

ncas
Sixty
Years
On...

Robert Short and Keith Roberts



Prunella Clough *Man Entering a Boiler House* Oil on canvas

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ncas **Sixty Years** **On...**

A brief history of the
Norfolk Contemporary Art Society
1956–2016

Robert Short and Keith Roberts

Published to coincide with the exhibition

Norfolk Contemporary Art Society Sixty Years On...

Treasures from the Castle's Collection

Timothy Gurney Gallery, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

September 2016

We are grateful to the John Jarrold Trust for their generous help towards producing this book, and to the Eastern Anglia Art Fund for supporting the associated exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum.

JARROLD
The John Jarrold Trust



Published 2016
Norfolk Contemporary Art Society
114 Pottergate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1EQ
www.n-cas.org.uk

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Acknowledgements: We thank Rosemary Dixon, archivist at the Archant Library, for her help in our research on the early origins of **ncas**, and Harriet Löffler and Hannah Higham, Curators of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Castle Museum and Art Gallery for their help while researching the history of contemporary works in the Castle's collection.

Design: Selwyn Taylor Artwork: Rachel Allen
Print: Swallowtail
ISBN: 978-0-9552498-3-9

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Fifty Years On...

The initiative to create a contemporary art society in our county was prompted by dismay on the part of a small but energetic group of local people at the pitiful representation of modern art in the Castle Museum. As far as the permanent collection of visual art went, any visitor would have imagined that painting had come to a stop with the nineteenth-century Norwich School around 1870. Apart from the Castle itself and the Assembly House, there was hardly anywhere for local artists to show their work. Temporary, visiting exhibitions of art in the modern idiom were likewise few and far between. A rare touring show devoted to Paul Klee was apparently greeted in Norfolk with an equal measure of horror and derision. The local papers were generally hostile. The Twenty Group, which celebrated its seventieth anniversary in 2014, was almost alone in holding up a heroic torch for modern art.

It all started with an exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum. David Carr, an artist and collector, had curated *Contemporary British Art*, a loan exhibition for the Norwich Museums Committee. On from December 1954 until March 1955, the show contained twenty-four works by twenty-four artists spread out over three galleries in the Castle Museum. The artists included what would now be regarded as major figures of twentieth-century British art, Sir Matthew Smith, Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland, Keith Vaughan, L S Lowry, Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud. It was reviewed on its opening in the local paper by MDWG who, although generally rather negative, said it was, 'a courageous and enterprising venture', and thought that Freud's *Girl in a Blanket* was, 'to my mind one of the best pictures on show'. However it was an article that came out the following year in March, just as the exhibition was closing, and written by EDP staff journalist Eric Fowler under his pseudonym Jonathan Mardle, that set the cat among the pigeons. Mardle, as his Norfolk-dialect name suggests, adopted his usual, traditional, chatty tone in dismissing the whole idea of contemporary art as being of no interest to 'us common people'.

This, and particularly his phrase, 'contemporary in the special and rather tiresome sense in which that word is applied to art', set off a vigorous debate in the letters section of the Eastern Daily Press, led on the 'contemporary' side by David Carr. By the summer there had emerged, allegedly over a lunch with Carr and Mardle, the idea of a 'challenge', in which each side would gather around

them a group of supporters, or subscribers, who would raise the sum of £50 with which to purchase a work by a living artist that best supported either Mardle's traditionalists or Carr's modernists. The works would be presented to the Castle Museum for display. By September each group had made progress. Mardle's group of 12 subscribers had chosen a large oil painting, *Summer Flood, North Wales*, by Charles Knight, a keen admirer of Cotman. Meanwhile, Carr had enlisted a team of 14 subscribers that included many artists from the Norwich Twenty Group. The group, consisting of Edward Barker, Ruth Barker, Jeffery Camp, David Carr, Ronald Courteney, Leslie Davenport, Joe Fairhurst, Willis Feast, Hubert Forward, Barbara Gilligan, William Hartwell, Sylvia Hartwell, Cavendish Morton and Hamilton Wood, had agreed on L S Lowry as their choice of a living artist. Lowry himself had then chosen an oil painting, *Landscape with Farm Buildings (A Lancashire Farm)* for them to buy. The argument had turned out to be less about Mardle's judgement of the 'man in the street', was evidently not about abstract versus figurative work, and was now more about Carr's insistence on the quality of the work.

Either way, the two teams met on the 22nd October to view and discuss the two paintings upstairs in the Flint House Gallery at 34 Elm Hill, in a room often used by the Norwich Twenty Group. Joseph Fairhurst, who was also an artist and member of the Twenty Group, had run the Gallery since 1949 and was to host many future meetings of both societies. In a long piece in the EDP the following Monday, Eric Fowler wrote that there had emerged quite a consensus at the meeting, and that he, as Jonathan Mardle, had suggested 'that both sides should cooperate to form a Norwich and Norfolk Contemporary Art Society'! R W Ketton-Cremer, asked to write a summing-up alongside the article, said, 'The Castle Museum is the richer by two admirable paintings'. He added, 'Quite apart from the acquisition of these two fine pictures, I think this controversy may have valuable results. It has certainly stimulated local interest in present day painting.' David Carr concurred, and before they knew it the idea was up and running.

Soon after, on the 10th November, a dozen enthusiasts met at the Assembly House to set up a temporary committee and to get the society off the ground. J F C Mills, a solicitor, was appointed as chair, along with artists Cavendish Morton and David Carr, while Eric Fowler (no longer acting as Jonathan Mardle!) became the interim treasurer and secretary. They set the minimum subscription at ten shillings! The first meeting proper of the society, at which it was formally constituted, was finally held after the Christmas break, back at the Flint House Gallery in Elm Hill on the 12th January 1956. Mardle in his column the following week described, rather fancifully, those attending along with the Lady Mayoress, as, 'About thirty Contemporaries (fiercely suspicious of being inveigled into buying academic pictures) were mixed up with about thirty old-fashioned people like myself (fearful of being implicated in purchasing works of art made of bits of old flannel and newspaper, with square trees and triangular nudes)'.



David Carr



Cover of Catalogue for Contemporary British Art exhibition 1954/5



The Flint House Gallery at 34 Elm Hill, now the Crome Gallery

After a secret ballot, they emerged with both officers (Mrs Geoffrey Colman, President; J F C Mills, Chair; B M le Dieu, Hon Sec; Eric Fowler, Hon Treasurer) and a committee (Henley Curl, J Fletcher Watson, David Carr, Noel Spencer, Cavendish Morton and Ruth Barker). They also defined the initial objects of the society, ones not greatly different to our current aims:

- (a) To encourage interest in creative art of the present day in all its branches;
- (b) to organise art exhibitions;
- (c) to raise funds for the purchase of works by living artists for presentation or loan to public museums.

By May, when they held their first event, a talk by Eric Newton, they had already amassed 120 members. And before their first AGM, held on 14 February 1957, they had already brought Anthony Blunt up to Norwich to talk on Picasso, and by the next year they had over 200 members!

In his opening address for *Surprise!*, the society's exhibition of modern art from Norfolk private collections at the Castle in September 2004, Timothy Colman said:

David Carr was possibly our hero in this story: a rather dashing romantic of everyone's imagination with a gift for strident comments on the art world. David was himself a painter of some talent, and lived on the Norfolk/Suffolk border with his wife Barbara, who also painted. He was articulate, good looking, and always, I recall, wore a dark blue shirt. He had a lively mind and independent means. In a sense, he was cut out to be 'the angry young man'. He was a friend of many artists, including Prunella Clough.

Recalling Carr on a visit to Starston in 1959, Bryan Robertson has written:

I realised most vividly how deeply personal to David were the separate but interrelated strands in his life: painting, collecting, and his work for the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society – where he had occasional quarrels and feuds. He was a maverick, fundamentally an autodidactic one-man band, and no respecter of authority if it imposed in any way on his own ideas, opinions and activities.

In addition to his love of L S Lowry, Prunella Clough, Colquhoun and McBride, Carr's allegiance was to Abstract Expressionist painters like Pollock, Kline and Rothko, and to 'tachistes' like the Dutchman Karel Appel whom he knew. We may feel it was a shame that more of these 'beyond-Britain' loves of Carr's did not get reflected in these early purchases. Carr was confident that if the artists were approached individually, the society would be able to buy good paintings for as little as £25 to £30, and thus lay the foundations of a local collection of contemporary art.

Already there were arguments about what was meant by 'contemporary', a dispute that kept breaking out intermittently until at least the 1980s. Francis Davidson argued that it was not enough for works to be made by living artists to

Apart from the two paintings, offered to and accepted by the Norwich Castle Gallery, the contest produced the suggestion from Jonathan Mardle that both sides should co-operate to form a Norwich and Norfolk Contemporary Art Society. The main object of the Society would be to raise a fund with which the Castle Gallery authorities could buy pictures or sculpture by living artists.

Eric Fowler writing as Jonathan Mardle in the EDP 24.10.55

make them 'contemporary' – not, for instance, if they took no account of the discoveries of Matisse, Picasso and their successors. David Carr suggested that purchases by the Contemporary Art Society in London could be a guide for the **ncas**. The acting chair of the meeting, Henley Curl, settled the issue for the time being by proposing that the society stick with the terms of the rules that the founding committee had set down, to the effect that 'living artists' be the criterion, without requiring further definition.

Whether they knew it or not, our founders thus set up a body the like of which exists nowhere else in Britain. Of course, there are many 'friends of museums' organizations. The website for the British Association of Friends of Museums lists 200,000 friends and volunteers across the UK, and Norfolk Museums have had their own Friends since 1920. But the **ncas** is the only art NGO/charity with a specifically contemporary remit, with a provincial base, and a role as a pressure group for the modern that extends a long way beyond support for local museums. Nationally, there is of course the Contemporary Art Society run from London and then based at the Tate Gallery. I believed for a time that Carr, Fowler, Curl et al., when devising our rules, might have cribbed phrases from the constitution of the CAS, but having recently compared the two, I find that this was not the case. The **ncas** is emphatically *sui generis* as it is unique.

Early years with Lettice Colman

According to Eric Fowler, the first months before **ncas** was constituted, when he was called on to act as both treasurer and secretary, were something of a struggle. He confessed that he 'went in daily fear of arrest for embezzlement through sheer incompetence'. Only slowly did membership creep up to 50. So there was something self-serving behind the good sense that led him to persuade a rather reluctant David Carr that the society needed 'a person of weight in the community' to assume its leadership. It was known that Mrs Geoffrey (Lettice) Colman was sympathetic to its aims, so Fowler went to see her:

She sat me down beside a log fire in her big drawing room at Framingham Chase and let me pour out the troubles of the Society. ...It must have been very funny: the description of a Society of fifty people ardently discussing a list of a



Lettice Colman

dozen or more of the best-known painters in the country, democratically voting upon them in order of preference, and then having barely £50.00 to spend.

Lettice Colman agreed, albeit reluctantly, to be our first president. She soon resigned, however, to take up the chair, and as Cavendish Morton recalled, two years after her death in 1970, 'When she became President the Society just took off. She directed our thoughts so that we knew where we were going. She resigned to become Chairman and then worked even harder'. Unquestionably, and in the spirit of Carr's 1955 controversy in the press, the first ten years of the **ncas** were dominated by the resolve to form a collection of modern art for exhibition at the Castle Museum. The works acquired at this time, it should be noted, remain in the ownership of the society and are 'on loan' to the County's Museums Service. As now, such purchases were made in consultation with members of the Castle's curatorial staff. The society has rarely sought to foist its own tastes onto the Castle, although you might not have guessed it from press and public reactions of knee-jerk outrage.

The choice of acquisitions and the procedures employed for their selection tell us a lot about **ncas** at the time and the artistic predilections of its members. In these early days, all the members of society were encouraged to participate in the choice of art for purchase. Up and coming artists needed support (and their work might be cheaper!), but every endeavour had to be made to ensure that the collection was of high quality. Some 30 to 40 members attended the meeting to start the process for the first purchase in 1957. The resulting shortlist included Prunella Clough, William Scott, Lucian Freud, Edward Bawden and Mary Potter. In the event Francis Hawcroft of the Castle Museum made the choice of Prunella Clough (Hawcroft was later to move to the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester). Clough's painting, *Man in Boiler House*, was selected from among three submitted by her, by society members at the first AGM on 14 February 1957. The price Carr agreed with Clough was 50 guineas.

A similar procedure was adopted for the second purchase the following year. Again Bawden, Freud and Scott were in the ring, joined by John Bretley, Ben Nicholson and Graham Sutherland. This time the vote went to Sutherland. David Carr negotiated with the artist and *A Path in the Woods* (oil on canvas) was acquired for £105. Eric Fowler claimed it was painted specifically for **ncas**! (A year later an outraged spectator defaced this painting and it had to be restored by the artist.) The 1959 purchase came out of an exhibition at the Castle, which included work by Michael Andrews, Keith Vaughan, Alan Reynolds, Jeffery Camp, Mary Potter, Lucian Freud, Robert Colquhoun and Robert McBride. In the event, the society was able to spend £200 and purchased both *Figure in a Red Room* by Keith Vaughan and *Golden Clifftop* by Jeffery Camp. In 1965, Lettice Colman campaigned vigorously for the purchase of the suite of etchings by David Hockney for his artist's-book limited edition of the *The Rake's Progress*; she was outvoted at the AGM.

The society bought on average one work each year in its first decade. Looking at the choices made, a clear preference can be seen for figurative over abstract painting and over what might be called 'cutting edge' art at the time. No Abstract Expressionism, for example, though Carr did mount an exhibition of 'Action Paintings' as the society's contribution to the Norwich Triennial Festival of the Arts in 1959 (at a cost of £20 after receipts). No Pop Art as yet, though Eduardo Paolozzi donated his bronze *Head* after it was shown in an exhibition of contemporary sculpture curated by committee member Edward Barker in 1962. By 1965, the society had bought works by Alan Reynolds, Patrick George, Peter Lanyon, Ralph Brown (another bronze sculpture) and Alan Davie. Prices started as low as £40 but were going up in the 1960s; the Davie cost a high (for the time) of £212. The major purchase of 1968, secured for £400, was *Thinking of Women* by Allen Jones – Pop Art at last! (It was almost immediately vandalized, but thankfully repaired without too much cost or difficulty.) The following year, Colin Self's drawing, *Empty Cinema*, was acquired for £180 minus a 10 per cent discount. The collection also grew through gifts: our Mary Potter, Anne Redpath and Ceri Richards were donated by Mrs Colman, and her brother Sir Robert Adeane gave the bronze *Standing Armed Figure* by Bernard Meadows, who by that point was president of **ncas**. Already in 1962, the collection numbered 14 works. The first of several loans to various East Anglian venues began when the collection was shown at the Hintlesham Festival of the Arts.

From a very early stage, the purchasing project was complemented by a programme of events to attract and retain members, whose number grew to around 200. A sub-committee was appointed, chaired by Ruth Barker, with a remit to think of lectures on painting, sculpture and architecture, film shows, visits to new buildings and to art exhibitions 'under the guidance of competent lecturers'. One idea was to start off with a talk by an eminent figure in the art world; in May 1956, Eric Newton duly lectured on Contemporary British Painting. The following year, Anthony Blunt lectured on Picasso's *Guernica*. Robert Furneaux Jordan, Michael Andrews and Roland Penrose came. Venues included the Assembly House and Mancroft Church Hall. The charge for admission was 2/6d for non-members and 1/- for members. Attendance seems to have varied between 25 and 40.

The events sub-committee established the tradition by which the society put on an exhibition to coincide with each Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival, usually at first in the form of loan shows from London galleries such as the V&A, the Piccadilly and the Marlborough. Links were established with the Norwich Art School, with talks and a forum by local painters laid on for students. Later, after its establishment at Earlham in 1963, contacts were made with the University of East Anglia. Alastair Grieve, the co-founder of UEA's collection of Constructivist art, came onto the committee, as did the Librarian, Willi Guttsman; the **ncas** helped fund one of his first art shows – *Sidney Nolan* – in the UEA Library foyer.

Relations with the Twenty Group, founded ten years earlier, were close from the start. While the **ncas** is not a society of professional artists like the Twenty Group, it has always had artist members. Twenty Groupers on the committee at this time included Edward and Ruth Barker, Cavendish Morton, Leslie Davenport, Geoffrey Wales, and more recently Bill English, Peter Baldwin, Joanna Reynolds and Derek Rae. Nor was architecture forgotten: the City architect, David Percival, addressed the society, and occasional joint events with the Norfolk and Norwich Association of Architects date from 1965.

