



Welcome to this month's NMDC newsletter which contains : information on the Sir John Soane's Museum's new director Mr Tim Knox; a summary of the Shadow Arts Minister's plan for the Arts under a Conservative government; and information on the Education and Skills Select Committee's report 'Education Outside the Classroom'.

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

NMDC News

Executive Committee

The NMDC Executive Committee met on 4th February. Tony Travers joined the meeting to discuss plans for taking forward the Valuing Museums project. Other issues discussed included the DCMS Consultation document Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life, to which NMDC will be responding; plans to facilitate further research regarding works of art in national museum collections with uncertain provenance 1933-45 that are currently listed on the NMDC website; and NMDC assistance to develop the proposal for the Five Rings Exhibition as part of the Cultural Programme for the London 2012 Olympic Bid.

National Museums and Historical Research

NMDC is working with the Royal Historical Society (RHS) on plans for this year's Gerald Aylmer Seminar, which will focus on the role of national museums, libraries and archives vis-a-vis historical research. The Gerald Aylmer seminar is convened jointly by the RHS and the National Archives to consider issue of interest to both historians and archivists. The seminar will be held at the Imperial War Museum on 6th October 2005. We are keen to hear from colleagues in national museums who would be interested in helping to develop the programme. For more information please contact Claire Henry, NMDC's Research & Communication Manager (chenry@iwm.org.uk)

New Director for Sir John Soane's Museum

The Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum have appointed Mr Tim Knox, as the next Director of the Museum. He succeeds Mrs Margaret Richardson who will be retiring on 30 April. The NMDC looks forward to welcoming him as a member in May.

Tim will join the Soane Museum from his current position as Head Curator of the National Trust, where he directs the research, care and presentation of the 450 historic properties in its care. He was one of the major champions for the Trust's recent acquisition of Tyntesfield, that staggering Gothic Revival country house near Bristol with all its extraordinary contents. He was also deeply involved in such diverse NT projects as the restoration of Stowe Landscape Gardens, the acquisition of The Workhouse, a grim early nineteenth-century 'house of industry' at Southwell, Nottinghamshire, and the rescue of the Darnley Mausoleum in Cobham Park, Kent. In recent years he has spearheaded efforts to retain historic collections in National Trust houses. He was Chairman of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust between 2000 and 2004, and is a Trustee of the Spitalfields Trust. He is a member of the Government's Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art, and regularly writes and lectures on art, architecture and the history of collecting. Tim Knox lives in Stepney in the East End of London, where he has restored from dereliction an eighteenth-century merchant's house as a setting for his eclectic collections of art and natural history.

Members News

A Vision for Exhibition Road: A space for the New Century

Architects Dixon Jones have unveiled plans to transform the Exhibition Road area in London, improving pedestrian access to the cluster of cultural institutions found there, which include the V&A, NHM and Science Museum.

The project will 'restore pedestrian priority to the street' by eliminating barriers, bollards and dropped kerbs and introducing more crossing areas. It is intended that the improved street design will reduce the speed of traffic to 20 m.p.h. The South Kensington Tunnel that connects the tube station to the museums will be refurbished, with travelators installed to provide access to street level.

Transport for London has allocated £750,000 towards design costs for the project that is being led by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, partnered by the City of Westminster and the Mayor of London. It is one of the first of ten pilot projects in the Mayor's '100 Public Spaces' initiative, which aims to upgrade 100 public spaces in London over the next 5 years.

A public consultation is scheduled to take place in April and May 2005. Following that, implementation is scheduled for 2006 with completion in 2009. Further information about the project is available at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea website at :

www.rbkc.gov.uk/Environmental/Services/general/ex_roadintro.asp

Divided World: Connected World

Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon carried out the official turf-cutting ceremony on 24 February for the £13m purpose-built centre to house a National Cold War exhibition at the Royal Air Force Museum. The new landmark building, which is funded by HLF, Advantage West Midlands, ERDF and the MOD among others, will be in the form of two exhibition triangles divided by a central walkway - representing a world divided by ideology - under the theme of Divided World: Connected World. A Grand Opening of the new building is scheduled for the end of 2006. For Further information go to:

www.rafmuseum.org.uk/cosford/aboutus/development-project.cfm

Redevelopment at the Royal Museum

Preparatory work for 'the Masterplan: the Royal Museum Project'- the 15 year programme of renewal and redevelopment to open up access to the National Museum of Scotland's Royal Museum- is now under way.

