

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update...

In this issue:

[Action plan for museums in England](#)

[Independent review recommends major overhaul of Renaissance programme](#)

[Museums urged to improve representation of migration](#)

[£16m funding for Cultural Olympiad projects](#)

[New role for British Museum in Abu Dhabi museum development](#)

and much more...

NMDC NEWS

NMDC adopts Guiding Principles to reduce museums' carbon footprint

NMDC members have adopted new guidelines for environmental conditions in a major move towards a less energy-intensive approach to collections care. NMDC recognises that museums need to approach the long-term care of collections in a way that does not require excessive use of energy. NMDC members have committed to review relevant policy and practice - particularly in relation to loan requirements, storage and display conditions, building design and air conditioning systems - with a view to reducing carbon footprints.

The guiding principles include:

- Environmental standards should become more intelligent and better tailored to clearly identified needs. Blanket conditions should no longer apply. Instead conditions should be determined by the requirements of individual objects or groups of objects and the climate in the part of the world in which the museum is located;
- Care of collections should be achieved in a way that does not assume air-conditioning or any other current solutions. Passive methods, simple technology that is easy to maintain, and lower energy solutions should be considered;
- Natural and sustainable environmental controls should be explored and exploited fully;
- When designing and constructing new buildings or renovating old ones, architects and engineers should be guided significantly to reduce the building's carbon footprint as a primary objective.

New interim guidelines for hygroscopic materials (such as canvas paintings, textiles, ethnographic objects or animal glue) have also been proposed. Further research is needed, particularly on the acceptable rates of change of relative humidity and temperature, to allow more definitive guidelines and conditions to be devised for particular groups of objects.

The interim guidelines for environmental conditions were developed in consultation with UK conservators, ICON and the National Trust among others. They were accepted by the European Bizot Group of major museums at their May 2009 meeting and will be taken to the international Bizot Group meeting in October.

More on [NMDC website](#)

Learning by doing: how can museums best inspire and engage young people. A Northern perspective

NMDC, IPPR North and Tyne & Wear Museums are organising a conference on 12 October to explore issues raised by the report *Learning to Live: Museums, Education and Young People*. The event, *Learning by doing: how can museums best inspire and engage young people. A Northern perspective*, will be attended by policymakers and practitioners from education, youth services, and museums as well as young people and the community and voluntary sector. It will be held at the Discovery Museum, with speakers including Paul Collard of Culture, Creativity Education, Janice Lane, Glasgow Museums and Sport, Baroness Estelle Morris and Sue Wilkinson, MLA. [Conference details](#) [Learning to Live report](#)

DIRECTORS IN THE NEWS

In an event at the London School of Economics, **Neil MacGregor** and **Sir Nicholas Serota** discussed changes in the national museum sector in the last 20 years and what museums will look like in future. Neil MacGregor said one of the most significant changes in recent decades was the growth of national museum's programmes to share their collections around the UK, Nick Serota said that the future museum would be a publisher and broadcaster: with fewer people working in galleries and more as commissioning editors of online material. A podcast and video are available [on the LSE website](#) [Guardian article](#)

National Portrait Gallery Director **Sandy Nairne** became part of a work of art, spending an hour on top of the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of Anthony Gormley's living sculpture *One & Other*. Sandy was the first to be called as a last minute replacement when one of the "plinthers" failed to show up. [London Evening Standard article](#)

And former Directors...

Charles Saumarez Smith, Chief Executive of the Royal Academy and former Director of the National Gallery, has written a book called *The National Gallery: A Short History*, described on the Gallery's website as "a behind-the-scenes look at the enduring tensions through the centuries between the management and the board that have always been a feature of the National Gallery and, indeed, many of our best-loved, publicly funded cultural institutions". [National Gallery website](#)

Sir Neil Chalmers, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford and a former Director of the Natural History Museum, has been appointed by the Government to undertake an independent review of Royal Botanic Garden, Kew. [DEFRA Ministerial Statement](#)

