

## **Brueghel Old Master saved for nation**

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Art Fund and National Trust campaign reaches £2.7million target as National Heritage Memorial Fund closes the gap with £1million grant.

Image



The Procession to Calvary by Pieter Brueghel the Younger

The Art Fund, the National Trust and National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) are delighted to announce that Pieter Brueghel the Younger's *The Procession to Calvary* has been saved for the nation after an intensive three month fundraising campaign.

The £2.72million total was announced today (Thursday 6 January) with the news of the NHMF grant of £1,034,000. Along with the Art Fund's £500,000 grant that kick started the appeal, over £680,000 from members of the public - many of whom were Art Fund and National Trust members - and nearly £510,000 from trusts and foundations, *The Procession to Calvary* can now be kept on public display at Nostell Priory in West Yorkshire.

In September, the Art Fund and the National Trust launched a joint fundraising appeal to save *The Procession to Calvary*. The painting is the star attraction at Nostell Priory, owned by the National Trust since 1954, where it has hung for over 200 years. The painting was put up for sale by its owner, Lord St Oswald, with the

risk of being lost from public view.

Completed in 1602, and amongst Brueghel the Younger's finest works, *The Procession to Calvary* shows Christ carrying the cross on the way to his crucifixion. He is surrounded by over two hundred figures in a vibrant narrative, set in a contemporary Flemish landscape.

Dr Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: "We have been bowled over by the support and enthusiasm of the public for this quite extraordinary painting, helping us to reach the £2.7 million target. Considering the economic climate, this has been a hugely challenging campaign and we are enormously grateful to all our members and supporters who have given so generously. Working with the National Trust has been a very fruitful experience, pooling our resources to pull out all the stops and save this remarkable painting for Nostell Priory and its visitors. As ever, our huge thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for its major role in bringing this campaign to a truly fantastic close."

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Director-General of the National Trust, said: "This is wonderful news and a marvellous start to the new year with the knowledge that Nostell Priory's star attraction will stay where it belongs and continue to be enjoyed by visitors. We want to thank everyone who has supported this campaign to save *The Procession to Calvary*, especially the National Heritage Memorial Fund for enabling us to reach our target today. And our special thanks go to the Art Fund for their generous donation that kick-started the campaign and who have worked tirelessly with us throughout the last three months to secure the future of this wonderful painting."

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, said: "The overwhelming public support to help secure this stunning painting has been an inspiration. Individual giving combined with on-going support from government funds such as the National Heritage Memorial Fund, will play an increasingly important role in securing our most precious heritage."

The Art Fund and the National Trust would like to thank the National Gallery and York Art Gallery for their support throughout the campaign in enabling the public to view the work in their spaces.

*The Procession to Calvary* is on display at York Art Gallery until 8 January 2011. It will return to Nostell Priory and be on display from February 2011, when the house opens once again to the public.

To discover more about *The Procession to Calvary* visit [www.artfund.org/procession](http://www.artfund.org/procession) or telephone 0844 415 4004.

## **Notes to editors**

### **About Pieter Brueghel the Younger, *The Procession to Calvary* and Nostell Priory**

#### **Who was Pieter Brueghel the Younger?**

Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564/65-1637/38) was the eldest son of the Brussels-based artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-1569). After the death of his parents he and his brother, later known as Jan 'Velvet' Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625), were raised by their grandmother Mayken Verhulst (c. 1520-1600), an artist herself and possibly their first teacher. Pieter the Younger may also have studied with the landscape painter Gillis III van Coninxloo (1544-1607) before setting up as an independent master in Antwerp, in modern-day Belgium.

#### **What is the date of the painting *The Procession to Calvary* and why is the painting so important?**

The *Procession to Calvary* at Nostell Priory is signed and dated P. BRVEGEL/1602. It is one of only 5 versions of this painting that are signed and dated by Pieter Brueghel the Younger. The earliest, of 1599, has been in the Uffizi in Florence since before 1686. The painting at Nostell Priory is the second in the series and is the only signed and dated version of the painting in a publicly accessible UK collection. The other signed and dated works are from 1603, (in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp), 1606 (formerly in Berlin, possibly destroyed) and 1607 (in a private collection having passed through the van Haeften Gallery in London). Other, undated versions are the product of his studio.

Art historian, Georges Marlier, who wrote the definitive book devoted to the artist, thought that the Nostell Priory version of *The Procession to Calvary* was "perhaps the most beautiful" painting in the series and that it alone "justified the inclusion of Pieter Brueghel the Younger among the masters of Flemish painting."