Essential building improvements in the East Wing will mean some Gallery closures. The contents of the Galleries on Evolution, Mammals, Fish, Geology, Minerals and Gems will move to NMS' major store, the Granton Centre. Work has also started at the new interactive science and technology gallery, which will open in March 2006 thanks to a generous donation from the ReDiscover Fund. Meanwhile, in the Museum of Scotland, the Twentieth Century gallery is closed as Discovery Centres for children and new displays on Modern Scotland are developed. Both are due to open in autumn this year. This work will pave the way for the implementation of the main phase of the Masterplan.

www.nms.ac.uk/royal/index.asp

Churchill Museum Open to the Public

The IWM's Churchill Museum at the Cabinet War Rooms was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 10 February. At the opening, the Queen met many veterans who had served under Churchill, including Mrs Elizabeth Nel, Churchill's only surviving wartime secretary. Her Majesty paid tribute to his leadership during the war, saying that his 'determination and example gave us all the hope, the courage and the confidence to 'tread safely into the unknown'".

The Museum combines cutting edge technology with poignant artefacts from his life, including one of his custom made red velvet siren suits that his family affectionately nicknamed 'rompers'. The centrepiece of the Museum is the Lifeline, an enormous computer interactive that allows visitors to browse 'files' of fascinating information about each day of Churchill's life, which include photographs, video clips and facsimiles of original documents as well as some arresting surprises. The Museum is open daily from 9.30am to 6pm and admission includes access to both the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms.

For further information visit <http://churchillmuseum.iwm.org.uk>

National Historic Ships Unit to be launched at National Maritime Museum

Heritage Minister Andrew Macintosh announced last month the creation of a National Historic Ships Unit. The Unit will advise the government on policy and fundraising priorities for historic ships. It will coordinate work within the sector and maintain an up-to-date register of the historic fleet. Based at the National Maritime Museum the Unit will be established in interim form in 2005/2006 with £100,000 government funding. In 2006/2007 this will increase to £170,000 with a further £80,000 held by DCMS for a challenge fund to support research, publications, training and similar activities relating to the preservation of historic vessels. The Heritage Lottery Fund will continue to be the main source of funding for historic ships, but the new Unit will provide a valuable source of advice when considering bids from ships in the historic fleet.

Roy Clare said that the NMM welcomed the announcement of the new Unit and that 'The Museum looks forward to sustaining its support for the heritage fleet and assisting directly with the process of establishing the Unit in Greenwich under an independent board'.

For further information go to:

www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms014_05.htm

British Museum launches new design for COMPASS

The British Museum has launched a new design for their collections online site, COMPASS at www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass.

Improvements include: a new 'look and feel' with a cleaner and fresher design; a new home page, with more links and more points of access to objects; a new 'Tours' page that follows the geographical zoning of the museum itself; and a new index search.

The popularity of the COMPASS site has increased significantly since it was launched in 2002. Last year total page views for the site were over 18 million. Further proposed changes to the site in 2005 should mean that it is picked up more easily by search engines, hopefully increasing its visibility to new users even more.

National Museums Liverpool Funding Success

NML has secured crucial funding to develop plans for the new Museum of Liverpool. The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme has given support to the project by ring-fencing £2.5m to contribute to the pre-development of the scheme and £5m for the building. This triggers a further £2.5 towards pre-development costs from the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

Danish Architects 3XN have been appointed to work up design ideas for a landmark building for the Mann Island site on Liverpool's waterfront. By June the project will have been developed to RIBA stage D, ready to apply for further funding. Interviews for an exhibition master planner are being held in the coming weeks.

The Museum will draw on all of NML's collection telling a range of stories of national and international significance from the perspective of the people of Liverpool. Due to be open in 2008 when Liverpool is the European Capital of Culture David Fleming says the Museum "will make the point that Liverpool is a modern, confident and successful 21st century city, culturally on a par with any other city in Europe".

