

John N. Duddington
by documents from the Whitechapel Gallery Archive:
AN INVISIBLE DIRECTOR?

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UNFAIR REPUTATION

The only information about John Duddington available to the public on the Internet is not at all laudatory, but rather derogatory. A 2001 Telegraph article on the 100th anniversary of the Gallery (actually the centenary of the Gallery's new building) has this to say about him:

'Parochialism took over between the wars, lack of money resulting in the long reign of a well-named nonentity called Duddington, who also acted as secretary. The gallery was either hired out or shown to local schoolchildren or amateur groups'¹.

In that same year, 2001, Mark Glazebrook, director from 1969 to 1971, shared this even more offensive opinion: 'One show a year normally had a spark of life in it, notably the controversial Review of Modern Movements in 1914, but between the wars there was no director, only a secretary called Duddington. The great coup of showing Picasso's 'Guernica' in 1939 was fixed up by the trade unions. The Whitechapel Art Gallery was not brought back to anything approaching the vitality of its first years until after the second world war'².

Duddington's name is not mentioned in the gallery's history on the Survey of London website, or anywhere else. None of the newspaper reviews or essays on the exhibitions he organized mention him, unlike Charles Aitken, Bryan Robertson or Nicholas Serota. He seems to have been a kind of invisible director. So, in fairness, it is necessary to make public at least the little

¹ 'A miracle in the East' by John McEwen, *The Telegraph*, 6 April 2001. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4722693/A-miracle-in-the-East-End.html>

² 'Battle with my Trustees' by Mark Glazebrook, *The Spectator*, 24 March 2001. Available at: <https://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/24th-march-2001/53/battles-with-my-trustees>

information that survives in the gallery archives. Much more can probably be found in the family archive held by Duddington's grandson, the historian Sebastian Garrett.

First of all, two basic facts. John Nightingale Duddington was secretary/director of Whitechapel Gallery from **1920 to 1947**, and that is 27 years. During these long years he contributed to many exhibitions, about one hundred, and not all of them were, 'parochial'.

On the contrary. Here is a partial list of over thirty exhibitions that were quite important, or at least interesting:

1. Russian Arts and Crafts (28 June – July 1921). Artists: Lipshitz, Larionov, Goncharova, Sudeikin, etc.
2. Polish Art (9 May - 4 June 1921)
3. Modern British Art (21 March – 22 April 1922). Artists: Fry, Grant, Rothenstein, Meninsky, Gertler, C. Winsten, Fry, Augustus John, W. Sickert, Nash.
4. Modern British Art (5 March - 14 April 1923). Artists: Spencer, Fry, Gertler, Bomberg, L. Pissarro.
5. Jewish Art and Antiquities (11 October - 24 November 1923).
6. International Posters (12 November - 20 December 1924).
7. Frank Brangwyn (17 October - 14 November 1925).
8. Canadian Art (26 November - 23 December 1925).
9. Swedish Art (12 March - 24 April 1926).
10. Flemish Art, 16th Century (10 February - 12 March 1927).
11. Chinese Art (1927). Artists: Chi Bai Shi etc.
12. Jewish Artists (17 May - 26 June 1927). Artists: Bomberg, Meninsky, Klinghoffer, Brodzky, Epstein.
13. Hollar Society of Czech Graphic Art (29 October - 26 November 1927).
14. Kibbo Kift Educational (20 April - 25 May 1929).
15. International Photographs (6 June - 29 June 1929).
16. Contemporary British Art (24 October - 1 December 1929). Artists: Winston Churchill, Roger Fry, Nash, Christopher Wood, Duncan Grant, Mark Gertler, Sickert, Pryde, Bomberg.
17. Children's Art Work (30 January - 8 March 1930).
18. Modern Belgian Art (15 October - 29 November 1930).
19. Association of Students' Sketch Clubs (2 December - 22 December 1931).
20. East End Academy (26 October - 3 December 1932).
21. Contemporary Chinese Art (23 May - 22 July 1933).
22. Modern Chinese Art: Professor Chytil's Collection of (14 June - 28 July 1934).
23. Isaac Rosenberg (22 June - 17 July 1937).
24. Contemporary British Art (1938).
25. Spanish Art – Guernica by Picasso (1939).

26. Artists International Association (9 February - 7 March 1939). Artists: Henry Moore, E. McNight Kaufer.
27. Graphic Art: Czech, French, Spanish (24 September - 24 October 1942). Artists: Callot, Goya, Daumier, Szobel.
28. Artists Aid Jewry (2 February - 18 February 1943).
29. Stepney Reconstruction Plans (13 October - 31 October 1943).
30. Russian Photographic Display of Three Heroic Cities: Leningrad, Stalingrad and Sevastopol (13 April - 3 June 1944).
31. French Pictures, Modern: From Algiers and North Africa (13 June - 1 July 1944).
32. Aspects of Jewish Life and Struggle (12 February - 17 April 1945).
33. Modern Brazilian Painting (7 July - 28 July 1945).
34. This Extraordinary Year: Artists' International Association (8 Sep - 29 Sep 1945).
35. Modern American Art (7 October - 30 November 1945).
36. Soviet Graphic Art (28 February - 30 March 1946).
37. Czechoslovak Modern Art (1947)³.

It should also be noted that John Duddington ran the gallery during a hard time, just after the Great War, when the Spanish flu continued to kill and was not very conducive to exhibition attendance. Financial problems never stopped throughout the years. He ran the gallery during World War II as well, and even then, he organized interesting exhibitions.

AVAILABLE CURRICULUM VITAE

So who was he, according to internet sources and very scanty publications?

Reverend John Nightingale Duddington, 'Jack' for friends, was born in **1864** in East Retford, Nottinghamshire, England, son of John and Mary⁴. He had five brothers and sisters. He earned a licentiate degree in theology and was Vicar of Christ Church in Chesterfield when he married writer Elizabeth Ann Bradley in **1893**. A daughter, Iris Tracy, was born to the couple.

Since **1908** they all lived in Hertfordshire. John met Natalia Ertel, through their common interest in Theosophy, in 1906. Natalia was the daughter of a Russian writer and a friend of Leo Tolstoy, Alexander Ertel. She developed a taste for philosophy in secondary school in Russia where her school teacher was famous Nikolai Losskii, and she came to London to have proper studies. John and Natalie had a love affair. In **1911** Duddington became Rector at Ayot St Lawrence, a small English village in Hertfordshire, two miles west of Welwyn, and Elisabeth had not followed him. Then Natalia came there to live with him. The Rector House, where it was

³ If not stated otherwise, the source of information are always documents from the Whitechapel Archive.

⁴ This biographical data, has been taken from the ancestry.co.uk webpages.

happening, later was sold to the playwright Bernard Shaw and became known as 'Shaw Corner'. Eventually, the affair with Natalia made John to lose his Rector position.

Duddington's first marriage was officially dissolved in **1911**, but it wasn't until Elizabeth's death in **1954** that he married Natalia⁵. Nevertheless, they lived together all this time and had children, daughter Anna Helena and son Alexander ('Sasha') John.

They visited Russia, Ertel's flat in Moscow and the countryside estate 'Ertelevka' in the Voronezh area, every year before and during the Great War⁶. Through her father, Natalia has got interesting and influential friends in England. She even met there the famous Russian anarchist Piotr Kropotkin, when she was a child, but the closest were the Garnetts, the famous translator Constance and the publisher Edward. Natalia had an affair with Edward Garnett, but it was the Constance who made a very important impact on her life⁷. Constance was her mentor in the art of translating from Russian to English. Initially, Natalia was her assistant but later worked on her own, and translated a lot of Russian literature: Pushkin, Goncharov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Turgenev, Merezhkovskii, Akhmatova, Zaitsev.

