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

NMDC News

Appeal for Government Funding for Culture to be Maintained

As part of a campaign organised by NMDC ahead of the comprehensive spending review, artists, designers, architects and others prominent in the cultural sector have written a letter to Gordon Brown which appeared in the London Evening Standard. The letter highlights the relationship between Britain's success in the creative industries and the health of the cultural sector as a whole, which has flourished during a decade of higher funding, and calls for core funding from the Government to be maintained at least at present levels.

The letter, signed by Ozwald Boateng, Melvyn Bragg, Sir James Dyson, Tracey Emin, Lord Foster of Thames Bank, Antony Gormley, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Anish Kapoor, Lord May, Alexander McQueen, Sir Paul Smith and Dame Vivienne Westwood can be read at:

www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23412718-details/Read+the+letter+here/article.do

In the same publication Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, wrote that "the arts are an extraordinarily effective public investment". He argued that "museums and galleries play a part in improving society, encouraging wider engagement and learning" and that cultural organisations can achieve more, but only with continued investment which will allow them to plan.

www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23412770-details/%22Modest+investment+producing+extraordinary+success%22/article.do

The Evening Standard editorial on the subject can be read at:

www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23412719-details/Keep+backing+London%27s+arts/article.do

There have been a number of related articles in the press ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. In the Guardian, Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate, wrote:

"We have seen 10 years of spectacular achievement by artists and writers and steady progress in making their work available to new audiences. It would be tragic if all this were to be threatened, even squandered, for want of the modest sum that it would take to maintain the real value of current support for culture and the arts". arts.guardian.co.uk/art/visualart/story/0,,2166413,00.html

In the Observer, Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, expressed concern that reduced funding in future would threaten the international pre-eminence of the Library. She concluded:

"In the coming century, UK plc will prosper according to its willingness to invest in world-class research and information resources. That the nation already has such a successful institution in the British Library and at a cost to the taxpayer equivalent to a single breakfast to go is a competitive advantage worth nurturing and sustaining." books.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2175282,00.html

NMDC response to HM Treasury Gift Aid Consultation

The National Museum Directors' Conference has responded to the Treasury consultation on Gift Aid. The response points out that national museums cannot claim Gift Aid on all donations, as a significant proportion of donors are not UK tax payers, and that they could use Gift Aid more successfully to build relationships with donors if the level of benefits that can be offered to donors were less restrictive.

The response makes recommendations that would enable museums to use Gift Aid more effectively and suggests that HM Treasury consider extending tax incentives to gifts of objects, as a next step in developing the ability of museums to encourage giving.

The Treasury gift aid consultation is at:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_spending_reporting/charity_third_sector_finance/psr_charity_thirdsector_giftaid.cfm

The NMDC response is at: www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/gift_aid_consultation.html

Members' News

Somme Theatre Wins National Lottery Award

The Imperial War Museum project *Somme Theatre* won the Best Heritage Project at the 2007 National Lottery Awards. Voted for by the public, the awards recognise the difference that Lottery-funded projects make to local communities and celebrate the achievements of the people behind them.

The Old Vic Theatre and The Imperial War Museum in London created the *Somme Theatre* project to raise awareness of the battle and educate people about the events of the First World War. The project brought together over 100 volunteers from secondary schools and community groups and staged a play about the Battle, *On The Middle Day*, which was seen by 1,500 people who would not normally go to the theatre. The grant also funded the creation of a resource pack, mailed free to 5,000 schools.

www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/mediacentre/item/228/the-national-lottery-awards

TopLots Heritage Auction

Museums, historic houses and heritage organisations are offering TopLots - privileged access, exclusive experiences, unusual corporate events and family outings - for auction on eBay for three weeks from 1 October. Toplots Heritage Auction is organised in by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and Development Partners in conjunction with VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland. It aims to generate funds for participating organisations, which will receive 80% of the proceeds, and AIM, which will get 20%.

TopLots offered by NMDC member organisations include:

- A tour of *The Walker Art Gallery* with the Chairman of National Museums Liverpool, Loyd Grossman
- Learning sword fighting at the *Royal Armouries* in Leeds with the man who taught the Monty Python team or spending a day with a curator;
- Private tours of the *Natural History Museum's* mineralogy treasures and wet & dry Zoology collection;
- Firing up and riding the footplate of the Flying Scotsman at the *National Railway Museum*;
- A chance to be a Roman soldier at Arbeia Roman Fort or to spend a day as a curator at Shipley Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums.

