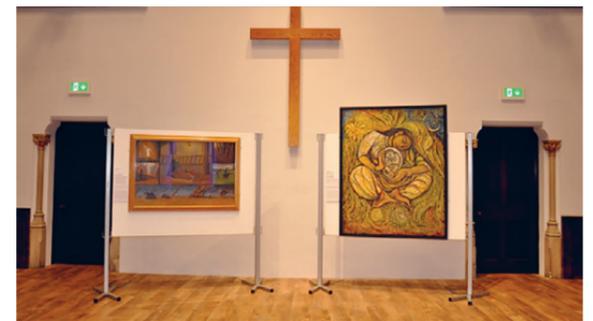
Four works from the Collection formed part of a powerful exhibition at Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol in January and February 2018. The exhibition was entitled 'From Suffering to Sanctuary' and was timed to open on Holocaust Memorial Day. It served also to open up the newly refurbished sanctuary to the local community and beyond.

Graham Sutherland's painting, *The Deposition*, perhaps the best-known of the four, is acknowledged to have been influenced by his viewing of photographs of Buchenwald and other concentration camps.

Reflecting the church's wider emphasis on refugees and asylum seekers, Francis Hoyland's *Nativity Polyptych* drew attention to 20th century expressions of the Massacre of the Innocents: warfare raging in the Congo at the time Hoyland was painting (1961), a child struck down by a nuclear attack, parents fleeing with a pram in Richmond Park.

Jyoti Sahi's large canvas, *Dalit Madonna*, showing an Indian mother with her unborn infant, evoked a poignant tenderness as a backdrop to the children's opera 'Brundibar' which was staged twice during the day. The opera, performed in Terezin concentration camp, follows a folk storyline that acts as an allegory for the triumph of unity and friendship over oppression. While it has no overt references to the conditions under which it was performed, certain phrases would have been recognized by the audience as clearly anti-Nazi.

The fourth work from the Methodist Collection was Nicholas Mynheer's *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, painted in 2003. All four paintings had been captioned with additional commentaries by students at the neighbouring Bristol School of Art.



(Top) 'Concentration Camp' scenario, from the Opera *Brundibar*; (Middle) The Dalit Madonna proving as popular as ever; (Above) Francis Hoyland's *Nativity polyptych* and Jyoti Sahi's *Dalit Madonna* seen together at Bristol Victoria.

A most memorable part of the day was hearing from three speakers linked with the Voice Network, describing their experience in Bristol as refugees from Iran, Iraq and Albania. Bristol Hospitality Network, who offer support to destitute refugees and asylum seekers, prepared a delicious meal for those who had come to learn and express solidarity through visiting the exhibition and watching the opera.

Local schools had been approached to produce artwork relating to the story of 'Brundibar'. The exhibition also featured poems and paintings by Abdullah Bash, an Iranian refugee living in Bristol, and photographs by Jackie Morgan relating to the context of Coptic Christians in Egypt.

An excellent example of what a

church community can do to encourage inclusion and dialogue through food, conversation and the creative arts.

— Sarah Middleton

*Readers may also be interested to know of an illuminating talk about Edward Burra's *Pool at Bethesda*, in terms of the influence on the artist of photographs coming out of Bergen-Belsen. The talk was given by Rev Bruce Thompson, as part of a series offered when the Methodist Modern Art Collection was on show at Lincoln Cathedral. The full script of this talk may be seen on the Resources page of the Art Collection website at www.methodist.org.uk/media/7232/btonebfinalscriptmar2018.pdf —Ed*



(Above) Exhibition curator, Liane Kensett; (Right) One of our special Sunday evenings together. Photos: Tony Barker and Mark Kensett



ELSEWHERE IN THE ART WORLD

TRURO CATHEDRAL'S CRAIGIE AITCHISONS

We are told that it took a good few years for the work of Craigie Aitchison, R.A., C.B.E. (1926-2009) to be accepted, as appropriate for display in places of worship. It was, in fact, the last throes of the 20th Century before Truro Cathedral made what, at the time, would have seemed a brave decision.