#### **Is this painting an original creation of Pieter Brueghel the Younger or a copy of one of his father's works?**

Most art historians believe this painting to be an original composition by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, though influenced by his father. There is a painting of the Carrying of the Cross, or Procession to Calvary, of 1564 by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Though there are similar elements, the painting at Nostell Priory is not a direct copy of the painting in Vienna, but rather, Pieter Brueghel the Younger's own composition of the events, in which Christ carrying his cross is given greater prominence. Significantly, he also later painted a number of versions of Calvary itself, but after a since-lost painting by his father.

### **What does the painting The Procession to Calvary depict?**

The painting depicts Christ, carrying his Cross, on the way to his Crucifixion at the top right of the painting. The biblical narrative is set in a contemporary Flemish town and landscape but with the inclusion of a fanciful depiction of the Temple of Jerusalem. In the right foreground are the women who followed Christ, weeping as he goes to his death. Ahead of Christ, in a cart, are the Good Thief and the Bad Thief, who were crucified either side of him. The dark sky above Calvary at the top right is symbolic of the fate which awaits Christ and a foretaste of the "darkness over the land, from the Sixth hour unto the ninth hour", after Christ was hoisted on the Cross (Matthew xxvii. 45).

### **What, if any, historical and social references are being made in this painting?**

Some art historians think that certain paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, such as the Massacre of the Innocents (c. 1565/7) or the Conversion of Paul (1567), allude to the presence in the Spanish Netherlands at that time of soldiers from the occupying Habsburg Empire. The Spanish king, Philip II, inherited the Habsburg Netherlands in 1555/6, and sent the Duke of Alva to enforce order – which he did brutally – in 1567. In some of his paintings, art historians have argued that the soldiers in the biblical narrative are made to look like contemporary soldiers

### **Why is it important to Nostell today?**

Nostell Priory is unique amongst the houses of West Yorkshire in having most of its historic collections intact dating back to the 18th century.

The pictures at Nostell Priory were largely collected in the 18th and 19th centuries. The collection probably totalled over 200 paintings by 1785, about half

of which had been inherited from the family of the 5th Baronet's Swiss wife in 1781. Some of the outstanding paintings still in the collection date from this period. Most notable is the Brueghel, but also important are pictures by William Hogarth and Hugh Douglas Hamilton. From 1817, Charles Winn, owner of Nostell Priory for over 50 years, made major additions, including many of the 158 pictures that the Trust is now trying to acquire as part of the chattels. It has always been very important to the National Trust to keep interiors complete and collections whole and, since 1954, when the Trust was given the house and gardens, it has been able to acquire a number of important and iconic objects at Nostell.

On a local level, it is important to keep this collection within Yorkshire. Nostell Priory sits within an area that suffers from low income and high unemployment, meaning that some local people may not have the budget or resources to go to London, or other major cities, to see other significant works of art. Nostell Priory is akin to a local 'national gallery'. Nostell Priory welcomes rising numbers of family visitors and local schools, who all take an interest in the portraits, porcelain and furniture that are on display, and who enjoy authentic interiors, decorated and created by many generations of one Yorkshire family.

In 2009, over 100,000 people visited Nostell Priory and its parkland, and over 40,000 people visited the house and enjoyed its collections. The Brueghel is one of the 'star' paintings, and very popular with visitors of all ages. Adults enjoy its aesthetic beauty and skilful detail, whilst children enjoy the imagery and story it contains.

## **The Art Fund**

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for works of art and plays a major part in enriching the range, quality and understanding of art in the UK. It campaigns, fundraises and gives money to museums and galleries to buy and show art, and promotes its enjoyment through its events and membership scheme. The Art Fund is funded by its art-loving and museum-going members and supporters who believe that great art should be for everyone to enjoy.

The Art Fund and National Trust have worked together on numerous fundraising initiatives, most recently to help save items at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland.

In addition to members of the public including Art Fund and National Trust members who have helped to bring this campaign to a successful conclusion, the

Art Fund is pleased to acknowledge the financial support of major Trusts and Foundations including the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust.

## **National Trust**

The National Trust cares for 300 inspiring historic houses and gardens across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. From former workers' cottages to the most iconic stately homes, and from mines and mills to theatres and inns, the stories of people and their heritage are at the heart of everything it does. People of all ages, individuals, schools and communities, get involved each year with its projects, events and working holidays and 61,000 volunteers help to bring the properties alive for the millions of people who visit our places each year.

## **Further information**

Lizzie Bloom, Press & Campaigns Manager, the Art Fund

Phone: 0207 225 4804 email: [lbloom@artfund.org](mailto:lbloom@artfund.org).

Helen Clarke, National Trust Communications Officer, Yorkshire and the North East,

Phone: 01904 771904 / 07901 504877.