Roy Clare, Chief Executive of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and former Director of the National Maritime Museum, is interviewed by *Public* magazine on his current role at MLA and as Chair of Living Places. [Guardian article](#)

MUSEUMS STRATEGY

National Action Plan for Museums in England

Following much consultation, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has published the long-awaited national strategy for museums in England. *Leading Museums: A Vision and Strategic Action Plan for English Museums*, is a succinct document setting out a ten point Action Plan, underpinned by three main aims: supporting excellence, promoting partnerships and building capacity. At its core is the idea that museums should be less about keeping collections, and more about sharing them. MLA, NMDC, Museums Association (MA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will take responsibility for delivering specific aspects of the strategy. The ten points of the action plan are:

- Public funding to follow excellence (DCMS)
- Developing and revitalising the Renaissance vision (MLA and Renaissance partners)
- Review and develop Accreditation (MLA)
- Strategic approach to collections management (Museums Association)
- Enhancing national/regional partnerships (NMDC)
- Museums at the heart of culture and public life (MLA)
- Promoting the role of museums as international ambassadors (NMDC, led by British Museum)
- Developing leadership and the workforce (MA)
- Investing in the digital future (MLA)
- Promoting sustainable finance and governance (MLA)

MLA will convene a leadership group, independently chaired, to oversee delivery of the strategy. It is expected that this group will include membership from MLA, NMDC, MA, AIM (Association of Independent Museums), University Museums, and the National Trust. [Museum Action Plan](#)

Renaissance Review recommends major overhaul

The MLA has published the report of the independent review of the *Renaissance in the Regions* programme, which will have invested nearly £300m in English regional museums by March 2011.

The Review found that over the duration of the Renaissance programme, regional museums became more confident in the management and presentation of their collection, attained greater political profile and better capability to lever in other funding. However, the Renaissance Review Advisory Group, chaired by Sara Selwood, Professor of Cultural Policy and Management at City University, was critical of the programme's leadership, financial reporting and performance measurement. The review has some 70 recommendations, including:

- **Guiding principles** – Government to commit long-term to Renaissance, for it to be linked to the national museum strategy, and for its overall vision and clarity of purpose be revisited and restated;
- **New frameworks** – dismantle regional hubs and replace them with 10-12 core museums that build partnerships and have a duty of care for other museums; new challenge funding to other museums in Renaissance 'cold spots'; and a national network of Museum Development Officers.
- **Governance** – replace regional boards with a new, powerful National Renaissance Board, with chair appointed by DCMS.
- **Implementation** – changes to MLA's management of the programme to ensure more joined-up management; standardised, coherent reporting and accounting mechanisms; greater transparency and the publication of an annual report.

Responding to the review, MLA says it will work with partners to re-state the vision for Renaissance, re-establish its shared ownership and plan the future of the programme. Fundamental to this process will be the collection of robust evidence about the impact of Renaissance that new systems have made possible. MLA does not support the proposal for a new national board, which it argues would introduce a new level of complex bureaucracy. MLA has pledged to consult before introducing any far-reaching changes to the delivery mechanisms of the Programme. [Renaissance Review and MLA response](#)

Consultation on Museums Strategy for Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government is consulting on its first Museum Strategy for Wales. The strategy identifies three key principles for museums:

- Museums for everyone
- A collection for the nation
- Working Effectively

The scope of this initial document is wide and is it intended to act as a route map for museums, identifying the issues and actions which museums, organisations that support museums specifically or generally, and governance bodies must consider. The route map sets out 2010-13 goals for the Welsh Assembly Government, working through CyMAL, in the following areas: developing the visitor experience; developing access; developing the collections; developing sustainable organisations; and measuring success. The deadline for comments is 23 October 2009. [Museum Strategy for Wales](#)

MUSEUM SECTOR NEWS

DCMS £100 million funding gap

DCMS is reported to have a £100 million funding deficit which will affect several capital projects, in particular the major projects at Tate Modern and the British Museum. The Government has committed £50 million to the Tate Modern extension, which is intended to increase the size of the capital's leading modern art gallery by 60 per cent. The British Museum has been pledged £22.5 million towards a new wing to house temporary exhibitions, but both these grants are now under review. Press reports: [The Guardian](#) [The Times](#) [The Telegraph](#)

NMDC members Diane Lees, Imperial War Museum, and Sir Nicholas Serota, Tate, were among 21 signatories to a [letter to the Guardian](#) from cultural organisations on the South Bank and Bankside Cultural Quarter in London, expressing concern over the threat to the Tate and BFI projects.

