

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

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

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NMDC Activities

Private Giving for the Public Good

NMDC, in partnership with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and Arts Council England, have launched a new manifesto, *Private Giving for the Public Good*, opening a nationwide campaign to encourage a culture of giving to the arts and heritage.

The aims of the campaign are:

- to provide greater incentives for living donors to make gifts of objects to the cultural sector;
- to give greater recognition to people who give to the cultural sector;
- to ensure that all parts of the country benefit from cultural philanthropy; and
- to share knowledge and expertise in this field across the whole arts and heritage sector.

The manifesto outlines the legacy of private generosity that has provided the foundation for many of our leading cultural institutions and sets out the need for greater encouragement of present and future donors, including via tax changes. At present, tax relief covers gifts of cash, stocks and shares, and land - but not objects that would be valuable additions to museums, galleries, libraries and archives.

These gifts can be tax-efficient if the donor is dead, through the acceptance-in-lieu scheme, but have no tax advantage for living donors. Comparable benefits should be available to living donors who wish to donate significant cultural objects in order to preserve them for the public benefit. This would enable museums, libraries and archives to build long-term relationships with donors.

Mark Jones, Chair of NMDC and Director of the V&A, said: "We want to encourage more people to give to culture. People who start by giving to cultural organisations tend to give to other things as well. We want the whole of society to benefit from this campaign."

The campaign is supported by a wide range of museum, arts, heritage and philanthropy organisations including Arts & Business, The Art Fund, Association of Independent Museums, English Heritage, the Museums Association, Museums Galleries Scotland, National Campaign for the Arts and The National Trust.

A copy of *Private Giving for the Public Good*, can be downloaded from www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/private_giving_apr08.html

The campaign has received good press coverage including [The Times \(Ben Hoyle, 26 April\)](#) and [Richard Morrison, 1 May](#), [The Guardian \(26 April\)](#) and [Evening Standard, \(25 April\)](#).

Comment: Sir Nicholas Serota, [The Guardian \(20 April\)](#)

Facts and Figures

- Since 1992 charitable giving has fallen 25 per cent as a proportion of gross domestic product.
- 69 per cent of money given to culture goes to London and the South East.
- The poorest 10 per cent of the population give about 3 per cent of their income while the richest 10 per cent give barely 1 per cent.

Related News

The Sunday Times has published its Giving List 2008 of the top 100 philanthropists in the UK. John Low, chief executive of the Charities Aid Foundation, said: "There are two distinct trends: one is a move towards being more open about giving, the other is a move towards planned giving and wanting to take greater ownership of it."

<http://extras.timesonline.co.uk>

Climate Change

NMDC members are committed to reducing their environmental impact and are working together to find new and innovative ways to do so. NMDC is looking at climate change and the implications for museums not only as consumers of energy but also as educators and as part of the tourism economy. On 1 May, NMDC in partnership with the V&A and the Royal Institute of British Architects hosted *ThinkTank: The Future Museum*, a lively debate on climate change. Leaders from across the museum and design professions were invited to challenge assumptions regarding climate change and contribute to rethinking of museum operations in the face of growing environmental concern.

NMDC's Operations Committee discussed environmental sustainability at their last meeting. They received an update on DCMS's Climate Change project, which has included a literature review of sustainable development in DCMS sectors, case studies of good practice, and work on carbon-footprinting for DCMS funded bodies.

www.culture.gov.uk/working_with_us/sustainable_development/

Simon Tilleard, Technology Manager at the London Climate Change Agency, told the Operations Committee about the *Better Buildings Partnership*, which involves commercial and public property owners in London working to improve the sustainability of existing buildings. The Natural History Museum's CHP trigeneration energy system is used as a case study of good practice

(www.lcca.co.uk/server/show/nav.00500a). Simon also gave details of the Green 500 Scheme, which will aid large businesses and public sector organisations in planning and implementing carbon reduction.

www.lcca.co.uk/upload/pdf/green_orgs_final.pdf.

