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Welcome to this month's NMDC newsletter which contains an update on our activities and news from the museum sector in the UK and beyond. www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

NMDC News

NMDC Jobs Website

The National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) has launched a new website to promote job vacancies across NMDC member organisations. The aim of the site is to provide a cost-free forum for NMDC members to advertise vacancies and a useful one-stop resource for museum sector jobseekers.

The NMDC jobs website is free to use and includes listings of current vacancies across the UK's national museums, galleries, libraries and archives which jobseekers can search by job category, individual organisation, region or salary. The jobs website is at: www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

Philanthropy

NMDC is firmly committed to promoting a culture of giving and is exploring how to engage better with a new generation of potential philanthropists. NMDC will be working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and other partners to encourage giving to the cultural sector.

DCMS has set up a project team headed by Keith Nichol, formerly Head of Museums at DCMS, to assess how to promote philanthropy across the cultural sector.

Foreign Domiciliaries Legislation - Impact on Museums

Mark Jones, Chair of NMDC, has written to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport about the potential impact on museums of proposed changes to tax rules for non-domiciled UK residents. Many of the largest donors to UK museums are non-domiciled UK residents and there are concerns about the ability of museums to raise private funds if, as predicted, a significant number of non-domiciles leave the UK as a result of the proposed tax reforms.

In addition, under the proposed changes foreigners resident in the UK will no longer be able to bring in and lend objects to museums without incurring tax liabilities. NMDC has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlining concerns that this will deter collectors from lending objects to UK museums and asking Government to consider creating exemptions for objects already in the country and those brought to the UK solely for the purpose of exhibition.

An article on the subject appeared in the Financial Times on 7 February 2008 and can be read at: www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a46fd744-d5b7-11dc-8b56-0000779fd2ac.html

Cultural Offer for Young People - Inclusion of National Museums

The NMDC welcomes the introduction of the Cultural Offer for Young People, a joint commitment between the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the DCMS for up to five hours of cultural learning and activity per child, per week. The Cultural Offer was included in the DCSF Children's Plan, details of which can be found on the DCSF website:

www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/

National Museums place learning at the core of their ethos and are in an excellent position to help deliver the Cultural Offer. Dr. Michael Dixon, Chair of the NMDC Learning and Access Committee, has written to officials at DCMS and DCSF highlighting why national museums should be fully and strategically included in the new Cultural Offer programme.

Michael Dixon's letter to DCMS is available on the NMDC website:

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/cultural_offer_letter.html

IPPR Report: The Power of Belonging: Identity, Citizenship, and Community Cohesion

Following the NMDC seminar on Identity, Diversity and Citizenship last year (see NMDC Newsletter August 2007), ippr have published a report exploring the role that 'shared identities' might play in building more cohesive communities and in underpinning citizenship.

The report says "Our museums, libraries and galleries can provide a safe and trusted space for people to reflect on the diversity of cultures that make up contemporary Britain" and includes a section on the role of the cultural and heritage sector in fostering shared identity. It argues that museums and galleries are trusted for their knowledge and expertise and are seen as non-partisan, providing places in which to reflect on potentially controversial issues. The report calls for government funding to foster an understanding of national identity based on democratic values and to support projects that celebrate Britain's democratic heritage. www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=568

A summary of the NMDC Seminar is available at: www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/identity_seminar.html

Members' News

National Portrait Gallery Receives £5 million from the Lerner Foundation

The Lerner Foundation has pledged £5 million to the National Portrait Gallery, London. The gift, to be made over three years, will help build the Gallery's Portrait Fund for the acquisition of portraits for the Collection and enrich Gallery programmes including: research; displays; digitisation of the Collection; education; and outreach in schools, colleges and hospitals. In recognition of the gift, the Ground Floor galleries have been named The Lerner Galleries. www.npg.org.uk/live/prellernergift.asp

NMDC Members Long-listed for The Art Fund Prize

Three NMDC members have been long-listed for the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries - formerly the Gulbenkian Prize - which is awarded for a museum or gallery project that demonstrates originality, imagination and excellence.