After earning a master's degree in **1911**, she stayed in the field, and translated the major writings of the contemporary Russian philosophers, including: Vladimir Solov'ev, Nikolai Losskii, Semën Frank, Nikolai Berdiaev, Lev Sheston, Pavel Florenskii and Sergii Bulgakov⁸. Thanks to Garnetts, she made acquaintance with Russian emigrants in London, most of them politically left-wing, even revolutionaries. Her close friend was Fanny Stepniak, a widow of the writer Stepniak-Kravchinsky, who was also a well-known terrorist in Russia, and had fled after having killed the chief of police, General Mezentsov. Fanny Stepniak left her recollections on the death of Friedrich Engels, which she witnessed⁹. Fanny and Duddingtons lived next door for seventeen years¹⁰.

There was another extreme political connection. In the Ertel's Moscow flat in **1912**, for several months stayed a British intelligence agent, Bruce Lockhart, who studied Russian language and traditions with Natalia's mother. In his memoirs, he recalled which interesting people he met there, for example, an actress and the widow of the famous playwright Anton Chekhov named

⁵ P. G. Winnington. 'Natasha and Jack', *Love in the Revolution: True stories of Russians and Anglo-Saxons*. The Letterworth Press, 2020. Pp. 45-64.

⁶ Oleg Lasunsky. 'Perepiska s docher'yu A.I.Ertel'a', *Rasskazy literaturoveda*. Moscow, 1972. P.179 (Russian). The fact of annual visits related the friend of Natalia's sister, Esthere Shub, in her memoirs 'Krupnym planom', cited here.

⁷ Helen Smith. *The Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett*. Random House, 2017. Chapter 15.

⁸ Anna Maslenova. 'Natalie Duddington's religious translations from Russian: Faith in translation', *Paralleles*, April 2022, No.34 (2).

⁹ *Russky drug Engel'sa*, by E.Taratuta. Moscow, 1970 (Russian)

¹⁰ Philippa Parker. 'Fanny Stepniak and Natalie Ertel, friends and translators', *East-West Review*, 1921, Vol. 19, no. 3, Issue 55.

Olga Knipper¹¹. He may meet Natalia and John as well, since they visited the family every year, but it is not for sure. In **1918** Lockhart came to Russia again, working for SIS and this time conspiring to kill Lenin. His main operator was Sydney Reilly, the likely prototype for James Bond, agent 007, created by Ian Fleming.

Those were Natalia's connections, which were likely available to Duddington as well.

In **1920**, John Duddington became the Secretary of the Whitechapel Gallery. He was 56 years old at this time. They moved to Hendon, and later to Hampstead. In **1958**, John Nightingale Duddington died, being 94 years old.

This is how much can be gleaned about John Duddington from published memoirs and historical research papers. In the next section we will add some detail to his portrait as a person and as curator of the Whitechapel Gallery, whether as 'secretary' or 'director', drawing on the Gallery's archive.

The Whitechapel archive contains folders of personal correspondence to and from J. N. Duddington, the so-called 'Secretary's papers', WAG/EAR/2/30-60, less than three boxes in all. There are also papers relating to exhibitions from this period, WAG/EAR/4/49-64, just two boxes. Both series help to reconstruct a personal portrait of John 'Jack' Duddington that is difficult to separate from his role as curator. Several notable themes or strands can be discerned, and some of them will be discussed below.

LEGACY, 1920

Duddington's non-prestigious and even lowly position was emphasized by its title: "Secretary." His name was always at the bottom of any annual report or catalog until 1939 when he was referred to as "Director".

Nevertheless, his role was key and was not only to take minutes at Trustees' meetings or even to manage the economic life of the gallery. He was also the chief Curator. This is evident in the correspondence: it was he who negotiated with artists, lenders, transportation companies and speakers at openings. Archival materials allow us to see that he was often the one who proposed the idea of an exhibition.

Unfortunately, the archival material gives no clue as to why Duddington was appointed Secretary or whose idea it was. We can only assume that it had something to do with his position in the church, long since abandoned, as the Gallery's founder, Samuel Barnett, also started out as a priest at St. Jude's Church in Whitechapel.

¹¹ Bruce Lockhart. *Memoirs of a British Agent*. London, 1932, Chapter 2.

The only useful information about the beginnings of his role is that the earliest document bearing his name, a thank you note to a subscriber, is dated **August 9, 1920**. In his humble position he differed sharply from his predecessor Charles Campbell Ross, banker and politician, five-time mayor of Penzance, who remained Secretary of the Whitechapel Art Gallery from **1901** until his death on **July 5, 1920**, aged 81.

After Ross's death, the fate of his family, his debts and his exhibitions became the concern of John Duddington. Charles Aitken, Trustee, Director of the National Gallery at Millbank (now Tate Britain) and himself a former Director of Whitechapel, in his letter of **August 17, 1920**, to the newly appointed Secretary, asked Duddington to check how much the gallery owed Ross and vice versa, at the request of Ross's widow.

'He has left his family almost unprovided' and 'She hopes that Trustees can help her to get the 3 children into schools', he wrote. Unfortunately, on **13 October** accountants from Martin, Farlow&Co reported that they had checked the books and 'there is a sum of £143:11:2 not accounted for by him' (Ross). As early as **October 16** Trustees decided to pay a most part of £144:1:2 to 'meet the deficit', 'the Gallery's books will be cleared'. The Receipt from the Trustees shows £137:10 'on behalf of the late Secretary'. Oenone Ross, his daughter by his first marriage, intervened the same day, ready to send a check of £6:11:3 to pay the remainder of the debt. A note by Duddington's hand says that she had not done this. Nevertheless, Trustees started to make enquiries on how to make sure 'the little boy' (8 years old) was admitted into 'Christ's Hospital School', and a statement entitled 'The Position of the Ross' Family' was drawn up. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Lord Burnham, wrote to one of his friends, a Member of Parliament and the latter contacted the Prime-Minister, Lloyd George. On **March 22, 1921** a reply was received from 10 Downing Street: 'Mrs. Ross's case will receive his [that is of the Prime-Minister – AL] careful consideration in connection with the award from the Civil list'. Eventually, all three Ross children were accepted. Of course, Duddington was only involved as Secretary: for example, Aitken wrote to him on **March 16, 1921**: 'I think the appeal was sent months ago. Could you let Mrs Ross know the precise details'.

RUSSIAN EXHIBITION, 1921

Duddington's previous life definitely influenced the way he carried out his role as Secretary/Curator/Director of the Whitechapel Gallery. The most obvious biographical subject is Russia. During his time at the Gallery there were three exhibitions related to Russia and on at least two occasions he lectured about it. The next exhibitions of the Russian avant-garde did not take place until **1959** (Kazimir Malevich) and **1963** (Serge Polyakov).

It is no coincidence that the first exhibition he organized on his own, was the Exhibition of Russian Arts and Crafts, which opened **June 28, 1921**. The previous major one, Dutch Art, had been conceived by Campbell Ross, and he had began negotiations for it as early as the spring of 1920. The Russian one became a real sensation, both in positive and negative sense. Among the participants were Jacques Lipchitz, Michail (Michel) Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, Serge

Charchun (Sharshun), Boris Grigorieff (Grigoryev), Alexander Jacovleff (Yakovlev), Nicholas Roerich, Serge Soudeikin, all the pride of Russian avant-garde, almost unknown in Britain. And it was indeed a gigantic scale. The catalogue listed 469 exhibits, but some publications mentioned more, even 800!¹²

The press described it as an avant-garde attack on the patriarchal East End. The explicitly anti-Semitic *Plain English* newspaper saw it as an attack on Christianity and the entire English nation.

Not much is known on the process of selection of works. There are only two letters in the Archive addressed to Duddington and on the topic: in one the author recommends an obscure Russian academician painter 'Korneeff'¹³, in another one T.A. Lehfeldt from Bethnall Green Museum thanks for displaying his 'Russian Bowl' in the glass case. There are no direct evidences that Duddington has organised this exhibition on his own, but there are two indirect ones.