1959 saw the first of the exhibitions, and happily recalled study weekends at Lettice Colman's home at Framingham Chase. Henley Curl wrote that she was 'always one of the main driving forces behind the society, recruiting members, full of ideas, with most useful contacts and generous in the extreme'. Although it was not specifically an **ncas** event, the profits of £100 from her 1959 exhibition went towards the society's purchase fund. Highlights from the show were a portrait head in watercolours by Lucian Freud and a fine Matthew Smith. Lettice's brother-in-law, the writer Roger Fulford, gave a talk 'to a crowded room, after which tea was provided'. Here is how – reminiscing in 2004 – Timothy Colman recalled this and subsequent **ncas**-related events at his mother's home,

A widow, she lived alone in a large country house at Framingham, where I was brought up, and she took up contemporary art as a new interest with almost frenetic energy, throwing herself into a programme which included lectures, discussion panels, and dinners in a country house setting.

In addition to Roger Fulford, eminent visitors included Robert Adeane – founder of the Friends of the Tate, whose Adeane Bequest of (mainly) surrealist paintings is kept at the Castle Museum; Michael Jaffé of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge; Pauline Vogelpoel of the London CAS; and Bryan Robertson of the Whitechapel Gallery. Norman Reid, director of the Tate, was another friend and visitor, and it was thanks to Lettice that Reid, along with Roland Penrose, became the first patrons of the society in 1966. In the book *David Carr: Discovery of an Artist* (Quartet, 1987) which he co-authored with Ronald Alley, Bryan Robertson gives a flavour of these events at Framingham Chase,

Lettice's large house was very often at the disposal of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society and it was where, as chairman, she organised art panels and very enjoyable dinner parties with artists and other London visitors mixed up with unfazeable country neighbours who looked upon some of Lettice's modern art jamborees with the same calm attention they would bring to bear upon an agricultural or cattle show.

The 1970s

1970 represented a milestone in the history of the society in a number of ways. Lettice Colman died at the end of the year. As chair since the earliest days, she

had been the dynamic spirit behind so much that had been achieved: raising funds, encouraging acquisitions, inviting prestigious speakers, putting the society on the map as a unique provincial venture, engaging with artists, critics and collectors of national calibre, forging links with the Tate and other London galleries. David Carr had died two years previously. Eric Fowler had long since taken a friendly back seat. The old guard was being superseded by 'Young Turks': Michael Everitt, Peter Baldwin, Ian Chance, Judy Marle and myself among others.

According to Michael Everitt, who had led an unsuccessful attempt to promote Lettice Colman 'upstairs' to a vice-presidency, this new generation was already impatient with what they saw as the over-cosy association of the society with the County set and the metropolitan 'great and the good'. There was grumbling that, for all the appearance of democratic procedures in the selection of purchases, in reality they were stitched up privately between Lettice and her cronies. (The justice of this charge is challenged in the case of the *The Rake's Progress* prints episode, mentioned above, where Lettice was outvoted in her championship of the Hockneys. In the light of this, and given the quality of so much that was acquired under Lettice's chairmanship, one may wonder if the occasional setting aside of the democratic niceties was such a bad thing!)

A call to order of a different kind, but which also proved to be a turning point in the history of the society, had come from the sculptor Bernard Meadows in his presidential address to the AGM in 1969. Confronting the challenge to a small society like ours, trying to acquire first-rate art in an age of rapidly rising prices, Meadows argued that the **ncas** henceforth should either save up longer and buy fewer – but major – works, or else settle for buying less notable drawings and prints annually. His advice was heeded and the pace of acquisition has slowed ever since.

A new era began in 1971 when David Cargill was elected chair. As partners in the Angela Flowers Gallery, David and his wife Shirley were already building up a significant private collection of contemporary art at their home, then Alby Hall. The society's first major acquisition under the new regime was the large abstract oil painting by John Hoyland, bought from the Waddington Galleries for £1,000. Half of the funding for this came from the V&A National Art Collections Fund. The Hoyland did not enter the society's own collection as previous purchases had done, but was made as a gift to Norwich City Council, and hence to the Castle Museum. This set the precedent for nearly all our major commissions and purchases ever since, though the beneficiary became the Norfolk Museums Service. The logic was simple: matching funding was required if the society was to acquire more ambitious and more costly works. Matching funding would only be granted if the work in question were to be donated to a public institution. Our ongoing negotiation at the time with the Charity Commission to secure charitable status for the society was a further consideration.

A number of other factors contributed to a change of course in the society's purchasing policy in the early 1970s. They remain operative today. There was no longer space in the Castle galleries to display more than a fraction of the contemporary art that had by now entered its collections. This was in part due to **ncas** efforts – certainly to its pump priming and example – but the Castle was now also purchasing modern art on its own. The London-based Contemporary Art Society was generous with its gifts. While there were obviously huge gaps in the collection – as there still are – there was now less incentive for us to buy for the Castle when work was likely to be consigned to the store. At the same time, we were further discouraged because the Castle found it administratively impossible to accede to the quite numerous outside requests to loan our collection – from the Minorities at Colchester, the Thetford Festival and the Bury St. Edmunds Gallery, for example. Only individual works got loaned.

Our relations with the Castle – under the benign direction of Francis Cheetham, and particularly with curatorial staff such as Miklos Rajnai, Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton and Norma Watt – remained very cordial. We continued to put on exhibitions there, and to hold lectures and give parties there. The **ncas** and the Castle still get on very well today. At that time we were constantly in touch with Andrew Moore, the Keeper of Pictures, with Nick Thornton who put on exhibitions with such flair, and with Norma, who knew everything, and who served the society for so long as our membership secretary.

A policy sub-committee in 1974 reconsidered the function of the **ncas**, particularly in the light of the arrival of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts on the UEA campus, which brought to Norfolk a collection of art, including modern art, that the county's other collections could not hope to rival. The working party concluded that the **ncas** should now be more 'forward looking', although it didn't say exactly in what way! But coincidental with this report and with Architectural Heritage Year in 1975, and thereafter, our major purchases have tended to be sculpture: public art for public places.

The first of our major sculpture commissions, in 1978, was under the chairmanship of Bill English, the principal of the Norwich School of Art and Design from 1972. (David Cargill had resigned as **ncas** chair in 1974.) After a three-year gestation period, the selection committee eventually settled on *Mother and Child* by George Fullard, who had recently died. Following negotiations with Fullard's widow Irena, it was agreed that one of his last works to remain in its original plaster form only would be cast in bronze for us by the London art foundry Gallizia. The total cost was £4,320, of which the Arts Council provided £2,000. The Department of the Environment funded the plinth and cost of installation close to the cathedral cloisters wall, where the piece still stands. The Lord Mayor and local television attended the installation in 1978 at which ownership of the sculpture was transferred to the Norfolk Museums Service. Like many of our other acquisitions on their first public appearance, *Mother and Child*



Mother and Child
by George Fullard

was immediately vandalized, but fortunately the damage was only superficial.

Coincident with the Fullard, the society commissioned *Girder Structure* by Peter Hide, one of the Stockwell Depot sculptors. After languishing for many years on an unprepossessing site between Duke Street Bridge and St Andrews multi-storey car park, the Hide is now rather handsomely located by the Barn Road roundabout at the start of Marriott's Way, along the old railway line to Reepham, and was carefully restored in 2005.

Another development in the early 1970s was the expansion of the events programmes, roughly from four or five a year to ten or eleven, a quota that is maintained today. I claim some responsibility for this: it followed my election to the deputy chair in 1974. Emulating Lettice Colman in a small way, I called on my friends and connections in the metropolitan art world, as did Shirley Cargill, to come up to give us talks: Richard Morphet, Simon Wilson, Edward Lucie-Smith, Roland Penrose, George Melly, Richard Cork, William Packer, Francis Spalding, Ted Polemus, Roger Cardinal, Anna Gruetzner, Angela Flowers, Marc Chaimowicz and many others. It became policy to have a noted artist to speak at least once a year, among them Ian Breakwell, Richard Hamilton, Richard Deacon, Patrick Hughes, Nigel Henderson, Colin Self, Eduardo Paolozzi, Allen Jones, Bruce McLean, Maggi Hambling and Bridget Riley. Visits to London exhibitions and private collections within a day's coach excursion (Ted Power in Mayfair, the Pilkingtons in the Lee Valley, for example) became more frequent, and there were trips to Paris, for a Cézanne retrospective, and to Amsterdam, when the Stedelijk extension opened. Christmas parties were held at the Castle Museum, Rita Thwaites often providing the excellent victuals.

Since the late 1960s, I had been mounting what we called 'Surrealist evenings', first at UEA and then in the grounds of country houses in Norfolk and Suffolk. There were about ten of them in all, and they took place in June after the exams but before the students went down. From around 1974, the original French language orientation of these events was dropped. And at the same time, they started to get advertised in the **ncas** programme. The first such was *Moonlight Circus* staged at the Loftus estate of Bulcamp beside Blythburgh Broad. It was the biggest 'Surrealist evening' so far, with between two and three hundred in attendance, not all of whom had paid for tickets (50p): word had got about on campus and a busload of gays who'd been having a conference there drove over. Likewise a group of what we now call 'New Age travellers' had seen our fireworks from their encampment on the beach at Southwold and rode over on their motorbikes.

These events lasted from dusk till dawn. They involved 50 or so 'performers', none of whom ever received more than their expenses. There was usually one biggish hired marquee for the poetry, theatre and film elements in the programme, but a lot of stuff went on outside in the open air. For *Moonlight*

Circus we had a 'ring' beside the river's embankment, on which was perched a line of fairground animals detached from their roundabout and mounted on huge rockers.

The highlight of all the evenings once they left UEA was a procession, usually starting around one in the morning, and led by a musician: a drummer or a horn player. Along the route through the grounds or fields, all sorts of 'delights' would be in waiting, each with its own lighting, and sometimes independent stage and loud-speaker sound system: tableaux with half-naked people perched in trees throwing down flowers on the procession as it passed below; St Sebastian, riddled with arrows, bound to a stake; a belly-dancer and her Egyptian band; giant 'ladybirds' with operators hidden inside, wriggling across an abandoned tennis court. The climax of *Moonlight Circus* was staged in an illuminated circular pit, probably a cows' watering hole that was dry for the summer. The procession gathered along the rim of the pit, in which a Minotaur figure (Keith Roberts in a horned mask made by Meg Rayner) menaced a scantily clad Athenian tribute maiden (the marvelous Freddie Riley). To the 'rescue' were meant to come a trio of phalluses – no boring Theseus here, thank you – volunteers encased in contraptions made of chicken-wire and pink papier maché by Ken Rice. Alas, one phallus was stoned out of his mind and never even got into his outfit. A second, who did, lost his footing and fell, bulb-first, into a blackberry clump. Only one made it into the pit to be ceremoniously decapitated by the Minotaur.

The last of the large-scale surrealist evenings was *The Night of the Femme Fatale* in 1981. In between had come *Pleasures of the Capital* and *The Night of Beauty and the Beast*, the latter at Wiveton Hall near Cley. One of these days I intend to do a full – and fully illustrated – account of these happenings, with due

The **ncas** at Elsing Hall
left to right Bill English,
Shirley Cargill and
Robert Short



acknowledgement of many, many extraordinary people – now alas mostly quite middle-aged – who helped them happen.

In 1976, Shirley Cargill replaced Bill English as chairman, and Professor Peter Lasko of UEA replaced Bernard Meadows as president. The first years of Shirley's command were dominated by the completion of the Fullard purchase. Also quite long in preparation was our exhibition, *Current British Sculpture*, curated by Derek Morris and Phillip King. The work of 15 sculptors, including Anthony Caro and a number of the Hardingham Workshop artists, was represented in this show at the Norwich School of Art in 1979. Once again, it was an event designed to be part of the Norwich Triennial Festival.

Two years later, we mounted the first of our Castle Museum exhibitions of *Contemporary Art in Norfolk Private Collections*: nearly 50 pieces from the homes of eight local patrons. Meanwhile, a start was being made on our next major sculpture commission, this time for the forecourt of David Percival's Norfolk County Library. In the event the competition, organised by Derek Morris and the Art School, attracted 147 entries and was won by Liliane Lijn. Her piece, titled *Extrapolation*, was composed of a set of overlapping stainless steel triangles set at an angle like the pages of a book to create an ever-changing movement of light. It was inaugurated in the Library forecourt in 1982, by our future president, George Melly, and accepted on behalf of the County Council and the Library Committee. Martini donated the liquid refreshment.

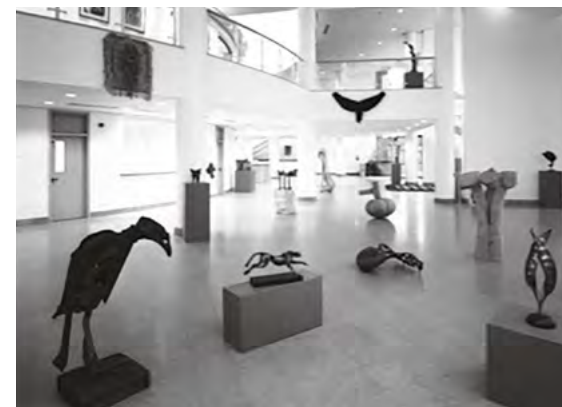
As had now become the norm, funding was raised by **ncas** members, and from organizations including the Eastern Arts Association, Sotheby's and the Henry Moore Foundation. The Lijn sculpture had to be surrounded with a protective fence in case children impaled themselves on its spiky steel sheets. I don't think Norwich people ever took it to their hearts. Subsequently it was moved to the grounds of UEA, appropriately close to the University Library where it stands today – a lucky thing since it was thus saved from meltdown in the County Library fire which broke out a year later. I'll never forget one of the Lijn fund-raising events, a party on a September evening in 1980 at John and Wendy Riches' home at Bacton. We were showing films in the garden when a bank of mist came in suddenly off the sea and blanketed out the screen. The audience stayed on enjoying the multi-coloured cone of light playing on the fog. A little later, we all went swimming off the beach in the dark. Conroy Maddox, the most faithful of all the first-generation English surrealists, forgot to take off his glasses, which were swept off his nose by the waves. Declaring that the sea would return what it had taken away, he spent an hour or so the next morning scouring the beach for them. Alas, his faith in serendipity was misplaced on this occasion. And his drive back to London later that day, by all accounts, was a little hairy!

Exhibitions

As we have seen, the society put on periodic exhibitions, often at the Castle and usually to coincide with the Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival. Since the 1970s it has kept this up, and more recently with increasing regularity. In 1976, there was *Reflection and Reality*, organized in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy: a show of contemporary Dutch art that later toured a number of other galleries in the UK. In 1985, there was *Art in Norfolk Now*, a selling exhibition of work by 65 local artists in the Assembly House, curated by Peter Baldwin and Nicholas Simmington and opened by Timothy Colman. In 1988 we sponsored an exhibition by the Prague painter Jan Bauch, a modernist artist who had been mysteriously tolerated by the Communist regime. His work was accompanied to the Assembly House by a pair of heavily-overcoated Czech secret policemen – probably on their last mission before the Velvet Revolution swept all that away the following year. In 1989 the society mounted an exhibition of the work of 25 local artists in the Senate House of UEA to mark the university's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Two years later we put on *Waterland – Reflections of Norfolk* at Dragon Hall. I remember escorting the Duchess of Kent around the show, a somewhat disconcerting experience for a militant republican like myself. In 1993, the **ncas** curated *Four of a Different Kind* at the King of Hearts. Two years later came

Borrowed from Nature at
John Innes Centre 1995



Borrowed from Nature, an exhibition of 40 pieces of sculpture by 18 Norfolk artists, on the theme of organic form, botanical and animal. This was mounted in the foyer of the recently opened Conference Centre at the John Innes Centre on Colney Lane. This selling exhibition had a sequel, *Borrowed from Nature II* in 1997. These successful shows were put together by Derek Rae, Martin Welch from the Art School and myself, in close cooperation with the JIC's Michael Ambrose and Liz Atchison.