Museums urged to improve representation of migration

A new report, *A Moving Story*, published by the think tank IPPR, sets out a step by step approach to build up the representation of migration in the museums and heritage sector. The report by the Migration Museum Working Group, chaired by former UK Immigration Minister Barbara Roche, recommends that the ultimate, long-term goal should be to try to establish a major museum of migration. The report argues that the history of migration is one that can help to advance a shared sense of history and shared identity, improving relations between communities and building a more cohesive society. The recommendations include:

- Establish a 'Migration in Museums' coalition of key players from museums, heritage and immigration sectors and funding bodies
- Create a brand identity and web portal to link up existing initiatives
- Encourage the reinterpretation of existing collections from a migration perspective
- Create a schools outreach programme
- Establish an international outreach programme to capture stories of migration and settlement from British emigrants abroad
- Moving stories: a major touring exhibition for 2012.

An accompanying report, [Stories Old and New](#), sets out a comprehensive survey of museum and heritage initiatives relating to migration. [A Moving Story report](#)

Spoliation Advisory Panel rejects claim for Courtauld drawings

The Spoliation Advisory Panel has published a report on eight drawings now in the collection of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. The Report concludes that, whilst the predominant reason for the sale of the drawings in 1933 by the owner, Professor Dr Curt Glaser, was Nazi oppression, the moral claim was insufficiently strong to warrant the transfer of the drawings. In reaching this conclusion, the Panel took account of the fact that the sale prices achieved at the time were reasonable and that Dr Glaser's widow had received compensation from the German compensation authorities after the war.

The Panel recommended, however, that whenever any of the drawings is on show, the Courtauld should display alongside it a brief account of its history and provenance during and since the Nazi era, with special reference to the claimants' relationship with, and historical interest in, the drawings. [Spoliation Advisory Panel report](#)

Using science to enhance understanding of the past

A new report has been published on the use of science to enhance our understanding of the past. This is second of three reports which provide the 'evidence-base' for a UK wide strategy for heritage science, following recommendations by the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee. The report describes the need for:

- improvements to existing equipment and methods,
- training and guidance to raise awareness of existing techniques and their application;
- better availability of information produced by heritage science investigations.

The final report and strategy will be published later in the year. Comments on this report are invited by 4 September. [National Heritage Science Strategy website](#)

Museum thief jailed for two years

A man who stole a 17th century barometer from Fairfax House in York has been jailed for two years. The court heard that Simon Hargreaves had been paid £200 to steal items to order from the Georgian town-house. The barometer was recovered soon after his arrest. No one else has yet been charged. [Article in The Telegraph](#)

Not Museum Pieces conference

The *Not Museum Pieces* conference at the National Gallery on 10 September will look at library and archive projects that are radically transforming visitor, community and researcher engagement with collections, making collections more accessible on the web and enabling user generated content. The event, organised by the London Museum Librarians and Archivists Group (LMAG), is aimed at curators, archivists, librarians, learning specialists, and web and new media people. [Full details](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

Arts Council England restructure to save £6.5m

Arts Council England has announced the final details of an organisation-wide restructure that will save £6.5 million a year in administration costs. Staff numbers will be reduced by 21% and the nine regional offices will be streamlined and grouped under four area executive directors. A smaller head office will co-locate with the London regional office and the executive board will be reduced to nine members instead of 14. A new "grants for the arts" centre, based in Manchester, will carry out assessment and monitoring processes. Implementation of the changes will begin immediately and the new structure will be in place by April 2010. [Arts Council statement](#)