To view the lots and current bids visit: www.toplots.co.uk

Record Attendances at Tate

Tate has announced its highest ever attendance figures: 7.7 million visits to Tate's four galleries between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007 and 11 million unique users on its website. Detailed figures are available in Tate's official report which has been published annually for the first time. During this period:

- 309 works were acquired for the Collection via purchase or bequest, at a total value of £14.8 million.
- Turner's *The Blue Rigi, Sunrise* was saved for the nation as the result of a campaign led by The Art Fund and supported by the public, Tate Members and The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).
- Tate launched *Tate Next Generation*, the vision for Tate to 2015, which recognises the need for Tate to respond to the needs of new audiences and art forms and to embrace opportunities afforded by advances in technology. www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2007/11771.htm

Tate Liverpool Awarded Charter Mark

Tate Liverpool has been awarded the Charter Mark, a national standard for excellence in customer service in public sector organisations. An independent assessment examined customer service in six areas: setting standards; engaging customers; accessibility and choice; development and improvement; effective use of resources; and improving opportunities in the community. The Gallery was highly-commended for meeting high standards in all areas and information and visitor service assistants were praised for the way in which they engage visitors with the art on display.

www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2007/11806.htm

National Archives Win Conservation Award

The National Archives, Kew won the Digital Preservation Award for the *Active preservation at the National Archives: PRONOM and DROID* project at the Conservation Awards 2007.

The Collections Care Award went to Durham University Library for a project to train and advise 50 organisations in the north east to enable them to preserve precious documents, books and manuscripts. The Award for Conservation went to Tuula Pardoe of the Scottish Conservation Studio and Sue Payne, curator at Perth Museum, for the preservation of a 400 year old silk doublet.

Rachel Morrison and The Courtauld Institute of Art won Student Conservator of the Year for research into cleaning unvarnished paintings and Professor Norman Tennent and Dr James Nobbs won the Anna Plowden Award for inventing a computerised technique to improve colour-matching in ceramic conservation. [www.mla.gov.uk/website/news/press_releases/Conservation awards 2007](http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/news/press_releases/Conservation_awards_2007)

British Library Strengthens Links with the National Library of South Africa

Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, attended the World Library and Information Congress in South Africa, where she met the South African Minister of Arts and Culture and visited the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) to build on and advance collaboration between the two institutions. The South African Government will invest more than 1 billion Rand in community libraries over the next three years and is constructing a new NLSA building.

Lynne also met Oswald Cupido, a craft bookbinder who worked with British Library conservators during a placement in 2004. Since his return, Oswald has passed on his training to 30 conservators in Africa. The British Library is finalising arrangements for a three-month internship in 2008 under the Department for Culture, Media and Sport South Africa Curator Training Scheme. www.bl.uk

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales Centenary Conference

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales will conclude its centenary celebrations by hosting an international Centenary Conference. *National Museums and Small Nations* will examine the contribution of museums in creating and maintaining national identities and the role that they have played in the development of national consciousness and citizenship, particularly in small and emerging nations. The conference is part of Amgueddfa Cymru's aim to create a world-class museum of learning and to become known world wide as a place for debate and exchange of ideas.

6-7 December 2007 National Museum Cardiff

www.museumwales.ac.uk

Search for Screen Heritage

The National Media Museum, in partnership with the British Universities Film and Video Council and Screen Archive South East, is carrying out a survey to uncover artefacts relating to film, television and screen-related media. An online survey is open to UK collections with artefacts relating to the moving image and screen-related media which may be accessible to the public or researchers. The information gathered will be used to create the first online database of moving image objects in UK collections. The survey is at: screenheritage.wordpress.com and will run until **30 November 2007**.