Acquisitions

On the acquisition front, major purchases for the Castle Museum continued, although at a slower rate than in the 1960s. Paintings by Nigel Henderson, Derrick Greaves and Bridget Riley were acquired in the mid-1980s. At around the same time, as our contribution to 'Norwich for Industry Year', we commissioned two murals: one by Walter Kershaw for the forecourt of Wensum Lodge; a second by Ian Starsmore for the entrance lobby of Hi-Tech House off Magdalen Street. The overall cost was in the region of £4,000, with more than half of that coming from Eastern Arts, and a contribution from Boulton & Paul. The Kershaw is still on view, and was restored a few years ago; the Starsmore, alas, languishes behind the boarded-up walls of a long-since condemned Hi-Tech building. In 1988, with financial support from the society, committee member Melanie Tucker completed a ceramic mural featuring Norwich landmarks in the pedestrian underpass linking Chapelfield West with the gardens. In 1988, we played an intermediary role in the commissioning of a large hyper-realist painting of the *Plantation Garden* by Antony James for the Vauxhall Centre. Two years later, Henley Curl made a bequest to the society of £2,000 to purchase a watercolour by a living artist. Boosted by a second timely donation of £1,000, the society set about maximizing this seed-corn with matching funding. The eventual outcome was our purchase of *Lotus I* and *Lotus II* by Howard Hodgkin: a pair of massively authoritative watercolours done on handmade paper during one of Hodgkin's sojourns in India. They cost £30,000, a sum successfully secured thanks to our original input being doubled up several times, principally by the National Art Collections Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.



Derek Rae standing in front of the Howard Hodgkin watercolours in 2006

The 1980s

There were significant changes in the personnel of the **ncas** in the 1980s. Penny Allen, the daughter of Lettice Colman, became a patron on the death of Roland Penrose, and London gallery impresario Angela Flowers succeeded Norman Reid. I took over the chair from Shirley Cargill in 1987, and ended up keeping it until 2005 despite repeated efforts to pass it on. Jane Edwards replaced my late wife Virginia as secretary in 1985 and remained in post until 2006. The following year, Peter Crocker handed on the treasurership to Derek Rae. Derek kept this sometimes unenviable job for 18 years until it was taken over by Susan Curran.

Coverage of the society's lecture programme in the 1980s, in an essay as brief as this, is bound to be reduced to a list of names. Nevertheless, the roster of speakers is pretty impressive. So many of the big names in the art scene nationally came to talk to us: Richard Hamilton, Frank Whitford, James Malpas, Peter Fuller, Brian Catling, the Boyle Family, David Sylvester, Elizabeth Frink, Nancy Balfour, Nicola Hicks, Julian Spalding, Bridget Riley, Stephen Bailey, Marina Vaizey, Ana Maria Pacheco, Andrew Causey, Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton,

Anthony Penrose, Marco Livingstone and many more. This intercourse, I like to think, kept our society in the metropolitan eye just as it had in the days of Lettice Colman with her Cork Street coterie.

The idea of an 'on loan' collection – later going under the name 'Artworks' – was first mooted at the 1982 AGM. Under this scheme, the society sought to encourage young, local talent by buying relatively low-priced work from mainly up-and-coming artists and art students. Such work was then loaned for display in public places – so far, principally the foyers and waiting rooms of local businesses, schools, hospitals, surgeries, UEA and the like. Would-be borrowers can access images of the 'Artworks' on our website and select what they like from the work available. The normal loan period is about three years, after which the borrowers can swap around if they so wish. So that the scheme can be as informal and cheap to run as possible, no charge is made, nor are the works insured.

The first purchase was made in 1985 from the Norwich School of Art and Design Degree Show. This became an annual custom, with the name of the student selected being read out at the NSAD graduation ceremony. All the committee take part in the selection process, meeting up in the courtyard of Cinema City after the Degree Show private view to compare notes and vote on what to buy: usually a noisy and slightly chaotic affair, but great fun. By the same token, though less regularly, we have bought works by artists represented in the taster shows for the 'Open Studios' event, when this was introduced as an adjunct to the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. The on-loan collection, curated by initially Diana Bulman, now comprises over 30 'art works'.

More recent acquisitions

A bonus from the development of the Castle Mall was the creation of a garden on the roof of the shopping centre, which the designer, Georgina Livingston, envisaged as a green for the display of sculpture. From 1990, the society had periodic meetings with her. Our original idea was to commission a tall mobile by Peter Logan in his characteristic brightly painted steel. Eventually, safety concerns put paid to this. We turned to Bernard Reynolds, steadfast friend to the society since its earliest days. Working up from a small-scale plaster model, Bernard produced *Parrot Head*, a magisterial bronze, four foot or so from beak to neck, which became the first sculpture to adorn Georgina Livingston's Castle Green. It was installed in 1994. The story of *Parrot Head* is worth retelling. Its origin was the skull of a macaw called Rubio that had belonged to Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines. Apparently Rubio had a foul tongue and an inexplicable antipathy to women. 'He' died after ingesting a sliver of broken glass from a wine goblet 'he'd' been attacking with 'his' beak. Only after death did his owners discover that Rubio had been a hen bird all along. Some years later,



Installation of *Parrot Head* on Castle Green in 1994
Left to right: Brenda Ferris (then Lord Mayor), Bernard Reynolds, Elliot (Bernard's grandson) and Robert Short

Bernard disinterred her skeleton from a Benton End flowerbed and kept it for future inspiration.

The year after *Parrot Head* was placed on Castle Green at a cost of £10,000, the society was instrumental in the gift to the university by member Caroline Hoskin of her father John Hoskin's steel sculpture, *One for Bristol*, now located on the old golf course in front of the ziggurats. At about the same time, we found another sculpture that we liked very much while on a group visit to the Chappel Gallery in Essex. This was *Monument to Daedalus* – a seven-foot cast-aluminium figure, half sci-fi and half classical Greek warrior – by the young Suffolk-born artist, Jonathan Clarke, son of the noted sculptor Geoffrey Clarke. *Daedalus* joined *Parrot Head* on Castle Green. In 1999, we commissioned Mark Goldsworthy – whose kind of work was already well known to anyone who'd trodden the Bergh Apton Sculpture Trail – to carve an oak tree stump in situ to mark the 400th anniversary of the exploit by Will Kemp, Shakespeare's fellow actor, in dancing all the way from London to Norwich (cost £4,500, destination: Norwich City Council). *Will Kemp and his Morris Men* occupies the former site of the Gurney clock, now transferred to Castle Mall. If the physical carving – in deep relief – of Kemp and his fellow morrisers, all round the stump, was an educational experience for the school parties who came to watch Goldsworthy on the job, its installation by Shakespearean actor Desmond Barrit (who happened to be performing at the Theatre Royal that week) was a hoot. Half a dozen at least of England's morris dance troupes turned up and strutted their stuff most royally, bladders to the fore, around the totem.

In 1993, disaster struck a recent Castle Museum acquisition to which our society had made a significant contribution. It befell Maggi Hambling's painted ceramic sculpture, *Reclining Moon Woman*. To the horror of one of the Castle's technicians who was quietly working nearby, the sculpture simply 'exploded' without warning, scattering in hundreds of fragments and much dust across the floor. The bits have been kept, but the piece is certainly beyond repair. In compensation, the Castle was able to acquire a set of six works on paper, *The Happy Dead*.

In 1994, the Castle's modern art holdings received a splendid boost in the form of the Adeane Bequest to what was to become the East Anglia Art Fund. Consisting of mainly surrealist paintings, it included a marvellous Chagall and an equally iconic Magritte. In turn, this same bequest gave some extra clout to ongoing efforts to win a 'Tate of the East'.

1990s events

The 1990s witnessed a succession of **ncas** St Valentine's balls, at the Castle or the John Innes Centre. They had titles like *Hand on Heart Ball*, *Pop Hop*, *Love's Body*, *Heart in Art* and *Masque with Eyes Wide Shut*. Richard Coward and



Sculptor Jonathan Clarke with *Monument to Daedalus*



Mark Goldsworthy carving *Will Kemp and his Morris Men*, 2000

Janey Bevington often did the décor. Janine Turner was a dab hand at sorting out the music: we danced successively to the Ouagadougous, the Red Herrings, Alka Salsa, and – could we ever forget them? – the Cleaving Heavages.

These were the years when Keith Pollard, for so long our principal events organizer, put on his 'Wood Works'. Biennially, in September, we would gather at his house in Old Costessey and make art out of materials to be found in his

Visiting John Loker's studio, 1991



wood and garden. There was a bottle of bubbly for the author of the piece voted best; it often seemed to get won by Kerriel Rayner or Juliet Wimhurst. In 1993, I put on *Dracula's Crypt* on the first floor of Dragon Hall, a mixed media and performance entertainment around the theme of vampirism. It was memorable for the sudden intrusion from below of a platoon of yellow-helmeted firemen; unbeknownst to us, the dry ice clouds that accompanied the awakening of the blood-hungry count had set off the long-distance fire alarm in the Bethel Street station! If *The Crypt* had echoes of the earlier 'surrealist evenings', so did the *Pataphysical Cabaret* put on before a bemused audience at The Last Wine Bar in 2004.

Speakers in the last decade or so have included Richard Humphries, Charles Harrison, Michael Ricketts, Mel Gooding, Peter Logan, Simon Morley, Bill Woodrow, Anthony Benjamin, John Loker, Conroy Maddox, Sarah Wilson, Richard Wentworth, Tim Marlow, Michael Peppiat, and again, many others. Mention must also be made of our annual coach excursions to the London area, to visit private collections, art fairs, galleries and major exhibitions. Invariably these trips ended up at the Chelsea Arts Club where Bill English booked our party in for supper. These boozy meals were tremendous fun, marred only by

arguments about the bill. The prices printed on the menus were for club members only. Despite being forewarned, our crowd was always dismayed to find that ordinary punters, like us, had to pay a good bit more! We went to see Ana Maria Pacheco's sculpture *The Longest Journey* on show in the Old Gas Hall in Birmingham, and we have also recently visited the modern art gallery in Walsall and the Minories in Colchester.

Funds

Funding of the society has always been somewhat precarious, even though membership since the 1960s has been relatively stable between 200 and 250. Members have often been unreliable in paying their subscriptions; and tardy in revising standing orders when the annual rates were raised. A half at least of income overall is set aside for the Art Purchase Fund. Attendance charges for lectures have seldom covered the costs of renting venues and the lecturers' expenses. Excursions have been expected to break even. AGMs have invariably turned in a decent profit, as have the Valentine's balls, not least because the committee members prepare all the food. In the early days, the proceeds from Lettice Colman's exhibitions and her annual garden openings were a significant contribution to funds. And in 1963, the first approach to the Arts Council led to a grant of £50.

After the setting up in Cambridge of the Eastern Arts Association, a regional arm of the Arts Council, the EAA's support, rising to £300 per year in the late 1970s, continued until 1985. While its funding lasted, the EAA preferred to fund the 'educational' functions of the society and exhibitions. It did not initially help pay for purchases. Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council have frequently contributed towards commissions that were immediately donated to the City or the Norfolk Museums Service. Matching or part funding has also come at one time or another from the National Art Collections Fund, the V&A, the Department of the Environment, Sotheby's, the Henry Moore Foundation, and from charities like the Esmé Fairbairn Trust.

Every major commission by the Society in the last 30 years has been preceded and accompanied by an energetic fund-raising exercise in which charities, local businesses and institutions, and generous individuals have made their contributions. In the case of the commissions from Bernard Reynolds, Jonathan Clarke and Ros Newman, the artists have given prints or maquettes, or smaller pieces of their own work, to be sold or raffled in aid of the funding. Since 1987 we have had biennial fund-raising auctions. Thanks to the intercession of former Lord Mayor and long-time committee member Brenda Ferris, these have always been held in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Diana Lamb and myself have always been the auctioneers, aided by dedicated, but necessarily changing, little bands of teenage porters. No one will forget the sale in the mid-1990s at



Robert Short is the auctioneer at our biennial sale in 2013

which Yarmouth-based painter Brüer Tidman bid for nearly every lot, pushing up the prices, most gratifyingly for us, though frustratingly for many other would-be punters. These auctions have invariably realised between £2,000 and £3,000, all of which has gone into our Art Purchase Fund.

The Norfolk art scene

Over the years, the provision of exhibition space for contemporary art in the locality – so disgracefully poor when the society was founded – has improved, even if by fits and starts. Although the society played no role at all, or only a peripheral one, in most of these developments, they both helped to fulfil our original remit and altered the context in which we operated. So the story of these developments and the story of the **ncas** are intertwined.

The university built up its own collection of Constructivist art under the curatorship of Alastair Grieve and Peter Lasko, who was later to become president of **ncas** for some years. Then came the Sainsbury Centre, the biggest fillip ever to the Norfolk art scene. In 1973 David Jolley was appointed curator of the Art School's new public gallery in the Gunton Building on St. George's Street. Shows in what is now called 'The Norwich Gallery' have been continuous there ever since, burgeoning in the 1990s with the annual exhibition of international art, EAST, under the direction of the indefatigable Lynda Morris. Willi Guttsman, UEA's founder librarian, made over his Library first-floor foyer for art exhibitions in the 1970s and 1980s, most notably for a show of graphic works by the Norwegian expressionist Edvard Munch. Commercial galleries like Frames and the Grapevine have come, and some, like Betty Jewson's in Pottergate, have regrettably gone.

In 1986 the Contact Gallery opened in a two-storey former shop belonging to the City Council in St Benedict Street, under the direction first of David Woods and then of Mike Toll. For almost a decade, the Contact provided a small but handsome showcase not only for local artists but also for numerous visiting shows. A liaison group was formed to coordinate its activities with **ncas**. St Etheldreda's Workshop was set up in King Street. Trevor Burgess established the Warehouse Artists' Studio off Old Palace Road. There was space for exhibitions of photography in the Norwich Arts Centre on St Benedict Street. Cinema City also made room for art shows on the walls of the 'Take Five' restaurant. In the early 1990s, Aude Gotto established the King of Hearts in Fye Bridge Street, which immediately became the main venue for **ncas** talks. As the Contact Gallery moved towards closure, the Advice Arcade Gallery on the first floor of the old lending library on Gaol Hill opened, under the direction of Mike Toll. But this too was soon closed down, in July 2000, despite vigorous lobbying from the **ncas**. Neither the Contact Gallery nor the Advice Arcade Gallery has been replaced.

But the switchback ride didn't stop there. Since the turn of the century, the



Nick Thornton and Sheila Read install a work by Laurence Edwards for *Sculpture on the Green*

Fringe has provided a terrific annual showcase for local artists in the old Bally shoe factory on Hall Road. Long may it thrive! Also on the upswing, the Outpost Gallery in Wensum Street set up shop in 2004, and Andi Gibbs opened his 'New Mu' Museum of Contemporary Art on King Street. EAST was reincarnated as the more extensive, biennial CAN 'Contemporary Art Norwich' had its trial run in 2005 and happened again on a still more ambitious scale in 2007.

Since the early 1980s, if not before, the society has been campaigning for a civic arts centre. It has always seemed to us disgraceful that a city as fine as Norwich has neither a dedicated concert hall nor a municipal art gallery. In the 1980s the Castle stopped showing local artists' work, whether by the Twenty Group, the Norwich Artists Group or the Arts Circle. In March 1989, Timothy Colman called the inaugural meeting of what became the campaign for a 'Tate in the East': a new gallery in Norwich to which the London Tate would lend, on a rotating basis, a themed selection of its twentieth-century holdings. The meeting was addressed by Nicholas Serota, director of the London Tate, who compared our project to the Tate Liverpool and the Tate St Ives. A steering group was set up under the chairmanship of Merlin Waterson with a budget of £5,000 to undertake a feasibility study. The society gave all the support it could to the project, and I served on the steering group until it became the East Anglia Art Foundation (now Fund). Alas, despite all the efforts of Timothy Colman and his 'Tate in the East' campaigners, Norwich was not going to get the new, purpose-built space for art that it so greatly needs. Instead, in 2000, we got a major refurbishment of the Castle Museum, one of whose features was enlargement of the area for modern art: a good thing, of course, but a far cry from our earlier ambitions.

From the outset, the society has also taken an interest in architecture and urbanism. The commissioning of sculpture for the city has been only one aspect of this. We have often had joint meetings with the Norfolk Architects Association, and forums – such as 'Sculpture and architecture: how can art work in public?' in October 1980 – about city planning and ways to improve the Norwich urban environment. In an address to an AGM in the mid-1970s, our then president Bernard Meadows inveighed against what he saw as Norwich's neglect of heritage and its policies of 'butchery and demolition'. Things have improved since then. In 1988, Michael Everitt proposed the setting up of the Norfolk Art in Architecture Group. Taking its leverage from the 'per cent for art' policy, NAAG's aim was to encourage property developers to incorporate sculpture into new buildings. It also sought to make links between potential sponsors and artists. Peter Palumbo, the Chair of the Arts Council, spoke at NAAG's inaugural lunch at the Nelson Hotel. Chris and Mary Lambert ran NAAG initially, and were later succeeded by Derek Morris. Given the parallel objects of the two societies, I represented **ncas** on its committee throughout its ten-year lifetime. NAAG was

wound up in 1998. Its remaining funds were transferred to **ncas**, which undertook to run with the NAAG baton.