Related news:

This summer the **Museums Association** is consulting the sector about how ideas of sustainability relate to museums. They will be holding free-half day discussion sessions over the next three months. A full discussion paper is due to be published this month.

www.museumsassociation.org/sustainability

Beat the Panel: Save the Planet, is a Science Museum event at the Dana Centre as part of their Museums and Galleries Month celebrations. Budding environmental entrepreneurs will pitch their carbon-cutting innovations to a panel of climate change and business experts, and the audience will vote for the best idea.

www.danacentre.org.uk/events/2008/05/22/397

Arts Council England and International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies are working together to collate international examples of good practice in supporting artists or arts organisations with creative and practical responses to environmental sustainability and climate change. www.ifacca.org/topic/ecological-sustainability/

In the United States, the University of California, **Davis Design Museum** is currently presenting an exhibition "Sustainable Practice: A Model for Museum Design", including online resources about sustainable exhibition design.

<http://designmuseum.ucdavis.edu>

Cultural Diplomacy

This month's edition of *The Art Newspaper* contains an extensive article comparing the respective foreign policies of the British Museum and the Louvre, including interviews with their Directors, Neil MacGregor and Henri Loyrette. The article observes that while the Louvre's international activities are "spectaculars" led or strongly assisted by the French Government, the British Museum's international programme "is initiated by the museum and its curators, is much quieter and grows organically out of the collections and the realities of the moment."

www.theartnewspaper.com

Intellectual Property Role for Lynne Brindley

Dame Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, has been appointed to the Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property (SABIP), which will give Ministers strategic advice on intellectual property issues.

SABIP was set up following a recommendation of the Gowers Review of Intellectual Property. It will be an advisory non-departmental body with a research budget to commission the empirical evidence that will underpin its thinking and advice. www.bl.uk/news/2008/pressrelease20080502.html

National Museum Jobs

NMDC jobs website this month includes jobs at museums around the UK including: Acting Head of Collections, Wallace Collection; Assistant Curator (Early Years), Tate; Visitor Services Manager, Museum of London; Events Manager, National Gallery; Press and New Media Information Officer, National Galleries of Scotland; and Digital Designer, Imperial War Museum.

Visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk for details.

Forthcoming Meetings

HR Forum

Friday 6th June, 11am-1pm, English Heritage, York

Learning & Access Committee

Thursday 5th June, 1.30-3.30pm, National Army Museum

NMDC Meeting

Friday 11 July, 11am, Victoria & Albert Museum

Current Issues

DCMS Corporate Plan

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has published its Corporate Plan 2008, setting out how the Department will meet its four strategic objectives (DSOs) and how it will contribute to the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) where the main delivery body is another department.

Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs):

- Opportunity
- Excellence
- Economic Impact
- Olympics.

The Corporate Plan summarises high impact programmes to achieve the DSOs including

- Find Your Talent: a cultural offer for young people
- Excellence in the Arts - implementation of the McMaster recommendations
- Philanthropy - working with the Office of the Third Sector to grow private giving
- Cultural Diplomacy - Connections Through Culture programme and protection of cultural heritage in Iraq
- Creative economy - contributing to the PSA target on raising the productivity of the UK economy
- VisitBritain Strategic Review of UK Tourism support
- Olympics
- Sustainability and Diversity

The document describes the Department's new structure and ways of working, with an organisation chart showing the new arrangement of responsibilities. It also summarises plans to improve working with partners in Whitehall, NDPBs and the regional review.

www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/corp_plan_08.htm

Andy Burnham MP Describes Policy Challenges

Culture Secretary, Andy Burnham MP has written an article in *The Telegraph*, setting out his main policy challenges, including freeing the arts from targets and measurement, relying more on the critical assessments of artists and cultural organisations, and applying the free entry principle more widely across the cultural sector, particularly the performing arts. He says the sector has grown in confidence over the past 10 years.

www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2008/04/13/btarts213.xml

Conflict of Interest Guidance

DCMS and the Charity Commission have launched guidance for members of the governing bodies of charitable museums, galleries and libraries, explaining how charity trustees can identify and manage conflicts of interest which arise in their charities, and how they should deal with any transactions which involve a trustee benefit or are conducted between a trustee and the charity. This follows the seminar that DCMS and the Charity Commission hosted in December 2006.