£16m for Cultural Olympiad projects

The Olympic Lottery Distributor (OLD) has announced an investment of £16 million towards the London 2012 culture programme. The grant will fund six of the major projects that feature in the Cultural Olympiad: World Shakespeare Festival, World River, Film Nation, Discovering Places, Unlimited and Carnival. [London 2012 statement](#)

Sir Tony Hall to chair new Cultural Olympic Board

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) has announced that Sir Tony Hall, the Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House, has been appointed to its Board of Directors and that he will chair a new Cultural Olympiad Board. Seven leading figures from the arts have been appointed to the Cultural Olympic Board board: Sir Nicholas Serota, Jude Kelly, Alan Davey, Vicky Heywood, Sir Nicholas Kenyon, Munira Mirza and Mark Thomson. These appointments are part of a restructure of the Cultural Olympiad's leadership which will oversee the Cultural Olympiad programme. Additional board members may be appointed later this year. [London 2012 statement](#)

Fall in international visits to the UK

The number of international visits to the UK fell in 2008 for the first time since 2001. New figures from the Office of National Statistics reveal there were 31.9 million visits to the UK in 2008, a fall of 2.7 per cent from the previous year. The decline was most marked during the last quarter of the year, with visits falling 13 per cent on the same period in 2007. Business visits were particularly hard hit. Despite the decline in the number of visits, spending on trips to the UK reached record levels during 2008, up 2.3 per cent on the previous year to £16.3 billion. [ONS statement](#)

Competition for first UK City of Culture

Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw MP has launched a national competition to find the first UK City of Culture in 2013. The initiative is being launched following a feasibility study by Phil Redmond, Chair of Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008. Bidders need to demonstrate a high-quality cultural programme that reaches a wide variety of audiences, and is a fitting follow-on from Liverpool Capital of Culture and the Cultural Olympiad. The winning city will become a focus for national attention in 2013 and could host high-profile media events including the Turner Prize. The deadline for initial applications is 16 October. [Full details on DCMS website](#)

Communities shape their culture

People who traditionally find it difficult to enjoy and participate in Scotland's cultural and creative life can do so if activities are better planned and co-ordinated at local level. That is the finding from an evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme, which supported 13 pilot projects throughout Scotland over two years, exploring practical ways to get people involved in cultural activities. [More on Scottish Government website](#)

British Council launches Cultural Leadership International programme

The British Council has launched a Cultural Leadership International programme which aims to help future cultural leaders develop their skills and talent in order to cultivate international partnerships and collaborations modelled on UK cultural leadership expertise. 26 cultural leaders from the UK, Western Europe, North America, and the Middle East attended a two-day event in London last month to launch the programme. The project will generate opportunities for the international exchange of knowledge, experiences and ideas, with a tailored programme of activities, including work placements, coaching and mentoring and creative collaborations. [Further details on British Council website](#)

HERITAGE

National Audit Office calls for review of performance management of DCMS funded-bodies

A report by the National Audit Office, *Promoting Participation with the Historic Environment*, has revealed a weak link between DCMS's policy objectives to broaden participation and the targets agreed with English Heritage. The report highlighted that DCMS met only one of its three targets to increase the number of people from under-represented groups who visit heritage sites in England. It concluded that the lack of effective performance measurement means that it is unclear the extent to which the actions of DCMS or English Heritage contributed to this result. The report argued that while the targets were challenging, they should have been underpinned by a performance framework that more clearly matched the priorities and activities of English Heritage with the Department's strategic objectives. The NAO recommends that DCMS needs to review its performance management practices to ensure that the bodies it funds are working with it towards shared objectives. [National Audit Office report](#)

HLF to invest £7.3m in heritage skills

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced that it is to invest an additional £7.3m to support a wide range of specialist skills and training opportunities within the heritage sector. £2.3m will be invested quickly with current grantees as an extension of HLF's successful £7m Training Bursary Programme. The demand for training places in this programme has far outstripped the opportunities available by as much as sixty to one. £5m will go to creating a new programme, entitled 'Skills for the Future', which will be launched towards the end of the year. This will offer new work-based training in the skills that are needed to look after our buildings, landscapes, habitats, species and museum collections. [More on HLF website](#)