National Galleries of Scotland Wins Arts & Business Scottish Awards 2007

The National Galleries of Scotland won the Arts, Business & Employees category in the 2007 Arts & Business Scottish Awards for *ENERGY: North Sea Portraits*, a partnership between the National Galleries of Scotland, TOTAL E&P UK and the artist Fionna Carlisle. The project engaged oil industry employees and local communities to create a lasting legacy of the industry. The Arts, Business & Employees award recognises a successful partnership that integrates the arts into employee development, while stimulating a more creative environment. www.aandb.org.uk/scotland/

National Museums in Line for 2007 Regional Tourism Awards

National Museums have been short listed for the Visit London Awards 2007. The National Maritime Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum have been short listed for Visitor Attraction of the Year; The Museum of London's exhibition *Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees* for Best Celebration of Cultural Diversity; National Maritime Museum for the Sustainable Tourism Award; and the National Portrait Gallery and Tate Modern for the Marketing/PR Campaign of the Year.

The annual awards highlight the best accommodation, attractions and cultural events in London and are judged by industry experts. Winners will be announced on 29 November. visitlondon.com/awards

Tyne and Wear Museums' Discovery Museum won Tourism NorthEast's new Tourism for All Award 2007 and was runner up for the Visitor Attraction of the Year 2007. Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon, County Durham, was runner up for the Sustainable Tourism Award.

www.tourismnortheast.co.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=content.detail&contentid=346§ionid=71

The Great Rebellion Display at the Royal Armouries

The Great Rebellion, a new display in the War Gallery at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds, has been created to mark the 150th anniversary of the Indian uprisings against British rule in 1857, also known as 'The Indian Mutiny'. The Royal Armouries has involved representatives from different communities in the production of the new display, so that the exhibition addresses not only the weapons and battles, but also the causes and results of the conflict. www.royalarmouries.org/extsite/view.jsp?sectionId=3547

Gift Aid Helps National Portrait Gallery to Acquire Hockney Painting

A recent self-portrait by David Hockney has been bought by the National Portrait Gallery, using funds raised last year through its 150th Anniversary Gala and gift aid donations from tickets sold for the David Hockney Portraits exhibition. The self-portrait will go on display from 11 October alongside a selection of recent acquisitions. www.npg.org.uk/live/prelhockneyacquisition.asp

Current Issues

Consultation on Publication of Information about Cultural Objects on Loan

Part 6 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 provides immunity from seizure for objects that are loaned from overseas to temporary exhibitions in approved museums or galleries in the UK. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is seeking comments on the content of draft regulations for museums on the publication of information about cultural objects they intend to borrow from abroad for temporary exhibitions and which will be immune from seizure under the Act.

The consultation also invites views from museums and galleries, the art trade and others who have an interest in this issue, on how far in advance museums should be required to publish information about such objects. The deadline for responses is: **21 December 2007**.

The consultation document can be viewed at:

www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Consultations/2007_current_consultations/draftregs_immunityfromseizure.htm

New Chief Executive of Arts Council England

Alan Davey has been appointed Chief Executive of Arts Council England, succeeding Peter Hewitt who has been in the post for ten years.

Alan, who is currently Director of Culture at the DCMS, will take up his new appointment in early 2008. He was previously head of the arts division at DCMS and worked at the then Department of National Heritage, where he was responsible for designing the National Lottery, and at the Department of Health, where he led the Modernising Division and was Secretary to the Royal Commission on Long Term Care. www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/press_detail.php?browse=recent&id=984

Measuring the Impact of Free Admission

In an article published in the journal *Cultural Trends*, Ben Cowell, Head of Museum Sponsorship at the DCMS, explores how government has measured the impact of its free admission policy, traces the history of the concept of free admission and sets out the background to the reintroduction of free admission to DCMS sponsored museums.

The article explores ways in which the impact of the policy can be measured, using data generated by the 23 performance indicators in DCMS funding agreements with museums. It outlines factors that need to be considered in assessing the impact of free admission, including the effect of new capital investment, and concludes by suggesting that further work is needed to isolate the precise impact of free admission, particularly on attracting new audiences to museums and galleries.

The article can be downloaded at: www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09548963.asp

Positive Activities for Young People

A £14.5m Government initiative will establish pilot projects in nine Local Authorities around the country to encourage disadvantaged young people to take part in out of school activities. 20,000 young people who are eligible for free school meals or are in care, will receive up to £40 per month to spend on activities of their choice, including trips to the theatre, sports, music, dance, drama and outdoor pursuits.