www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/charitable_mus_gal.htm

Protection for Cultural Objects Loaned from Abroad for Exhibition

The Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan (Publication and Provision of Information) Regulations 2008 were made on 23 April. The Regulations relate to the provisions in the Courts, Tribunals and Enforcement Act 2007, providing protection from court orders for seizure or forfeiture for objects that are lent from abroad for temporary public exhibitions in the UK. It is not mandatory for borrowing institutions to seek protection for exhibits: however, if they choose to do so, the Regulations set out the information about the lender, the object and its provenance that the borrowing institution must publish as one of the conditions of the protection. The Regulations also specify the additional information that must be given to persons who have believe they have a claim for possession of an object. The Regulations can be found at:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20081159_en_1

The legislation covers objects brought into UK by for a temporary public exhibition by an approved museum or gallery. DCMS and the Devolved Administrations are inviting applications for approval from museums and galleries. To achieve approved status, institutions will need to produce satisfactory evidence of robust due diligence procedures as well as compliance with international standards and the Department's guidance (*Combating Illicit Trade, Due Diligence Guidelines For Museums, Libraries And Archives On Collecting And Borrowing Cultural Material*, 2005).

A letter has been sent to Directors inviting them to apply for the Secretary of State's approval under the Act. Details will also be available shortly on the DCMS website (www.culture.gov.uk). DCMS is also organising a seminar for those within each museum who have ultimate responsibility for managing the process of assuring the provenance and ownership of objects.

The Regulations were made following a public consultation last year on the draft Regulations. DCMS has published a summary of responses to the consultation as well as the individual responses from museums and representative groups.

www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2008/cultural_objects_summary.htm

Heritage Lottery Fund Strategy

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has published *Valuing our Heritage: Investing in Our Future*, its strategy for 2008-2013. The key features of the strategy are:

- **Simpler Application Process** - a simplified and faster application and assessment process. Online application forms for the Heritage Grants, Your Heritage and Young Roots programmes are now available, with all others following in July;
- **More Help** - HLF will offer a mentoring service provided by specialist advisors to reduce risks in project development, improve the overall quality of projects and provide inexperienced applicants with extra help;
- **Going Green** - applicants will be asked to 'green' their projects, minimising environmental impacts and encouraging innovative thinking and developing practice on sustainable use of resources;
- **Champions of the Future** - Whilst continuing with the 'Young Roots' programme, HLF will develop a new youth participation strategy; and
- **Heritage Heroes** - an annual awards scheme giving the public the chance to nominate a local 'heritage hero'.

The strategy sets out the budgets for the next five years and the timetable for funding decisions. The total grant budget will be £220m in 2008-9, and £180m a year from 2009-2013. The budget for grants over £5m will be £20m a year. From 2009-10, a total of £83m will be available each year for grants of £50,000-£5m - a cut of £27m from 2008-9.

HLF has also introduced a new logo and style, intended to reflect its open, straightforward vision for future working.

www.hlf.org.uk/HLF/Docs/HLF_SP3%20LOW2.pdf

Jenny Abramsky Appointed as Chair of NHMF and HLF

The Prime Minister has appointed Jenny Abramsky CBE to the board of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as Chair designate. She joins the Board as a Trustee on 1 September and then succeeds Dame Liz For as Chair on 1 October 2008. Her term of appointment is three years.

Jenny Abramsky has spent her working life at the BBC, where she is currently Director of BBC Audio & Music, responsible for all BBC national and digital radio and for music across television, radio, online and live events. She has been editor of the Today programme on Radio 4 and launched BBC Radio Five Live, BBC News Online and BBC News 24. She was awarded the CBE in 2001 for services to news and radio broadcasting.

www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page15238.asp

Museums and Galleries Month 2008 - 1-31 May

Culture Minister, Margaret Hodge launched Museums and Galleries Month 2008 at London Transport Museum. The theme for this year's celebration is Ideas and Innovation. A programme of events and debates will be held throughout the month taking inspiration from this theme, including:

- *China and the Creative Industries*, Victoria & Albert Museum, 9 May, www.vam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/whatson/events_mgr.pl
- *Sport and Art: A Clash of Cultures?* at the National Portrait Gallery, 15 May, www.npg.org.uk/live/mayeve.asp
- *Do Museums Matter?* at Urbis, organised by Renaissance North West, 16 May
- *Can design save your life?* at the Wellcome Collection, 29 May www.artfund.org/whatson/arthappens.html