As usual, his name was not mentioned in the press, and the 'authorship' is given to some Arthur Ayliffe and a Russian female painter Maria Porohovchikova¹⁴. Her pen name was 'Miss Marie', and she was not famous or even known artist in Britain. In **1920** she was only mentioned in the British newspapers as a doll-maker, whose partnership The Art Toy Manufacturing Company had been recently dissolved¹⁵. But it is more interesting, that she was a professional children's writer in Russia¹⁶. So it can't be excluded that Duddington could contact her through Natalia's connections. What concerns Arthur Ayliffe (or Ayliff), his role was transportation from Paris¹⁷, and it went not too well¹⁸. That was the reason why the opening delayed for a week.

¹² Jewish Guardian (1921, June 26) tells about 600 pictures. Daily Mirror, 1921, June 27 mentions: 'the opening postponed owing to non-arrival of some very important pictures...[F]ormal opening will be to-day and the public admitted tomorrow. Over 800 are to be shown'

¹³ Letter from N. Bartous, 9 June 1921.

¹⁴'Jewish Guardian', **1921, June 26.**

¹⁵ The London Gazette, 15.10.1920.

¹⁶ **1921, July 15** – Pall Mall and Globe: 'It is not usually known that Marie Porohovchikova, the young painter, who is mainly responsible for organizing the Russian Exhibition of Arts and Crafts at the WAG, is also a writer. Her first book which was written in English, when she was eight years old, was called 'The Poor Governess', and was the outcome of her passion for England'.

¹⁷ The Times, 29 June 1921.

¹⁸ An announcement from the exhibiting Committee, dated 18 June 1921, says: 'owing to unforeseen transport delays in France a number of the best work will not arrive in time for the proposed opening on the Exhibition (namely, Tuesday, June 21)'. Whitechapel Archive.

His correspondence with the Trustees also proves that the Russian Exhibition was a personal credit to Duddington. It seems that the idea of the exhibition was not supported. There is even evidence that the Trustees did not like it at all.

For example, the influential trustee Henrietta Barnett, widow of the founder, Canon Samuel Barnett, who kept a close eye on Duddington's activities and regularly gave him meagre advice, failed to attend the opening on a rather odd pretext: 'I am exceedingly sorry I did not get to you on Tuesday. I had arranged to bring a most influential American lady to the Opening, but the luncheon party at which we were both present, took so long that we did not leave until 3.45 – too late to make it possible to be with you. I thought the notice in the Times was very interesting, and I must make a point of coming down as soon as I can.'¹⁹

London County Council, the main sponsor of the Gallery at the time, refused to place posters of the Russian Exhibition in its subordinate schools: 'Your letter...asking for permission to exhibit posters on the notice boards of the schools...was unfortunately mislaid, otherwise the permission would be granted'²⁰.

It was Duddington who sought for a celebrity or an expert to open the exhibition. When he asked the Trustee George Clausen, a famous academician painter, RA, the latter clumsily tried to avoid the honour: 'I am sorry I feel obliged to decline opening the Russian Exhibition, I am not equal to the occasion – as I am not a ready speaker, and I could not say anything appropriate without going to a good deal of trouble in 'getting up the subject'. But if I may do so, I would suggest that you ask Prof Rothenstein of the Royal Coll. Of Arts, S. Kensington, to do this. He speaks readily & well & is sympathetic to the subject. I would be pleased to act in a formal way as Chairman...'²¹

So Duddington addressed another famous painter, William Rothenstein. There is one letter which could be Rothenstein's answer, but it is dated '19 Aug' instead of '19 June 1921', which can be a typo. Rothenstein complained on the difficulties to reach London, because he lived that summer in the countryside, far from the railway station: 'If you cared for some one who is not out of town to open your exhibition I feel you would do well. But if you have any serious difficulties I will come up for the day. Perhaps you will let me know during the next ten days whether or not you have been successful...'²².

Whatever was the reason, finally it was not Rothenstein who opened but another person, and the press could not help to notice the strangeness of the choice:

'The ceremony was performed by Mr Edward Evans, who is more closely connected with Russian music than with Russian painting'²². And: 'Edwin Evans, the musical critic...His knowledge of music is amazing but it is not so well known that he is by way of being an

¹⁹ Letter of **30.06.1921**.

²⁰ Letter of 15.06.1921.

²¹ Letter of **12.06.1921**. **Whitechapel Archive**.

²² Daily news, **1921, June 30**.

authority on art. To-day he is opening the First Russian Exhibition of Arts and Crafts at the Whitechapel Gallery'.²³

But Clausen, as promised, was the Chairman at the opening. And, as he had foreseen, it turned out to be awkward. As it put one journalist: 'I wonder what were the feelings that lay behind Mr. George Clausen's very tactful speech at the opening of the Whitechapel Exhibition of Russian Art. When he consented to officiate he was probably unaware of ultra-revolutionary character of the exhibits, most of which must have been anathema to his academically-trained mind'.²⁴

RUSSIAN LECTURES BY J.N. DUDDINGTON, 1931

Duddington obviously maintained acquaintances in the Russian milieu both in London and in the USSR. For example, in **1923** the Gallery hosted a concert to accompany the Jewish Antiquity Exhibition, organized by the Russian piano teacher Maria Levinskaya²⁵. Another 'Russian concert' is mentioned in the Duddington's Diary for **3 November 1931**, but without any details.

In **1929** Duddington received a letter from a Russian lady saying: 'Madame Arsenieff²⁶ who just arrived from Moscow and has an introduction to you for the purpose of asking of asking your advice about some pictures of one Russian Artist. Perhaps you could arrange for his drawing to be exhibited at your Gallery'.²⁷

Two other Russian exhibitions, arranged during the WWII, were nothing remarkable. They were: 'Russian Photographic Display of 3 Heroic Cities: Leningrad, Stalingrad and Sevastopol' (**13 April - 3 June 1944**) and 'Soviet Graphic Art' (**28 February - 30 March 1946**). Most likely they were organised on the state level, being opened by Madam Gusev, wife of the Soviet ambassador, and especially considering a lot of correspondence between the Gallery and the Ministry of Information during this period.

It looks like that Duddington did not feel any aversion to contact with the Soviets. Thus, from a letter of his friend, a potter Henry Wren we can understand that an International Folkart exhibition was considered in **1940** at the Whitechapel, and its organization included borrowing Russian exhibits at the embassy:

²³ Daily Graphic, **1921, June 28**.

²⁴ Daily Mirror, **1921, June 30**:

²⁵ Poster in the Whitechapel Archive says: 'Society of Jewish Artists. Exhibition of Jewish Art. First concert organised by Maria Levinskaya', scheduled for 4 November 1923.

²⁶ Probably, it was Maria Arseniev, a correspondent of Olive Garnett, a writer and diarist and also the niece of Edward Garnett. Olive lived with Arseniev family in Russia for a year as a governess. Her correspondence with Arsenievs is kept at the Archive of the Northwestern University, USA.

²⁷ Letter from Olga Zeitlin, 25 January 1929.

'Further to the point about the Folk art exhibits, it appears that these are from Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Roumania, France, Germany, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Greece Russia. For the Russian exhibits we should have to fix up with the Russian Embassy in London'.²⁸

Duddington's political connections, with Labour Party, Trade Unions and even the Communist Party, which we discuss later, made such contacts possible. In **1944** and **1945** he also corresponded with the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR (SCR).

It is unclear to what extent he understood the repressive nature of the Soviet regime. His wife Natalie probably knew a great deal about it, as her sister Elena remained in the USSR until the height of Stalin's terror and was fortunate enough to escape the country²⁹.