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

HLF Award £17.7m to NLS for John Murray Archive

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the National Library of Scotland £17.7 million towards their bid to buy the John Murray Archive.

The archive - containing more than 150,000 items- includes private letters, manuscripts and other correspondence from Jane Austen, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, David Livingstone, Edith Wharton and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, among others.

Although valued at £45 million the archive has been offered to the Library at a reduced price of £31.2m. With the Scottish Executive contributing £6.5 initially, followed by a further £1.8m, this leaves the balance of £6.5 million as the Library's own fundraising target.

More information about the bid is available on the NLS website at:

www.nls.uk/news/index.html

Their Past Your Future

The 'Their Past Your Future' World War II exhibition, organised by the Imperial War Museum, has gone on tour. The aim of the exhibition is to educate as many young people as possible about the conflict and its impact across the world. The roadshow begins in eight UK cities at venues including town halls and shopping centres. In the next year the exhibition will travel to 70 cities across the UK and is expected to attract up to three million people. For further details visit:

www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk

LMLAG and NMM Conference

The National Maritime Museum is hosting a conference jointly organised by NMM and the London Museum Librarians and Archivists Group (LMLAG) on April 14 on cross-domain working to achieve more effective interaction with collections. The conference will be led by a series of speakers from National Museums. Chris Batt, Chief Executive, MLA will be giving the keynote address. All are welcome. For more details see:

www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.15000

Embedding Diversity in Galleries at the National Gallery

The National Gallery is hosting the seminar 'Embedding Diversity in Galleries' on 22 March. Drawing on research undertaken by engage as part of the ESF-funded Creative Renewal programme, the seminar will explore practical ways in which galleries and the arts sector can implement change, building on engage's previous 'Diversity and Citizenship' and 'Whose Diversity?' events. A booking form and further information are available at:

www.engage.org/downloads/embedding.pdf

Record pre-show sales for Tate Exhibition

More than 28,300 people booked tickets for Tate Britain's Turner Whistler Monet exhibition. The exhibition, featuring 100 paintings, watercolours, prints and pastels, traces for the first time the artistic dialogue between the three artists. Despite the strong advance bookings, visitors can purchase tickets at Tate Britain on the day - a minimum of 1600 tickets per day will be available at the gallery. The exhibition continues to 15 May.

www.tate.org.uk

BM Hosting Conference on new History GCSE

The British Museum is hosting a one-day conference on 21 March on the new history GCSE being developed by OCR for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The new qualification will link history to related vocational areas of learning such as heritage, museums, galleries, sites, archaeology, tourism, media and law. Up to fifty schools and colleges will be recruited for a pilot starting in September.

The conference, organised by GEM and OCR, will provide information about the pilot to interested parties across the sector and the opportunity to explore ways in which pilot schools and colleges might be supported in developing materials and activities.

Further information and an application form are available on the GEM website at:

www.gem.org.uk

Current Issues

Reform of the Honours System

The Government has published a Command Paper 'Reform of the Honours System', that sets out changes to the current system. A new system of eight honours committees will be introduced with non-civil servants in the chair, which will include committees for Arts and Media, Education and Community, voluntary and local service. The Government is inviting people with a wide range of experience and backgrounds to apply for posts on the selection committees. A full copy of the paper can be downloaded from:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ceremonial

Economic Impact of Science Centres

A report has been published on: 'Assessing the Economic Impact of Science Centres on Their Local Communities' as part of an international study funded by the Association of Science-Technology Centres along with thirteen individual Science Centres. The study presents information on science museums as well as centres, including the Natural History Museum, London. Details of the study and a copy of the report can be downloaded from:

www.aspacnet.org/apec/history.html

Scottish Executive's Charities and Trustee Investment Bill Amended

Last month's newsletter reported that the Scottish Executive's Charities and Trustee Investment bill before parliament at Holyrood may result in the National Museums of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland losing their charitable status. The Executive has now agreed to amend the legislation specifically to enable charitable status to be retained by these institutions and by the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Information about the bill can be viewed at:
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/billsInProgress/charities.htm>

AHRB Seminar on Museums and Higher Education Institutions

The AHRB held a research strategy seminar on 21 February entitled 'Researchers and the cultural sector: Exploring the relationship between researchers in the HEIs and museums galleries and heritage organisations'. The event attracted professionals from all sectors and provided an opportunity to discuss ways in which relationships between the sectors could be developed. The speakers included Professor Dawn Ades FBA, director of the AHRB Research Centre for the Studies of Surrealism and its Legacies, Dr Carolyn Sargentson, Head of Research at the V&A, Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage and Ms Sara Selwood cultural analyst based at the University of Westminster and editor of the journal Cultural Trends.