This year also sees the expansion of the **Museums at Night** event with hundreds of venues opening their doors for after-hours tours and entertainment to coincide with the major European initiative *Nuit des Musées* on Saturday May 17. The Science Museum is holding a Science Night sleepover. The Discovery Museum, Laing Art Gallery, Royal Observatory, Greenwich, National Railway Museum and the National Gallery will all be open late with special events and activities. <http://nuitdesmusees.culture.fr/index.php?l=GBR>

More information about Museums & Galleries Month 2008 can be found at: www.mgm.org.uk/home.html

The Art Fund Prize for Museums and Galleries Short List

Four museums have been selected for the final round of the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries:

- The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol, for 'Breaking the Chains'
- The Lightbox gallery and museum, Woking
- Shetland Museum and Archives, Lerwick, Shetland
- Wellcome Collection, London

The Art Fund Prize, formerly the Gulbenkian Prize, is awarded for originality, imagination and excellence. The winner will be announced on 22 May. www.artfund.org/news/674

Family Friendly Museum Award 2008

Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, has won the Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award 2008. Weston Park was transformed by a £18m refurbishment programme in 2006 and nearly two thirds of the museum's visitors are families with young children.

www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk/the-guardian-award/

MDA re-launches as the Collections Trust

MDA has become the Collections Trust, a new independent national organisation for collections. The new brand is intended to reflect its new wider remit in the field of Collections Management. The Collections Trust's role will be to deliver programmes which help people connect to culture, and which enable practitioners to improve the quality of their services. To achieve this, it will provide advice, support and guidance to professionals and the general public to help them achieve the highest standards in the management of their collections.

The Collections Trust will continue to be committed to documentation and information management, and over the next 12 months it will be investing in the development of the Collections Link advisory service to provide access to expertise across an even broader range of professional disciplines. www.collectionstrust.org.uk.

Cultural Olympiad - Database of Cultural Activities

The Museums, Libraries and Archive Council and Culture24 want to capture all the activity across the country leading up to and including the summer of 2012, and have opened a database for museums, libraries and archives to log details of their events and activities. The database will be used to: support the marketing and promotion of activities through the databases, websites and promotional programmes of LOCOG, Visit Britain and Culture24; share data with MLA, the London 2012 Creative Programmers and other national and regional agencies working to coordinate and develop 2012 programmes; and allow museums to share ideas and approaches with others from across the culture sector, and to identify potential partners. www.culture24.org.uk

Trustee Appointments

The Prime Minister has made the following appointments:

- **David Norgrove** reappointed as a Trustee of the **British Museum**. He is chair of the Pensions Regulator, a former Marks and Spencer Board member and civil servant.
- **Dr Brian Lang** reappointed as Deputy Chair and Scottish Trustee of the **National Heritage Memorial Fund** (NHMF). Dr Lang is Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of St Andrews, and previously Director of NHMF, and Chair of the British Library.
- **Howard Covington, Professor Averill MacDonald, Dr Gill Samuels CBE, Ms Janet Street Porter and Chris Swinson** as Trustees of the **National Museum of Science and Industry**. Mr Covington is Chief Executive of New Star Asset Management, a former investment banker and a patron of the Science Museum's Smith Centre. Professor Macdonald is holder of the Chair of Science Communication at the University of Reading. Dr Samuels is a physiologist and neuropharmacologist, and Chair of the Council of Global Forum for Health Research. Ms Street Porter is a journalist, broadcaster and producer. Mr Swinson was previously Chair of the HM Treasury Audit Committee and a Commissioner of the Audit Commission.

www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page2517.asp

Research Highlights Psychological barriers to Arts Participation

Arts Council England has published *From Indifference to Enthusiasm: Patterns of Arts Attendance in England*. This report, produced in collaboration with sociologists from University of Oxford, is based on data from DCMS's Taking Part survey. The research has identified four main types of arts attender across the adult population in England: 'little if anything'; 'now and then'; 'enthusiastic'; and 'voracious'. 84 per cent of the population fall into either the 'little if anything' or the 'now and then' groups. The strongest and most consistently significant factors that determine which of the four groups an individual is likely to belong to are education and social status. Income has very little impact. The research suggests many of the barriers to participation are psychological and driven by some concept of identity and that many people believe the arts are 'not for people like me'.

www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/project_detail.php?sid=13&id=373&page=2

The Arts Council of Wales has also published two reports, *Arts and Public Engagement- Patterns, Processes and Levers for Change* and *Hand in Hand: Arts Based Activities and Regeneration*, commissioned to develop a greater understanding of public engagement with the arts in Wales and to explore the reasons for lower levels of participation among key social groups. This research also highlights perceived relevance and early life experience as the primary factors affecting levels of engagement in the arts.