Much more interesting in the biographical sense were lectures by Duddington on Russia. The lectures as such were not something new for him: for example, in **1925**, during the Posters' Exhibition, Duddington delivered several 'lantern lectures on travel', with the assistance of slides, lend by a railway company.³⁰

Regarding one of them, from **January 28, 1931**, there is an advertisement in the archive with the program of events. It states that J. N. Duddington will give a talk at the Christ Church Institute, Westminster Bridge Road, entitled: "Fifteen Months in Russia during the War", 'illustrated with photographic slides'. The program lists him as "curator of the Whitechapel Art Gallery," not director or secretary. Unfortunately, the Whitechapel archive has no other documentation of this lecture - no notes, no transcripts, no one's recollections. But the mention of "photographic slides" or "lantern slides" is interesting. These were a common form of illustration in lectures. And in the Archive's glass slide collection (WAG/PHOT/GS, over 750 in all) there is a series on Russia, labeled "N", containing 70 slides. These consisted of several sets, at least three, one of which is photographs of Reverend Henry Lansdale's journey through Russia and Siberia in the 1882, the other is black and white, not colorized as was usually done, and not produced by a well-known firm because there are no stamps on the frame. It consists of amateur photographs of rural Russia and views of an unrecognizable provincial Russian town. These slides could have been home-made and based on the photographs taken by Duddington during his journey from Moscow to Ertelevka.

Probably, this first lecture went well and Duddington attempted to repeat the success in another venue, The Institute Hall of the Henrietta Barnett's School for Girls. So, on **23 November 1931**, she wrote to him a patronising letter: 'We have not forgotten your kind readiness to lecture on Russia with slides, in the Institute Hall, but my Committee asks me to request you to be so good as to tell them what line you are going to take, as you know some

²⁸ Letter from Henry Wren, 19 May 1939. There were three more letters from him in 1939 and 1940 on the same topic.

²⁹ Winnington, p.60-61

³⁰ Whitechapel Art Gallery Report 1925-26.

lecturers count a fresh revelation from Heaven, other as a wholesale destruction. Would you be so good as to intimate the line of your thought? We are very anxious to avoid discussion, and the lecturer should show pictures of Russian buildings, Russian people, Russian scenery, and, of course, Russian art’.

DAME HENRIETTA BARNETT, THE FOUNDER’S WIDOW

The tonality of Mrs Barnett’s letter was not something unusual. From the very start of Duddington’s role at the Gallery she tried to mentor him, doing it much more than Charles Aitken, who had more reasons to do so.

For example, in **1921** she wrote to him in a rather patronizing manner: ‘You will of course going to see the Exhibition as it is necessary to keep up to date... Perhaps I better mention that the position of the Art Director in the Whitechapel gives you entre to all these private views etc. I say this as you may not have realised this.’³¹

In **1931** she was doing the same, and once advised after reviewing one of his exhibitions:

‘I counted the people and found there were only 44. That is indeed dreadful...I gathered that the Press has not been told...You doubtless had some good reasons for omitting the Press and omitting Sir Andrew Taylor’s name on the card...but I venture to think, that after my large experience at the Institute, one has to advertise in these crowded days if one wants to get an audience’³²

Eventually, their relationships became more friendly. In the same lecture year of **1931**, Duddington, in addition to all his other responsibilities, was appointed Chairman of the Reading Club organised by Barnett:

‘I have entered your name as the Chairman of the Novel Reading Society and everybody is delighted, so we shall come into closer touch than heretofore after that’³³.

It may be supposed that this duty gave him much trouble. From that time onwards the whole of his extensive correspondence with Mrs. Barnett was almost exclusively devoted to the Novel Reading Club alone. Sometimes it resulted in embarrassment:

‘How good of you to give so much time to my poor Novel Reading Club and how sad it is that the people do not come...Miss Cole and I think we shall have to write to each one of the

³¹ Letter from H. Barnett dated 10 Mary 1921.

³² Letter dated 10 March 1931. ‘Institute’ was Mrs Barnett’s school for girls in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, the same venue where the Russian lecture by Duddington was planned to take place.

³³ Letter dated **21 July 1931**.

Members and rebuke them for not writing specially as they were invited and coffee etc. provided'³⁴.

At the same time their relationships more looked as the family one.

Several times Mrs. Barnett, as well as Charles Aitken, considered leaving her role as a Trustee. And several times Duddington persuaded her to stay. On **July 22, 1931** she wrote to him: 'Your letter is indeed very kind and very complimentary. Of course, if the Trustees think my name is of any use, I gladly leave it on your list. But I should be pleased if you would send me as long notice as possible of the Meetings so that I might plan to attend. Lord Burnham used to have them in his house, which saved one the journey through the City and the long flight of stairs'.

She passed away on **June 10, 1936** at the age of 85. One can only assume that Duddington was very upset. On **June 26, 1936**, Mrs. Barnett's assistant, Miss Cole, discussed with him the possibility of honoring her memory by having an exhibition of her own paintings in the gallery - the lady had discovered an aptitude for painting at the age of 71. The letter also discussed a 'service', apparently a funeral service, which Duddington missed due to ill health.

MODERN ART AND ARTISTS, 1922-1927

It was not only the Russian avant-garde that Henrietta Barnett grumbled and resented. Any modern trends might have seemed suspicious to someone born in **1851**, even given her record of promoting the art of the previous period. But it wasn't just about her. Duddington could be said to have been subjected to real censorship by the conservative Trustees, in which Henrietta Barnett only joined. Thus, she regularly rebuked Duddington for his taste and penchant for experimental art. The Russian exhibition of **1921** was only the first in this row.

For example, here is an eloquent exchange of letters between Barnett and Duddington in **February 1922**, shortly before the almost annual Contemporary British Art exhibition. She wrote:

'I greatly hope that you are not accepting these extremely modern works which the poor people cannot in the least understand, and which, to many of us, seem little else but an evidence of national decadence. I was seeing a man yesterday who said he would not give a subscription to you as he thought the Exhibitions had fallen from their ideal of showing beautiful pictures to the poor, by showing, what he called 'mad things'. I hope you are well'.

Duddington replies: 'With regard to the pictures shown I can say that each exhibition has been under the supervision of a Royal Academician and Trustees of the Gallery, a.g. Mr Clausen & Mr. Shannon, and one has only to read the speech of Sir [illegible] or Mr Clausen to know what experts in the matter of selecting pictures though of the exhibitions for which I have been responsible. I cannot therefore, understand the strictness of the man you saw recently. The coming Exhibition will be in both the big rooms. Thank you, I am very well but cannot help

³⁴ Letter from H. Barnett dated **30 January 1933**.

feeling what a pain it is that with all one's endeavours it is impossible to meet with everybody's approbation'.

And exactly a year after that Duddington was again negotiating with some radical artists from the London Group. Here is just a list:

1923, Feb 4 – a letter from Paul Nash.

1923, Feb 20 – a letter from Ethel Walker, famous female artist named 'a lesbian artist' at Tate website, member of the London Group and many others.

1923, Feb 13 – letter by Sydney Carline about his brother Richard, also a member of the London Group. Sydney recommended Duddington to ask his brother to send some works. Duddington followed his advice, which is obvious from the next Carline's letter. Both brothers lived in Hampstead, and formed a centre of a circle, with such participants as Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer and Mark Gertler.

The **1927** exhibition of Jewish Artists was a continuation of the trend to exhibit specifically modern art, very different from the **1923** exhibition of Jewish Art and Antiquities, which mostly featured old books and religious objects. Participants included David Bomberg, Bernard Meninsky, Clara Klinghoffer, Horace Brodzky, Jacob Epstein. The Whitechapel archive contains several letters to Duddington from Mark Gerlter and Clara Klinghoffer relating to it.

It can be assumed that at times Duddington had tense relations with some radical artists, such as the famous Paul Nash, because of the Trustees' stance. For example, on **February 7, 1928**, Nash impatiently asked "whether any of my work will be included," and on **February 9** he explained rather angrily, "I did not actually ask you to include my work in your exhibition, I was trying to discuss whether it was included, and if not, for what strange reason."