A site-specific placement of a work, a tetraptych entitled *Calvary*, was in 1996-7, commissioned and funded, by the Jerusalem Trust. It can be seen in St. Margaret's Chapel, taking its place behind and above Peter Skerrett's beautifully fashioned contemporary yew and glass altar of 2002.

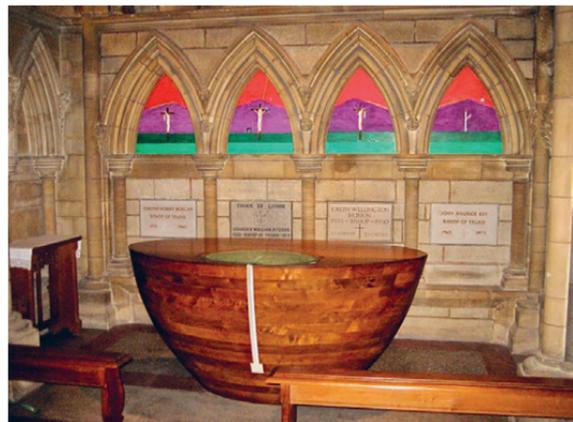
The Aitchison paintings occupy the four small arched recesses on the east wall of the chapel. They are very much in the accepted tradition of his works on the theme of the Crucifixion with the two thieves on either side of Christ, and Aitchison's Bedlington terriers making their requisite appearance on two of the panels. We can also observe a bluebird perched on the horizontal element of the cross, adjacent to our Lord's left arm.

Truro Cathedral is a late Victorian edifice not over-endowed with religious art although the impressive stained glass does include a particularly interesting portrayal of John Wesley, in full flow, preaching at Gwennap Pit. Thus the Aitchison's images do very much catch the eye.

Further works by Craigie Aitchison can be found in Liverpool Cathedral, Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, National Galleries of Scotland, Birmingham Art Gallery and in St. Michael's, Aldebourne. The Tate also have four of his works within their own Collection, one of which is a 1987 work entitled *Crucifixion 9*.

Extensive notes on the Methodist Modern Art Collection's Pink Crucifixion print can be found on the 2106 insert to the Guide.

— The Editor



St. Margaret's Chapel, showing the Aitchison tetraptych



Peter Skerrett's 2002 altar A section from the Calvary tetraptych

TWO EXHIBITIONS IN NORWICH AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR...

THE MURALS OF THE BOGSIDE ARTISTS: ART, CONFLICT AND REMEMBERING

*Norwich Cathedral Hostry
November 2017*

REMBRANDT: LIGHTENING THE DARKNESS

*Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery
October 2017—January 2018*

On paper, these two exhibitions seemed chalk and cheese. The in-your-face rawness of 12 murals painted on the sides of buildings during the Troubles in Northern Ireland contrasted with the subtle light and dark of Rembrandt's etchings, made just under 400 years earlier in a peaceful Holland. Yet for anyone familiar with the Methodist Modern Art Collection, they highlight many of the same universal themes.

In the Cathedral Hostry Gallery the travelling exhibition *Art, Conflict & Remembering* was skilfully mounted on black industrial-looking poles. It focused on twelve iconic murals painted on the walls of the Bogside area of Derry/Londonderry by three artists who experienced the Troubles first hand. They are not graffiti artists in the usual sense. They are muralists with many years' experience – William Kelly, who died in 2017, gained an honours degree in painting. The murals themselves, and the events they commemorate, are documented by eight contemporary photographers whose black and white images vividly convey the every-day domestic setting of the conflict. Here are pictures of real people, caught up in the horror and tragedy of armed conflict on their own streets.

The exhibition in Norwich Castle offered a unique opportunity to see the

93 Rembrandt etchings bequeathed to the Castle in 1951, together with four loaned paintings. As the title suggests, the exhibition was designed to explore the artist's fascination with light and shade and his skill as a printmaker – in fact he was better known for prints than for paintings in his lifetime. The process was illuminated through the display of several stages of a print, and the exhibition included a print room where the process could be explored with resident artists.

Rembrandt's mastery of the medium was particularly marked in some 44 religious works on show. It is not always evident to us today, but Rembrandt portrayed his religious figures in contemporary dress, emphasising the reality and humanity of the biblical stories and of Jesus himself. Some of the most moving, like the etching *Christ Preaching*, show ordinary people crowding around Christ, transformed through contact with him.