As NAAG faded away, NART dawned. The Norwich Arts Round Table was part of the city's initiative for the renewal of Norwich, titled variously: 'Towards 21st century Norwich' and 'Norwich 2000'. The City Council had initially left the arts out of the picture. The society protested successfully against this omission, and as a result – and with a bit of help from Liz Edwards – NART became for a few years more or less an adjunct of **ncas**. We funded it, we called its meetings and maintained its database of about two hundred addressees. NART's finest hour came in 1998 when, with the help of a £5,000 grant from the 'Arts 4 Everyone Express Scheme', we were able to employ the Will Alsop Partnership to work up with us the Norwich urban embellishment scheme that became known as the 'Magic Carpet'. The basic idea was to map out an art-animated, pedestrian route to link up the new Riverside development on the Thorpe Station side of the Wensum with the city centre, passing through King Street, which was itself the object of an urban regeneration programme. We set up a cluster of study groups each focused on a specific issue: pathways, lighting, greenery, performance space, security, business involvement, disabled access, water features and so on. The findings of these study groups were fed into the deliberations of the main workshop, chaired by Will Alsop and his colleague Roger Zogolovitch, which was held at the Art School and lasted three days. The outcome was a large-scale map of a walkway over the river up to what is now the Chapelfield shopping mall, with a series of imaginative features located along the way, such as to entice and enthuse the pedestrian, adult or child. Whether acknowledging or not their debt to the 'Magic Carpet', the city planners, developers and Andi Gibbs, the King Street architecture consultant, have adopted many of its ideas under other names. A good deal of what Will Alsop dreamed has become reality. The annual King Street Festival pioneered by the Rev. Hereward Cooke is itself an offspring of 'The Magic Carpet' (the society mans a stall there each May, but we wish it didn't rain so often). NART itself was wound up as the new millennium opened.

The committee and the society

The society – and its committee – has often been accused of being 'cliquey'. A frequent complaint under 'any other business' at AGMs a few decades ago was that purchasing procedures were not democratic enough; members ought to have more opportunity to participate. However, when they have been invited to involve themselves at one stage or another in the selection process, the response has not been great. Nor had it been, indeed, in the first years, when members voted on a choice of works displayed in front of them; attendance at such meetings was apparently never more than 40. By the same token, members



The catalogue for our exhibition *Surprise: Modern Art from Norfolk Private Collections*

Woodworks 1996 an
ncas event



have not been particularly forthcoming in proposing topics for talks or the names of speakers they would like to hear. To put it more positively, when ordinary members have taken an active role they have sooner or later found themselves on the committee – even those like Willi Guttsman, the Rev Willis Feast and Michael Everitt, who specialized in asking awkward questions. For good or ill, **ncas** has always been a society very much led by its officers and its committee members.

According to our constitution, the committee consists of four officers (including an assistant secretary), the vice-presidents (three former retired chairmen) and eight ordinary members. The officers have to stand for re-election at each annual general meeting. Half of the ordinary members stand down every year. They are not eligible for re-election until the following AGM. They may, however, be co-opted for a year. Thus the society achieves a measure of stability in its running, together with the annual opportunity for renewal. By and large the officers have tended to stay in post until they have chosen to resign, and many of the committee members have also given long service: one thinks of Henley Curl, Peter Baldwin, Ruth Barker and Sheila Read in the past, and of Janey Bevington, Brenda Ferris, Liz Edwards and Keith Pollard today. Yet, even though quite a few of us have hung on in there for many years, it is worth noting that upwards of 120 individuals have served on the committee at one time or another since our foundation. Rather a lot for a 'clique', one might think.

The committee meets about every six weeks, with a slightly longer break over the summer holiday. Since the 1970s, these meetings have been at the homes of committee members on an informal rota basis, with coffee and biscuits offered at the start and wine at the finish. One of the oddest venues was Michael Ambrose's houseboat moored somewhere up near Brundall: on the hot summer evening in the 1990s when we crowded into the boat's saloon, mosquitoes came out in force. They fed on us so well that, when swatted, they left big

bloodstains on the ceiling. It has long been a tradition that the meeting after the AGM in July – when we welcome new members and wind up the previous year's business – is held at Shirley Cargill's Elsing Hall. It's somehow always been a balmy summer evening with time to wander about her marvellous garden before embarking on the agenda around a long stone table overlooking the moat. Though punctuated with bursts of laughter, tittle-tattle and other mischief, **ncas** committee meetings can be quite contentious. Often it's a case of members wanting to spend money and the treasurer trying to tighten the purse strings. Or there can be disagreement about priorities: on behalf of which of its objects should the society expend the most of its energies and resources?

What sorts of people, you might be wondering, have been sufficiently attracted by the society to subscribe and/or to serve on the committee? Are we 'the great and the good'? I suppose the answer could have been a qualified 'yes' in the early days, when much the same kinds of people were being pressed into **ncas** by Lettice as were lobbying then for a university for Norfolk. Some of these gentry folk are still on board. Few of us were as bohemian as the Twenty Group, but we prided ourselves on being less strait-laced than the Friends of the Museum or of the SCVA. In the provincial context there remains, even today, a whiff of the maverick, the 'left of field', the 'sexy', about contemporary art, which I hope we have done nothing to dispel. For all that, members have come from many different walks of life: artists (of course), teachers, academics, solicitors, librarians, accountants, housewives, architects, writers, journalists – in short, from the broad spectrum of the British (or at least Norfolk) middle class in the second half of the twentieth century.

We have always cultivated relationships with like organizations in the locality. In the mid-1970s, for instance, we shared publicity and many events with the Ellingham Mill Art Society, set up by the interior designer Lucy Halford and her husband, the painter Chester Williams, at their home and gallery on the banks of the Waveney. This liaison led to a lecture by Sir Hugh Casson, a famous two-night away trip to Amsterdam and a joint fete at Beeston Hall near Wroxham. When the Ellingham Mill Art Society folded in 1985, Chester and Lucy donated its remaining funds to **ncas**. There have invariably been representatives on the committee from the Twenty Group, the Norwich School of Art and Design, the Friends of the Sainsbury Centre, the University, the East Anglia Art Foundation (now Fund), and pretty frequently the Norfolk Association of Architects. In turn we have been represented on most of the above, plus the Norwich Area Museums Committee, the Norfolk Arts Forum, the Festival Visual Arts Panel and more.

In 1980 we put together a lecture pack, complete with a suggested text for speakers and carousel of slides. The idea was that any member of the committee, equipped with the pack, could introduce the society to a wider audience. For a number of years, indeed, this did happen and we were able to respond positively to invitations from Round Tables, Women's Institutes, schools and the like across



Woodworks 2000
Ros Newman and her
creation

the county, spreading the word. The pack still survives, though it's a somewhat curious relic today.

In 1988 we produced an 'Arts Map' of Norwich, which was distributed to all the arts and tourist outlets in the city and sold for 20p. A single folded sheet, it contained brief information about all the significant galleries and museums that gave space to contemporary art, and located them on a large-scale street map. As with so much of **ncas's** activity, this was another networking effort aimed at bringing together the disparate initiatives that have kept springing up on the Norwich arts scene, and thereby raising their collective profile. Lacking a geographical base of our own, we act like a pressure group. Often this means we protest: just to give a few examples, we protested against the closures of the Contact Gallery, the Advice Arcade Gallery and Strangers Hall in the 1990s; against the wretched quality of the City's millennium celebrations; against the last-minute change of mind about a promised commission of a £30,000 light sculpture (it had already been competed for and selected) for the grand atrium of the Forum. More positively, in 2000, we actively supported the County Council's project for a cycle path/walkway, Marriott's Way, between Norwich and Reepham along the disused railway track, especially because it gives opportunities for art interventions along its route. Likewise, when solicited, we offered advice to the creators of the Bergh Apton sculpture trail at its take-off stage. Such protesting and such networking still seems a necessary and worthwhile thing to do.

Art in Norfolk now

ncas members on a studio visit



Trip to the Minorities Art Gallery, Colchester, 2005
Left to right Jane Edwards, Liz Edwards, Brenda Ferris

The exponential increase in galleries, exhibitions and the general availability of modern art since the 1950s coincided with, and was a sign of, a similar increase in the number of practising artists living in Norfolk. This was a progress that went a long way towards achieving the original goals of the founders of our society. But by the same token, it reduced, relatively speaking, the significance of a small, poorly funded organization without real estate and dependent on the spare-time input of a coterie of 20 or so volunteers. And the cultural and artistic climate around us had changed dramatically too. In the early days, many of us in **ncas** had been champions not so much of art by living artists in general, as of art by living artists that was avant-garde, challenging and at the cutting edge. We were evangelical for work that delivered 'the shock of the new', with a measure of subversion to it, whether moral, political or aesthetic. By the 1990s such a stance had become unsustainable. Post-modernism told us that the era of the avant-garde was over. Clement Greenberg's historiography of Modernism, as a succession of iconoclastic new waves overtaking each other since Cézanne, was discredited.

Norwich's own Lynda Morris was both a witness to and an actor in this change of climate. In her essay for the Twenty Group's recent book *Sixty Years of Art*, she says she was attracted to Norwich by the 'pluralism' she found at the School of Art. By 'pluralism', we can understand, for example, a revival of life drawing, the renewal of respect for the traditionalist aesthetics of critics and teachers like Ruskin and Tonks, and for the art practice of a William Coldstream. It was the return of the 'hard-won image'. The hierarchies of avant-gardism were crumbling. A hundred flowers could grow. At the same time, a change of a very different kind was happening. Art was becoming increasingly commodified and mediatized. Since the 1980s and 1990s, artists have had to become streetwise and tuned in to the values of the market place. To be thought a 'good' artist now,



you have to have become a rich artist. The bohemian lifestyle typified by those annual communal holidays of the Twenty Group in their bell-tents at Winterton now looks quaintly archaic.

Among the general public, outrage at art's provocations has given way to an amused tolerance (vide Emin, Hirst, the Chapman Brothers). You might say that vandalism has declined because people take art less seriously than they did 50 years ago. Artists no longer pretend to be seers or 'architects of the soul'. Their job is – expensively – to entertain. They have become celebrities, not much different from footballers, fashion models or the contestants in the 'Big Brother' house. What have been the biggest disappointments? One has been the failure to secure better coverage of the visual arts in the local press. Even back in the 1960s, we felt they were shabbily treated. But the years when Hamilton Wood (Bones) had his weekly column in Eastern Counties Newspapers look like a golden age compared with now, when only major exhibitions get any mention at all (although we appreciate the astute writing of Ian Collins when once a month he's vouchsafed a column or two). Time and again, over the last 40 years, the society has sent delegations to Rouen Road to plead for a higher profile for painting and sculpture, but with little or no satisfaction.

Another disappointment has been the committee's difficulty in renewing itself with young recruits. Our average age has got appreciably older of late. Certainly we have been able to persuade younger people to join the committee, but we haven't been able to keep them. In retrospect, the last significant rejuvenation of the ranks occurred 35 years ago and it hasn't been repeated!

Perhaps the biggest disappointment is our failure so far to get for Norwich a permanent space for the exhibition of contemporary art, including the work of local artists. As we have seen, hopes have been repeatedly raised, only to be quickly dashed, as one initiative after another has come to nothing. In 2005 the principal of the Art School, Sue Tuckett, invited **ncas** and other interested parties to take part in a consultation exercise about what was most needed. She was confident of having the backing of Arts Council England, East, to develop the site of the Gunton Building into an architect-designed, custom-built arts centre combining a gallery, resource centre, outreach rooms and café. We have just learned that this too has fallen through!

Where, then, is **ncas** now?

The most recent of the society's commissions is Ros Newman's *Bird Flight* for the Friends' garden at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. It was at the invitation of Joan Luckhurst, then chair of the Hospital Arts Project (subsequently elected chair of **ncas** in July 2005), that we decided to donate a piece of sculpture. The creation of a quiet garden in front of the Oncology Department presented the obvious site. Fifty-nine artists submitted entries in the competition,



Ros Newman at the unveiling of her *Bird Flight*

whittled down to a shortlist of four who produced maquettes of their ideas. In the event, Norwich-based sculptor Ros Newman was the chosen artist, and her shining, stainless steel, aerial piece featuring some 20 seemingly weightless birds in spiral flight was the chosen work. It cost £10,000 (plus some related expenses), a sum raised almost entirely from donations and public subscription. Ros generously donated a smaller version of *Bird Flight* to be raffled, the proceeds from which offset more than half of the overall costs. *Bird Flight* was installed on a bright blustery day in June 2005. My only regret was that Brenda Ferris's idea to release a small flock of doves at the ceremony was vetoed by the hospital authorities; they were afraid the real birds would collide with the blades of the NHS helicopter!

ncas actively supported Norwich's bid in the national competition (2001) to be 'European City of

Culture' in 2008, while remaining sceptical about the chances of a place with no proper concert hall and no municipal art gallery. As expected Norwich didn't win, but there has been a useful consolation prize in the form of additional government funding for urban regeneration. Keith Pollard and I have represented the society on the 'Liveable City' initiative launched by the City Council in 2002 – yet another scheme for urban improvement, this time in partnership with a number of other cities in the North Sea region of Europe.

In 2001 the society started mounting exhibitions to complement the visiting Tate shows at the Castle. The first of these was a show on Castle Green of the work of three East Anglian sculptors, Dan Archer, Laurence Edwards and Peter Blunsden. In 2003, to coincide with Tate's *The Body*, Liz Falconbridge curated for us a show, *The Naked Truth*, at the Fermoy Gallery in King's Lynn. And in 2004, we put on a joint exhibition of photography, *Wide World*, with the Sea-Change Gallery in Great Yarmouth, from which one of the items exhibited, *East Point* by Robert West, was donated to the local authority.

At the end of 2004 we mounted *Surprise! Modern Art in Norfolk Private Collections*, a sequel to a similar show back in the early 1980s. It comprised 30 works of very high quality borrowed from seven collectors. Many visitors were indeed 'surprised' to discover that major works by the likes of Miro, de Stael, Sam Francis, Rosenquist, de Kooning, Hodgkin, Rego, Andrews, Hockney, Frink and Pacheco were squirrelled away in so many Norfolk homes. Derek Rae's role both in putting together these recent shows and in doing most of the work on recent commissions has been inestimable.

Coming up next is *Fifty Years On...* an exhibition in celebration of our first half-century consisting of a selection of the works loaned or given to the Castle Museum by **ncas** since its foundation. The free booklet you are reading is meant to accompany it. Finally, as of writing, we look forward to our most ambitious exhibition yet, with a budget of £115,000, largely funded by the Wellcome Trust, and secured for us through the efforts of committee member Keith Roberts. Scheduled for September 2006, *Making Faces* is a Sci-Art show that will form part of the British Association for the Advancement of Science Festival of Science, which is to be held in Norwich. It will be on show in the Forum, and will feature three artists working in intimate collaboration with scientists. It will relate to both the physical and artistic construction of the face, our interaction with the faces of others, the phenomenon of disfigurement and much more besides.

What has the society achieved in fifty years? Does the society still have a *raison d'être* when so many things have moved on? Assuming you've taken in something from the above essay, I leave these questions for you, 'dear reader' (as they used to say in the days before the foundation of **ncas**) to answer for yourself.

Robert Short

January 2006

(Robert Short was chair of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society from 1987 till 2005 and still serves as a trustee in 2016)



Our 50th anniversary party at the Castle. left to right Derek Morris, Andrew Moore, Nick Thornton, Janet McIntyre and Robin Jesson



The 50th anniversary party in the Castle. Joan Luckhurst in the centre

2006 to 2016: the latest decade



Joint lectures with NUA:
John Christie

Following Robert's excellent preceding history of our first half-century, I agreed, now that we are 60, to bring us all up to date with an account of what the society has been up to over this last decade. I have been deeply involved in **ncas** activities over this period, but I do lack Robert's elegant prose and raconteur skills, and so I shall be rather more factual and rather less discursive, even if I do insert my own opinions occasionally where I feel they're needed. Errors and omissions that remain, after proofreading by all our Trustees, must surely all be mine, but we would welcome any corrections and additions that you send us.