AWARDS

Kids in Museums nominations open

Nominations are now open for the *Guardian* award for the most family-friendly museum in Britain. The closing date for nominations is 28 August. [Full details](#)

Jodi Awards welcome nominations

Nominations are now being sought for the Jodi Awards 2009. The awards are for museums, libraries, archives and other arts organisations that use digital technology to widen access for disabled people. Deadline for nominations is Friday 25 September 2009. [Full details](#)

European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards

Nominations are open for the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards with up to six prizes of €10,000 available in four categories: conservation, research, dedicated service by individuals or organisations; and education, training and awareness raising. The deadline for entries is 1 October. [Full details](#)

IN PARLIAMENT

Proposal to extend devolved cultural powers in Wales

Welsh Heritage Minister, Alun Ffred Jones AM, has proposed that Wales should have devolved powers in the area of culture. The Legislative Competence Order relates solely to the functions of local authorities and is intended to ensure that the National Assembly for Wales has the ability to place a duty on local authorities to provide the majority of cultural services and activities. The proposal is now being considered by a Legislative Committee of the National Assembly for Wales, which has issued a call for evidence. The deadline for consultation responses is 4 September. [Full details on National Assembly website](#)

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Bill

Lord Janner of Braunstone introduced the Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Bill in the second reading debate in the House of Lords on 10 July. The Bill received widespread support. It will now be examined in detail by a Lords Committee on 19 October. [Full details on Parliament website](#)

Lords debate move of export licensing team to Birmingham

The House of Lords debated the move of MLA's export licensing team to Birmingham. Speaking for the Government, Lord Davies of Oldham assured peers that the same standard of service would be maintained following the move, with 95% of applications processed within 5 days. He also said that neither the Government nor MLA were prepared to sustain the whole £700,000 cost of introducing an electronic licence application form and that, if it were to go ahead, a contribution might be sought from the art industry. [Parliamentary record](#)

APPOINTMENTS

New Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland

Nelson McCausland has been appointed Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in the Northern Ireland. Mr McCausland was elected to Belfast City Council in 1989 and has represented the Council on the Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Belfast Education and Library Board. He was the director of the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council from 1997 to 2003 and has been a Democratic Unionist Party member of the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2003 for the North Belfast Constituency. [Northern Ireland Executive statement](#)

National Museum Trustees

The Prime Minister has made the following appointments:

- British artists Bob and Roberta Smith and German artist Wolfgang Tillmans appointed as Trustees of **Tate**.
- David Ross and Sir William Proby Bt CBE DL appointed to the Board of the **National Portrait Gallery**. Businessman David Ross is co-founder of The Carphone Warehouse plc and is involved with many public and private companies, as well as with the planning of the 2012 Olympics. Accountant Sir William Proby was Chairman of the National Trust from 2003 to 2008 and is a Member of the Advisory Council of Tate Britain.
- Professor David Ekserdjian reappointed as a Trustee of **The National Gallery** for four years. [Number 10 statement](#)

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

Two experts in learning have also been appointed to the MLA Board: Patricia Cullen, Emeritus Professor of Learning Innovation at York St John University, and Karen Tyerman, currently Director for Community Learning in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, where she is responsible for services for children, young people and adults ranging from libraries to sports development. [DCMS statement](#)

Tessa Jowell to head Public Services Forum

Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell MP has been appointed as the new Chair of the Public Services Forum which encourages employers, government and trades unions to work together to deliver world class public services for everyone. [Cabinet Office Statement](#)

INTERNATIONAL

Te Papa Chief Executive killed in hiking accident

Dr Seddon Bennington, who had been Chief Executive the national museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa since 2003, died in a hiking accident last month. Dr Bennington oversaw a period of significant growth and success for Te Papa. He and a friend went missing in the Tararua Ranges during a severe winter storm. [Te Papa statement](#)