- **The British Library** is long-listed for the exhibition *Sacred – Discover What We Share*, that brought together Jewish, Christian and Islamic holy texts in its collection for the first time.
- **International Slavery Museum, Liverpool**, opened in August 2007, tells the story of the transatlantic slave trade, exploring issues including freedom, identity, human rights, racism and cultural change.
- **The National Army Museum** is long-listed for *Helmand: The Soldiers' Story*, an exhibition created by soldiers that explores the British army's first campaign in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

The other long-listed museums and galleries are: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol, for *Breaking the Chains*; The Lightbox, Woking; London Transport Museum; The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney; Shetland Museum and Archives, Lerwick; Topsham Museum, Exeter, for the *River Gallery Project*; and the Wellcome Collection. www.artfundprize.org.uk:80/press/press-release-080131.php

National Museums Scotland Returns Human Remains

The Trustees of National Museums Scotland have agreed to return a Tasmanian skull to Australia and other human remains to New Zealand. The items came into the collections of National Museums Scotland in the 19th century and have not been on display for many decades.

Approval to return the remains was needed from the Scottish Minister of Europe, External Affairs and Culture, as the Human Tissue Act (2004), which includes provision for specified museums in England to dispose of human remains, does not apply to National Museums Scotland.

www.nms.ac.uk/pressrelease_human_remains.aspx

Mitsubishi Corporation Sponsors Japanese Galleries at the British Museum

From January 2008 the Mitsubishi Corporation will sponsor the permanent galleries dedicated to Japanese culture at the British Museum in a 10 year partnership. The Galleries were recently refurbished and officially re-opened as the Mitsubishi Corporation Japanese Galleries in January.

www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/news_and_debate/press_releases/2008/mitsubishi_sponsors_galleries.aspx

British Sign Language Tours at Tyne & Wear Museums

Tyne & Wear Museums are offering British Sign Language (BSL) tours of museums, led by local deaf volunteers. The tours, on the last Saturday of every month, include a morning and an afternoon, usually at two different venues, and cover a range of topics from fine art to local history. The tours are part of the *Our Way* project, run by the North East Regional Museums Hub, which recruited deaf volunteers to create and deliver BSL tours in museums and galleries across the North East, following consultation with deaf people in the area. www.twmuseums.org.uk/communityoutreach/bsltours/

Glasgow Museums Collections Recognised

The entire collection of Glasgow Museums has been acknowledged as being significant to the Scottish nation under the *Recognised Collections of National Significance*.

Custodians of Recognised Collections are presented with plaques and certificates and can bid for funding of up to £40,000 for a project to increase access to collections and improve how they are cared for. Nine other collections have been recognised, making a total of 27 *Recognised Collections of National Significance*. www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/news/2008/Recognisedcollections0108.asp

Ulster Museum Awarded Art Fund Collect Prize

The Ulster Museum has been awarded an *Art Fund Collect* award, which offers museums funds to purchase contemporary craft. It was one of ten museums and galleries selected to attend a preview of the craft fair Collect 2008 and submit their choice of object to a Committee, which decided the winners.

The Ulster Museum won for its choice *A Silver Organism – Pine 2007* by Junko Mori, bought for £8,865. The other winners were: Hove Museum & Art Gallery; mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art); and The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester. www.artfund.org/news/649

British Library Puts Hidden Treasures Online

Five documents from UK public library collections, winners of the 2007 *Hidden Treasures Brought to Life* competition, are now accessible online. Pages of the texts have been digitised and transformed into Turning the Pages 2.0™ 'virtual texts' on the British Library's website. Winning treasures include: a 12th century legal work from Kent, which contains the earliest record of the English language; a 15th century illuminated missal, which features a rite of excommunication; and a Women's Institute World War II record book. www.bl.uk/news/2008/pressrelease20080124.html