As in *The Pool of Bethesda*, or *Christ Writes in the Dust* in the Methodist Collection, both exhibitions brought the viewer face to face with real people in their everyday lives, caught up in extraordinary circumstances that can be devastating or transformative.

— Meryl Doney

Conscious that our reporting, other than on sovereign Methodist Modern Art Collection exhibitions, tends to be London and West Country-centric, I am delighted to be able to include a review of recent significant happenings in Norwich.
—Ed



(Above) *Christ Preaching with the Sick around Him, Receiving Little Children*, c.1649. Etching; (Right) Poster

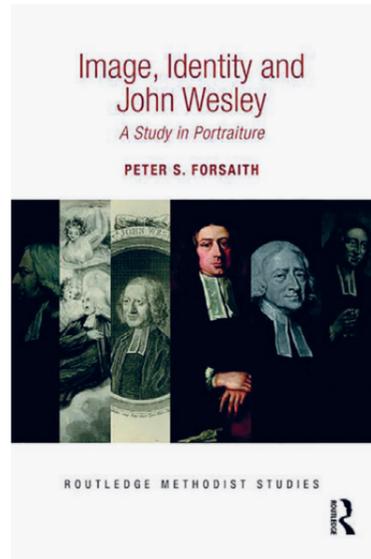


BOOK REVIEW

IMAGE, IDENTITY AND JOHN WESLEY: A STUDY IN PORTRAITURE BY PETER S. FORSAITH

Routledge, 2017.

ISBN 978-1-138-20789-9.



‘Although Wesley lived in an age of satire, he himself seems largely to have escaped.’

did he sit, and where is the portrait – since there is no other evidence? It is convoluted, but my conclusion is that this was in spring/summer 1755, though after six sittings there was no resulting portrait.

That exploration is a useful introduction to some of the issues and complexities around the whole subject. The next chapters consider portraits ‘from the life’. Two-thirds date from his last decade, leaving a general but misleading perception of an elderly clergyman. After he died people still painted pictures of him – right into the 21st century, and it is intriguing to see how the image evolved and heroic stereotypes developed.

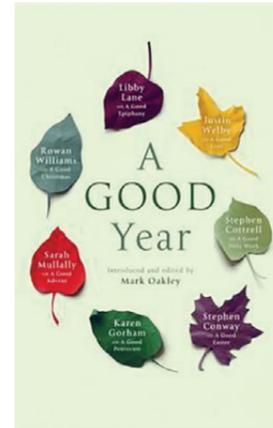
The Victorian era brought a crop of large moralising ‘scene paintings’: Wesley’s ‘Journal’ lent itself to visualisation. Many hung on the walls of the new municipal public galleries but, more typically, as large engravings adorned the parlours of upstanding Methodist families. The first (1839) was of Wesley’s rescue (age 5¾) from the fire that destroyed Epworth Rectory. The artist, Henry Perlee Parker, had painted a picture the previous year of Grace Darling rescuing the crew of the wrecked S.S. Forfarshire – now synonymous with the lifeboat movement. One dramatic rescue from water, another from fire.

There are hundreds of different prints of Wesley, some derived from paintings, some not. Although Wesley lived in an age of satire, when cartoonists pelted anyone in the public eye with insults and invective, he himself seems largely to have escaped. Concluding chapters look at Wesley’s (ambiguous) attitude to art and – back to beginnings – how what we recognise as accepted pictures of Wesley came to be where and how they are. A full appendix lists all the pictures I have been able to track down over more than 25 years – as I write no one has yet told me of others!

