



Welcome to this month's NMDC newsletter, a briefing on our activities and developments in the museum sector in the UK and beyond.

NMDC's members are the leaders of the UK's national collections and leading regional museums, operating in over 100 sites across the country.

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

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NMDC News

New NMDC Chair

NMDC is delighted to announce that Dr. Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum, will be the next NMDC Chair. Michael will take over from current Chair Mark Jones, Director of the V&A, in April 2009.

Michael Dixon took over as Director of The Natural History Museum in June 2004. He was previously Director General of The Zoological Society of London, with responsibility for London Zoo and Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, alongside the organisation's worldwide conservation activities and its scientific research. At ZSL he spearheaded an £80 million project to develop a major conservation aquarium in the London Docklands area, and unified the scientific and visitor-facing activities of the organisation. Before taking up his position at ZSL Michael worked for twenty years in the scientific, technical and medical publishing industry, following a BSc in Zoology from Imperial College and a DPhil from the University of York.

www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/museum-governance/directors-group/michael-dixon.html

Copyright and the Knowledge Economy

NMDC has responded to the European Commission Green Paper on Copyright and the Knowledge Economy, which is seeking views about the possible extension to the copyright exceptions across Europe. The NMDC response was informed by papers and advice from members and the Museums Copyright Group and the Collections Trust. NMDC supports sensible teaching and research exceptions within copyright legislation to increase access to museum collections and preserving Europe's digital culture and research for posterity by adopting a harmonised approach. The full NMDC response can be read on our website:

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/images/publications/nmdc_eucopyrightresponse_nov08.doc

More information about the consultation and the full MCG and Collections Trust responses can be found at:

www.collectionslink.org.uk/get_to_grips_with_copyright

National Museums Working Internationally

National museums undertake a huge amount of international work, including working with cultural organisations in countries where political relations are strained, just some examples of which have been in the news this month.

The Financial Times reports on how Tate, the V&A and the British Museum are engaging in 'cultural diplomacy':

www.ft.com/cms/s/0/46e4128c-ad1d-11dd-971e-000077b07658.html

V&A ceramics exhibition opens in Damascus

World Ceramics: Masterpieces from the V&A, an exhibition of international ceramics from 3000BC to the present day, opened this month at the Khan As'ad Pasham in Damascus as part of the city's celebrations as Arab capital of culture. It is the first time a European museum has sent an exhibition to Syria.

www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9894250c-c011-11dd-9222-0000779fd18c.html

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/philip-hensher/philip-hensher-showing-syria-our-fragile-side-is-our-strength-1042757.html

Continued...

Tate sends Turners to Moscow

An exhibition of work by Turner from the Tate's collections, *J.M.W. Turner: Oils and Watercolours*, opened at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts this month. It is the most comprehensive Turner exhibition ever to have been shown in Russia, and the first for a generation. www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2008/16967.htm
www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/nov/08/russia-pushkin-art-turner-tate

V&A exchange of exhibitions with Kremlin museums

The Magnificence of the Tsars, a display of costumes from the courts of Imperial Russia drawn from the collections of the Moscow Kremlin Museums, has just opened at the V&A as part of an exchange between the two organisations. It follows the success of *Two Centuries of British Fashion*, an exhibition of British costume from the V&A's collections recently shown in Moscow. www.vam.ac.uk/files/press_release/48603_press_release.pdf
http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/visual_arts/article5176025.ece

Tyne & Wear Museums partnership with museums in South Africa

Tyne & Wear Museums has signed a three year partnership agreement with the Museums of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The two organisations are hoping to develop a range of initiatives including craft exhibitions, a link between South Africa's 2010 World Cup celebration and the 2012 Olympics and initiatives around audience development. There will be web-links to promote trans-national learning programmes and the opportunity to promote leadership development amongst staff. www.twmuseums.org.uk/

British Museum to assist in creation of new Basra Museum

The British Museum is to aid in the creation of a new museum in a former palace built by Saddam Hussein in Basra. Although final approval for the project has yet to be given by the Iraqi Prime Minister, British Museum staff have visited the site with the British army and officials from the Iraqi culture ministry, and could offer assistance on display techniques and staff training at the new museum.