Report on National Archives Meet the Chief Executive Day

On 8 November the National Archives held a *Meet the Chief Executive* day, giving the public a chance to put forward views on or questions about the management and future of The National Archives. Issues raised and suggestions made, alongside responses from the National Archives, are documented in a report available at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/meet-the-ceo2007.pdf

Consultation on 30-year Rule Review

Last year the Prime Minister announced a review of when historical records are transferred to The National Archives and largely opened to public access. The Review Website has been launched and is inviting views on the 30-year rule review until **Friday 29 February**. www.30yearreview.org.uk

Natural History Museum Shortlists Artists for *Darwin's Canopy*

Ten artists, including Rachel Whiteread, Susan Hiller and Mark Wallinger, have been short-listed to develop proposals for *Darwin's Canopy*, a permanent artwork inspired by Charles Darwin's ideas that will become part of a gallery ceiling in the Natural History Museum. The project is part of Darwin200, a national programme celebrating Darwin's ideas, impact and influence around the bicentenary of his birth. The selected artist will be announced in June and the artwork will be unveiled on Darwin's 200th birthday in February 2009. www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2008/february/news_13339.html

Current Issues

New Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Andy Burnham has been appointed Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport replacing James Purnell who became Secretary of State for Work and Pensions following the resignation of Peter Hain.

Andy Burnham was Chief Secretary to the Treasury and prior to that served as Minister of State for Delivery and Reform at the Department of Health and as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality at the Home Office. He entered Parliament in June 2001 as MP for Leigh. Andy Burnham was Parliamentary Private Secretary to David Blunkett at the Home Office and to Ruth Kelly at the Department for Education and Skills, and worked as a Special Adviser to Chris Smith at the DCMS in 1998 and as a researcher for Tessa Jowell MP.

Speaking in the House of Commons Andy Burnham said "I take on this new role at a time of tremendous opportunity for culture, sport and media in this country, and I will work enthusiastically to ensure that we make the most of that opportunity". He paid tribute to his predecessors for setting the department on a "clear direction towards delivering world-class cultural and sporting activity" and said that this was his "dream job". [House of Commons Hansard Debates for 28 Jan 2008 \(pt 0002\)](http://www.parliament.gov.uk/hansard-debates/28-Jan-2008/pt0002)

There is a biography of Andy Burnham at: www.culture.gov.uk/about_us/our_ministers/aburnham.htm

Consultation on Informal Learning

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has announced a consultation on informal adult learning to help shape future Government policy in order to deliver "vibrant and fulfilling informal adult learning". The consultation seeks to understand changes that are taking place in informal learning, how Government and other organisations can support adult learners and what learners want.

Everyone with an interest in the future of informal adult learning is invited to take part in the consultation at www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk/. The deadline for responses is **15 May 2008**.

Record Private Investment in Culture in the UK

A survey of over 4,500 arts organisations published by Arts & Business shows that private support for the arts in the UK increased by 11% from 2005/6 to 2006/7, to £599.45 million. Investment from individuals was up 10.8% to £298m, the corporate sector up 10.1% to £172m and Trusts and Foundations increased 11.4% to £129m. According to the survey UK museums received £85.55 million in private support in 2006/7.

Colin Tweedy, Chief Executive of Arts & Business, warned that financial uncertainty could result in a reduction in expenditure on the arts. www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,5,1377,1384

Arts Council England Regular Funding for 2008-2011

Arts Council England has announced funding of £1.3 billion for 888 arts organisations for the period 2008-11. 753 (76%) of Arts Council regularly funded organisations received increases in their funding in line with, or above, inflation and 81 new organisations will be funded. 185 organisations will not have their funding renewed and 27 organisations will have their funding reduced. Following a campaign against proposed cuts and submissions from arts organisations, the Arts Council revised its funding proposals for 17 organisations.