Changing venues, changing people

Over the decades, the Society has used a rich variety of locations to hold its events and AGMs, from pubs to chapels, from grand country houses to research institutes and Trustees' gardens. Finding somewhere suitable for our programme of talks, that met the often-conflicting constraints of capacity, cost, projection facilities and accessibility, has always been a bit of a struggle for the Society. For some years we used the Aude Gotto Music Room in what was then the King of Hearts in Magdalen Street. This room, in the ancient grade II* listed building, while beautiful, only holds a limited number of people, and the projection and temperature were sometimes inimical. It eventually became the Anteros Art Foundation and we gradually explored other venues. Some talks were held as joint events with Norwich University of the Arts, and their spacious new lecture theatre has been used for some memorable occasions, the artist talks by Ana Maria Pacheco, Cornelia Parker, Brian Webb and John Christie all being notable. Some events have been held in the local performing arts centre, The Garage, and some events that were held jointly with the Castle Museum took place in their Town Close Auditorium. Increasingly though, our good relationship with The Forum, that majestic Millennium building in the city centre, has seen us increasingly using their Curve Auditorium in the bowels of the building. Accessibility, equipment, comfortable seating for 120, and reasonable costs have all made this our current go-to event location.



Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton
with Cornelia Parker



Ana Maria Pacheco

Our AGMs are a very different matter, and we have a long history with this important event, always in July and usually clashing with Wimbledon final day, of holding it somewhere congenial in the Norfolk countryside. After a long series in



Relaxing after the AGM at Bolwick Hall 2013



AGM at Wolterton Hall 2009 left to right: David Holgate, Robert Walpole and David Mawson



AGM at The Cedar, Norwich 2014



AGM at Templewood 2008



On the balcony: AGM at Wolterton Hall 2009



AGM at Hunworth left to right: Keith Roberts, Susan Curran, outgoing chair Joan Luckhurst and Brenda Ferris 2007

Elsing Hall, and following its sale by the Cargills, we have since 2006, and courtesy of some very generous hosts, been to Gunton Hall (2006), Hunworth Hall (2007), Templewood (2008), Wolterton Hall (2009), The Tithe Barn in Needham (2010) and St Mary's Church, Burston (2011). We then returned to the City in 2012, meeting in an empty St Michael Coslany church, before heading back out to Bolwick Hall for 2013. In 2014 we returned to The Cedar, in Norwich, before finally heading back again to Templewood for 2015. These have



Exploring the grounds after the AGM at Bolwick Hall 2013

become well attended and very happy occasions, with a free glass of wine and a gourmet lunch provided at minimal cost by trustees and members, a brief business meeting, and a short talk by someone relevant to the year's interests, before the party mood takes over.

The chair of **ncas** trustees is usually appointed at the AGM, and since Robert Short stood down as chair in 2005, after many years of dedicated service, several different committee members have each held the post in turn. Joan Luckhurst took over at the 2005 AGM, presiding over our 50th anniversary celebrations, and she then handed over to Susan Curran at the 2007 AGM. Susan stood down in 2010, when Keith Roberts became Chair, finally standing down and handing over in 2013 to his deputy, Brenda Ferris who remains in post as I write. The chair's role is a demanding one, as I'm sure the previous incumbents will agree, but each chair has brought to the post new and interesting sets of priorities and passions and has introduced new ideas that have energised and enriched the Society as it continues to evolve.

The Society has two other official posts, its treasurer and its honorary secretary, and different trustees have occupied both in the last ten years. When Derek Rae stood down as our treasurer in 2004, Susan Curran took on the job until she was elected chair in 2007, when Cate Allwood bravely took over the post. Cate remains as our treasurer to this day, doing an accurate and efficient job looking after the annual accounts and our charity returns. The hon sec position, which had been held for many years by Jane Edwards, lapsed in 2006 until it was generously, and very competently, taken up by Keron Beattie in 2015. In the interregnum we muddled along, but the lack of administrative support was noticeable and the decision was finally taken to appoint a part-time paid administrative assistant. Some very highly qualified young applicants have held this post in swift succession, and we are deeply grateful for all the work that Julia Martin, Alison Hall, Eleanor Cherry, Claudia Milburn and Sarah Ballard have done for the Society since 2008.



The Forum, where talks and exhibitions have been held

The trustees of the Society meet regularly, roughly every six weeks or so, but the bulk of the practical work of the Society gets done by its two committees, Events and Exhibitions, whose membership is made up from the trustees together with co-opted members where needed. The trustees are an ever-evolving community of engaged individuals from diverse backgrounds and with very different skills and expertise. Some are artists, some are not, but all have served us with the clear goal of helping to enrich the City and County's experience of contemporary art. Over the last decade the following individuals, in alphabetical order, have all served as trustees: Cate Allwood, Steve Baker, Keron Beattie, Janey Bevington, Diana Bulman, Susan Curran, Jane Edwards, Liz Edwards, Bill English, Brenda Ferris, Gill Findlater, Caroline Fisher, Andrew Gibbs, Susan Gunn, Felicity Hartley, Chris Heuvel, Diana Heuvel, Robin Jesson, Joan Luckhurst, Helen Mitchell, Derek Morris, Nicola Ovenden, Nairne Plouviez,

Keith Pollard, Derek Rae, Keith Roberts, Robert Short, Selwyn Taylor, Heather Tyrell, Joseph Wang and Mary Yule. In addition to the trustees the committee always wanted to ensure that other closely related organisations had representation at our meetings and therefore delegates have been co-opted over the years from both the Norwich Twenty Group and the Castle Museum. The N20G have had Derek Rae, the late David Holgate and Sandra Rowney as their representatives, while the Castle had Nick Thornton followed by Penny Sexton. Latterly Hannah Higham and Harriet Loffler have been sharing the job, until Hannah left recently to become curator at the Henry Moore Foundation!

Artworks, and Art School prizes

Since 1985, the Society has run Artworks, our on-loan collection mostly containing contemporary works by local living artists. Many of these had been bought from local exhibitions such as Open Studios and Norwich Twenty Group shows, but more recently they were bought from the annual Art School degree shows. The works have been displayed in public spaces around the city such as doctors' surgeries and schools. Keeping tabs on these, constructing meaningful loan agreements and simply documenting the works proved a time-consuming business, and some works have wandered, been stolen or mislaid. But many terrific artworks remain, many of which have now found permanent homes over the last ten years. For example, John Broadbent's triptych, *Thinking of Mrs Hall* has found a home at UEA, Rebecca Lyne's plaster frieze, *Here's One We Made Earlier*, is now located in the Strangers Club in Elm Hill, while Lee Marshall's *Untitled* has been gifted at their request to the Castle Museum's permanent collection. Emily Mayer's powerful sculpture, *Dawn Raucous*, was loaned in

2014 to the Castle's huge exhibition, *The Wonder of Birds*, and is now located in the new Enterprise Centre at UEA. Robert Short, Diana Bulman, Chris Heuvel and latterly Diana Heuvel have all put in a lot of hard legwork with the Artworks project over the years.

But, with suitable locations becoming harder and harder to find in which to display works from the collection, the Artworks project had been slowing down for some time now. New works to replenish the collection had for some time been acquired mainly from the annual degree shows held at the then Norwich School of Art and Design. Based on a good bit of lateral thinking on Joan Luckhurst's part it was decided that, rather than buying more works, everyone would benefit if instead we awarded an

Dawn Raucous by
Emily Mayer



2012 Keith Roberts and
Rachel Kurdynowska (winner)



2014 left to right Brenda Ferris, Anthony George
(winner) and Joseph Wang



2011 Susan Curran, Katriona Parkinson (winner)
and Keith Roberts



2008 Susan Curran
and Kazumi Hyodo
(winner)



2013 Rose Davis (winner) with
John Last of NUA



2009 Joanne Young (winner)



2015 Henry Driver (winner) and
Brenda Ferris

annual cash prize to the chosen student. That way the student got a prize to mention on their CV, they kept their original work and they got some welcome cash. We get more publicity and no more orphan works to store in committee members' houses! This win-win situation also meant we could now include artists who produced site-specific or more ephemeral works that were essentially impossible to acquire for the Artworks collection.

So, starting in 2007, a small committee, with the gracious and enthusiastic help of the NSAD staff, chose their first winner, Margaret Cooper, who received a cheque from Joan, then chair, for £250. This practice has continued in subsequent years, and is currently organised by our vice-chair Joseph Wang, with the winners chosen largely from the Fine Art degree shows. In 2008, Kazumi Hyodo won the prize, in 2009 it was Joanne Young and in 2010 it was Kyle Kirkpatrick. In retrospect it is astonishing how well the shortlisting marks coincided with the final votes; many of the winners were unanimous decisions. We look forward to seeing how the artists' subsequent careers develop. In the following years we patiently continued the exercise, but upped the prize money

to £500, while NSAD itself methodically went through its own transformations, first to Norwich University College of the Arts and finally to Norwich University of the Arts. Our more recent winners are Katriona Parkinson (2011), Rachel Kurdynowska (2012), Helen (Rose) Davies (2013), Anthony George (2014), Henry Driver (2015) and Saskia Jonquil (2016).

A new constitution

ncas is an unincorporated association and since 1971 it is also a registered charity, with a charity number and a constitution. The object of the charity is 'to advance the education and engagement of the public in the appreciation of the visual arts and in particular the creative visual art of the present day in all its branches'. The Charity Act of 2006 required that we revisit our original governing document and so a small committee met to draft a new version. The resulting document is split into two parts; the first covers our object and powers, how we can use our money, how we can dissolve ourselves and how we can amend our constitution, while the second essentially sets out the rules by which we formally conduct the day to day business of the charity. It was approved by the Charity Commission and was formally adopted at our AGM in 2007. The full document can be found on our website.

Although not related to our constitution, we have always had, and highly value, the patrons of the Society, non-trustees who have made a significant contribution to the work or aims of the Society and who can act as ambassadors for its work, promoting it more widely. Our original patrons were Angela Flowers, Sir Timothy Colman, Paul King and Penny Allen. In the last ten years or so we have gained more patrons, whose names all appear on our letterhead. In 2007 Caroline Jarrold, Shirley Cargill, Bill English, Colin Self and Maggi Hambling all accepted our invitation. In 2009, Paul Hobson was appointed, with Nichola Johnson added in 2011 and Andrew Moore in 2012.

Talks: artists, writers and curators

To further our core project of helping to raise awareness of issues and debates within the contemporary art arena, we have always held a regular programme of talks, lectures and discussions. Over the years, as Robert remarked earlier, we have developed the habit, and been privileged to hear remarkably talented artists talk about their practice, cogent critics assess particular artists or periods, and curators describe how they run galleries and stage exhibitions. This habit has continued and has become further embedded in our culture over the last decade, with between four and eight talks scheduled every year.

Some have been held in partnership with other bodies, for example a series of artist talks that have been jointly run with Norwich University of the Arts. Perhaps the most memorable of these have been the talks by Cornelia Parker



Maggi Hambling,
an ncas patron

and Ana Maria Pacheco. The former, in conversation with Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton, saw over 250 people packed into the NUA lecture theatre in 2011 to hear her talk about her conceptual art practice. In her work, both the natural world and the world of designed and manufactured objects are given new identities, with new meanings, new resonances and new allusions, through a complex process of destruction and resurrection. The following year Pacheco came to the same venue and talked about her work as a sculptor and printmaker. She described her visual roots in Brazilian landscapes, stories and colonial baroque, and outlined her complex way of working, through prints and drawings towards major sculptural installations every five or six years. Other such joint projects with NUA have included John Christie, talking in 2013 about working for many years with John Berger, and Brian Webb talking in 2014 about graphic design, book production and his work with Peter Blake.

Artist talks continue to remain popular with our members and over the last ten years we have listened to a wonderful roll call of speakers. It is to their credit that so many artists are willing to give up their time to tell others about their working methods and ideas and to show us their work. **ncas** patron, Maggi Hambling, kicked off in 2006 with a riotous talk in the Assembly House about her recent work. Potter Emmanuel Cooper discussed contemporary ceramics and Katarzyna Coleman talked about her recent work, documenting and working on the bleak Yarmouth industrial landscape through her large charcoal and acrylic works and a series of monotypes. Kathleen McFarlane, who sadly died in 2008, discussed her subversive weaving, tapestry and crochet work in conversation with Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton, who also talked to us on another occasion about Damien Hirst. Trustee and artist Robin Jesson told us about his time at Corsham,



Panel discussion on Benton
End 2012: left to right
Ian Collins, Frank Pond,
Peter Baldwin, Robert Short
and Maggi Hambling



Catherine Lampert



Hilary Spurling



Derek Morris



Paul Greenhalgh

and the art of William Scott and Terry Frost, and Peter Baldwin, another local artist and long time **ncas** member, described the background to his carefully-ordered figurative paintings. Suzie Hanna from NUA spoke about animation while Edwina Ashton covered similar areas of animation, video and performance.

Sculpture has been a major theme in the last decade and several sculptors have discussed their work for us, including Bill Pye whose powerful works involve water, trustee Derek Morris on 'a short history with sculpture', and portrait sculptor Neal French. Michael Sandle told us about his public commissions and Paul de Monchaux talked about his, including his large public work, *Breath*, which forms part of the Norwich Memorial Gardens in front of City Hall. Bruce Gernand, whose work, *Star and Cloud*, will be mentioned later, gave us a talk that described his increasing involvement with computer-generated and biomorphic forms. Jonathan Keep described his development and use of 3-D printing for ceramics. Andrew Moor provided insights into the increasingly complex possibilities of working in glass for public projects, while Trope Design demonstrated their concrete animation that creates audio-visual, kinetic worlds where an audience can move freely, encountering the art in a synaesthetic and immersive way. We have had group talks too, including presentations by the artists that were commissioned to produce the work in Felbrigg Hall mentioned elsewhere. Several talks have related directly to exhibitions that were held at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. Harriet Loffler gave us a gallery talk on the French sculptor, Hubert Duprat, whose first UK show she had curated, and I gave a complementary talk on him in their auditorium. Harriet also gave us invaluable background information for the *The Family in Art* exhibition and the major UK exhibition of Jeff Koons that she curated at the Castle. Also at the Castle, Nick Thornton talked about the wonderful exhibition of Hepworth, Moore and Nicholson that he curated.

Artists have also been keeping us abreast of recent art developments. Over the last decade, Outpost Gallery in Norwich is probably the most important artist-led development in the city, and we have heard two talks by artist members from the gallery. Trustee Steve Baker, on the publication of his latest book, discussed how contemporary artists have found innovative and sometimes controversial ways to explore humanity's continuing fascination with the power of animal imagery. Neil Powell, both an artist and pro-vice chancellor at NUA, dissected curatorial myths and mysteries, while Derek Morris and Mel Clark did a double act for members in Mandell's Gallery about the Derrick Greaves works on display there, and about Derrick and his association with Norwich School of Art. Local artist Lee Marshall discussed his current work when we gifted one of his paintings to the Castle Museum. Environmental artist James Eddy talked to us about his sculpture and land art and his engagement with art education.

Then there were all the interesting talks presented by the critics, historians, writers, curators and collectors that make up the other half of the contemporary



Caroline Douglas



Neil Powell



Antony Penrose



Martin Holman

art scene. Robert Short posed the question, where were all the surrealist women, and then a few years later he teamed up with long-time colleague Krzysztof Fijalkowski to give us a terrific double act, discussing the boxed assemblages of the New York maverick surrealist, Joseph Cornell, obsessed with nostalgic bric-a-brac, exotic avians, stellar constellations and Hollywood stars. Catherine Lampert, who has both written on, and modelled for, Frank Auerbach gave us a brilliant analysis of his work. Nixi Cura discussed contemporary Chinese art and Marion Sander discussed contemporary art in churches. Martin Holman considered Arte Povera, Matthew Rampley looked at the work of Anselm Kiefer and Hilary Spurling discussed her book on Matisse. Andrew Spira spoke about Russian icons and the avant-garde and, following the Tate Liverpool exhibition that she curated, Lynda Morris looked in depth at the political battle for Picasso's mind. Picasso was also centre stage, along with Max Ernst and Man Ray, in Antony Penrose's personal account of the lives of his mother, the American photographer Lee Miller and his father, the surrealist artist and poet Roland Penrose. Collecting contemporary art was the topic chosen by Caroline Douglas, the director of the London Contemporary Art Society, based on her wide experience both there and as head of the Arts Council Collection. Eddie Berg talked to us about artists' films and videos and Mary Yule discussed issues surrounding public sculpture in the landscape. Writer and critic Evelyn Toynton gave us a terrific talk, discussing her recent book on Jackson Pollock and his circle, providing a vivid and powerful portrait of this troubled but talented American hero. Well illustrated, the talk wove together insights into personal dramas and psychology with her careful but critical appreciation of individual works to provide a compelling portrait.