Evidence shows major benefits from participating in a wide range of out of school activities, but roughly 25% of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not take part. The pilots will test different ways to overcome financial barriers to participation and will run in Tower Hamlets, Camden, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Liverpool, Nottingham, Sunderland, Bolton and Lincolnshire until March 2009. www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2007_0163

£60 million London Youth Offer

The £60 million *London Youth Offer* aims to increase the range of services for teenagers, provide more support for parents and give young people new opportunities to gain skills and raise their aspirations. It is part of a package of measures from the Mayor of London and Government to address concerns about high levels of child poverty in the capital. The funding package will run over two years, £20 million will come from the London Development Agency and £40 million from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, part of places to go and things to do for teenagers, announced in the Youth strategy, *Aiming high for young people*. www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2007_0169

Heritage Lottery Fund Board Vacancies

The HLF/NHMF will have vacancies for a Chair and four Trustees to join the Board; and vacancies for Chair and Members to join the East of England, East Midlands, South East England and West Midlands regional Committees. Appointments will start in 2008. For further information visit:

www.hlf.org.uk/English/AboutUs/Vacancies/ or email decisionmakers.recruitment@hlf.org.uk

Cultural Olympiad Creative Programmers

Eight Creative Programmers have been appointed in England's regions to take forward plans for the Cultural Olympiad in the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Based in the Regional Cultural Consortia, the Creative Programmers will develop a package of innovative regional activities to help make a lasting difference and celebrate cultural life across the UK.

Northern Ireland has appointed a Cultural Programmer and there is an interim Creative Programmer in Wales. Scotland is considering its arrangements and London plans to put in place a framework for developing the Cultural Olympiad. www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2007/dcms109_07.htm

Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond

DCMS has published *Winning: A Tourism Strategy for 2012 and Beyond*, in conjunction with VisitBritain and Visit London. The report provides a blueprint to help the tourism industry prepare to welcome new visitors in the lead up to and beyond London 2012 and follows the publication of research showing that tourism benefits from the London 2012 Games are estimated to be worth up to £2.1bn.

The aims of the strategy for tourism include:

- engaging all UK businesses in a campaign aimed at domestic and overseas visitors starting in 2008;
- developing a skilled workforce providing better customer service;
- promoting the UK as a key location for international business visits and conferences; and
- improving sustainability by ensuring that environmental needs are central to tourism development.

The report can be found at: www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Tourism/tourism2012.htm

Foreign Visits to UK Up

According to statistics released by the Office for National Statistics, visits by overseas residents to the UK rose by 6%, from 31.2 million to 32.9 million, during the 12 months ending July 2007. Visits from residents of Europe increased 7% (to 23.7 million), North America remained broadly the same at 4.6 million and visits from other parts of the world rose 6% (to 4.6 million).

During May to July 2007 there were 8 million visits to the UK by overseas residents, a decrease of 5% compared to the previous three months, and associated spending decreased by 3% to £3.9 billion.

www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/otfnr0907.pdf

Russia to Loan Paintings to Britain Following Anti-seizure Legislation

The Art Newspaper reports that Russia is to lend 120 paintings from its national collections to the exhibition *Bonjour Russia* which opens at the Royal Academy in London in January 2008. These include works from the Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morosov collections, which were nationalised after the 1917 revolution and have been the subject of legal claims by the collectors' heirs.

The loan was made possible by the recent introduction of immunity from seizure legislation in the UK. Following the seizure of Russian paintings in Switzerland in 2005, the result of court action by a Swiss company that had a financial claim against the Russian state, Russia refused loans to countries without anti-seizure provisions. www.theartnewspaper.com/article01.asp?id=4564

BAFM & AIM Robert Logan Award 2007

Lucy Price, Curator of the London Fire Brigade Museum in Southwark, has won the British Association of Friends of Museums and the Association of Independent Museums 2007 Robert Logan Award, presented to a young person working in the heritage sector. Lucy wins £500 and an invitation to take part on a panel of speakers at the BAFM and AIM conferences. The next Robert Logan Award will be presented in 2009. www.bafm.org.uk/pages/bafm-logan-award.htm

National Trust Learning Panel Seeks Members

The National Trust is seeking members for its newly established Learning Panel. The Panel will advise on securing a shift in culture towards the Trust's Vision for Learning and on current trends, practice and standards in access and learning. The National Trust is looking for up to 12 volunteer experts in fields related to formal, informal and non-formal learning, including interpretation, access and diversity, and internal learning by staff and volunteers.