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/news/artsreports/?version=1&lang=en>

Alan Davey

Alan Davey, Chief Executive of Arts Council England has given his first major press interview since taking up his new role. (The Guardian, 14 April)

<http://arts.guardian.co.uk>

ACW Interim Chief Executive

The Arts Council of Wales has announced that James Turner will be taking up the role of interim Chief Executive while the full public appointment exercise of appointing the new Chief Executive is taking place.

www.artswales.org.uk/viewnews.asp?id=826

Subject Specialist Networks Seeking Information

Subject Specialist Networks are a focus for the expertise and collections knowledge of collections managers, keepers and curators throughout the UK. They have been supported by over £500,000 funding through Renaissance in the Regions

The **Medical & Healthcare** Subject Specialist Network is carrying out a collections mapping project. For further information contact: Steph.Gillet@btinternet.com

The **Archives in Museums** Subject Specialist Network is conducting a survey to find out what museum archivists want from the network and build an accurate picture of the needs of archives in museums. www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//A/AiM_SNN_questionnaire_Word_402KB_13135.doc

For more information on Subject Specialist Networks, visit www.collectionslink.org.uk/find_a_network/subject_specialists

Grants for Manuscript Preservation

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, administered by The National Archives, is inviting applications for grants to cover the cost of conservation or preservation of manuscript material. Any record offices, libraries and owners of manuscript material that is exempt from capital taxation or owned by a charitable trust can apply for funding. The next deadline for applications is 1 October 2008.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/preservation/trust/

Increase in Overseas Visits to UK

Figures published by National Statistics show that during the 12 months to February 2008, the number of visits by overseas residents to the UK (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 3 per cent from 33.1 million to 33.9 million. Visits from residents of Europe increased by 3 per cent to 24.4 million, from North America decreased by 3 per cent (to 4.6 million) and from other parts of the world increased by 5 per cent (to 4.9 million). www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=352

Registry of Museum Technology Projects

The Museum Computer Network (MCN) and the Museum Software Foundation (MSF) have recently launched MCN Project Registry, a space for sharing information about technology-related projects in the cultural heritage sector around the world. To search or add details of technology and information projects in museums, libraries and archives, visit: www.musetechcentral.org

Museum Opens in a Supermarket

The Johnstone History Society has opened a museum in the middle of a new Morrison's supermarket. The museum, which focuses on the industrial and social history of the town of Johnstone, Scotland, has been funded by a grant of £29,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Morrison's donated the space for a nominal rent. www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/nwh_gfx_en/ART56029.html

Proud Heritage Online Museum

Proud Heritage has launched a new online museum, the first public step in a three-year journey to create a museum reflecting British lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans history and cultural ancestry in all its diversity. www.proudheritage.org

In Parliament

New All-Party Group on Archives

The creation of an All Party Group (APG) on Archives was approved by Lords and Members of Parliament on 1 April. Parliamentarians expressed concern that the position of archives on the political agenda does not reflect their importance, despite the popularity of family and local history and people's burgeoning desire for a sense of place and identity. Tim Boswell MP was confirmed as Chair, Lord Bew as Secretary, and Lord Howarth, Lord Redesdale and Dr Hywel Francis MP as Vice-Chairs. The National Council on Archives will provide secretariat support for the APG, which plans to meet two or three times a year.

www.archives.org.uk/thesociety/societynews.html

Draft Marine Bill Published

The draft Marine Bill was published, for consultation, on 3 April. The marine historic environment is a component of the Bill, which sets out plans for a new network of marine conservation zones around Britain's coast, a new UK-wide marine planning system based on 'making the best use of marine resources' and proposes the establishment of a new Marine Management Organisation as the UK Government's strategic delivery body in the marine area. This would be an NDPB of Defra, but also formally advised by a cross-Government MMO Sponsorship Group, including DCMS, because of its responsibilities for marine heritage, recreation and tourism. Deadline for comments is 26 June 2008. www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation/index.htm