www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/01/iraq-museums-palace

World Collections Programme

Five NMDC members - the British Museum, the British Library, the Natural History Museum, Tate and the V&A - are part of the World Collections Programme, which aims to foster bilateral links with institutions in Asia and Africa and facilitate greater access to UK national collections and expertise, brokering relationships and establishing partnerships with organisations in four priority areas: Africa, the Middle East, India and China.

www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/museum_in_the_world/world_collections_programme.aspx

Directors in the News

Private Giving for the Public Good

In an article in The Times Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, argues that tax incentives are needed to encourage lifetime giving of objects to public collections. Neil uses the example of the recently promised gift from Arthur R. Miller of nearly 2000 Japanese prints by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, which will greatly strengthen the British Museum's representation of Japanese visual culture. The collection, valued at several million dollars, is being given to the American Friends of the British Museum in several stages, demonstrating the value of the tax structure in the US that favours lifetime giving to museums.

www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article5157719.ece

Directors of the V&A, Natural History Museum and Science Museum **Mark Jones**, **Dr. Michael Dixon** and **Professor Chris Rapley** have written to London Mayor Boris Johnson in protest at Transport for London's decision to scrap an upgrade scheme to offer step-free access at South Kensington station.

www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23591301-details/Don%27t+axe+Tube+station%2C+upgrade+say+museums/article.do

Neil MacGregor and **Sir Nicholas Serota** were part of the business delegation that joined the Prime Minister on his recent visit to the Gulf States.

www.number10.gov.uk/Page17341
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081117/text/81117w0011.htm#08111718000070

National Museum Jobs

NMDC's jobs website has details of vacancies around the UK, including:

- Policy and Advocacy Co-ordinator, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales
- Head of Facilities Management, National Museums Scotland
- Interpretation Developer, Natural History Museum
- Curator (Middle East), V&A

For details of all the current vacancies visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

Forthcoming meetings

UK Affairs Committee
Weds 17 Dec, 2-4pm,
V&A
NMDC
Mon 23 Feb 4-6pm,
V&A

Current Issues

Mayor Outlines Cultural Priorities for London

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has outlined his key priorities for culture over the next four years including better cultural provision in the outer London boroughs and improving access to central London venues. *Cultural Metropolis - The Mayor's Priorities for Culture 2009-2012* provides a commitment to work with the National Museum Directors Conference and other cultural organisations to improve access to and promotion of cultural institutions. It also welcomes the work of major cultural institutions to reach audiences across London through new touring and partnership schemes, citing the British Museum as an example. *Cultural Metropolis* states that the 2012 Games should be used as a once in a lifetime opportunity to develop a high quality cultural legacy, through projects such as the art commissions set to be integrated into the Olympic Park. The document also reveals plans for *The Story of London*, a major celebration of the city's people, its past, present, and future, which will take place across the capital in June 2009 in partnership with the Museum of London and MLA London.

The Mayor has appointed the Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director of Whitechapel Gallery to be the new Chair of the London Cultural Strategy Group advising him on cultural activity. NMDC Directors Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery and Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, are members of the group along with other senior figures from the cultural sector.

Cultural Metropolis is a precursor to the Mayor's Cultural Strategy and comments may be submitted until 30 January 2009. www.london.gov.uk/mayor/culture/cultural-metropolis/docs/cultural-metropolis.pdf

Economic Case for Tourism

A report by Deloitte and Oxford Economics examining the *Economic Case for the Visitor Economy* reveals that the total economic contribution of the visitor economy to Britain is £114 billion, or 8.2 per cent of total GDP. This is far higher than previous estimates, since it takes into account the direct and indirect impact of travel and tourism in the economy. The report, which was commissioned by VisitBritain and the Tourism Alliance, also reveals that the sector directly employs more than 1.3 million people.