Arts Council England also announced an extra £200,000 for Literature, an assessment of English theatre and an additional £200,000 for the National Theatre, to fund a new Sunday opening programme.

www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/press_detail.php?rid=10&id=1063

DCMS Conducts First National Study of Voluntary Arts Activity in England

The DCMS has launched the first national survey of amateur arts groups in England. Culture Minister, Margaret Hodge, said: "Over 70% of people in England take part in artistic activities...This survey will try to map voluntary and amateur arts groups and look at how they are supported and how more people could be encouraged to get involved." The results of the survey will be published in the summer.

Voluntary and amateur participants in music, dance, crafts, theatre, visual arts and literature are encouraged to complete the online questionnaire before **29 February 2008**. www.artsurvey.org.uk

MLA Seeks Non-executive Chair

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is seeking a non-executive Chair with outstanding leadership and communications skills to help the MLA to map the future and succeed for the cultural sector. The closing date for applications is **3 March 2008**. Visit: www.mla.gov.uk/aboutus/jobs

Strategy for Apprenticeships Published

The Government has published *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All*, its strategy for the future of apprenticeships in England. The report sets out how the expansion of apprenticeships announced last year will be delivered, how quality will be improved and how employers will be supported. It aims to ensure an apprenticeship place for all qualified young people by 2013 and more apprenticeships for older learners. New measures include: a National Apprenticeship Service to lead the expansion of the programme; a drive to increase apprenticeships in the public sector; and a task force to improve the take up of apprenticeships in London.

A leaflet, *Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent* sets out how Government intends to work with business and employers to raise skills. www.dius.gov.uk/publications/world_class_apprenticeships.pdf

Government Seeks Views on Youth Support Arrangements

Children's Minister Beverley Hughes has launched a call for evidence on how to improve the capacity, coherence and quality of support arrangements for youth sector professionals, volunteers and organisations. This builds on the Government's *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*, launched in July 2007, and will inform Government support for the sector.

The call for evidence is open to professionals, volunteers and organisations working with, or set up for the benefit of, young people, including those working in leisure, culture, sport, youth justice and health services. It is open until **9 April 2008**. www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1525

Responses to Gift Aid Consultation Published

The Treasury has published a summary of responses to its Gift Aid consultation last year. The report shows that Gift Aid is much valued by charities, but that there is room for development, particularly in its profile, take-up and in reducing the administrative requirements for charities.

In the arts and heritage sectors, respondents drew attention to the rules governing gifts of land, property, shares and securities, calling for a system of carry back or carry forward of the tax relief to other tax years. They also raised concerns over Gift Aid benefit limits on membership and patron schemes. Visitor attractions argued that rules on admission charges created administrative burdens and longer entry queues. Other concerns related to record keeping, the claim and audit processes and to the principle of tying the system to the basic rate of income tax. Many respondents felt that small charities needed targeted guidance and support. The Treasury is looking further at measures to increase take-up, and help for small charities. www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/D/giftaid_responses181207.pdf

The NMDC submission to the consultation is at: www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/gift_aid_consultation.html

New Funding Strands from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has introduced a number of smaller, focused funding strands in addition to its Main Fund. The majority of the Foundation's funding will be channelled through the Main Fund, which supports work that focuses on the UK's cultural life, education, the natural environment and enabling disadvantaged people to participate more fully in society. It will continue to support museums and the heritage sector, building on previous work that has provided grants towards staffing, exhibitions and skills development. www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/index.html

Museum and Heritage Collections, one of the first new funding strands, will focus on time-limited collections work, including research, documentation and conservation, outside the scope of an organisation's core resources. www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/funding-strands.html

New Local Government Performance Framework

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published a set of documents outlining the implications of the new performance framework, introduced under the Local Government Act 2007 in a number of areas, including: the Third Sector, Community Cohesion, Health and Well-being, Climate Change and Children and Young People.