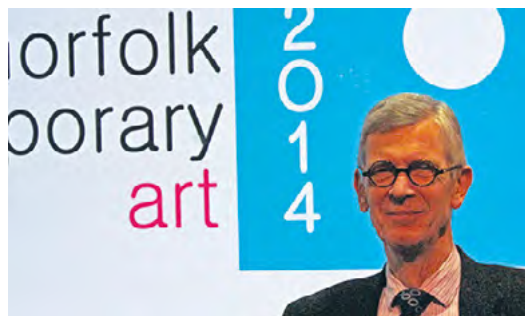
A few of our talks have addressed the spaces used for displaying art and related collections of work. Caroline Jarrod talked to us about her family's ambitions for developing an arts strategy for St James Place, the principal office location in the centre of Norwich. Paul Hobson told us about the history and current activity of the Contemporary Art Society in London, the only such society that is older than ours! And James Hyman told us of his ambitions for the James Hyman Gallery in London, specialists in twentieth century British art, including photography.

Contemporary photography has been an emerging theme recently, particularly since we helped the Castle begin to add photographs to their permanent collection. Local artist Mark Edwards discussed the complex processes and ideas behind his large-scale photographic work, *The View From Here*, in the Castle's exhibition from which a large light-box was acquired for the collection. Martin Barnes, a senior curator at the V&A, presented us with a broad view of the state of contemporary photography and later joined with Amanda Geitner in a discussion of the works of Frances Kearney in her *Running Wild* show at the Castle, where again a work was acquired for the collection.

Some issues or topics in contemporary art probably benefit from a more



Steve Baker



Andrew Moor



Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Robert Short



Carol MacGillivray and Bruno Matez from Trope Design

varied approach than offered by a straightforward talk, and several of our events have taken the form of panel discussions. A good example is Benton End Remembered, a lively discussion evening of the legacy of the famous East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing established by Cedric Morris (whose exhibition was then in the Castle) and his lifelong partner Arthur Lett-Haines. They established a kind of bohemian paradise where art, literature, good food, gardening and riotous conversation combined to produce an extraordinarily stimulating environment for artists. Ably chaired by Ian Collins, the panel of past alumni and friends consisted of Maggi Hambling, Robert Short, Peter Baldwin and Frank Pond. To accompany their exhibition, *A Figurative Presence* at Mandell's Gallery, a panel of artists, together with Hannah Higham, curator of modern and contemporary art at the Norwich Castle Museum, discussed how the figurative tradition persists in the current cultural landscape.

Writer and long time **ncas** supporter, Ian Collins, gave us two talks, the first on artist John Craxton, drawing on his recent Craxton book and exhibition. The second was on the major exhibition, *Masterpieces: Art in East Anglia*, which he curated for the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. A faithful devotee of the East Anglian art scene, Ian gave us a privileged and engaging preview of his eclectic

selection that celebrated the rich and unique artistic heritage of the region. Staying with the SCVA, we also had two talks from its current director, Paul Greenhalgh. One, shortly after he arrived to succeed Nichola Johnson as director, spelling out his future vision for the Centre, the other an engaging and perceptive talk about *Reality: Modern and Contemporary British Painting*, then their current exhibition. His relationship with the curator, Chris Stevens, goes back to art school and gave Paul a powerful insight into this wonderful show.

Exhibitions and partnership working

A core activity of the Society has always been holding and curating exhibitions, and as Robert's account of our first 50 years ended he rightly highlighted the major 2006 exhibition, *50 Years On*, held in the Castle early in the year to celebrate that anniversary. And in 2016 we shall be celebrating our 60th anniversary with a similar show in the Castle's Timothy Gurney Gallery. But the intervening decade has been characterised by an escalation in both the size and the variety of our exhibitions. **ncas** has two energetic committees that oversee our work, one for events and one for exhibitions; Janey Bevington currently chairs the former and I chair the latter.

In 2006, we received substantial funding from the Wellcome Trust to curate *Making Faces*, a major exhibition held in the Atrium of the Forum, the first in what was to become a regular succession of shows at this spacious venue. The Forum is a Millennium Commission Lottery Project from Hopkins Architects, a unique landmark building situated in the heart of Norwich and built to house a new state-of-the-art library, replacing Norwich's central library that tragically burned down in 1994. I devised and curated *Making Faces* as a collection of activities associated with the British Association's 2006 Festival of Science in Norwich. In partnership with the John Innes Centre, the Teacher Scientist Network, Commissions East and the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, we commissioned three London-based artists, Simon Tegala, Keith Piper and Alexa

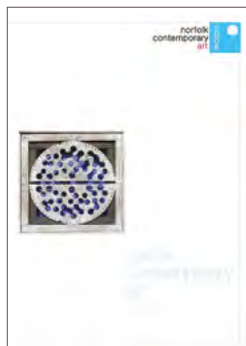


Artist Mark Edwards in conversation with Keith Roberts

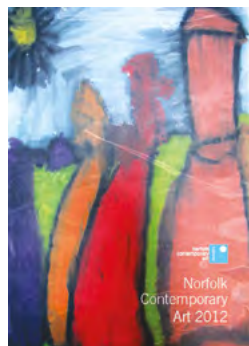
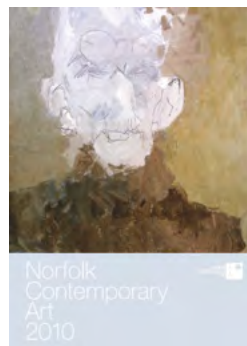


Harriet Loffler talks about the Castle's Hubert Duprat exhibition

Wright, to create work that responded to the artist's interactions with a panel of UK scientists who had research interests in various areas of 'face biology'. The works were displayed within a context that examined current issues of how we interact with, identify, connect to, manipulate and reconstruct faces. A website and published catalogue were visible outputs. As part of this project, a bronze *Head of Charles Clarke*, a former Home Secretary and Norwich South MP, was



Catalogues of our biennial open exhibition 2008/2010/2012/2014



made by portrait sculptor and **ncas** member Neal French, and together with a 4-D reconstruction of its own making, was presented to the Castle's permanent collection.

Two years later, in 2008, we started the first of what has become a series of biennial open exhibitions of work by artist members of **ncas**, an idea initially suggested by Joan Luckhurst. The exhibitions committee set up an independent selection panel and the first show, with its associated catalogue, launched to terrific success. All the work was for sale and the huge amount of effort, from both committee and volunteers, to hang, design, invigilate and manage the project was worth it. We generated new members, who wanted to submit work,



Left to right: Keith Piper, Simon Tegala and Alexa Wright



Opening of *Making Faces* at The Forum, 2006
left to right: Keith Roberts, Ian Gibson and Joan Luckhurst



Making Faces 2006

Making Faces exhibition
2006: Charles Clarke MP with
bronze head and artist
Neal French



and we engaged with a whole new audience in this open public building that has none of the potentially alienating attributes of a commercial gallery. Similar biennial shows, each with its own full colour catalogue, were staged in 2010, 2012 and 2014 and the next, organised by Steve Baker and Selwyn Taylor, is planned for September 2016, again in partnership with The Forum. From 2012 we have managed to obtain the sponsorship funds to award a prize to the artist whose work was judged the best in the exhibition. An excellent feature of these open shows has been the Meet The Artist sessions, organised at the last two shows by Joseph Wang. At these panel events in the Curve Auditorium we appreciated the willingness of the artists to talk about, engage and be questioned on their practice.

Our partnership with The Forum was further reinforced when **ncas** was invited to curate for them two large open exhibitions, *Elements: Man and the Environment* in 2010 and *Elements: Material Worlds* in 2011. These were again a big success and they gave our exhibitions committee a lot of valuable curatorial and practical experience in managing large exhibitions. That experience had been extended anyhow in 2009, when another large grant from the Wellcome Trust enabled me, in partnership with The Forum and Norwich University College of the Arts, to curate an exhibition focused on photography, *Photo-ID: Photographers and Scientists Explore Identity*, which proved a major undertaking.

Ten international photographers were chosen from hundreds of applicants to tackle various aspects of identity. The intertwining of photography and notions of identity is as old as photography itself. We once relied on our name and face, with corroboration from friends and family, to say who we were. In the seventeenth century we began to use identity papers, but with the invention of cheap and reproducible photographic images things changed forever and photographs became the standard for recording and assigning identity. And

photography is the medium most deeply rooted in identity. Its theoretical concerns, with issues of representation, stereotypes, marketing, documentation, and portraiture, made it the obvious choice for a re-exploration of current issues of identity. The photographers were introduced to various scientific experts working in parallel on the genetics and biology of identity.

The *Photo-ID* selectors were Lynda Morris, Gilane Tawadros, Martin Barnes and the late Richard Denyer, and the whole event was a formal part of *CAN09*, the short-lived biennial celebration of international contemporary visual art across Norwich that, along with *EASTinternational*, was folded (invisibly) into the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. Later *Photo-ID* received an additional extension grant from the Wellcome Trust to enable it to tour, and following a brief showing at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts it went on in July 2010 to Hereford Town Hall as part of the Hereford Photography Festival before finishing in Newcastle's Centre for Life in 2010/11.

Our exhibitions have not been confined to Norwich. In keeping with being the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society, we have staged several shows in the county. Three exhibitions, one of selected works from our *nca10* exhibition at the Forum in 2010, *Brinkmanship*, a joint *ncas/N20G* exhibition in 2011, and *Reality Check*, a photography exhibition in 2012, were all shown in the Rocket Café in Cromer as part of COAST, the arts festival associated with Cromer and



Photo-ID logo

Artists from left to right: Dave Lewis, Simon Terrill, Mark Edwards, Evi Lemberger, Åsa Johannesson, Kim Cunningham, Carl Jaycock, Joanna Kane, Paul Sucksmith and Marlene Haring.

Photo-ID being installed in Hereford Town Hall 2010

Photo-ID in the Forum 2006



Gayle Chong Kwan in *The Tourists* exhibition at Felbrigg Hall 2014

Sheringham. And in 2014, stimulated by a talk from Tom Freshwater about the National Trust's recent links with the Arts Council, a major exhibition of commissioned work by three artists was shown in Felbrigg Hall, a 17th century property in North Norfolk. Curated by one of our Trustees, Caroline Fisher, and funded by Arts Council England, *ncas* and EAAF, *The Tourists* exhibition offered another example of effective partnership working, in this case with the National Trust. The three artists, Gayle Chong Kwan, Kate MccGwire and Claire Morgan, each installed their inspiring, imaginative and thought-provoking work in sites around the house and grounds, all of it a reflection, or a meditation on, different aspects of the life of this great house through the centuries, and in particular on their understanding of the experience of the Grand Tour.

Last year, 2015, saw what was probably our most complex exhibition project to date, with multiple locations, partners and funders. Our partner organisations, and where we simultaneously installed large works by Brazilian-born but London-based artist, Ana Maria Pacheco, were Norwich Cathedral, the Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich Castle and Norwich University of the Arts. The goal was to use these large works to stimulate and focus discussion about some of the serious issues that her work addresses, the exercise and abuse of power, migration and immigration. *Shadows of the Wanderer*, a large polychromed wood sculpture, was placed in the North Transept of Norwich Cathedral. It comprises ten over-lifesize figures, each carved from a single lime tree. The group recalls the tale of Aeneas and Anchises, but powerfully resonates with contemporary issues of exile, asylum, migration and the displacement of people. In the Keep, Norwich Castle, a new series of eight polychromed and gilded alabaster reliefs, *Enchanted Garden*, reflected the artist's long interest in the medieval alabasters in the Castle's collection. At The Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts, we showed *The Banquet* (1985), another large, polychromed, wood sculpture that directly questions the exercise of power. Completed the year the artist moved to Norwich, and not previously exhibited in the City, it was shown alongside a selection of recent prints and a related contextual work, *Box of Heads* – an agreed loan from the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne. In the Catholic Cathedral of St John The Baptist, *Study for Requiem (John the Baptist I)*, a large Portland stone head, again referencing an abuse of power, was installed in the nave, while *Study of Head (John the Baptist III)*, 1992 was placed on the font. The four venues showing her work all have important associations for the artist. The two Norwich cathedrals reflect her upbringing in a Brazilian household with a catholic father and a protestant

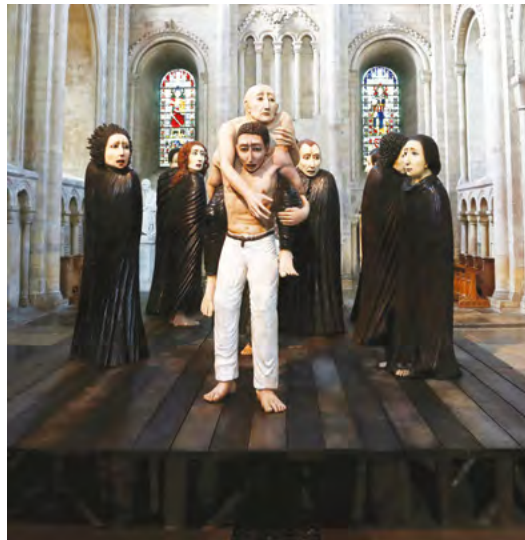


Keith Fox wins the Adnams prize in our 2014 exhibition



Above: Bill English, former head of Norwich School of Art and former chair of NCAS, talking to Ana Maria Pacheco 2015

Right: Ana Maria Pacheco *Shadows of the Wanderer*, 2008 in Norwich Cathedral



Members' Open Exhibitions at The Forum
top left: *nca8*
top right: *nca10*
bottom left: *nca12*
bottom right: *nca14*

Norwich 2015 exhibition in association with Pratt Contemporary and we received funding from **ncas** itself, Arts Council England, Norwich University of the Arts, the East Anglia Art Fund, the John Jarrold Trust and Norwich Cathedral Exhibitions Panel.

Trips, parties and productions

Too much work makes Jack a dull boy, and **ncas** has never been just about talks and exhibitions, however much fun these can be. So on the social side the Society has, every year, organized a steady roll call of parties and trips away for our members. Coaches are booked, payments arranged, venues sorted, meals organised and wine purchased by a reliable core of trustees, led in recent years by Janey Bevington. In the last decade, after a game stab at a trip to the Netherlands, organized by patron Paul King that sadly had to be aborted, members did finally manage to venture abroad on a lively trip to a variety of galleries and other events in Paris, generously organized for us by Susan Curran. But numerous other trips have been enjoyed here at home, including to the Bergh Apton Sculpture Trail (when that still existed), Burghley House, New Hall's large collection of works by women artists and Kettles Yard in Cambridge, the Goodwood Sculpture Park and Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the art fair, Frieze London, where we were enthusiastically shown around by Harriet Loffler. The Tate à Tate trip to London was a chance to see the new rehanging at Tate Britain and then, via a trip on the



Above: Ana Maria Pacheco *Study of Head (John the Baptist III)* in the Baptistery of the Cathedral of St John the Baptist

Right: Ana Maria Pacheco *The Banquet*, 1985 in The Gallery at NUA



mother. The old Norwich School of Art, now NUA, was where she arrived in the 80s to become head of Fine Art, and the Castle was where she had a major exhibition in 1994 that included *Man and His Sheep* and where she encountered the director, Francis Cheetham and the museum's alabaster reliefs.

Accompanied by both a catalogue, an exhibition guide and a brilliant talk by Colin Wiggins in the Castle, these four exhibitions continued on show in the Castle and Cathedrals for nearly eight months and, like those at Felbrigg Hall and in The Forum, reflect our ambition to show artwork in less formal, less familiar locations. Outside of a commercial or art gallery context, these different locations provide a good example of how different spaces encourage a new and more contemplative viewing of art works. I curated the *Ana Maria Pacheco Sculpture*:

Thames Clipper to Tate Modern, a look at the Matisse exhibition. Our two-day outing to Wiltshire in 2013 centred on a visit to the sculpture park at Roche Court, near Salisbury, but also included a guided tour of Salisbury Cathedral. We had an extremely congenial welcome at the New Art Centre at Roche, and a generous lunch, which was very much appreciated. The Gallery was showing work in *The Writers Series* by Sarah Pickstone, winner of the John Moores Painting Prize in 2012 and we were privileged to hear her talk about her work.