The report highlights a number of what it calls Market Failures and Policy Barriers that "could prevent the Visitor Economy from optimising its potential". These include a lack of information about what is on offer for visitors, skills shortages, transport difficulties and overcrowding. The report also points to areas where government policy could risk the success of the Visitor Economy, such as transport infrastructure investment, the high cost of taxes and visas to enter the UK and climate change legislation. VisitBritain is calling for more immediate action including a public-private partnership and a fund to promote Britain's value for money in a spring campaign.

www.tourismtrade.org.uk/corporatepress/deloitte.asp

The key findings of the British Tourism Framework Review were also presented last month. The Review is intended to deliver a recession recovery plan to boost domestic and inbound tourism in 2009. Recommendations include re-defining the role of VisitBritain and the way it works with stakeholders, and creating a new English tourism lead body. The final report will be published at the end of the year.

www.tourismreview.co.uk/

Scotland Bids to Recover Olympic Lottery Funding

The Scottish Government has submitted a formal bid document to retrieve £150 million in lottery funds diverted from Scottish good causes to finance the 2012 London Olympics. The money would be destined to ensure a lasting legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The £150 million would not be used to fund the delivery of the 2014 Games - these costs are being met by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. Communities Minister, Stewart Maxwell, said the legacy of the Glasgow Games should be about community engagement, heritage and culture, as well as sport and regeneration. The bid was submitted to Andy Burnham, Secretary of State for Culture at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on 9 November.

www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/11/07164019

New Medal to Celebrate Arts Philanthropy

Arts and Business (A&B) and its President HRH The Prince of Wales have created a new medal to celebrate individuals who support the arts. The first five medals were presented by the Prince on November 27 2008. Recipients - including Dame Vivien Duffield CBE and Lord and Lady Sainsbury, generous benefactors of national museums - were chosen after an open nomination from which the Prince of Wales' Arts Advisory Group drew up a short list of twenty philanthropists to go forward to a final judging panel of artists.

The aim of the new medals, up to five of which will be awarded annually, is to recognise the contribution of great philanthropists as well as inspirational and innovative supporters of the arts across the UK and to encourage positive action throughout society. www.aandb.org.uk/render.aspx?siteID=1&navIDs=1,1559

MLA Commits to Funding Portable Antiquities Scheme

An independent report has endorsed the MLA's approach to funding the highly-valued Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). The scheme, established 11 years ago, encourages members of the public to report archaeological finds. The future of the national scheme has been the subject of talks between the MLA, the British Museum and DCMS since the government's three year spending plans for the MLA were announced last year, which included a significant reduction in funding for the MLA. At that time, MLA committed funds for one year only, indicating its intention in principle to develop the relationship between PAS and Renaissance in the Regions. MLA has now confirmed that PAS will receive funding as part of the Renaissance in the Regions programme, with an allocation of of £1.3 million this year, rising to over £1.4 million in 2010/11 and will continue to be managed by the British Museum.

www.mla.gov.uk/news/press_releases/PAS_funding_confirmed

Increase in Reported Treasure Finds

DCMS has published the eighth Annual Report on the operation of the Treasure Act 1996 with details of over 1200 new cases reported during 2005 and 2006. Of these cases, 282 new Treasure finds have been, or are being, acquired by museums across the country. The number of finds being reported as Treasure continues to increase rapidly: in 1998, the first full year of the Treasure Act, there were 201 cases and by 2002 that number stood at 240 cases, while in 2007 the total stood at 749. This is largely due to the expansion of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in 2003, when 21 new Finds Liaison Officers were appointed across the country. Finds Liaison Officers play a crucial role in the effective operation of the Treasure Act, encouraging finders to report their finds and guiding them through the Treasure process; 97 per cent of finds of Treasure are reported to the Finds Liaison Officer in the first instance.

www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/5620.aspx

Digital Britain Report

A forum of independent experts has been appointed by Stephen Carter, the first Minister for Communications, Technology and Broadcasting, to guide the work of *Digital Britain*, a comprehensive plan to further the UK's digital and communication industries. The objectives of the *Digital Britain* work include encouraging universal access to high quality, public service content and developing a digital copyright framework which supports creativity, investment and job creation. www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases/5548.aspx