The local performance framework aims to improve the quality of life in local communities and public services. Local Area Agreements for 2008-11, which will reflect up to 35 local shared priorities and include plans to comply with the 198 national indicators, need to be in place by June 2008.

www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/

Increased Budget for the Arts in Northern Ireland

An additional £3 million has been allocated to Arts in the Northern Ireland budget 2008-11, in response to a public consultation, bringing the total planned resource spend to in excess of £55 million. Arts Council Northern Ireland will receive an additional £7.55 million over the coming three years and almost £70 million resource and £23 million capital investment has been allocated to museums in Northern Ireland over the period of the budget.

www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-dcal/news-dcal-230108-budget-will-enhance.htm

Their Past Your Future 2 InSite Programme for Educators

As part of *Their Past Your Future 2*, Imperial War Museum is running *InSite*, an immersive learning programme for teachers, museum and other educators to increase their knowledge of 20th century conflict and their confidence in teaching outside the classroom. The programme includes an opportunity to visit Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary, access to historical sites, museum collections, eyewitnesses, historians and educators, and is designed to inspire and provide fresh teaching ideas. The deadline for applications is **Friday 22 February 2008**. www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/InSite

Heritage Organisations Invited to Sign Up to Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto

Organisations in the heritage sector are invited to endorse the aims of the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, by becoming signatories and making a pledge to offer young people high quality, inspirational experiences that take place outside the classroom. Research shows that learning experiences in 'real-life' situations can help raise achievement across a range of subjects and develop personal and social skills. Since its launch in November 2006 more than 800 schools, local authorities, museums, heritage and other organisations in the UK have signed the Manifesto.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/

Museums Association Consultation on Simple Loans Administration

The Museums Association is seeking feedback from museums and museum practitioners on *Simple Loans Administration*, the first edition of the Effective Collections guide to creating simple loan agreements, and on how the guide can be improved and made easier to use.

The responses will feed into a second edition of *Simple Loans Administration* and a downloadable template that museums will be able to edit to use for specific loans. The deadline for responses is **Friday 29 February 2008**. www.museumsassociation.org/15610&IXPOS=manews1.1

Our Place Website for Outreach Professionals in the Cultural Sector

English Heritage has launched *Our Place*, an online networking space for outreach professionals who work in the arts and heritage sector. *Our Place* will enable people working in education, community engagement, access and social inclusion in the heritage, libraries, museums and arts sectors to network with peers, share project case studies, discuss challenges and find news, resources, links and discussion groups. www.english-heritage.org.uk/ourplacenetwork

Enjoy England Culture08 Campaign

VisitBritain has launched Culture08 to showcase events in England and promote cultural tourism to the British. When Britons were asked what activities they take part in while on holiday 35% said they visited museums, 20% architectural visits, 22% concerts and 19% theatre.

An interactive website www.enjoyengland.com/culture allows users to search by region, theme, event and date, and to incorporate selected events into personalised cultural travel itineraries.

www.visitbritain.com/en/press/press-releases/press-2008/new-campaign.aspx

Record Number of Tourist Visits to the UK in 2006

Visits to the UK by overseas residents rose 9.2%, from 30.0 million in 2005 to 32.7 million in 2006, according to an Office for National Statistics report. 71% of visits to the UK were by European residents, 15% from North America and 14% from other countries. www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/ttds0108.pdf

Provisional results show that in the 12 months to November 2007, the number of visits by overseas residents to the UK increased by 1%, from 32.4 million to 32.9 million. Visits from residents of Europe increased 3% to 23.8 million, from North America decreased by 4% to 4.5 million and from other parts of the world increased by 1% to 4.6 million. www.statistics.gov.uk/cgi/nugget.asp?id=352

Free Public Access to British Architectural Library

Access to the British Architectural Library at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is now free to members of the public. The Library holds close to four million items and is part of the RIBA Trust, the UK national architecture centre that focuses on education, outreach and the role of architecture in culture. In 2005 the Library was recognised by the MLA under the Designation Scheme as having outstanding national and international importance.