Louvre launches English version of its collection database

The Louvre has launched an English version of its online collection database with \$380,000 funding from the American Friends of the Louvre. The Atlas database currently provides information in English on 22,000 of the Louvre's 35,000 works of art, as well as high-resolution images and the locations of works and galleries within the museum. [Louvre website](#)

Museum benefactors sue over proposed closure

Three top benefactors of the Rose Art Museum are suing the Brandeis University over plan to close the museum and sell the collection. The donors insist that the University has no right to sell art originally donated for the public to enjoy. [Boston Herald article](#)

New National Museum of Immigration in Canada

The Prime Minister of Canada has announced the creation of a new national museum of immigration at Pier 21, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Pier 21, which has been a museum since 1999, was a primary point of entry for immigrants between 1928 and 1971. The federal government will invest about \$15 million for development and operations of Pier 21. Canada currently has five national museums, including the Canadian Museum for Human Rights which is under construction. Pier 21 will be the second national museum to be located outside Ottawa. [Prime Minister's statement](#)

NEWS FROM NMDC MEMBERS

The British Museum will be a consulting partner on the development of the Zayed National Museum, Abu Dhabi. Under the new partnership agreement with Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development and Investment Company, the British Museum will provide advice on the full range of issues, from design, construction and museography to educational and curatorial programming as well as training. The new Museum, designed by Foster + Partners, is scheduled to open in 2012/2013 as cornerstone of the Saadiyat Island Cultural District, planned to be the largest concentration of premier cultural institutions in the world including the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a performing arts centre and maritime museum. [More](#)

The National Portrait Gallery has issued a statement on its legal dispute with Wikipedia. In March 2009, over 3000 high-resolution files were appropriated from the NPG website and published on Wikipedia without permission. The NPG says that is very strongly committed to giving access to its Collection has spent around £1m in the past five digitising its Collection to make it widely available for study and enjoyment. The Gallery is very concerned that potential loss of licensing income from the high-resolution files threatens its ability to reinvest in its digitisation programme and so make further images available. [NPG statement](#) The NPG's position has been robustly defended by many of Wikipedia's users [on this blog](#).

Northern Ireland's new Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Nelson McCausland, has announced a £2.4m expansion plan at the **Ulster American Folk Park**. The expansion has been largely funded by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure as part of its capital development programme with **National Museums Northern Ireland** which, since 2006, has provided a total investment of over £18.6m. The project will transform 30 acres of museum land transformed into a series of American Frontier Landscapes to display a growing collection of original Ulster settler buildings. [more](#)

The National Maritime Museum has secured planning permission and listed building consent for its Sammy Ofer Wing project and appointed Bovis Lend Lease as the main construction contractor. Preparation work to decant galleries and the Museum's archives has already begun and construction work is scheduled to begin on-site in August. The project is due to be completed before the 2012 Olympics, in which the Museum will host the equestrian events. [more](#)

The **National Maritime Museum** has also launched a new prints website. The new ordering service presents over 1000 of the Museum's images, from detailed maps to magnificent photographs, in themed collections and enables user to select finish, format, size and frames for prints. [more](#)

The Viscount Rothermere has been appointed Chairman of the **Imperial War Museum** Foundation - a new, independent charitable body which will generate funds for the Imperial War Museum's development plans for the next decade, in particular the reinvigoration of the permanent galleries at the Imperial War Museum London. Lord Rothermere is Chairman of Associated Newspapers and the Daily Mail and General Trust plc. His great-grandfather, the first Lord Rothermere, provided the Imperial War Museum with its current home, in what was then Bethlem Royal Hospital, in 1936. [more](#)

The National Gallery has re-launched its website and is the first major gallery to offer a full-screen zoom facility for its entire collection. The website contains 12,000 images, 18 hours of audio and 200 videos. A new editorial approach enables a wide range of users, from novices to academic researchers, to access different layers of content targeted to their specific needs. Users can also check the location of works of art before visiting on the website, which is updated twice a day from the Gallery's collection database. [more](#)