NMHF £10m Funding for Titians

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), the UK's fund of last resort for saving great heritage at risk, has announced an award of £10million to The National Galleries of Scotland and the National Gallery, London to help acquire Titian's *Diana and Actaeon*. The NHMF's contribution is the most significant so far to the campaign to purchase the painting. As well as recognising the outstanding quality and importance of 'Diana and Actaeon', NHMF was particularly keen to help the Galleries secure the continued loan of the rest of the Bridgewater Collection - the greatest private collection of old masters on loan to a public gallery in the world. Staggered payments will enable the Fund to spread the costs and remain open to help save other heritage treasures. <http://search.hlf.org.uk/NHMFWeb/LatestNews/Titian+Masterpiece.htm>

Profile Raising for Heritage Lottery Funding

In her first speech as Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Jenny Abramsky has said that the "contribution of Lottery funding for heritage isn't as well understood by the public as it should be and that heritage seems, at times, to be arguably still in the shadow of the arts on both public and government agendas. She outlined her view of the Heritage Lottery Fund's role as not just a funding body but the UK's leading advocate of the value of heritage to modern life. In the past 14 years, the HLF has distributed £4bn, including £1.4 billion awarded to museums and galleries. www.hlf.org.uk/English/MediaCentre/Archive/Heritage+and+Regeneration+Speech.htm

Discovering Physical Objects: Meeting Researchers' Needs

The Research Information Network (RIN), established by the higher education funding councils, the research councils and the national libraries in the UK, has published a new report examining how researchers discover and gain access to physical objects and artefacts in museums and the current issues for museums and their staff in providing the facilities researchers need. *Discovering physical objects: Meeting Researchers' Needs* gives an overview of the current situation in the UK and provides a range of recommendations for museums and their supporting organisations. RIN wants museums to "get as much information out there as possible, so it is online in whatever format - it doesn't matter about tidying it up or just putting up the bare minimum." A follow up event is to be held in Spring 2009 to investigate these issues further and discuss ways to address the recommendations made. www.rin.ac.uk/objects

Archives Awareness Campaign

The Archives Awareness Campaign has launched its fifth annual campaign with the theme 'Take Your Place In History'. This year's campaign is celebrating community archives and the roles individuals and different groups including black and ethnic minorities have played in shaping local history. Archives across the UK will be holding a number of special and interactive events to illustrate how different groups have worked to bring about the change and raise awareness about social issues amongst decision makers and opinion informers and to celebrate the treasures lying in their collections. www.archiveawareness.com

MLA Area Director North

Keith Bartlett, currently Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, has been appointed as the Museum, Library and Archive Council's Area Director North. Dr Bartlett's appointment marks the completion of the first tier of the MLA's new integrated national and regional structure. He becomes the third Area Director of Engagement, alongside recent appointees Jon Finch, Area Director West, and Sam Bestwick, Area Director East. By the time the new structure becomes fully functional (all regional MLAs will have closed by end March 2009), each region will have at least one regional manager, accountable to their respective Directors of Engagement. www.mla.gov.uk

Financial Sustainability and Business Models

MLA has published new research examining financial sustainability of museums, libraries and archives and the capacity of different organisations to innovate and adopt new business models to secure financial sustainability. The research suggests that a sense of entitlement to government funding may be inhibiting organisations from actively exploring alternatives to better ensure their sustainability in the face of change. <http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=923>

Arts Council Consultation on Peer Review and Self Assessment

Arts Council England has launched a consultation on proposals for peer review and self assessment for regularly funded arts organisations. A number of approaches are put forward in the consultation document, including ongoing artistic assessment, sectoral reviews, and occasional one-off appraisals of individual organisations. The move comes after Brian McMaster's report on excellence urged the Arts Council to include peer review and self assessment at the centre of its decision making. It is expected that the new self assessment process will be in operation from April 2010 and that some aspects of peer review will be introduced during 2009/10. The consultation runs until 23 January. www.artscouncil.org.uk/consultation

Heritage Science Strategy Website Launched

The steering group for the National Heritage Science Strategy has launched a new website. Over the next few months, work will be undertaken to produce three reports which will provide the evidence base for drawing up the Strategy, covering:

- the current use of science in preserving and protecting cultural heritage (available April 2009)
- the use of science in enhancing our understanding of the past (available end of May 2009)
- sector skills and practitioner and institutional capacity to deliver improvements in the application of heritage science (available July 2009).