Further to this meeting and subject to the outcome of the spending review, the AHRB will develop a research strategy for museums and galleries and produce a consultative document on the matter leading to a plan of action to develop the relationship between museums, galleries and heritage organisations and HEIs.

n.b. The Arts and Humanities Research Board is expected to become the Arts and Humanities Research Council on 1 April 2005. The new AHRC will be on an equal footing with other research councils when funding allocations are made and when research policy is developed.

For further information go to: www.ahrc.ac.uk

Education Outside the Classroom Report

The Education and Skills Select Committee has published 'Education Outside the Classroom', following an inquiry into the educational value of school trips. The report recommends that DfES set up a structure to champion education outside the classroom at all levels and that a dedicated team of officials should have responsibility for outdoor learning across curriculum areas. The report also recommends that DfES review the place of outdoor learning in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes. It proposes that each school should have an Education Visit Co-ordinator to act as the local champion for outdoor learning.

Further to the report Ruth Kelly has said that the Government will work with partners from across the outdoor learning sector to produce a Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom to be launched in the new school year. The full report can be downloaded from:
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmmeduski/120/12002.htm

Frayling Gives Speech on Arts and Public Value

Sir Christopher Frayling gave a speech to the Royal Society of the Arts on the evening of 16 February. In his speech, entitled 'The only trustworthy book: arts and public value', Sir Christopher criticised the media for being 'out of step' with public support for contemporary art during what he described as a 'Golden Age' for the Arts in England. He described how the National Lottery Act of 1993 'threw a lifeline' to the historically underfunded sector, but voiced his concern and disappointment following the last spending review resulting in 'a cash standstill settlement over three years'. Frayling cited the increasing length of the notification of settlement letters from the Secretary of State as symptomatic of the increasingly prescriptive nature of DCMS: a process that he described as a 'shortening of the arms-length principle'.

The full speech can be downloaded from the Arts Council website at:
www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/news/artsandpublicvaluesdoc_phpugtHdM.doc

Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society

The National Audit Office published a paper last December on 'Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society'. The paper looks across Whitehall at the way in which government bodies are taking steps to better tailor their services to the needs of diverse groups. It includes a case study that focuses on the National Gallery's 'Art Through Worlds' programme, which is designed to make the NG's collection more accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

Further details and a copy of the paper can be downloaded from: www.nao.org.uk/pn/04-05/040519.htm

Guide to Quangos Published

The Centre for Policy Studies and the Economic Research Council have published a document listing details of the UK's Executive NDPBs. 'The Essential Guide to British Quangos 2005' is critical of the duplication of effort that takes place among these organisations. The publication contains a list of what they believe to be 'the 9 most useless quangos', which includes Investors in People UK (IIP) and is topped by the British Potato Council (BPC).

The report can be downloaded at: www.cps.org.uk/pdf/pub/402.pdf.

Creative Economy Conference

A conference is to be held on the 5 - 7 October, that will bring together industry, consumers, creators and policy makers from across Europe to explore ways of placing creativity at the heart of their economies and will highlight the necessity of protecting Europe's intellectual property. The Creative Economy Conference will be held under the auspices of the UK's EU Presidency and has the support of the European Commission. The conference will be co-hosted in London by the British Copyright Council (BCC) and the British Screen Advisory Council (BSAC) on behalf of the creative and audiovisual industries in the UK. Tessa Jowell and Patricia Hewitt have given Government backing to the conference.

Their comments can be viewed at: www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms015_05.htm

New guidelines on Christian Human Remains

English Heritage and the Church of England have published jointly a new set of guidelines which set out, for the first time in England, standards for the treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds.