By contrast, Duddington's relationship with Clara Klinghoffer became close over time. In **December 1934**, for example, she sent him two friendly letters from Holland in which she recounted local news and weather and discussed whether he could place her paintings somewhere in the Gallery until she could take them away.

And it was in the same **1934** that Dame Barnett mentioned again Duddington's 'experimental' bias: 'I see your Meeting [of Trustees - AL] is a very important. Who are you going to elect as Chairman? It must be somebody who has a large mind on Art and does not think that all the kinks and cranks of modern art movements are to be encouraged'.

CRISIS OF 1927

The year of Jewish Artists exhibition was also a year of hardships for the Gallery and its Secretary. The crisis started in **1922** when London County Council withdrawn its funding, which was its fundament. It

can be or can't be a reaction to the radical Russian Art exhibition **1921**. But the Gallery survived thanks to the City Parochial Foundation who gave most of the money.³⁵

In **1925** and **1926** LCC continued to refuse funding due to the 'financial stringency'³⁶.

How hard it was, can be assumed from the 'Notes for talk at the Whitechapel Gallery meeting 25.7.1927' written by Duddington's hand. It stated that:

'1.The Picture Palaces. The wireless and explainers have reduced our attendance...This is our duty to face facts.

There are several possibilities:

1. To turn it into Educational Cinema – Travels – Empire venues (?) – Drama – Nature Studies.
2. To unite it to the Tate Gallery or obtain pictures from their overflow.
3. To use it more for music via Wireless – or choirs – or community singing or competitions...³⁷

Though the Notes cited only these three possibilities, the financial state of the Gallery luckily had normalised.

MODERN BUT NOT AVANT-GARDE ART, 1920s

Although Duddington was criticized for his avant-garde exhibitions, and he maintained personal relationships with some fairly radical artists, his closer circle appears to consist of other people. These were artists more related to the previous movements, such as Arts and Crafts and Modern Style, and not the celebrities, but rather outstanding pariahs of the art world. For example, the members of Knox Guild of Design and Craft, such as Winifred Tuckfield and Henry Wren. Possibly the Welsh painter Frank Brangwyn and his Art Decoration Group.

The annual exhibition of Knox Guild was held at the Whitechapel Gallery since **1912**, when it was set up by the twenty Knox's students, who followed the 'Celtic Revival' designer Archibald Knox when he quitted his post of the Head of Design at the Kingston School of Art. Duddington's support of them was larger than before. He chaired Knox-related events outside the Gallery, and from the very beginning of his role as a Secretary, maintaining the friendly ties³⁸.

Thus, in her letter of **May 25, 1921** the weaver and co-founder of the Guild Winifred Tuckfield, while discussing the next Knox Guild exhibition, but also mentions personal matters: 'My sister's [Denise Wren, nee Tuckfield – AL] garden is now looking more settled. Your trees look well. I am sure they will be pleased to see you whenever you care to run down'. And again, on

³⁵ Whitechapel Art Gallery Report, 1922-24.

³⁶ Whitechapel Art Gallery Report 1925-26.

³⁷ Whitechapel Archive.

³⁸ For example, in 1931 the 19th annual exhibition was held not at the Whitechapel Gallery, but in Kingston-upon-Thames, and it was opened by Duddington.

June 8, 1921: 'I have seen Mr and Mrs Wren [artist from Knox Guild Henry Wren] today and they ask if you and Mrs Duddington will give them the pleasure of seeing you both at Oxshott of Sunday next. I will be there too...'

On **July 16, 1921**, Winifred Tuckfield tried to help Duddington find a celebrity for the opening of the Russian Artist exhibition and advised him to contact the Keeper of the Tate at the National Gallery and the Warden of the Royal College of Art [William Rothenstein - AL]. 'I forgot his name,' she wrote, and also mentioned that 'Clausen will be there.' There are totally eight letters from Tuckfield in **1921** only! Wrens, Denise and Henry, were potters, they built their house and studio in Oxshott, Potter's Croft by their own hands. Correspondence with both, Wrens and Tuckfield, went through **1920s** to **1940s**. It was the same Henry Wren who were planning the International Folk art exhibition at the Whitechapel and discussed with Duddington the visit to Russian embassy for exhibits.

In **1925** Duddington organized a joint autumn exhibition by Archibald Knox and Frank Brangwyn. The latter was a self-taught Welsh artist, although for a short period he studied art with William Morris. Duddington also organized solo exhibitions and sales of his paintings and was active in his Decorative Arts Group, where he was even Vice-President³⁹.

FROM ARTS AND CRAFTS TO KIBBO KIFT KINDRED

It is not accidental that Winifred Tuchfield was a mediator of the kind between the Gallery and such a bizarre movement as Kibbo Kift Kindred.

Organized in **1920** by poet and artist John Hargrave, it contained elements of Boy Scouting, traditionalist spirituality, magical rituals, and the use of symbols such as the Roman salute, which was also used by the Italian Fascists at the same time. Although Kibbo Kift meant, in Hargrave's words, "proof of great strength," it was not about politics, but rather an escape from civilization, as in the hippie movement, and of course, crafts. Many of the items and camping equipment were homemade. Around the same time as the Whitechapel exhibition, the Kibbo Kift began to turn into the Green Shirts, with uniforms, marches and demonstrations for the National Dividend⁴⁰. Hargrave later organized the Social Credit Party on its basis.

A collection of five letters, two posters and a advertising brochure dated **1928-31**, is kept at the Whitechapel Archive. Two first letters to Duddington were written by someone called A.C.

³⁹ The Whitechapel Archive holds an undated copy of 'Rules and Regulations' for the Group. There is also a correspondence with other officials of the Group (under the title 'The Arts Group for Decoration and Art). For example, in 1932 he promises to lend exhibition equipment etc.

⁴⁰ Jon Savage. The other KKK: how the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift tried to craft a new world. Guardian, 2 November 2015; Annabella Pollen. The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift: Intellectual Barbarians. Donlon Books, 2015. The archival exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery with the same name was held in 2015-2016.

Anderson who sometimes signed as simple 'A.C.A.' In **July 1928** he mentioned that Miss [Winifred] Tuckfield told him about the aims of Kibbo Kift. He discussed the idea of the exhibition, and promised that a special committee of six people from Kibbo Kift would arrange everything.

And as early as **January 1929**, one L. Southcombe of Kibbo Kift again mentioned Miss Tuckfield and discussed ideas for an exhibition. The letter was written on paper with the letterhead "Kibbo Kift Educational Exhibition, London 1929". The exhibition was held in April and May 1929 and was a success. So on **October 14, 1929**, Angus R. McBean, Kibbo Kift's official chronographer and photographer (the paper had the letterhead "Tir-na-Nog, 21 Lowfield Road, London"), talked about a new exhibition the following year (**1930**), this time of Kibbo Kift's photographs.

In **1931** Duddington opened the 19th Annual exhibition of the Knox Guild of Design and Craft in Kingston. Two main artists are advertised on the poster of it, Archibald Knox himself, and John Hargrave.

The relations with the movement, probably, were not lost. At least on **September 21, 1934**, Kathleene Milnes, another official of Kibbo Kift, invited Duddington to an exhibition at the Head Quarters of the movement.

POLITICAL EXHIBITONS

Although Kibbo Kift Kindred of 1929 was not a political exhibition, probably the Whitechapel Gallery had its own political sympathies, and this was a personal choice of Duddington. Of course, the gallery worked with a variety of clients willing to rent space, but a significant proportion of these were leftists, socialists and even organizations such as the Communist Party of Great Britain.