Each of the reports will be available on the Strategy's website, with a one month consultation period to ensure that the views of the heritage sector are fully represented and integrated in the final Strategy.

www.heritagesciencestrategy.org.uk

Crafts Council Exhibition Partnership

The Crafts Council has launched the *Fifty:Fifty Programme*, a major new collaborative exhibition scheme. The Crafts Council is seeking UK based galleries and venues to co-curate and deliver partnership exhibitions, sharing funds, ideas and resources which will be joined and shared equally on a fifty-fifty basis.

www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about-us/press-room/2008/newsarticle-200811101216-4918262041f90

Their Past Your Future Grant Applications

The final phase of *Their Past Your Future* was launched on 3 November 2008. The Big Lottery funded programme is open to all museums, libraries and archives in England. The project explores the ongoing legacy of 20th and 21st century conflict on people and places. Grants between £500 and £10,000 are available for venues to develop programmes, workshops, exhibitions and events. The deadline for applications is the 16th January.

www.mla.gov.uk/news/press_releases/TPYF2008

Consultation on Future Designation of World Heritage sites in the UK

Culture Secretary Andy Burnham has launched a consultation on *Identifying, protecting and promoting our World Heritage*. The consultation seeks views on how best to protect the UK's World Heritage Sites, including: how sites should be added to the World Heritage List; the costs, benefits and responsibilities of designation; how protection for World Heritage Sites can be clarified and strengthened; and whether the current approach supports the UK in protecting and promoting its cultural and national heritage, particularly in relation to UNESCO.

In advance of the consultation the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Historic Scotland and Cadw jointly commissioned a cost benefit analysis of World Heritage Site (WHS) status, undertaken by Price WaterhouseCoopers. Key findings include:

- WHS status does not in itself provide any additional statutory protection, although the quality of development around such sites may be superior.
- Costs are rising - up to £400,000 to bid for World Heritage Site (WHS) status and £150,000 p.a. to maintain
- Benefits of tourism and regeneration arising from WHS status have been overstated, with very low percentages of visitors being aware of such status or motivated by it.
- While additional funding often follows inscription, much of this comes from UK heritage or conservation bodies - benefit for WHS is at the expense of heritage sites elsewhere.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks until 24 February 2008. Copies of the consultation document and PricewaterhouseCooper report can be found at: www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/5629.aspx

Public Appointments

The Prime Minister has appointed Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas DBE as a Trustee of the Imperial War Museum. Dame Judith is Chair of The New West End Company and of The Independent Schools' Council, and a Non-executive Director of Merrill Lynch (New York). www.number10.gov.uk/news/press-notice

Stephen Robertson, Director General of the British Retail Consortium, has been appointed the first Non-Executive Board member of the National Portrait Gallery Company Ltd. www.npg.org.uk

Creative Scotland

Ewan Brown CBE FRSE has been appointed as the first Chair of Creative Scotland, the new national development body for Scotland's arts and culture in Scotland. Ewan Brown is currently vice chairman of the Edinburgh International Festival and was chairman of Lloyds TSB Scotland until May 2008. The Government intends to establish Creative Scotland as a statutory Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) through the Public Services Reform Bill to be introduced to Parliament next year. Brown has indicated that he plans to step down as Chair when NDPB status is established and the transition process is completed.

www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/11/03111331

In Parliament

Committee Recommends Greater Cooperation and Shared Services for Grant Making Bodies

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has published its report *Making Grants Efficiently in the Culture, Media and Sport Sector*. The report follows the earlier report by the National Audit Office. In 2006-07, the nine principal grant-makers sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) awarded grants of some £1.8 billion, and spent some £200 million on administering the grants and related activities. The average cost of awarding £1 of grant across a sample of open application programmes in the sector ranged from three pence to 35 pence. The recommendations include that:

- DCMS should take the lead in agreeing with grant-makers ways to measure and report the cost of making grants on a like-for-like basis and make savings where there is evidence of inefficiency.
- Grant making bodies should work together in the regions, and with other partners such as local authorities, to establish one-stop shops and run events to promote grant programmes and offer advice.
- DCMS should be more pro-active in encouraging sharing and co-operation between bodies in the sector in areas such as office accommodation, IT systems, developing online applications and a shared grant application system.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmpublic/641/641.pdf