If you have any comments or contributions for the NMDC newsletter, please email: news@nationalmuseums.org.uk

International Issues

Guggenheim Hermitage Leaving Las Vegas

The Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation and the State Hermitage Museum have announced that the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum in Las Vegas will close on 11 May 2008. The museum is offering free admission for the remaining weeks in celebration of the seven year partnership with The Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino. Guggenheim Director, Thomas Krens, said it was planned from the beginning that this partnership [with the Venetian] would be for a specific term, and this has now been fulfilled. We are looking forward to continuing the relationship with a number of projects that are under discussion." The museum attracted 1.1m visitors and 20,000 students over the past six and a half years.

The Guggenheim Hermitage Museum project was the result of a larger long-term collaboration agreement between The State Hermitage Museum and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which will continue. Current projects include a feasibility study in Vilnius, Lithuania.

www.guggenheimlasvegas.org/press_releases/

Guggenheim Bilbao Finance Director Admits Embezzlement

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has dismissed its Director of Finance and Administration after he admitted to embezzling almost 487,000 Euros since 1998. In a statement, the museum said Roberto Cearsolo Barrenetxea confessed to taking the funds from two companies that manage the Guggenheim building and its art collection. He has returned more than half the total and pledged to give back the rest within three months, the Museum said. The Museum is taking legal action against Cearsolo and has ordered an external audit of the two companies' accounts.

www.guggenheim-bilbao.es/uploads/area_prensa/notas/es/np_denuncia_es.pdf

Translation: www.bloomberg.com

Cultural Property

Syria Returns Looted Objects to Iraq's National Museum

Syria has returned 701 artefacts to the National Museum in Baghdad. Syrian authorities confiscated the antiquities from smugglers over the past five years. In agreement with the Iraqi government, Syria stored them in its national museum because Iraq was deemed unsafe. The Iraqi minister for antiquities and tourism travelled to Syria to collect the objects and escort them home. The museum lost an estimated 15,000 artefacts; an unknown number were looted from Iraq's estimated 12,000 archaeological sites. So far, only 5,000 museum pieces have been recovered. www.baghdadmuseum.org/news/?geo=

Dutch Committee Orders Restitution of Toorop Painting

The Netherlands Restitution Committee has issued binding advice requiring the Zeeuwse Museum Foundation to return the painting entitled *A Prayer Before Supper* by Jan Toorop to the heirs to the estate of the former owner upon payment by the heirs of €121,500 to the Museum. Should the heirs decide to sell the work within the next ten years, they will be obliged to offer it for sale to the Museum first. The painting was originally in the collection of Ernst Flersheim in Frankfurt am Main and was confiscated by the Gestapo in 1938 after the Flersheim family fled Germany. www.restitutiecommissie.nl/en/rc_3.45/persbericht_rc_3.45.html

City of Amsterdam reaches settlement with Malevich Heirs

The dispute between the City of Amsterdam and the Heirs of the Russian artist Malevich has been resolved, in a settlement that covers the City's entire Malevich collection, not only the 14 works which were claimed in a US Court when they were exhibited in the United States in 2003-4. The artist's descendants will receive five important paintings from the City's collection, the remaining works in the collection will remain with the City and the Heirs' U.S. action will be permanently withdrawn. The Malevich collection has been in the Stedelijk Museum since 1958. The settlement acknowledges the historical developments and circumstances that prevented Malevich from returning to Berlin and to his artworks after he was called back to the Soviet Union in 1927. http://oc.stedelijk.nl/content/Pb-066.2008%20Malevich_Engels.doc

Romanian Court Orders Return of Art to Ceausescu

A court in Bucharest is reported to have ordered the National Art Museum to return works of art confiscated during the 1989 anti-communist revolt to a son of the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Authorities confiscated the works when Nicu Ceausescu, a Communist Party official was arrested during the uprising that ousted his father. He was executed and it is his brother and heir Valentin Ceausescu who is claiming the paintings and sculptures. www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/04/25/news/Romania-Ceausescu-Paintings.php

Beijing Olympics Cultural Programme

China's Ministry of Culture has released a schedule of major cultural events to be held in Beijing to celebrate the Olympic Games. Over the next six months, the host city will hold about 160 art exhibitions and stage over 260 shows, including music, opera, dance, drama and acrobatics from 80 countries on five continents.

www.meetinbeijing.org.cn/english/index.asp

Collectors to Give 2500 Contemporary Works of Art to 50 museums

New York collectors Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, with the help of the National Gallery of Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, are launching a national gift program entitled *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States*. It will distribute 2,500 works from the Vogels' collection of contemporary art throughout the nation, with fifty works going to a selected art institution in each of the fifty states.