www.architecture.com/NewsAndPress/News/RIBANews/Press/2008/BritishArchitecturalLibraryfreeopening.aspx

Research Indicates that Education and Social Status Determine Cultural Interests

Research carried out at the University of Oxford has concluded that education and social status, not social class, predict cultural consumption in the UK. The research studied survey data from the UK and six other countries and found that a cultural elite linked to social class does not exist. The report identifies different types of cultural consumers and indicates that a substantial minority of the most advantaged social groups has an interest in popular culture only or is not culturally active.

www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/PO/releases/2007/december/myth.aspx?ComponentId=25039&SourcePageId=17700

Parliamentary Report

House of Lords Debate on Free Entry to Museums and Galleries

The Lords held a debate, initiated by Lord Harrison, on 7 February, to "call attention to the policy to grant free entry to national museums, any subsequent assessment of the policy and any further policies the Government have to broaden the profile of those coming to museums and galleries".

Lords praised the policy of free entry to national museums and raised a number of issues including: the need for funding to meet higher maintenance costs resulting from increased visits to free museums; the need for additional funds for acquisitions; potential changes to the tax regime to encourage philanthropy; broadening audiences; increasing the diversity of museum boards; the impact of free admission on museums that charge for entry; and funding for non-national museums. The debate is at:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/80207-0010.htm#08020782000004

Debates on Additional Lottery Funds for 2012 Olympics

In the House of Commons on 15 January ministers sought a further £675m from the lottery for the 2012 Olympics, in addition to the £110m in the original budget. During the debate the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport James Purnell pledged that there would be no further diversion from lottery good causes to fund the Olympics, even if the Olympic budget increases again, and that funds to be raised from Olympic-specific lottery games will be capped at £750 million.

James Purnell also announced that DCMS and the Treasury will re-examine the case for a gross profits tax on the Lottery. The Lottery operator Camelot argues that moving to tax the lottery post-payment of prizes will generate additional funds for good causes.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080115/debtext/80115-0006.htm#08011510200001

A debate on the subject took place in the House of Lords on 30 January.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/80130-0005.htm#08013075000006

Government Response to Report on the Funding of Science and Discovery Centres

The Select Committee Report on Science and Discovery Centres recommended that the Government review the Museum Accreditation Scheme with a view to creating a funding stream for educational and outreach programmes to which science centres could apply (see NMDC newsletter November 2007).

In its response the Government points out that "Museums exist because of their collections" and that education activity is just one element of the Museum Accreditation Scheme, which is not linked directly to any funding stream. It states that MLA, which manages the Accreditation Scheme, is best placed to determine priorities for the sector. [House of Commons - Innovation, Universities and Skills - First Special Report](#)

Government Response to Call for Free Entry to the National Waterways Museum

The Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recommended in a recent report that the DCMS look at helping to introduce free admission to the National Waterways Museum. In its response, the Government said that it is for the trustees of the National Waterways Museum to assess whether free entry is viable and that the DCMS is working with stakeholders to ensure the museum's collection is conserved and accessible to audiences. [House of Commons - Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - Third Report](#)

Parliamentary Questions

Visits to National Museums by Children

On 28 January, Kelvin Hopkins MP asked how many children visited national museums in 2006-07. Culture Minister Margaret Hodge replied that 8.4 million children under 16 visited national museums in that year, a 79% increase since the introduction of free admission in 1999. Responding to a follow up question, Ms Hodge said the Government is working on introducing a cultural offer giving children two hours a week, rising to five hours, of experiencing and participating in culture and that "Part of that must involve going to museums. If people go to museums as children, they are far more likely to go as adults". www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080128/debtext/80128-0002.htm#0801285000019

McMaster Review

Responding to a question about the McMaster Review *Supporting excellence in the arts* Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Andy Burnham endorsed the conclusions of the report and said "It articulates the right way forward at this precise moment in time for arts in this country", combining access and excellence to make the highest quality art available to as many people as possible.

Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Culture, Media and Sport Don Foster noted that the Department had failed to meet its target for boosting attendance at arts events. Andy Burnham responded that the Government wanted local organisations to have ownership of targets and said "there should be no let-off in our ambition to get people into the arts, but it is also right that we hear the complaints made about having too great a reliance on targets, and that we free up organisations up to fund what they want to do." [House of Commons Hansard Debates for 28 Jan 2008 \(pt 0002\)](#)

Portable Antiquities Scheme

A number of MPs asked questions about the future of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Responding for the Government, Culture Minister Margaret Hodge reiterated that the PAS is funded by the MLA and that any decisions on its future funding will be taken by the MLA. In a written answer to James Gray MP she said "The PAS is of national importance and the MLA is committed to seeing it thrive and evolve". [House of Commons Hansard Written Answers for 24 Jan 2008 \(pt 0011\)](#)

Question in the Scottish Parliament about the Lewis Chessmen

Labour MSP Malcolm Chisholm asked whether recent statements by the First Minister seeking the return of the Lewis Chessmen were an expression of Government policy. Replying for the Scottish Government, the Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture Linda Fabiani said: "Yes, they are. The Scottish Government believes that it is absolutely unacceptable that only 11 Lewis Chessmen rest at the national museum of Scotland while the other 82 remain in the British Museum in London". She said that such matters were for museums to consider, and that she planned to visit the British Museum to ask it to consider the case. www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-08/sor0124-02.htm

Information from the British Museum about the Lewis Chessmen is available at:

www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/news_and_debate/debate/the_lewis_chessmen.aspx

International Issues

Fall in Visits to Swedish National Museums Following Reintroduction of Charging

The Museums Journal reports that visits to Sweden's national museums dropped nearly 20% last year after admission fees were reintroduced. Sweden's 19 national museums received some 6.5 million visits in 2007, down from around 8.0 million in 2006. The coalition government introduced admission charges to the museums in January 2007, two years after they had been removed by the previous government.

A government spokesman said that museums "are not just there to attract visitors" and that entrance fees were needed to help pay for work to protect Sweden's cultural heritage.

www.museumsassociation.org/15739&search=2.2 afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hY_8pITSVKYbbBPO9azwAJmkbGhw

Free Admission to be Introduced to Museums in China

According to the state-run China Daily, admission to national museums and provincial comprehensive museums in China will be free by 2009. A circular issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China states that museums and memorial halls listed as national patriotism education bases will not charge admission fees, but historical sites will continue to charge for entry, with discounts for children, the elderly, soldiers, the disabled and low-income families. Museums will be allowed to charge for special exhibitions, but are encouraged to offer discounts for regular visitors, groups and families. China has more than 2,300 museums, which received over 150 million visitors last year.

www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-01/27/content_6423649.htm

Benefactor to Loan Art to Museums

The Art Newspaper reports that philanthropist Eli Broad, who funded the Broad Contemporary Art Museum which opens in Los Angeles this month, has decided to leave his collection of over 2,000 works of 20th and 21st century art to The Broad Art Foundation, which lends works to museums and galleries. Concerned that if the collection was given to museums much of it would be held in storage and not be on display for most of the time, Mr Broad plans to make his art collection available through loans.

The Broad Art Foundation has made more than 7,000 loans to about 400 museums and galleries since 1984. www.theartnewspaper.com/article.asp?id=7487

www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/arts/la-et-broad9jan09,1,3637046.story?track=rss&ctrack=4&cset=true

Forthcoming Meetings

HR Forum

Friday 7 March, 11am, Wallace Collection

NMDC Meeting

Friday 14 March, 11am, V&A

Emily Candler will edit the newsletter from next month.

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If you have any comments on the NMDC Newsletter or would like to contribute to a future edition, please email the Editor, Emily Candler, at news@nationalmuseums.org.uk

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