Of particular relevance to museums, Annexe S7 on longer term access and storage recommends minimum staffing requirements for 'holding institutions', dedicated storage areas for human remains and periodic review, in conjunction with an external advisory board, of the status of all collections, allowing the case for reinternment or retention for further scientific study to be reconsidered. Following the Royal Assent of the Human Tissue act last year, DCMS are currently working on a code of practice for the treatment, care and safekeeping of human remains in English Museums.

A copy of the EH and CoE guidance can be downloaded from the EH website at: www.english-heritage.org.uk/filestore/publications/pdf/free/16602_humanremains1.pdf

HLF give Stage 1 Pass for Tank Museum project

The Tank Museum (www.tankmuseum.co.uk) has been successful in its Stage 1 Heritage Lottery fund bid for £8.5m. The bid is part of the Museum's 'Close Quarters' development scheme that will improve interpretation and learning facilities and provide a more spacious and welcoming building with room to understand and enjoy the scale and scope of the collections. The scheme will also increase live action and tank displays throughout the year. The 'new' Tank Museum is scheduled to open its doors in March 2009.

AHRB Core Funding Scheme for University Museums and Galleries.

The new guidelines and application forms for the Core funding scheme for University and Museum Galleries are now available at:

www.ahrb.ac.uk/ahrb/website/apply/mgc/core_funding.asp

The deadline for applications is 6 May 2005.

Hugo Swire announces Conservative Plans for the Arts

Shadow Arts Minister, Hugo Swire, outlined the Conservative approach to the arts in a speech to the Association of British Orchestras' Annual Conference in Birmingham on 11 February. Swire stated three main principles behind the policy that firstly, the role of the State must be strictly limited because state intervention beyond funding 'erodes a free society', secondly culture cannot be governed by targets or measured by statistics so the Conservative government would not issue any targets and thirdly, the Conservatives would not be ashamed of supporting arts for art's sake' and, as Arts Minister, Swire would trust Art Sector professionals to 'get on with the job (they) so effectively do'.

Changes under a Conservative government would include a 'leaner, more efficient Arts Council, one that dispenses funding with minimal interference and minimal bureaucracy': a reduction in the number of staff and 'bureaucratic functions' within DCMS and the abolition of schemes, including *Culture Online* and *Creative Partnerships*, deemed to represent an inefficient use of Taxpayers money. Swire hinted that the £70m earmarked for the Creative Partnerships project would be used instead to fund a Museums Association scheme to send every school child on an educational visit, free, at least once a year.

Swire also said that the Conservatives would announce a policy on the National Lottery over the next few weeks that would include a plan to ensure that major capital projects were properly endowed.

Britain Welcomes China

Following China's announcement last month that the UK was to be awarded 'Approved Destination Status (ADS)', VisitBritain has announced a new marketing campaign 'Britain Welcomes China' to encourage people from China to visit Britain. Tessa Jowell has welcomed the campaign saying "We aim to double the value of inbound tourism from China to at least £200 million by 2010 and again to over half a billion by 2020. That could mean upwards of 200,000 visitors from China in 2010 and the potential for China to be in Britain's top ten inbound tourism markets by 2020".

For further information about the implications of ADS go to the Visit Britain Website at: www3.visitbritain.com/corporate/links/visitbritain/press.htm

Visits to Leading Visitor Attractions 2004

National Museums and Galleries make up 7 of the top 10 most visited attractions in a list of figures for 2004 published by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA). The National Gallery came top of the Nationals with 4,959,946 visitors, up 13.75% from the previous year. NG was exceeded only by Blackpool Pleasure Beach that had 6,200,000 visitors but no increase from the previous year.

To see the full list of results go to www.alva.org.uk/visitor_statistics.

Record Number of Inbound Tourists

VisitBritain have reported 'the best ever-recorded year for inbound visits'. The number has exceeded expectations by over 1.2 million, reaching 27.5 million visits, which is an eleven per cent increase on 2003, and seven per cent rise on the previous record in 1998.

For more details go to www3.visitbritain.com/corporate/links/visitbritain/press.htm.

How the Olympic Bid is Transforming London

As part of the London 2012 campaign English Heritage and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) have published a document that highlights 40 existing and proposed new developments that will radically alter the public face of London. The proposals in 'Capital Spaces' include plans for Exhibition Road, South Kensington and Greenwich Park.