In 2015 our excursion was to the Hepworth Wakefield Gallery, whose collection of Modern British art features some of the most significant British artists of the twentieth century, including Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. We also visited the National Media Museum, situated in the heart of Bradford, UNESCO City of Film, which looks after the National Photography, National Cinematography, National Television and National New Media Collections (although as I write its future is a matter of some controversy). We went on a two-day trip to Tate Liverpool, where we saw Lynda Morris's exhibition *Picasso Peace and Freedom 1945-73*, together with the gorgeous Gormleys on Crosby beach. Back in Norwich, Lynda later gave us a talk about the exhibition and her



Trip to Goodwood Sculpture Park



Sarah Pickstone talking about her exhibition at Roche Court



Trip to the New Art Centre, Roche Court



Enjoying Gormley's *Another Place* figures on Crosby Beach, 2011



Turner Contemporary Gallery, Margate, 2014



Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage on Dungeness beach, 2014



Production of *Fantômas: Surrealism and Crime* at the 18/21 Gallery, 2013



Members on a trip to the Imperial War Museum, 2016

associated book. In 2012 we were off to Kent, to Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate and Derek Jarman's Dungeness garden. The Gallery in Margate had a mixed reception; most appreciated the future potential of the striking Chipperfield building, but many emerged profoundly depressed by the Tracey Emin exhibition, *She Lay Down Deep Beneath the Sea*, that filled much of its interior. The strange and rare landscape of the shingle at Dungeness however left a lasting impression, as did the beautiful, spare garden created by Jarman. Further trips were to the Imperial War Museum, Mike Todd's studios and Andrew Schumann's studio in King's Lynn. Susan Curran and Paul Simmonds reliably provided tricky art-related quizzes for the longer coach trips.

Parties too, usually in less than salubrious venues, as well as raising funds, have all generated real atmosphere (and a host of memories that I won't repeat). From upstairs at Take 5 to the Chapel in Park Lane to Keir Hardie Hall (dancing to the Mojo Band) and the Scout Hut in 2014 (dancing to the Vagaband). Joseph Wang will again be arranging our Christmas knees-up there in 2016, along with the tombola, the feast, the slide show and the usual bunting, lights and revelry.

Continuing the theme of fun occasions, Robert Short's theatrical REBUS events, while not strictly **ncas** events, have permeated our collective psyche for long enough to be considered as such. All of them have been publicized in our literature and many of the cast are **ncas** trustees and members. Robert has already described his earlier surrealist events, but in the last decade REBUS have so far mounted ten, multi-media, original shows – all on themes or artists in the orbit of Surrealism – since the first one, *A Pataphysical Entertainment*, at the Last Wine Bar in 2004. These shows continued with *The Adventures of Alice* in 2007 at the Garage and several other venues, including the Balcony in Overy Staithe; *MERZ* – a Kurt Schwitters evening at the Workshop, also at Laura Williams' 18/21 gallery in 2009 and later at the Little Theatre in Sheringham.

In 2010, there was *The Pleasures of the Capital – Giorgio de Chirico and Surrealism* and the following year *Autumn Leaves – a Jacques Prévert Entertainment*. In 2012: *Volver al sur: Bunuel, Dali and Lorca in the 1920s*. In 2013, *Fantômas: Surrealism and Crime*. All of these were put on at Laura Williams' Tombland gallery. 2013 saw the first collaboration with Black History Month with *Edward Burra: White Boy in Harlem*, followed by *A Josephine Baker Entertainment* in 2014, both in the Forum's Curve Auditorium. And last year, 2015, *Surrealism and the Street* was staged at Mandell's Gallery in Elm Hill. All these events have furthered the aims of **ncas**, and done so in a fun and accessible way, introducing us to what is, as both texts and slides accumulate, effectively an evolving comprehensive overview of surrealism, its origins, images and impact. **ncas** salutes them!

As Robert has noted in his earlier account, Keith Pollard used to organize a fine series of 'make-your-own' sculpture days called Woodworks. These sadly went into retirement for a while, but the tradition was revived in 2014, and we look forward to more woodland exploits in the future.

Purchases and the Castle

In the last decade the Society has been particularly active in buying, or at least helping to acquire, new art works. To mark our 50th anniversary, **ncas** purchased for the Castle, with the aid of the Alfred Cohen Art Foundation and a donation from our chair, an oil painting, *Evening Sky – Wells*, by Norfolk artist Alfred Cohen. Then, urged on by our chair, Joan Luckhurst, we finally helped to purchase two significant works from the *EASTinternational 2006* exhibition. Rosie Snell's large painting, *Stalker*, entered the Castle's collection in 2007 with help from **ncas**, the Art Fund and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. And **ncas** gifted their first video work to the Castle; a DVD of Ruth Ewan's *The Rebel's Complaint*, music and material based on Kett's rebellion that was commissioned for *EASTinternational 2006*. As already mentioned, we purchased a bronze, *Portrait Head of Charles Clarke*, made by Neal French as part of our *Making*

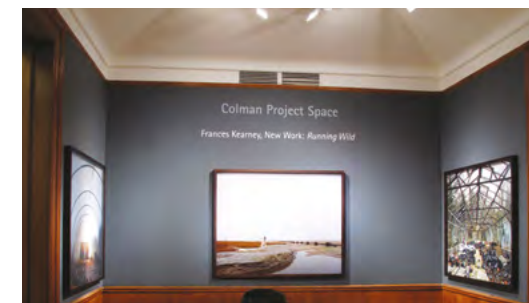
Faces exhibition, along with *4-D Head*, a video depicting its genesis, and gifted them to the Castle in 2006. *Five Windows with Sky*, an abstract construction by Derek Morris, one of our trustees, was bought with the help of a private donor and the Art Fund and entered the Castle collection in 2008. Derek also encouraged the purchase from her studio in 2011 of *Salthouse Blues*, an abstract work by Mary Mellor that had been shown at the Salthouse exhibition. All of these works were only contemplated in the first place as a result of frequent consultation with the curatorial staff at the Castle Museum, in particular until he left, Andrew Moore, but more recently Hannah Higham and Harriet Loffler, who share the post of curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. Sadly, the



Christmas Party in the Scout Hut, dancing to The Vagaband, 2014



Accession of Mary Mellor's *Salthouse Blues* 2011
Left to right: Harriet Loffler, Keith Roberts, Mary Mellor, Derek Morris



Francis Kearney's *Running Wild* exhibition at The Castle 2013.
The work acquired is on the left.



Andrew Moore presented with the Alfred Cohen to mark our 50th

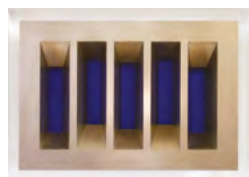


Accession of Mary Webb's painting *San Filippo IV (version 2)*
Left to right Derek Morris, Hannah Higham, Mary Webb and Ian McIntyre 2013

Castle itself has no acquisitions budget and it therefore has to raise funds elsewhere, from trusts and charities, in order to acquire new works for their collection. Without new works, museum collections can ossify and wither, and so the seed-corn money that **ncas** provides enables them to apply to other bodies like the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Art Fund, the Contemporary Art Society,



John McLean's three windows in Norwich Cathedral



Derek Morris Five Windows with Sky, 2005

Friends of Norwich Museums and others, to make sure that appropriate new works regularly enter the collection. Occasionally they are offered works in lieu of death duties, such as the recent acquisition of a Frank Auerbach from the Lucian Freud collection.

The general principles underpinning an acquisitions policy for the Castle's art collections have steadily evolved over the decades, most recently through Andrew Moore. The principal purpose of their fine art collecting policy is the acquisition of works: 1) by artists associated with Norfolk and East Anglia; 2) collected by collectors in the region; or 3) to fill identifiable gaps within the existing collection. Most of the works we have helped to acquire map onto this policy. In particular several recent photographic works have entered the collection, an area that has been neglected in the past. Following an exhibition of his work in their Colman Project Space, *River Bungay*, 2010, a local landscape transparency in a light-box by Mark Edwards, who had been one of the artists in our *Photo-ID* exhibition, was acquired with the initial support from **ncas** that then leveraged the remaining funding from the Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund. This is a local artist and his work has strong resonances with the work of the Norwich School of Painters, the core of the Castle's collections. Another artist, Frances Kearney, who exhibited in one of our Forum shows, also had an exhibition in the new Colman Project Space. Again landscape-based and large in scale, one of her works, *Untitled III*, was purchased with pump priming from **ncas** and the remainder from Arts Council England. And very recently, our help in purchasing a large photograph by Canadian artist, Andrew Dadson, gives a more international dimension to the photography collection. The formula seems to work well!

The next major work to be bought, in 2013, was *San Filippo IV (Version 2)*, a large abstract by Mary Webb that appeared in her retrospective show at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in 2011. This time, and championed by Derek Morris, the remaining money required came from the Nerys Johnson Contemporary Art Fund and a private donor. In 2014, *Grand Release*, a mobile by Marjolijn Dijkman that now hangs in the Castle's rotunda, was bought with funds from **ncas**, Friends of the Museum, the V&A and the Art Fund. Not all works that we purchase end up in the Castle Museum's collections, although *Untitled* by Lee Marshall that we originally bought for our Artworks on-loan collection from the NSAD degree show in 2008, did eventually transfer to the Museum's collection at their request! In 2014, we took the unusual step of contributing to an emergency appeal from writer Ian Collins to help fill the huge funding-gap that had emerged for the three magnificent, stained-glass windows, commissioned from London-based abstract artist John McLean, and installed in the North aisle of the Cathedral. We voted to contribute 10% of the cost of one of the windows, a gesture that triggered sufficient further donations from other individuals and bodies to secure the window, subsequently dedicated to Dame



Sculpture for Norwich agreement being signed in 2010
Left to right: Susan Curran (for **ncas**), Keith Pollard (for SfN) and Derek Burke (for The Norwich Society)



Accession of *Head of Charles Clarke* by Neal French
Left to right: Robin Jesson, Susan Curran, Keith Roberts, Neal French, Vanessa Trevelyan and Andrew Moore, 2008

Elizabeth Esteve-Coll and Moya Willson, both previously of UEA. They had key roles in the Sainsbury Centre's *Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia* exhibition, and Dame Elizabeth is a former director of the V&A.

We are pleased that for many years **ncas** has provided a co-opted member on the Norwich Area Museums Committee. Although the Castle itself belongs to the City, it is worth remembering that the Norfolk Museums Service and all its collections belong to us all as citizens of Norfolk, insofar as the service is paid for by our rates that go to the County Council, and their struggles with funding in recent years have arisen largely as a result of the cuts imposed on local funding by central government.

Websites, logos and marketing

When Robert Short concluded his earlier account **ncas** already had its own website, but it soon lapsed and was regularly months, if not years, out of date. And our logo, for many years a gorgeous version of Lichtenstein's 1965 *White Brushstroke* on a yellow background, was, like pop art itself, getting a little tired and was also potentially falling foul of copyright constraints. Shortly after I became chair in 2010, we set about running a competition to select a graphic designer to create a new logo for the Society. By early 2011, Steve Baker and I had worked with the winner, Nigel Orme, to come up with our current logo and its various versions and colour-ways that could be used in other contexts, including on a new website. We bought the domain name, www.n-cas.org.uk, and later in 2011, closed down the old and launched our new website, designed for us by Robert Bird of Cube Connections Ltd. The site has nine main sections, including Events, Exhibitions and Collections, and has been kept up to date ever since. Regular reviews of other art events in the area are posted under News. Nigel Orme, incidentally, also designed all the full-colour catalogues that have accompanied our recent exhibitions.

ncas NORFOLK CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY

In addition to the website, which is our main public-facing information source (and we still do not have Facebook or Twitter accounts!), our members also receive their own copies of the events programme and a Newsletter about three times a year. Currently these are all still hard copy items, so printing and postage remain ongoing costs. The programme has had a fairly conventional look for many years but it has recently had a refreshing redesign by trustee Selwyn Taylor, who also did our special 60th anniversary logo and designed this new publication. The newsletter (of which there are now over a 100) is the chair's chance to tell members what is happening with their Society and this has usually been produced in partnership with Susan Curran. Both the current newsletter and programme can be downloaded from the website. And since almost all members do now have email accounts, even if it is often hard to extract their addresses from them, Keron Beattie can now circulate notices of other relevant events to them where appropriate. Most of these are related to Private View invitations to artist members' exhibitions. In recent years, Marion Catlin has produced a freely available, twice-yearly booklet, *Art In Norwich*, that details pretty much everything that is happening and in the pipeline for art lovers in the area, and **ncas** has a regular slot in that.

Our membership has remained fairly constant over the years, with slight rises when artists join to submit to our biennial open exhibitions, and numbers reached a peak of 612 in 2012. But editing the list, culling names that no longer pay or are hard to reach or have moved away, remains quite a task, one that has been central for our part-time paid administrators, and thanks to them our membership list is now in pretty good shape. Our fees rose to £10 a single and £15 a couple in 2005 and were raised again to their current rate of £15 a single and £25 a couple in 2010, which to my mind is pretty good value, particularly as your membership card, since 2007, gets you, in addition to your programmes, private views, newsletters, a reduced price for events and valuable free admission to the Castle Museum and Art Gallery!

Sculpture for Norwich

Starting in 2009, with discussions between the Norwich Society and **ncas**, a new charitable company was set up the following year called Sculpture for Norwich, or SfN. It was established through cooperation between the two societies to work in an area of shared interest, 'to promote and advance the education of the public in the art of sculpture within the area of greater Norwich'. Along with the Norwich Society, **ncas** put in an initial sum of £6,500 to allow it to begin its operations. Their trustees are proposed in turn by the two parent



bodies and our Keith Pollard was its founding chair. He and Derek Morris have been central figures in the society, which through no fault of its own, and with the recent collapse of two key projects, sadly has no great achievements yet to boast of.

A year after Bruce Gernand offered his fine sculpture *Star and Cloud* to Norwich Cathedral through the agency of Sculpture for Norwich, the Cathedral Chapter informed them that it was returning the work to the Cass Sculpture Foundation at Goodwood, Sussex (where **ncas** members had seen it on their trip



Left: Bruce Gernand's *Star and Cloud* seen on our trip to Goodwood Sculpture Park

Right: and how *Star and Cloud* might have looked in the Cathedral Close



there many years earlier). Despite widespread support and enthusiasm for the sculpture being sited in Norwich and after sustained efforts on the Cathedral's behalf by SfN, the Chapter failed to reach agreement with the Fabric Advisory Committee (the statutory body overseeing the site and works of the cathedral) on a suitable location for the sculpture in the Cathedral Close.

A major project – the installation of a landmark work of public art on St Martin at Palace Plain, to celebrate the Norwich School of Painters – has proved even more frustrating. For six years SfN worked closely with chosen artist Mariele Neudecker, and glass expert Andrew Moor (both of whom have given talks to **ncas** on their work), to come up with a workable and exciting proposal. The final scheme consisted of a projection of the windows of Cotman's House flat onto the ground, comprising 14 glass panels set flush with the surface of Palace Plain. Each panel was to be etched with landscape images, some from scenes of contemporary Norfolk landscape and others taken from paintings of the Norwich School. FutureCity were to undertake the commission and its Director Mark Davy came and gave an inspirational talk to us all in 2010 on Art in the Public Realm and the Rise of the Creative District. A charismatic and eloquent speaker, Mark Davy made very clear the value of well chosen art works in enhancing and



Above: Mariele Neudecker talking to us in 2013

Right: Mariele Neudecker's proposed installation on Palace Plain



enriching locations, both historical and new, but the result, four years later, was different. The subsequent difficulties that slowly emerged of dealing with a less than enthusiastic Norwich City Council and other planning bodies, and in small part difficulties with new glass technology, have meant that the project has reluctantly had to be shelved. SfN has learned a lot of hard but useful lessons along the way and we wish it better luck with future projects, all of which you can keep up with at www.sculpturefornorwich.co.uk.

Money, struggles and change

All our **ncas** events, exhibitions and acquisitions cost money. So where does this cash come from? The most constant source of revenue is our membership fee, which with some reminders continues to be renewed each year, and our treasurer Cate Allwood dutifully recovers the Gift Aid where appropriate. A second source of revenue is our grant income, mainly earmarked for exhibitions, and we have been very successful in winning most of the grants that we have recently applied for. And lastly there are the auctions! These fabled events have been held biennially for many years now, the most recent being in 2015. Held in various locations over the years the recent ones have found a congenial home in the Council Chamber of Norwich City Hall. For many years Robert Short with his loyal assistants have conducted the proceedings but these are now passing over to Selwyn Taylor and Joseph Wang to manage. They are hard work to organise but the sales, mostly of donated artworks, have been very successful with the most recent one bringing in around £11,500. All this money of course is then applied over subsequent years to the various purchases, events and exhibitions as need arises.