The one exception was perhaps a confirmation of the rule. Thus, in Duddington's early days at Whitechapel, in **December 1920**, he was approached by The Woman's Leader and The Woman's Institute with the idea of an exhibition, Indoors and Out, planned for March-April 1921. It was probably not realized, or only as part of the **late 1920** Household things exhibition, but there is one name among its Committee members that is interesting from a political point of view: Lady Cynthia Mosley, née Curzon, the newly-minted first wife of Sir Oswald Mosley. But it is likely that Duddington inherited this connection from his predecessors, as the Whitechapel Archive also hold a pamphlet published in 1919 by the right-wing 'British Woman Patriotic League', which was then associated with 'The Woman's Institute'. Also significant is the fact that in **1920** Oswald Mosley was still a Tory MP, not a Labour MP as he was a little later, and still too far from the founding of the British Union of Fascists in **1932**.

Also purely coincidentally, but characteristic of the time, the following year, **1921**, a letter signed Sinn Fein was received by the Gallery, which said: 'We the Undersigned (as the Truce ends this month)

hereby give you a due Warning that your Institute is to thouroughly fired and gutted in the very near future! If the oportune moments fall when the place is crowded – all the better!’⁴¹

Much more important were the Duddington’s early contacts with the Labour Party. In 1921 the Gallery received four letters, now in the Archive, all related to the future Labour exhibition.

June 30, 1921: ‘Under the auspices of the London Labour Party we are proposing to organize an Art Exhibition, and I am writing whether it would be possible for us to hire for this purpose the Whitechapel Art Gallery for a period of three weeks in the month of November’.

All four were signed by Secretary Herbert Morrison who was the Mayor of Hackney in 1920-21 from Labour, a member of London County Council in **1922** (became its Leader in **1934**, and created TFL), MP in 1923 and 1929, Minister of Transport in 1929-31, Foreign Secretary in **1946**, and interim Leader of Opposition in 1955.

The further correspondence from Morrison turned out to be less hopeful.

July 13, 1921: ‘I reported to the Executive Committee of the London Labour Party the situation with regard to the proposed Art Exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Having regard to the expenses involved the Committee would not give unqualified authority to go forward, but they are endeavouring to secure financial guarantees from friends which will remove us from any serious risk of loss and I am authorised to make definite arrangements directly I am satisfied that there is no great danger of a heavy loss’.

September 7, 1921: ‘We have been making further efforts with regard to the Art Exhibition, but I am sorry to say that probably in consequence of the existing slump we have not been successful in securing the necessary financial guarantees. In these circumstances we have decided to postpone the venture for the time being, but we are not dropping the idea altogheter...’

When Morrison became a member of LCC, he tried on several occasions to obtain for the Gallery the funding, withdrawn in **1922**, but in vain:

July 4, 1925: ‘I see that the matter be brought up to the Labour members of the Council, and I feel sure that they will be sympatetic, having regard to the fine work you are doing’.

Correspondence continued and in **1934**, when Morrison became leader of the LCC, the idea of a Labor exhibition reappeared. Duddinghong wrote to him on **November 14, 1934**, about “an exhibition of working people’s art work”. When Morrison replied on **November 19**, he thanked him for a certain catalog, but was not so enthusiastical about the exhibition: ‘I have been trying to come along but it has proved impossible as I am working at great pressure’.

Nevertheless, Herbert Morrison was not the only contact in the Labour Party. As early as on **February 16, 1937** have began negations with the Stepney Trade Council and (London) Labour Party, and the person responsible was the Honorary Secretary of the Labour, R. Silkoff.

In his letter of **3 December 1938** he mentioned the display of Pablo Picasso’s painting ‘Guernica’ for the first time. Also on **7 December 1938** the Labour started to discuss the hire of space: ‘arrange that the

⁴¹ 7 October 1921.

dance take place on 31 December'. In the result, on 31 December the 'Guernica' exhibition as opened by Clement Atlee, then the Leader of Labour and former resident of Toynbee Hall. The painting was displayed until **15 January 1939**.

Next was the exhibition of 'Artist International Association, Unity of Artists for Peace, Democracy & Cultural Progress'. It was also organized very quick. The undated sending-in form from the Whitechapel Archive says that it will take place **9 February to 7 March, 1939**. There were real celebrities in several selection committees: Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Graham Bell, Eric Ravilious, James Bateman, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson etc. The advisory council was formed by Eric Gill, Paul Nash, Lucien Pissarro, Duncan Grant, Augustus John, and Henry Moore.

Both projects, the display of 'Guernica' and the first A.I.A. exhibition at the Whitechapel, were sensational. But they were opposed by the Trustees.

On **December 16, 1938** the Chairman Lord Balniel requested:

'With regard to our meeting yesterday, I would be much obliged if you would find out, without delay, the details, which were asked for. What I would like to be found out:

The Work of the A.I.A.

What propaganda for A.I.A. means

What exhibitions they have previously held, together with catalogues of such exhibitions, and photographs of the type of work they wish to show in our Gallery.

So many of these bodies are political, that we really must exercise considerable care in insuring that we do not allow our Gallery to be used for propaganda by any political or semi-political artistic organisation'.

It is not known what Duddington had replied, but on **January 25, 1939** there was a next comment by Lord Balniel:

'Many thanks for your letter and enclosure regarding the A.I.A. which I return.

The catalogues look to me quite horrible, but I take it that we have committed ourselves and that there is nothing more to do?

Even with these explanations, the position of A.I.A. remains obscure but I think you must make it clear to the promoters that we are non-political Gallery and that no political propaganda can be permitted'.

Despite the success of the first A.I.A. exhibition, the Trustees stayed displeased. That's the only reason why the further collaboration with A.I.A. or the Labour was cancelled.

On **July 18, 1939** Beryl Sinclair, Chariman of the next A.I.A. Exhibition Committee, wrote:

'I hope you will not mind writing to you although we have not yet received a letter confirming the information you gave me on the telephone to the effect that your Trustees were not willing

to allow us to hold our members exhibitions and the exhibition of American Art at your gallery. We would be very grateful for some indication of the reason why this decision was made.

We have thought that the success of our exhibition last year must have warranted favourable consideration of our request for dates during 1940...The exhibition we propose in 1940 will give even more representative cross section of the British Art to-day.

As far as the exhibition of American Art is concerned, this will be the first really representative collection of contemporary American painting showing in this country'.

The correspondence had renewed several months later, after the beginning of the World War II. On **January 19, 1940**, new Chairman of A.I.A., Misha Black, wrote to Duddington:

'As the situation has changed so much during the last few months, I hope you will not mind my re-opening the question of holding an exhibition of contemporary painting and sculpture at your Gallery during the Spring of this year...

If you can agree to let us have our members' exhibition...I can assure you that it will not contain any propaganda or work to which you or your trustees might object'.

Though not successful this time, the negotiations continued:

On **June 27, 1941**, from A.I.A: 'the Exhibition Committee of this Association is exploring the possibilities of various galleries for its next Annual Exhibition...[in] October this year'.

On **July 21, 1941**, again from A.I.A.:

'very glad to learn that the Whitechapel had not been damaged beyond repair. It now seems likely that our Annual Exhibition may not take place until early next year..We will communicate with you...'

As we know, the second exhibition of A.I.A. did take place, but only in **1945**, under the title 'This Extraordinary Year', in between the exhibitions of the Soviet photography and Soviet Graphic. It was not probably so successful, as the first one but on the **October 23, 1946**, a representative of A.I.A. enquired 'if and when it would be possible for our organisation to avail ourselves of your gallery during the coming year...contemporary Spanish painting'.

In the same year of 1938, then A.I.A. contacted the Gallery, it had got another client, the Communist Party of Great Britain. On January 21 1938, its representative asked Duddington: 'Will you please advise me whether your Gallery would be available to us for a dance on the evening of Saturday April 30'.

No one planned to limit this collaboration with dances. On **October 8, 1942** a letter from Communist Party asked: 'Would you be kind enough to inform what the rental of the Gallery would be for the two weeks in November for use as an exhibiton?'

Unfortunately, there is no further information about this project.