A copy of the document can be downloaded from: www.english-heritage.org.uk/FileStore/publications/pdf/CapitalSpaces/pdf.

UK Museum Training for South African Curators

Up to 30 training places at UK museums are to be offered to young South African curators. The places - each of up to six months and costing £300,000 over the next three years - will be paid for by DCMS, under a unique partnership with the South African Department of Arts and Culture. The British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Museum of London and the Horniman Museum have already agreed to provide placements.

www.culture.gov.uk

Courtauld Appeal to find Van Gogh's Stolen Print

The Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery has launched an appeal to find a Japanese print stolen from the Gallery sometime before November 1981. The image *Geishas in a Landscape* was one of many that Van Gogh used to decorate the walls of his studio. It has particular significance because it appears in the background of his famous painting *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*, which is part of the Courtauld's collection. It is thought that an art collector may have acquired the print without realising its provenance and it is hoped that this campaign may alert them to it. A photograph of the stolen print will be displayed at the Gallery alongside Van Gogh's self-portrait until 31 March. www.courtauld.ac.uk/sub_index/news/japanese-print.html

Student Journalist Bursaries

The MLA has announced a new scheme to encourage young journalists to write about regional museums. The Renaissance Student Journalism Network is a partnership between journalists, museum staff, the 24 Hour Museum and MLA. The network provides 10 student journalist across the country with £500 bursaries to work one day a week for six months generating stories and features about regional museums to be published on the 24 Hour Museum's website. The £20,000 project is being funded under Renaissance. www.mla.gov.uk/

Culture at the Heart of Regeneration

DCMS has published a Summary of Responses to the 'Culture at the Heart of Regeneration' consultation document of 30 June 2004. Respondents include the National Archives, National Museums Liverpool, the National Museum of Science and Industry and the British Library. According to the report, the general response was positive and respondents supported DCMS taking a lead in the promotion of culture in regeneration projects.

A full delivery plan will follow that will analyse the responses in order to inform the Department's next steps.

The Summary of Responses can be downloaded at: www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2005/cthr_summary_resp.htm

Accessible web page awards

The closing date for this year's nominations for the Jodi Mattes Webaccessibility Award is Friday 11th March 2005.

The Award was established in 2003 to celebrate the most accessible museum, gallery and heritage website. The National Maritime Museum (www.nmm.ac.uk) has won the award previously and the Tate Modern imap website (www.tate.org.uk/imap) has been commended for innovation in making content accessible to disabled people.

Further information and a nomination form can be downloaded from:

www.mla.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00access_03.asp#6

Local Authorities as Cultural Pathfinders

Thirteen local authorities have been chosen by the Government to be Cultural Pathfinders, showing how culture and sport can help deliver Government priorities across public life. In this joint initiative with the Local Government Association (LGA) and DCMS the thirteen councils, drawn from the eighty-eight who applied, will be pathfinders for two years.

For further information go to:

www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms025_05.htm

Artifact User Consultation

Artifact, the free guide to the best of the web in the arts and creative industries (www.artifact.ac.uk) is conducting a user consultation to inform improvements to the site. If you would like to participate go to:

<http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~krlmeyer/artifact-ttt.htm>

Curiosity and Imagination Annual Conference 2005

The annual conference for Curiosity & Imagination, the national network for children's hands-on learning, will be held at Robinson College, Cambridge on 14 and 15 July. The theme is 'Releasing children's creativity through hands-on learning' and the conference is aimed at anyone involved in providing hands-on learning experiences for children. For further details email jayne.springer@4Children.org.uk. To join the free Curiosity & Imagination network, visit www.curiosityandimagination.org.uk/join_us.asp.

Trustee Appointments

The Prime Minister has appointed Dr Tristram Hunt and Matthew Saunders Esq MBE as Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund each for a term of three years. Dr Derek Langslow has been re-appointed as a Trustee of NHMF, also for three years from 18 February 2005.

The PM has re-appointed Ranjit Sondhi as a Trustee of the National Gallery for a period of four years from 4 February 2005.

Sir John Guinness and Mrs Gilly Drummond DL have been appointed as Trustees of the National Maritime Museum for four years.