The best-known aspect of the Vogels' collecting focus is minimal and conceptual art, but the donations as a group encompass include works by more than 170 contemporary artists.

www.nga.gov/press/2008/vogel50x50_a.shtm

Boeing Donation to National Museum of African American History

The Boeing Company has donated \$5m to the development of the National Museum of African American History, part of the Smithsonian Institute. Boeing will fund efforts to bring together representatives from existing African American history museums and community leaders to share ideas about what this new museum will represent and what it will contain. The museum is due to open in 2015 and expected cost of \$500m.

Through a national collections and preservation initiative known as "Save Our African American Treasures," the museum is working with other organisations across the country to offer workshops designed to teach people to identify and preserve historically significant items and ultimately, to help museums across the country secure items for exhibitions and collections.

http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/nmaahc_Boeing-donation.htm

Newseum Opens

The Newseum, a 250,000-square-foot museum of news, has opened in a new building on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC on 11 April. The Newseum has 14 main exhibition galleries, many sponsored by major news corporations, exploring news history, electronic news, photojournalism, world news and how the media have covered major historical events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Sept. 11 2001 terrorist attacks. There Newseum also has 15 theatres, two broadcast studios and a 4-D time-travel experience. Total project cost is expected to be approximately \$450 million. The Newseum received \$450m from the Freedom Forum, a nonpartisan foundation dedicated to free press, and has also received \$79m from its consortium of founding partners, including Bloomberg, ABC News, Time Warner, The New York Times, NBC News and the Annenberg Foundation. www.newseum.org

Free Entry to Korea's National Museums

South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has announced that they will be introducing free entry to the country's 14 national museums from 1 May to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding Republic of Korea this year.

www.mcst.go.kr/english/issue/issueView.jsp

New Director for Rijksmuseum

Amsterdam Rijksmuseum's Supervisory Board has appointed Wim Pijbes to take over as the new general director of the museum. Pijbes is a Dutch art historian from Groningen University, and has been director of the Kunsthal Rotterdam since 2000. He succeeds Ronald de Leeuw on 1 July 2008.

<http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nieuwsagenda/nieuwe-directeur?lang=en>

Hungary plans 'tie tax' to support Culture

Hungary's culture minister, Maria Schneider, has unveiled plans for a tax on ties to support the arts and culture. The Minister is reported to have said: "Good design is after all a sign of culture, so it is right that the Culture Ministry should benefit from it." She is proposing a 0.8% tax on all sales of ties and bow

ties. www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_2825817.html

National Museums' News Round Up

Correction: In last month's newsletter we reported that the **Ashmolean Museum's** redevelopment was a £15m project. £15m is in fact the amount awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the total cost of the project is £61m. The editor apologises for this error. www.ashmolean.org/news/news/index.php?id=71

Record Visitor Numbers

Museum in Docklands has had its busiest year since it opened five years ago, with almost 108,000 visitors. Overall the Museum's numbers of visits are up 6.7% on last year and since the opening of *London, Sugar & Slavery* in November visits are up by 40%. www.museumindocklands.org.uk

The **National Media Museum** has recorded its highest number of annual visitors for the last five years with almost three-quarters of a million visitors in the past financial year, an increase of 9% on the previous year and 20% on the preceding year. The Museum is celebrating its 25th anniversary next month. <http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/General/MuseumNews.asp>

National Museums Liverpool's visitor numbers were up by 28% in 2007/8 compared to the previous year, with over 2.1m visits. The International Slavery Museum received more visitors in the first seven months than were expected in the first year, and visits to the Merseyside Maritime Museum have increased by 50%. www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mediacentre/

Nearly 1.7 million visits were made to the seven sites of **Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales** during 2007-08 - the highest total on record and 124% up on the number of visits made in the last financial year before free entry was introduced in April 2001. www.museumwales.ac.uk