*

The Whitechapel Archive holds many documents relating to other aspects of J. N. Duddington's activity and his relationship with Charles Aitken, Jewish organizations, local communities, and various religious and cultural institutions (there was a long tradition of Jewish festivals in the gallery). He also corresponded extensively with government agencies, especially during World War II, when a part of the gallery was used as an Aid Raid Shelter, and when it hosted official exhibitions of the Ministry of Information. Of interest are Duddington's contacts with the Ministry of Refugees when he helped rescue two German doctors, sisters of his acquaintance, the British-Jewish artist Hannes Hammerschmidt. All this awaits its researcher.

APPENDIX

"INDOORS AND OUT."

Exhibition organized by "The Woman's Leader" and "The Women's Institutes."

Committee.

The VISCOUNTESS ASTOR, M.P.
The LADY DENMAN.
Mrs. HERON-MAXWELL.
Miss MARGESSON.
The LADY CYNTHIA MOSLEY
Mrs. C. S. PEEL.
Mrs. OLIVER STRACHEY.

December 21st 1920.

Exhibition Dept.

"THE WOMAN'S LEADER,"
62, Oxford Street, W.1
Telephone: MUSEUM 2702.

Organizer:

Miss E. M. JAMES.

Dear Sir,

I should be so glad if you would let me know the following particulars concerning the Whitechapel Art Gallery:-

1. The total floor space.
2. The price per week.
3. Whether we could have an option on the Hall

for either of the following dates--

March 7th to March 19th 1921.

or April 4th to April 16th 1921.

We are organising a House Decorating and Furnishing Exhibition and would use the Hall for that purpose.

Trusting to hear from you at an early date.

I am,

Yours truly,

Evelyn James

1920. Exhibition by The Woman's Leader/The Woman's Institutes

OBJECTS

TO ORGANISE IN LONDON AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL LABOUR MOVEMENT; TO SECURE THE RETURN OF LABOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO PARLIAMENT AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES; TO PROMOTE THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION OF THE PEOPLE

SECRETARY—
HERBERT MORRISON

LABOUR PARTY
ORGANISERS FOR LONDON—
R. T. WINDLE
Miss ANNIE SOMERS



INTERVIEWS BY APPOINTMENT
Telephone . . . Museum 879

BANKERS

THE CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LIMITED, CHEQUES, &c., TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE LONDON LABOUR PARTY AND CROSSED "& Co."

YOUR DATE AND REFERENCE:—

OUR DATE AND REFERENCE:—

30 June 1921.

HM/AA.

BEDFORD ROW HOUSE,
58 THEOBALDS ROAD, W.C.1

J. Nightingale Duddington Esq.
Whitechapel Art Gallery,
81/82 Whitechapel High Street, E.1.

Dear Sir:

Under the auspices of the London Labour Party we are proposing to organise an Art Exhibition, and I am writing to ask whether it would be possible for us to hire for this purpose the Whitechapel Art Gallery for a period of three weeks in the month of November. If it is possible for you to entertain this request favourably I should be glad if you would let me know particulars of letting, including charges of accommodation, etc., and if you would be good enough to telephone to me making an appointment, perhaps it would be possible for me to see the premises.

The proposed Exhibition will be an interesting departure for the Labour Movement, and I think your Trustees will realise the suitability of the Whitechapel Art Gallery for this purpose and will give us every assistance and encouragement in making an endeavour to associate the work people's Movement with Art.

We are anxious to have things fixed up as early as possible and I should be glad if a reply at your earliest convenience.

With thanks for your kind attention,

Yours faithfully:

Monthly Publication "The London Labour Chronicle."

Herbert Morrison
SECRETARY.

1, SOUTH SQUARE,
HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB, N.W. 11.

(TEL. 1347 FINCHLEY).

June 30th, 1921.

Dear Mr Duddington,

I am exceedingly sorry I did not get to you on Tuesday. I had arranged to bring a most influential American lady to the Opening, but the luncheon party at which we were both present, took so long that we did not leave until 3.45 - too late to make it possible to be with you.

I thought the notice in the Times was very interesting, and I must make a point of coming down as soon as I can.

Would you please send me a catalogue?

Yours very truly,

H. Barnett

1921. Letter from H. Barnett on the Russian Art exhibition.

FIRST AID FOR THE WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY.

At the beginning of the century Canon Barnett and Mrs. Barnett and other social workers established the present Whitechapel Art Gallery, one of the greatest blessings the East End enjoys. It has held exhibitions, sometimes as many as five in a year, and these shows have varied from collections of old masters and modern masters of extraordinary quality to school and domestic collections. It was, I think, the first art gallery to have an arrangement by which in certain circumstances a class visit could be made to the gallery and be counted as in school time. The educative value of this sense of culture, well developed by guide lectures and school connections and connections with men's societies of all kinds and creeds, is incalculable.

The late Canon Barnett would not tolerate the idea of "poor pictures for poor people," and believed that the best that could be got could not be too good for Whitechapel. A more difficult thing was to get the really good pictures to a new gallery in a part of the town whose associations to most owners of pictures were least likely to make them open to an appeal for loans. Happily the director of the gallery, Mr. Charles Aitken (now director of the Tate Gallery), is a man with a genius for art galleries and for inducing others—even the most unlikely—to respond to his discriminating enthusiasm. The result was that the Whitechapel Art Gallery shows acquired a European reputation.

It is now announced that the London County Council, owing to the present financial stringency, has withdrawn the substantial grant which it had given for years, and in consequence it will not be possible to keep the gallery open for more than a small part of the year. This would be a genuine disaster. The Committee, of which Lord Burnham is chairman and Sir William Davison honorary treasurer, appealed for first aid for the gallery. They hope that many new annual subscribers will arise to take the place of the many who were lost in the war, as were the two gallery directors, Mr. Teed and Mr. Ramsay, who fell in France. Subscriptions will be gratefully acknowledged by the honorary treasurer. They should be sent to him at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, E.1.

*Reprinted from "The Manchester Guardian,"
February 19, 1923.*

STATION: ANGMERING.
TELEGRAMS: ZANGWILL, EAST-PRESTON.

FAR END.

EAST PRESTON.

SUSSEX.

13th April, 1927.

J. N. Duddington, Esq.,
Whitechapel Art Gallery,
High Street, Whitechapel, E. 1.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter asking for Jewish exhibits, I am sending a book of Lilien's illustrations. He was a characteristic modern Jewish artist who died recently.

Also a modern shield, the design for which was taken from the High Priest's breastplate. Its history is as follows:

My husband was making a speech of a Pacifist nature to a large meeting during the war. There was a good deal of hostility aroused, and angry cries that he was a Jew. He stopped in his address and said the words that are quoted in the centre of the shield, which unexpectedly changed the feeling of the audience and provoked a great burst of applause. The shield I am sending was in commemoration of this event, and was sent to him by East End admirers.

With regard to the insurance, I would suggest ensuring the book for £1 and the shield for £4.

All my husband's Jewish books are now in the possession of his brother, Louis Zangwill. Some of them were old, but not, I think, of great value or general interest. I have no other Jewish antiquities.

An acquaintance of mine, Mrs. de Sola, has a very interesting collection of illustrated Jewish marriage certificates of the eighteenth century, and also, I think, other interesting historical documents. I have not got her address here, but you would find it in the telephone book. She lives in a turning off Sloane Street.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Zangwill

P. C. Hoofthade 9,
Heemstede - Aerdenhout -
Holland.

Dec: 22nd 1934.

Dear Mr Duddington,

Many thanks for your
letter and cheque. It is charming of you
to hang my pictures on your walls to
attract notice.

My husband and I send you our best
wishes for a merry Xmas and a very
happy new year.

The letter you enclosed was from a ~~young~~
young lady I met some twenty years
ago - Extraordinary!! I feel quite ancient.

The weather is so mild in Holland
that the rose bushes are in bloom
again; Unbelievable you'll think, but
it is nevertheless quite true.

Our kindest regards

yours very sincerely

Clara Stoppelman
Klinghoffer.