International Issues

Dallas Museum Windfall

Dallas Museum have announced an anonymous \$32 million endowment gift to support acquisitions that has been added to a private foundation exclusively dedicated to the enrichment of their collection. This brings the total amount of acquisition funds available to the Museum to \$70 million. The Museum has also announced the unprecedented private donation of 800 works of art from three collections.

<http://dmaws.dallasmuseumofart.org>

New Director for RMN

Thomas Grenon has been appointed by the French Culture Minister as Administrateur général of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux (www.rmnm.fr). He was previously Director Général of la Cité des Science et de l'Industrie.

According to a report in *The Arts Newspaper*, he will have to galvanise the RMN's 1,200 employees after months of uncertainty about the organisation's future. The paper also reports that since 2003 the RMN has ceded many of its responsibilities to individual museums such as the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay, which now organise their own exhibitions and print their own catalogues

Japan Stages 'Most Visited' Exhibition of 2004.

A Japanese exhibition 'Treasures of a Sacred Mountain' has topped *The Arts Newspaper's* annual ranking of exhibition attendance figures. The international survey, that ranks exhibitions according to daily attendance, has shown that 241 shows attracted more than 1000 visitors a day, a 21% rise on 2003.

Data showing the number of top 100 shows in each city over the last three years has indicated a steady decline in London, New York and Washington and an increase in Paris and Tokyo.

The Edward Hopper exhibition at the Tate Modern was the eleventh most visited internationally and the most visited in the UK with an average of 4,215 visitors daily making a total of 429,909 for the whole show.

The full results of the survey can be downloaded from:

www.theartnewspaper.com/attfig.pdf

Bush 2006 Budget Proposal

President Bush has proposed level funding for the Arts in the 2006 budget according to a recent article in *The Art Newspaper*. The National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, the government's grant-making agencies for culture, will receive the same funding \$138 million and \$121 million respectively. The Smithsonian Institution would get a total of \$615 million, representing \$91 million facilities capital budget for renovations and reconstruction and \$524 million for salaries and expenses.

The proposed budget will be debated in Congress before a final spending bill is passed.

Details of the budget proposal can be viewed at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

Parliamentary Report

Compensation for Free Entry

There were questions in Parliament last week from Sir Patrick Cormack and Hugo Swire about insufficient free admission compensatory payments for the Nationals and calling for trustees of museums to have the freedom to charge visitors if they so wished. Tessa Jowell strongly refuted the claim citing an increase in visitor figures of 75 percent as a result of free entry.

Education Outside the Classroom

Further to the publication of 'Education Outside the Classroom', Jeff Ennis MP- asked how the Department would help to develop the role of educational visit coordinators in tandem with regional museum curators. Estelle Morris responded saying that if schools thought it appropriate to appoint such a staff member the Department would wish to help them through their close relationship with the MLA.

Droit de Suite

Lord Freyberg asked her Majesty's Government when they plan to issue a formal consultation document and draft statutory instrument to prepare for the introduction of Droit de Suite on 1 January 2005 and whether the Patent Office's website would be the only means used to inform interested parties in the change of legislation. Lord Sainsbury of Turville responded, saying that the Government plan to issue the consultation document and draft statutory instrument in the next few days and that the Patent Office will continue to work closely with the British Art Market Federation and the Design and Artists Copyright Society and will co-ordinate information for their constituent members and others with them.

Forthcoming Meetings

National Museum Directors' Conference

Friday 8 April 2005
Friday 8 July 2005
Friday 9 December 2005

NMDC Executive Committee

Thursday 26 May 2005
Friday 16 September 2005

Joint Advocacy Committee

Monday 11 April 2005

All the above meetings begin at 11am and take place at the Imperial War Museum

UK Affairs Committee

Monday 14 March 2005, 12 noon, Liverpool Museum

HR Forum

Friday 04 March 2005, 1pm, MLA London

Learning and Access Committee

Tuesday 17 May, 2pm, National Portrait Gallery

PR Group

Friday 22 April, 11.30 am, Cabinet War Rooms

**If you have any comments on the NMDC Newsletter or would like to contribute to a future edition, please contact Claire Henry
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