The closing date for submission of applications is 5pm on **12 October 2007**.

For further information visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-learning_panel_advert.pdf

Rethinking Disability Representation in Museums and Galleries

The Rethinking Disability Representation project, managed by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, looks at approaches to the display and interpretation of objects and collections linked to the lives of disabled people and the notion of disability. A project update is now available, to share the outcomes and learning experiences of the project. www.le.ac.uk/museumstudies/research/rcmg.html.

London's Creative Sector Shows Strong Growth

A new report published by GLA Economics, *London's Creative Sector: 2007 Update*, shows that 18,000 new jobs were created in the sector between 2004 and 2005. This brought the number employed in London's creative industries up to 554,000 - 12% of London workers. London and the South East remain the hub of the sector in Britain, accounting for 57% of British creative workforce jobs.

This renewed growth of the creative industries, by 5% in a single year, is almost double the growth rate of the financial and business sector. www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=13773
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/wp_22_creative.pdf

Demos Report on Growing Talent for the Creative and Cultural Industries

The last 30 years have seen the democratisation of creative work that was previously open to very few; a trend that looks set to continue. This paper, *Inclusion, Innovation and Democracy: Growing Talent for the Creative and Cultural Industries*, argues that the process of democratisation is incomplete and that the very things that give the creative and cultural industries their vitality – speed, fluidity and turnover of people, organisations and ideas - also work to exclude people from non-traditional backgrounds.

www.demos.co.uk/publications/inclusioninnovationanddemocracy

Changing Lives and Places - Lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders

An evaluation of the DCMS and Local Government Association (LGA) Cultural Pathfinders programme shows how culture and sport can contribute to shared outcomes by engaging people in community activity and helping to develop a long-term vision that all partners support. The Pathfinders combined culture with services such as social work and education, developing shared aims, mutual understanding and learning. The report concludes that the cultural planning approach adopted by the Pathfinders can provide local authorities with scope for innovation in meeting community needs.

[Full Report - Changing Lives and Places - Lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders](#)

Classic FM Arts & Kids Week 20-28 October

For the last four years The Prince of Wales Arts and Kids Foundation has worked with Classic FM to promote arts events for children and young people in the UK during October half term, encouraging children and families to get involved in the arts and visit their local cultural venue. Arts & Kids Week offers an opportunity for arts organisations to promote their events for young people at no charge. To add an event visit the Events for Kids section of the website at:

www.artsandkids.org.uk
www.artsandkids.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2007/07/A%20&%20K%20News%20Summer%202007.pdf

Exhibition Closed After Police Remove Exhibit

BALTIC has closed the exhibition *Thanksgiving*, by Nan Goldin, at the request of the Sir Elton John Photography Collection, which loaned the works, following the removal of one of the images by police, on the grounds it may breach child pornography laws. BALTIC said that it was sympathetic to the request to close the exhibition, as the works could no longer be exhibited as the artist intended.

www.balticmill.com/whatsOn/present/index.php news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/tyne/7023055.stm

Technology Could Reveal Hidden Texts

Research presented at the British Association science festival in September shows that the Diamond synchrotron, which generates intense x-rays and light beams that can probe matter at the molecular and atomic scale, could be used to uncover text in scrolls and books without having to open, and potentially damage, them. The technology is used to analyse the condition of parchment.