TEL. B192 HAMPSTEAD

April 25. 1927

19, WORSLEY ROAD,
HAMPSTEAD, N.W. 3.

Penn Studio
Rudall Crescent
Hampstead
N.W.3

Dear Sir

I am sorry I did not answer your first communication, but I misunderstood it. I thought you only wanted autogins.

I shall certainly send you one or two pictures, as I am going away on Wednesday for 2 or 3 weeks, I shall send them probably in a day or two - Rather early I suppose from a point of view now, but convenient for me, as I shall be away & not be able to manage it later.

Yours Sincerely,
Mark Gertler

1927. Letter from Mark Gertler

Notes for talk at the
Whitechapel Art Gallery
Meeting 25.7.27

1. The Picture Palaces
The Wireless and
The public & plainers
have reduced our
attendance.

For such small numbers
owners of really fine
pictures will not lend.

It is our duty to

face facts -

There are several possibilities

I To turn it into an

AUTUMN EXHIBITION, 1925



THE KNOX GUILD OF
DESIGN AND CRAFT

WATER COLOURS BY
ARCHIBALD KNOX . .

DRAWINGS AND ETCHINGS
BY FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

OPEN DAILY

Saturday, October 17 to Saturday, November 14

Hours: 12 noon to 9 p.m. SUNDAYS 2 to 9 p.m.

HIGH STREET, WHITECHAPEL, LONDON, E.1
Nearest Stations: ALDGATE (Met.), ALDGATE EAST (Dist.)

FREE

WAG/EAR/2/38/16

THE MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY, PUBLIC LIBRARY,
THE FAIRFIELD, KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES.

THE KNOX GUILD OF DESIGN AND CRAFT
19th ANNUAL EXHIBITION

WILL BE OPENED BY J. N. DUDDINGTON, Esq.,

On SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21st, at 3.30 p.m.

WATER COLOURS by JOHN HARGRAVE and ARCHIBALD KNOX.

*The EXHIBITS will
include*

JEWELLERY
METAL WORK
EMBROIDERY
WOVEN MATERIALS
PRESERVES
WOODCUTS
PHOTOGRAPHS
MASKS

The EXHIBITORS being

GRACE, JESSIE AND ANNIE BEGG
MAUDE BOOM, KATHLEEN FREEMAN
GLADYS FORGE, PHYLLIS GAZE
MAY HARRIS, BEATRICE HARMSWORTH
MAY HOLDING, PAUL JONES
ANGUS MCBEAN, HETORH PLATTEN
MABEL POPE, WINIFRED TUCKFIELD
DENISE K. WREN, ANNE WILLIAMS

*The EXHIBITS
(contd.)*

OXSHOTT POTTERY
RAFFIA
LEATHER WORK
MARQUETRY
BASKETRY
LAMP SHADES, and
WOOD CARVING

OPEN DAILY 11 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. UNTIL DECEMBER 5th, 1931.
SATURDAYS UNTIL 8.30 p.m.

Scribe: Winifred Tuckfield.

ADMISSION FREE

Paul & J.S. 1929

WAG/2/37/12

KIBBO



KIFT

Educational Exhibition.
London. - 1929.

32, Camden Road,
N.W.1.

26th June 1929.

Dear Mr Duddington,

Owing to the amount of work at my office now and also a private drain on my time, I have despaired of coming to the Whitechapel Art Gallery to see you at a time when you would be likely to be there and so I enclose a list of the Expenses which I have incurred over the Kibbo Kift Exhibition. I must first of all explain that I have entered there all my expenditure - or rather all of it that was noted - and the list probably includes some things which you will think should not properly be paid for by the Gallery. If so, please strike them out and I will see whether the kindred can afford to pay me for them!

Three items on the back page need explanation. Two of the girls who took part in the entertainments only made special journeys to the Gallery for that purpose; because they are extremely "hard-ups". Under the circumstances I have guaranteed a donation of 10/- each towards their expenses. Another member, the only available one at the times, and living some way out of

1929. Letter from L.Southcombe of Kibbo Kift

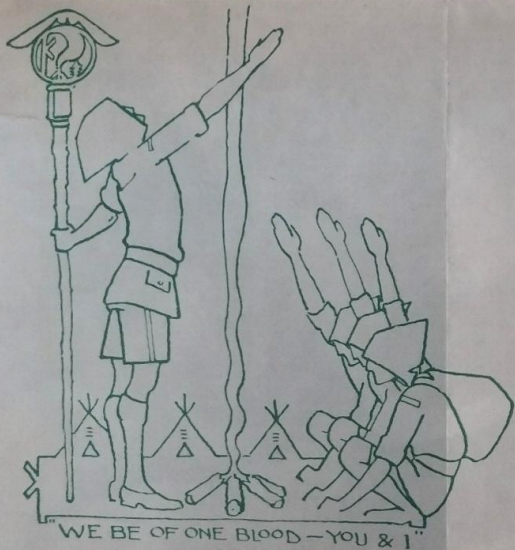
WAG/EXR/2/36/17

WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY

HIGH STREET, WHITECHAPEL

KIBBO KIFT

Educational Exhibition



**CAMPCRAFT
HANDICRAFT
POSTERS
TOYS**

OPEN DAILY
April 21—May 25
12—9 SUNDAYS 2—9

FREE

Nearest Stations:
ALDGATE (Metro)
ALDGATE EAST (Underground)

L.C.C. Trams; 47, 53, 61, 63, 65, 67, 71
'Buses; 10, 15, 25, 26, 126, 40, 42, 96, 100

FENNY & HULL, 2 ST. CLARE STREET, MINORIES, E.1

1929.

STEPNEY BRANCH

COMMUNIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN
15, FIELDGATE ST., WHITECHAPEL, E.1

Telephone: BISHOPSGATE 3743

2nd December 1938

The Secretary,
Whitechapel Art Gallery,
Whitechapel High Street,
E.1.

Dear Sir,

I called at the Gallery tonight in the hope of seeing you, but as you were not there I left a deposit of £1 for the hire of the Hall on Saturday, December 10th, from 8 to 10.30 p.m. for a Meeting and Film Show, as agreed with you over the telephone.

Also, as agreed, I undertake that this meeting will not be used for political purposes. No propaganda for this Party will be given, and no attempt will be made to recruit new members. The purpose of the meeting is solely in aid of ^{the} Chinese people and the movement for the boycott of Japanese goods.

I should be very glad to know if we may arrive at the Hall at 7 o'clock in order to make arrangements for the meeting.

Yours truly,

Vera Reid

Propaganda Secretary

*A E 12-38
all right*

1938. Communist Party non-political meeting

THE POTTERSCROFT, OXSHOTT, NEAR LEATHERHEAD, SURREY

DENISE WREN HENRY WREN:
CRAFTSMEN POTTERS: DESIGNERS

19 MAY 1939

Dear Duddington

Further to the point about the Folk Art exhibits, it appears that these are from Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Roumania, France, Germany, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Greece and ~~Roumania~~ Russia.

For the Russian exhibits we should have to fix up with the Russian Embassy in London and in all other cases with the Liverpool Consuls.

The exhibits are due away from the Walker when the exhibition closes on 26 May, so I ought to write on Monday really, if you can give me any information about dates. I could come and see you anytime after or, if you like, before, hearing from the Consuls etc.

It looks like being incidentally a way of re-introducing some Whitechapel residents to the craftwork of their own homelands.

Ever

Henry Wren

*9.6.39 -
more particulars*

45, Stoke Newington Church Street,
London, N. 16.

28 February 1939.

Dear Mr. Duddington

The secretary of the committee who
have charge of the Picasso pictures
while they are in England is

Roland Penrose,
21, Downshire Hill,
London, N. W. 3.

He will be able to give you any
information you require about them,
and will be able to say whether they
can be loaned.

I hope that this is the information you
need.

Yours very truly,

Clifford Busby