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan Abdul Aziz Al-Saud has presented the **Ashmolean Museum** with a further £1m towards a new Islamic Gallery. HRH Crown Prince Sultan gave the Museum £1m in 2005. In addition to creating a new Islamic Gallery for the Museum's internationally renowned collection of Islamic Art, the donation will also provide for ten scholarships at the University of Oxford for students from Saudi Arabia. www.ashmolean.org/news/news/index.php?id=73

The Trustees of **National Museums Scotland** have agreed to return six Aboriginal skulls to the Australian Government. The announcement follows the Trustees' agreement earlier this year to return a Tasmanian skull to the Australian Government and other human remains to the National Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa. The six remains were given to National Museums Scotland in the 19th century by collectors. There is little information on the remains apart from the country they came from. The Australian Government intends to work with the National Museum of Australia and the indigenous communities to carry out further research to determine the origin of the remains. www.nms.ac.uk/press_release_remains040408.aspx

The **National Gallery** and Eurostar have launched the world's first interactive digital art gallery for travellers at St Pancras International. Located within Eurostar's departure lounge at St Pancras International, the STATION MASTERS interactive gallery enables users to explore a database of 100 highlights from the National Gallery's collection and choose which painting they want to see displayed on one of six free-standing plasma screens situated within the brick archways that run along the eastern wall of the departure lounge, creating a constantly evolving gallery. <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about/press/2008/stationmasters.htm>

The **Ashmolean Museum** is touring Japan and Taiwan for the first time with its exhibition *Camille Pissarro, Family and Friends: Masterworks from the Ashmolean Museum*. The exhibition, supported by the Brain Trust, features painting, works on paper and letters from the Museum's Pissarro Family Archive, the largest single resource for the study of Impressionism in the world. www.ashmolean.org/news/news/index.php?id=75

The **Imperial War Museum Duxford** and the **Victoria and Albert Museum** were awarded 'Gold' awards for the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence 2008. The Roald Dahl Museum in Buckinghamshire is the winner of Small Visitor Attraction of the Year. www.enjoyengland.com/corporate/corporate-information/excellence-awards/index.aspx

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) has announced an investment of £1.8 million in the International Slavery Museum, which will enable **National Museums Liverpool** to take forward its plans for the development of the attraction and extend into the Grade I listed Dock Traffic Office adjacent to its current location. www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mediacentre/

The **Science Museum's** online game *Launchball*, has won two awards. The game, developed to accompany the museum's recently reinvented interactive gallery *Launchpad*, has won both 'Best Innovative Site' and overall 'Best of the Web' at Museums and the Web 2008 - the international conference for museums and heritage online. www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/press_and_media/press_releases/2008/04/launchball_awards.aspx

The **Natural History Museum's** collection of Blaschka glass models of creatures from the sea will go on display at the National Glass Centre, Sunderland this month. It is the first time the models have been on public display since they were taken behind the scenes in the 1970s. Conservators have spent years restoring some of the models, 49 of which will be on display alongside a collection of models of sea anemones from **Tyne and Wear museums**. www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2008/april/news_14197.html

A rare, spider-like harvestman preserved in amber has been donated to the **Natural History Museum** by Rochester fossil collector Terence Collingwood. The tiny arachnid is 34-40 million years old and is only the second example of its species, *Dicranopalpus ramiger*, to join the national collection. http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2008/april/news_13657.html

Tate Liverpool opened 20 years ago this month. To celebrate, the gallery hosted a weekend of special events on 3-5 May. **Tate Britain** is displaying the last work by Edward Burne-Jones, *The Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, in its major rehang of the BP British Art Displays. It is the first time in 40 years that the painting from Museo de Arte Ponce, Puerto Rico has been display in the UK. www.tate.org.uk

The **National Portrait Gallery** has announced the shortlist for the BP Portrait Award. This is the second year since the competition was opened up to everyone over 18 years old, and it attracted record numbers of entrants from overseas and from those who are 40 years old (the previous upper age limit). The exhibition will be on display at the Gallery from 12 June. www.npg.org.uk

The **British Library** has launched a distance learning website, *Intellectual Property - How to Protect and Develop Your Idea*. The comprehensive website incorporates information provided by the Library's Business and IP Centre. <http://bipc-ecourses.bl.uk/>

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