The V&A has opened the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Galleries, showing over 500 items from the Gilbert Collection of gold, silver, mosaics, gold boxes and enamel portrait miniatures. The collection was given to the nation by Sir Arthur Gilbert (1913-2001) in 1996. The collection was on display at Somerset House, London from 2001 until 2008 when it was transferred to the V&A. [more](#)

The Natural History Museum has begun taking advanced bookings for the free timed slots at the new Darwin Centre which opens on 15 September. The Cocoon journey will take visitors deep into the 65-metre-long, 8-storey-high building, which houses 20 million insect and plant specimens in world-class storage conditions, and enable them to see Museum scientists at work. [more](#)

The National Archives is consulting on changes to operations and services intended to reduce running costs by 10% by March 2010. Proposed changes include: cutting reading room opening to five days a week - Tuesday to Saturday; reducing overall staff numbers by 35, mainly in administration and management roles but increasing the number of senior records experts; and doing things differently at lower cost - such as making trading services profitable and shifting to online recruitment. The long-term future of the Kew site is under review. The £4.2m savings are intended to ensure that the Archives has sufficient funds to continue with core activities and is able to invest for the future. [more](#)

The National Archives, in collaboration with UK-based family history website findmypast.com, is providing seven archives and libraries around England and Wales with a year's free access to the recently completed online records of the 1911 census. The institutional accounts will also allow users to download for free other family history records, including earlier census records. The 1911 census launched online in January and attracted 1.5 million people in its first four weeks. [more](#)

The National Archives has published *Corporate memory – a guide to managing business archives*, which highlights many different ways companies are successfully using their archives and the benefits of maintaining high quality records. The publication coincides with the launch of a national strategy for business archives in England and Wales, which aims to promote the commercial value of archives to the business community and encourage wider and better business sector management of archives. [more](#)

The Royal Navy Submarine Museum has received an HLF Development Grant (first round pass) to progress plans for a £4.8m restoration of the World War Two submarine HMS Alliance. HMS Alliance is the only surviving WW2 submarine preserved in the United Kingdom and is included in the "core collection" on the Historic Ships Register. [more](#)

The Royal Armouries has secured Home Office funding to support its commitment to tackle youngsters' attitudes to guns and knives. The museum will receive £28k for Safe Days, a programme of events for hard-to-reach, disengaged youngsters as well as for mainstream schools and community groups. [more](#)

The Museum of London has appointed Antony Robbins as its Head of Communications. Mr Robbins joins the Museum from the Overseas Development Institute, Britain's leading think-tank on international development. [more](#)

The British Library has won the Nominet Best Practice Open Internet Award for the web resource to accompany its 2008 exhibition *Taking Liberties: The Struggle for Britain's Freedoms and Rights*. The judges praised the way that this project used the internet to open up content and engagement around serious issues to a UK (and global) audience who would otherwise not have access. Culture24 was runner-up in this category, and was praised for its clear strategic vision and attention to detail. [more](#)

The **British Library** and its partners have created a virtual reunification of the world's oldest Bible and the most important Biblical manuscript, Codex Sinaiticus. A four-year collaboration between the British Library, Leipzig University Library, the Monastery of St Catherine (Mount Sinai, Egypt), and the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg), each of which hold different parts of the manuscript, has produced the online publication of high-resolution digital images of all the extant pages, as well as new historical research. [more](#)

NMDC JOBS

Our jobs website, www.nationalmuseumsjobs.org.uk has details of current vacancies at museums around the UK including:

- Director, Tate Britain
- Exhibitions and Displays Manager National Museums Scotland
- Collections Database Assistance, National Portrait Gallery
- Financial Controller, V&A
- Preventative Conservator, National Maritime Museum
- Information Assistant Electronic Resources, Natural History Museum

For details of these jobs and many more visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://nmdcgit.nmdc.webfactional.com/news/newsletters/>