Attempt to Protect Heritage in Planning Bill

Lord Howarth of Newport moved an amendment to the Planning Bill to include a special regard for protected heritage assets in the proposed National Policy Statements. Having taken advice from Heritage Link, the National Trust and Historic Houses Association, Lord Howard argued that the Bill failed to provide sufficiently robust

protection for heritage. He said 'Regulations do not offer the same solidarity of protection as statute. They can all too easily be altered by government or discarded'. The amendment was supported in speeches by ten peers. Baroness Andrews responded for the Government, saying that 'the Bill does not deliberately or inadvertently reduce the protection available to our precious heritage' and that 'the single consent regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects would not entail a reduction in heritage protection.' The proposed amendment was then withdrawn. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/81110-0007.htm

National Museum Visitor Figures

In response to a Parliamentary Question from Chris Ruane MP, DCMS has published visitor figures for the museums it funds for each year from 1990-91 to 2007-8. Tate, Natural History Museum, National Portrait Gallery, V&A, National Maritime Museum, Geffrye Museum, Horniman Museum and Museum of Science and Industry have all doubled their visitor numbers since 1991 and the total number of visits to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries has risen from 20.9m to 40.3m in this period. Figures for the 2007-08 average daily number of UK visitors to DCMS funded museums in London have also been published in response to a Parliamentary Question from Matthew Taylor MP. Tate received an average of 12,307 domestic visits per day during the period. Labour MPs Anne Snelgrove and Jim Cunningham both also asked questions about museum visitor numbers last month. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081117/text/81117w0004.htm#0811174001851

International Issues

Tax Incentives for Donations by Artists

In the United States, the Art Dealers Association of America is lobbying for an extension of tax incentives to artists. At present artists donating their own work can only claim a tax deduction for the cost of the materials used to create the work rather than, as other donors can, the market value. The Artist Museum Partnership Act currently before Congress would allow artists to donate under the same conditions as art collectors. It is estimated that the cost of the proposed changes would be \$25m. www.theartnewspaper.com/article.asp?id=16501

Museum Returns Spoliated Painting

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Association En mémoire d'Alphonse Kann have announced the restitution of *Smoke Over Rooftops* (1911), a painting by Fernand Léger, to the Kann Association. The decision to return the work of art was made after careful research into the painting's provenance proved it had been looted by the Nazis at the home of Alphonse Kann during the German occupation of France. The Museum first received a claim for the painting in 1997 and after several years of conducting research the Museum and the Kann Association reached an agreement to return the painting to the Kann Association, which represents the Kann heirs. www.artsmia.org/press/view.cfm?PR_ID=186

National Museum of American History reopens

The National Museum of American History has reopened after a 2 year-long, \$85 million renovation. The renovation project, which has involved extensive architectural enhancements including a new gallery for its famous 200-year old Star-Spangled Banner, as well as a full re-display of the collections, was undertaken using a mix of public and private funds following criticisms made by a 2002 commission which called for a large-scale "transformation" of the museum. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/19/AR2008111901361.html

Opening of Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

The new Museum of Islamic Art in Doha opened on November 22nd in Doha, Qatar. The museum, which holds an encyclopaedic collection of manuscripts, textiles, ceramics and other works from across the Islamic world, is housed in a new building designed by I.M. Pei on a purpose-built island in Doha and is part of efforts to transform Qatar into an international arts destination. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7744586.stm

Concern Over Future of Italian Cultural Heritage

Italy's culture minister, Sandro Bondi, has caused uproar with suggestions that the country should think of its state museums and archaeological sites as generators of revenue. There has been heavy criticism of the appointment of Mario Resca, who ran McDonald's Italian subsidiary for 12 years and has no experience in arts management, to head a new ministry directorate to develop Italian museums and ancient sites. Thousands of Italian and international museum professionals have signed a petition to 'Appeal for the safeguard of Italy's artistic and archaeological heritage'. www.bianchibandinelli.it/appello_super-manager_musei.htm
www.nytimes.com/2008/11/22/arts/design/22dire.html?scp=4&sq=november+22+2008&st=nyt

National Museums' News Round Up

Professor Martin Earwicker has announced that he will be stepping down as Director of the **National Museum of Science & Industry** (NMSI). He will leave in April 2009 to take up a new post as Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of London South Bank University. NMSI's Board of Trustees, aided by Prof Earwicker, will immediately begin the process of recruiting a successor and hope to have a new Director in place by next spring.