Dr. Forsaith is Research Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University. He is a member of the Methodist Church Heritage Committee... and, of course, our invaluable Custodian of the Methodist Modern Art Collection. Although strictly not within the remit of Modern Christian Art, this is a fascinating account of the part played, more often than not, unwittingly, by ‘the portrait image’ in the long life of the Founder of Methodism. —Ed

BOOK REVIEW

A GOOD YEAR — A COMPILATION



Seasons influence our lives in various forms, and the extent to which we are governed by them, differs. The church is not exempted and a few years ago St Paul’s Cathedral Adult Learning Department invited four bishops to talk to enquirers about how the Church of England divides its year into seasons. They were asked to elaborate on some of the distinctive religious and theological features of each season. Subsequently requests were made to publish these talks but this was put on hold pending the ordination of women bishops. The result was that a further three contributions were provided by the newly appointed Bishops of Crediton, Stockport and Sherborne. The published outcome in 2016 was A Good Year introduced and edited by Mark Oakley, Chancellor of St Paul’s Cathedral.

Each contribution reflects the personality, background, life experience and scholarship of each bishop. In that, lies both the diversity and the richness of the Church of England. Some are an easy read while others benefit from re-reading to derive full value.

Of interest to Friends of the Collection is that three of the contributions refer to pictures to help illustrate their written thoughts. Sarah Mullally, then Bishop of Crediton but recently appointed Bishop of London, in her reflection on the Advent season refers to *The Dalit Madonna* by Jyoti Sahi and part of the Collection. She makes the point that Mary was an outcast of society in terms of being a refugee and unmarried but the picture provides a powerful image that God is found amongst the broken and in unexpected places and people.

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, writing on Lent refers to *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, by Caravaggio, in a section that encourages folk to spend time listening and sensing what God is saying to them. Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely, uses no fewer than four pictures in his Easter season contribution. He takes *Noli Me Tangere* by David Wynne, *The Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca, *The Resurrection with the Raising of Jairus’s Daughter* by Sir Stanley Spencer and *Christus Rex* by Peter Eugene Ball.

We live in a very visual age and some would say that the younger generation neglect the written word and reading. The fact that three of these reflections make use of works of art to help make their point, and to accompany the written word, highlights the collaborative role and partnership potential of the Collection.

— Ian Baker

*A Good Year – Introduced and Edited by Mark Oakley
Published by SPCK / ISBN 978-0-281-07703*

FORTHCOMING TOUR PROGRAMME FOR THE COLLECTION

2018

13 May to 17 June

Isle of Man

Venue details: 6 churches
Ramsey Methodist Church IM8 1DS
St.Andrews URC, Douglas IM2 5DA
Colby Methodist Church IM9 4NW
Peel Cathedral IM5 1HH
Promenade Methodist Church,
Douglas IM1 2EG
Ballagarey Methodist Church,
St. Mark's IM9 3AH
Contact: Mr John Binns, 01624 837143
Email: jbinns39@gmail.com

3-22 August (6-17 to the public)

Cromer Methodist Church and Church Hall, Norfolk

Contact: Revd Sharon L Willimott, 01263
512405
Email: sharon.willimott@methodist.org.uk

7-30 September

Winsford, Cheshire

Contact: Revd James Patron Bell,
01606 558148
Email: james.patronbell@methodist.org.uk

14 November to 21 December

Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin

Contact: Neil Payne, 00353 87 2557578
Email: nhpayne@hotmail.com

2019

30 April – 9 June

Leicester Cathedral, Bishop St Methodist Church, St.Nicholas Church, St.Andrews Church (tbc)

Contact: Revd Fran Rhys (fran.rhys@
methodist.org.uk), Dr Miriam Gill
(mcg9@leicester.ac.uk)

September/October (tbc),

Carver Uniting Church (Methodist/URC), Windermere

Contact: Revd Martyn Coe
Email: unitedchurch@btinternet.com



Hilda Stevens on her 100th Birthday.
Photo: Paul Robinson

Mrs. Hilda Stevens, thought to be our 'most senior' subscribing Friend, seen here celebrating her 100th birthday back in October 2017. Born into a Baptist family in Bristol, following her marriage and a move to Bath, Hilda became an active Methodist and a loyal member of Oldfield Park and, subsequently, Horizon Church. No longer able to attend in person, she keenly looks forward to receiving a CD recording of the Sunday Morning Service – and her six monthly copy of our Friends Newsletter!

A THOUGHT TO LEAVE YOU WITH

*...I saw the angel in a piece of marble
and carved until I set it free'...*

— Michelangelo