Despite the vibrant art scene in Norwich and the County and all our efforts at partnership working, there have still been threats and struggles in keeping our focus clearly on our charitable aim of locally promoting contemporary art. Paradoxically the two main threats of late came from the Castle itself, and the

Norfolk Museums Service responsible for it. Early in 2011 we found out that one of the Museum's cost-cutting plans involved the Timothy Gurney Gallery, changing its use to children's education and a classroom. This gallery is the only long-term civic space for contemporary art displays, and it has been used for this purpose since Mr and Mrs Samuel Gurney inaugurated it in 1964. They gave the gallery in memory of their eldest son, Timothy Samuel Gurney, and it is dedicated "to the inspiration of living artists and practitioners". This change of use would have raised serious issues about the artworks that we had loaned the Museum, but frank discussions followed by lobbying from **ncas** and partner organisations, including EAAF, Norwich 20 Group, Outpost Gallery and concerned individuals, finally saw the plan rescinded. More or less at the same time, and again in response to funding pressures, a consultation exercise had been commissioned that recommended that the Norfolk Museums Service should be transferred to a charitable trust. This would have meant even more of a potential threat to the works of art that we had helped to acquire but, thankfully, both Norwich Area Museums Committee and the Norfolk Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee finally voted not to go ahead with the recommended trust. These threats come and go regularly, but they do highlight the uncomfortable fact that Norwich, alone among major university and cathedral cities, has no proper dedicated civic art gallery. This lost ability to promote the visual arts through the unique heritage opportunity of the Norwich School of Painters collection, enriched by older and more recent works, is a sad reflection on our political inertia. There have been many efforts in the past, such as the Tate in the East project, and while we were all briefly excited by the sale of the old Fire Station in 2012, central, spacious, listed and potentially perfect for a Norwich City Art Gallery, as usual it all came to nothing, and it is now an Academy!

But by no means is it all doom and gloom, and one of the most noticeable changes we have witnessed over the last decade is the enormous and exciting increase in spaces that now cater for the visual arts. In Norwich, art is now to be seen in more places than we could ever have dreamt of, in warehouses,

The Castle's Timothy Gurney Gallery



co-operatives, arts centres, cathedrals, undercrofts, basements, universities, charity cafés and shops, churches, museums, retail outlets, business premises, theatres, bars, restaurants, historic buildings and civic buildings, and not forgetting, of course, the growing number of commercial galleries. And now artwork is also appearing in outdoor spaces, on walls, at festivals, on social media and in ephemeral pop-up galleries. What a wonderful and welcome transformation in our city's cultural amenity. It is one **ncas** welcomes, and I am sure our founders 60 years ago would also approve. It does, of course, make us question whether or not in this context **ncas** still has a viable and useful function today? We held very well attended brainstorming sessions in both 2006 and 2010, and the clear message from these was that members still thought we did, and they endorsed our current balance of events, trips, purchases and exhibitions. Lots more places to show art than but, correspondingly, more bodies, committees and publications pop up to underpin and help co-ordinate all this activity. **ncas** was involved ten years ago with Network Now and Contemporary Art Norwich (CAN) and since then has been closely involved with Turning Point, Norwich Visual Arts Forum, Norfolk Arts Forum, Norwich Area Museums Committee, the short-lived Contemporary Committee at the Castle and the very useful, regular *Art in Norwich* booklet produced by Marion Catlin. We believe strongly that in this densely populated new landscape, working closely with other parties, who have different skills, expertise and resources, is the way forward. Partnership working has therefore been a firm principle underlying our various activities over the last decade, and we are pleased to have had formal links with Norwich University of the Arts, the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich 20 Group, East Anglia Art Fund, The Forum Trust, John Innes Centre, the University of East Anglia, both Norwich Cathedrals, the National Trust, Mandell's Gallery, the Norwich Society and Sculpture for Norwich.

I shall finish by paraphrasing the final words of Robert's account of our first 50 years: what has the society achieved in *sixty* years? Does the society still have a *raison d'être* when so many things have moved on? Again, the reader must decide...

Keith Roberts

May 2016



ncas biennial auction in
The Council Chamber
City Hall 2015

List of works for public display and public collections acquired with help from **ncas**

Prunella Clough

Man Entering a Boiler House c.1957 Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1957)

Graham Sutherland

Path Through a Wood 1958 Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1958)

Keith Vaughan

Figure in a Red Room Oil on softboard
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1960)

Jeffery Camp

Golden Clifftop 1959 Oil on hardboard
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1960)

Alan Reynolds

The Well at Cheveley, Suffolk 1952 Watercolour
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1961)

Patrick George

Natalie Dower, Full Face 1960/1 Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Peter Lanyon

Coastguard, Lulworth 1956 Gouache
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Mary Potter

The Mere 1958 Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Anne Redpath

Spanish village Oil on panel
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Ceri Richards

Rape of the Sabines 1947 Watercolour and ink
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Ceri Richards

La Cathédrale Engloutie 1959 Pencil and crayon on paper
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1962)

Ralph Brown

The Turning Woman 1960 Bronze
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1963)

Eduardo Paolozzi

Head c.1960 Bronze
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1963)

Bernard Meadows

Standing Armed Figure 1962 Bronze
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1963)

Alan Davie

Glass for Snake Juice 1963 Watercolour
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1965)

Allen Jones

Thinking About Women c.1965 Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1967)

Frederick E McWilliam

Study for the Unknown Political Prisoner Pencil, pen and gouache (loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1967)

Colin Self

Empty Cinema I Pencil and ink
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1969)

David Carr

Machine drawing Oil on canvas
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1969)

Colin Self

The Gardens 1969 Black ink and blue wash, heightened with white (loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1969)

Penny Slinger

Head box - She Craned her Neck

Head box - In Case of Fire

Head box - Nightwood

Head Box - Trepanation - Homage to Amanda Fielding

Mixed media (Norwich Castle Museum, 1972)

Tom Phillips

The Castle, Norwich. After JH Ltd 3NFII and ... the

Splendour Falls 1972 Acrylic on canvas

(Norwich Castle Museum, 1972)

John Hoyland

Painting 20.2.70 1970 Acrylic on canvas

(Norwich Castle Museum, 1972)

Ian Chance

Landscape Device Acrylic resin on canvas
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1973)

Peter Hide

Girder Structure 1973 Mild steel
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1978)

George Fullard

Mother and Child 1958 Bronze
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1978)

Michael Andrews

Lowestoft Promenade 1958 Oil on canvas board
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1980)

Wyndham Lewis

Portrait of Willis Feast 1948 Black and white chalk
(loan to Norwich Castle Museum, 1980)

Liliane Lijn

Extrapolation Stainless steel
(Norfolk Library Committee, 1982)

Edward Barker

Shrine Figure 1979 Aluminium and ciment fondu
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1984)

Derrick Greaves

Entering a Room with Difficulty 1979 Acrylic on canvas
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1984)

Nigel Henderson

Willy Call-Up 1979 Photomontage, oil and added collage elements mounted on blockboard
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1984)

John Bowman and Simon Poulter

Chicken-Rabbit: Performance, Norwich to Rouen, December 1983 Photomontage in two black stained wooden cases
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1984)

Bridget Riley

Edge of Day 1981 Oil on linen
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1985)

Walter Kershaw

Celebration of Norwich Industry Mural on board in ripolin paint
(Norfolk County Council, 1986)

Andrew Starsmore

Celebration of Norwich Industry Mural on board
(Norwich City Council, 1986)

Eduardo Paolozzi

Head of a Man Black felt pen and coloured crayon
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1987)

Roland Penrose

Cryptic coincidence II Oil on canvas
(loan from Penrose Foundation to **ncas**, 1988)

Howard Hodgkin

Lotus I and Lotus II 1978 Indian textile dyes on handmade rag paper
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1992)

Bernard Reynolds

Parrot Head 1993/4 Bronze
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1994)

Bernard Reynolds

Parrot Head 1994 Etching
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1994)

Maggi Hambling

The Happy Dead I, II, III, IV, V & VI 1990 Watercolour and black ink
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1994)

Jonathan Clarke

Monument to Daedalus 1995 Sandcast aluminium and steel
(Norwich Castle Museum, 1998)

Mark Goldsworthy

Will Kemp and his Morris Men 2000 Wood sculpture
(Norwich City Council, 2000)

Robert West

East Point 2004 Colour photograph
(Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2004)

Ros Newman

Bird Flight 2005 Stainless steel sculpture
(Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, 2005)

Zara Schofield

Veiled (Orange and Green) 2005 Oil, wax and resin on canvas
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2005)

Alfred Cohen

Evening Sky – Wells 1991 Oil on canvas
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2006)

Neal French

Portrait Head of Charles Clarke 2006 Bronze on marble plinth
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2006)

Neal French

4-D Head of Charles Clarke 2006 Video on DVD
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2006)

Ruth Ewan

The Rebel's Complaint 2006 Video on DVD
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2006)

Rosie Snell

Stalker 2005 Oil on canvas on panel
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2007)

Derek Morris

Five Windows with Sky 2005 Stainless steel, epoxy, MDF, acrylic
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2009)

Mary Mellor

Salthouse Blues Acrylic and mixed media
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2011)

Lee Marshall

Untitled 2008 Acrylic on panel
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2011)

Mark Edwards

River Bungay 2010 Transparency in lightbox
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2012)

Mark Edwards

Untitled no 5 Photographic print
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2012)

Frances Kearney

Untitled III 2013 Digital C-type print mounted on aluminium
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2013)

Mary Webb

San Filippo IV (version 2) 2010 Oil on canvas
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2013)

Marjolijn Dijkman

The Grand Release 2013 Mixed media mobile
(Norwich Castle Museum, 2014)

John McLean

Stained Glass Windows, North Aisle, Norwich Cathedral
(Norwich Cathedral, 2014)

Andrew Dadson

Black Barbed Wire 2013 Photographic print
(Norwich Cathedral, 2016)

(Note: the works listed as 'loan to' in the above list were bought by **ncas** and are on loan, most to Norwich Castle Museum; others have either been bought outright by **ncas** and then gifted to the stated body, or were purchased by the body with pump-priming funds from **ncas**. Additional funding has also come from diverse other sources including the Friend's of Norwich Museums, Eastern Arts Association, the National Art Collections Fund, the Victoria & Albert Purchase Grant Fund, the Wellcome Trust, the Department of the Environment, the Henry Moore Foundation, Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, Sotheby's, numerous other charities, private individuals, and public subscription supported by local businesses and public-spirited individuals.

ncas Artworks collection

Michael Watts *Origami Boats* - photographs (1985)

Oona Grimes *Santa Rosala* - coloured etching (1986)

Clare Carswell *Eye of Cappadocia* - mixed media (1986)

Francis Richardson *Double Head* - etching (1987)

Steve Farrell *Escapist Pursuits* - etching (1988)

Christopher Crouch *Don Giovanni Stealing Away*
- bronze (1989)

Mark Edmondson *Dinner Dance at the Abattoir*
- monoprint (1990)

Emily Mayer *Dawn Raucous* - wood metal and wire found
objects (1990)

Oliver Langham *Guardian of the Atom – Beta and
Guardian of the Atom – X* kinetic sculptures (1991)

Polly Cruse *Number 13* - scorched paper pulp (1992)

Louise Richardson *Untitled* - mixed media
assemblage (1992)

Mark Harris *Graduation Day* - screenprint and
etching (1993)

Marilyn Mann *The Osteopath* - oil on canvas (1994)

Louise Elvin *Endoptergote 2* - monoprint (1994)

Gill Melling *Smoke Screen no 2* - mixed media (1995)

Nicola Slattery *Hel* - Colograph (1995)

Frank Booth *Study, Self Portrait* - oil on canvas, (1996)

John Loker *Crossover/Entry and Crossover/Exit*
- screenprints (1997)

Ben Southwell, *The Trouble with Worms* - metal
sculpture (1997)

Lee Scarfe *Satellite* - screenprint on aluminium (1998)

Ann-Mari Stevens *Warp Picks* - glass and mixed
media (1998)

John Broadbent *Peafield Mill: Thinking of Mrs Hall*
- tryptych oil on canvas(1998)

Tom Wright *French Landscape* - oil on canvas (1999)

Leslie Burton *Tokyo Joe* - oil on canvas (1999)

Susan Laughlin *Early Morning January* - oil on
canvas (1999)

Sue Norrington *Uncertain Shore* - ink jet print (2000)

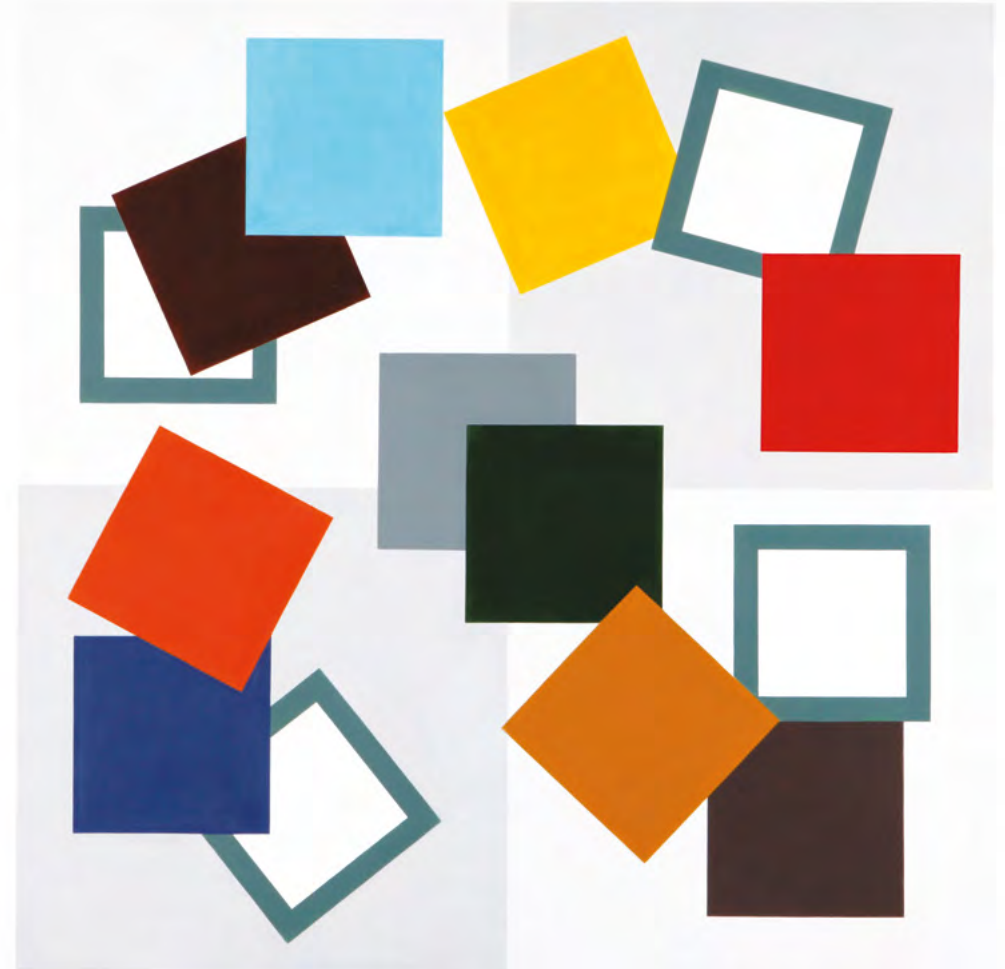
Victoria Newman *The Doubting of St Thomas* - ink jet
print on textile (2002)

Sam Potts *Portraits 1–5* - oil on canvas (2003)

Rebecca Lyne *Here's One We Made Earlier* - plaster
frieze on wood (2004)

Tim Mellors *Untitled* - acrylic with collage elements on
wood (2006)

Dates in brackets refer to year of acquisition



Mary Webb *San Filippo IV (Version 2)*, 2010 Oil on canvas

© Mary Webb

Norfolk Contemporary Art Society is a charity that celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, in 2016. The society was set up with a key aim of helping to buy works of contemporary art that could be shown publicly, but also to promote contemporary art through events, trips and lectures for both its membership and the general public. These remain its goals today. It has had an eventful history, full of incident, controversy and success. This new, fully illustrated book, produced to mark our 60th birthday, covers all of this and more. Its publication is designed to accompany the launch of an exhibition, in The Castle Museum and Art Gallery, of artworks that the society has helped to acquire over the last 60 years.