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/press_and_media/press_releases/2008/12/Martin.aspx

The **Royal Armouries** has a new partnership with the University of Huddersfield, which has appointed Graeme Rimer, Academic Director of the Royal Armouries as a Visiting Professor, and Peter Smithurst, Senior Curator, as a Visiting Research Fellow. Paul Wilcock, Research Fellow at the University, has been appointed by the Royal Armouries as an Historical Consultant. The partnership will encourage new research in the field of arms and armour by bringing research students into contact with the collections at the Royal Armouries. www.royalarmouries.org

The **Ashmolean Museum** will close to the public from 23 December until late autumn 2009 while the major redevelopment of the museum is completed. The Western Art Print Room will remain open by appointment for specialist visitors. The new Ashmolean building opening in November 2009 will increase the previous display space by 100 per cent. www.ashmolean.org

The **British Library** has issued a statement following the conviction of a man for the theft of over 150 pages from the Library's rare books. Mr Farhad Hakimzadeh, a former British Library Reader, has pleaded guilty to ten counts of theft from the Library, and asked for further charges to be taken into account. He has also pleaded guilty to charges of theft from the Bodleian Library in Oxford. www.bl.uk/news/2008/pressrelease20081121a.html

The Clive of India Flask is expected to go on long-term loan to the **Victoria & Albert Museum**. The Flask was given a temporary export licence to allow it to be sent to Qatar for the opening of the new Islamic museum and will be returned to the UK by next October to be shown in the V&A's exhibition *Maharajas: the Splendour of India's Royal Courts*. The two museums are in discussion about rotating the display of items from the Clive Treasure between Doha and London in coming years. www.theartnewspaper.com/article.asp?id=16544

The **National Portrait Gallery** has acquired one of the few Tudor family portraits on public view, Hans Eworth's *Lady Dacre, and her son, Gregory Baron Dacre*, described as "one of the finest works to be painted in Britain in the mid-16th century". The portrait has been acquired for the Gallery following contributions from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Gallery's Portrait Fund. www.npg.org.uk/live/prelladydacre.asp

Awards

The **Science Museum** was voted Visitor Attraction of the Year at the 2008 Visit London Awards. The Science Museum was recognised for a range of achievements including its reinvented interactive gallery, Launchpad, which has attracted 1.2 million visitors in its first year, alongside its strong exhibitions programme.

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/press_and_media/press_releases.aspx

Also at the Visit London Awards the **Natural History Museum** won the Kids Love London Best Family Fun Award, part of the People's Choice Awards which are voted for by Londoners. The **British Museum** won the gold award for Marketing/PR Campaign of the Year for *The First Emperor* exhibition, with the **Museum of London** winning silver for *London, Sugar and Slavery*. http://corporate.visitlondon.com/partners/vl_awards/winners.html

The partnership between the **British Museum** and Morgan Stanley has won the Cultural Branding Award in the 30th annual Arts & Business Awards. The Arts & Business Awards celebrate excellence in the field of cultural sponsorship and several national museums were shortlisted for awards in various categories.

<http://interim.aandb.org.uk/Awards-anniversary.aspx>

National Museum Cardiff has been awarded the Sandford Award in recognition of its outstanding contribution to heritage education. The Sandford Award, presented by the Heritage Education Trust and valid for five years, is an independently-judged benchmark made annually to recognise the provision of quality education in and about historic sites across the UK. www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/5/?article_id=480

The **British Library's** Annual Report & Accounts 2007/08 has won the Accountancy Age Award for Best Annual Report (Public and Voluntary Sector). Judges said that "The British Library's annual report makes outstanding use of video to convey what it is doing and stood out a mile." www.bl.uk/news/2008/pressrelease20081117.html

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