Scientists from the University of Cardiff have developed a technique that uses the synchrotron to create a three-dimensional image of an iron-inked document. A computer algorithm separates the image into the different layers of parchment, in effect unrolling the scroll.

www.diamond.ac.uk/News/LatestNews/press_release_13Sept.htm

CyMAL Report on Quantifying Diversity

The Quantifying Diversity: Mesur Amrywiaeth project collected data on equality and inclusion in local museums, archives and libraries in Wales. The report is now available on the CyMAL website. CyMAL will develop a Forward Plan for Diversity to focus on providing better local provision.

new.wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymall4/Research/Research1/?lang=en

MDA Guide to Applying for Documentation Funding

MDA, MLA East of England and the East of England Regional Archives Council have published *Making the Case*, a guide to making funding bids for documentation projects. *Making the Case* provides a range of evidence to help secure funding for documentation work and includes case studies of successful projects.

www.collectionslink.org.uk/raise_funds

An Idea to Help Eliminate the Black Market in Stolen Antiquities

A paper by Michael Kremer, a Harvard economics professor, and Tom Wilkening, a graduate student, uses economic principles to suggest that rather than banning the export of antiquities, which often leads to illegal trade and makes it unlikely that artefacts will be displayed in museums, impoverished countries could rent artefacts to foreign museums. The authors argue that long-term leases of antiquities would raise revenue for the country of origin while preserving its long-term ownership rights.

www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d025eb40-61a8-11dc-ae58-0000779fd2ac.html

www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/papers/AntiquitiesJAN607finclean.pdf

MICHAEL Training Workshops

MLA is holding a series of training workshops for those interested in describing their digital collections and online resources in MICHAEL, a ground-breaking project, supported by the European Commission, which aims to provide simple and quick access to the digital collections of museums, libraries and archives across Europe. Four training workshops will be held in London on **25 and 26 October** and **22 and 23 November**. To register for a place, email n.bishop@ukoln.ac.uk www.michael-culture.org.uk

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Grants

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust offers fellowships to British Citizens resident in the UK to acquire knowledge and experience abroad. The 2008 categories include an award in the field of history. The deadline for applications is **Tuesday 16 October 2007**. For further information visit: www.wcmt.org.uk.

Secretary of State at the Labour Party Conference

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport James Purnell spoke in a debate on strengthening communities at the Labour Party Conference. He said that giving "everyone the chance to develop their talent. To unlock the potential inside everyone" was still a great cause of the Labour Party and cited the Conservative position on free admission to museums as evidence that they do not agree.

He concluded "...as we debate the future of our communities, let's put a stronger culture at the centre of our vision. A public realm in which the arts are flourishing; in which all children are given the chance to learn an instrument, to hear a concert, to visit a museum, to make a film. Let's have a society that would recognise the sheer joy of taking part. That would take people's potential seriously and understand that ordinary people love extraordinary things. Let's have a society in which culture would be thought of as something we all share, something held in common. A thriving culture is a community alive. This is the common wealth of the nation, ours to increase from generation to generation".

www.labour.org.uk/conference/purnell_speech

James Purnell also spoke at the Smith Institute Labour Party Conference fringe event *Britishness: identifying with heritage*. He focused on the role of UK collections in allowing people to 'explore stories and common roots' and cited exhibitions at the British Museum and British Library.

There is a write up of the meeting at www.guardian.co.uk/race/story/0,,2176894,00.html

International Issues

Museum Abandons Unfinished Art Installation

Following disagreement between MASS MoCA, a contemporary arts centre in Massachusetts, USA, and artist Christian Büchel, from whom it had commissioned the installation *Training Ground for Democracy*, the artist ceased work last year, leaving the work unfinished. The museum sought a court declaration to allow it to exhibit the work against the artist's wishes and was granted the right to do so.

Having won the right to show the incomplete work, and following comment in the press, the museum decided to remove the materials without putting them on public display and announced that it would co-host a symposium with The Clark Art Institute to explore the issues raised.

www.massmoca.org/event_details.php?id=316

www.theartnewspaper.com/article01.asp?id=4565

US Museums Agree to Share Art

Fisk University, Nashville, has agreed in principle to share ownership of its Alfred Stieglitz Collection of 20th century art with the new Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, due to open in 2009, in exchange for \$30 million. The founder of Crystal Bridges, Wal-Mart heiress Alice L. Walton, also pledged \$1 million to renovate and maintain the Fisk gallery, and to finance an art internship.

The New York Times reports that this is one of several cases in the US where colleges and universities have sought to leverage the value of their art collections to bolster their endowments or avoid closure.

www.nytimes.com/2007/09/26/arts/design/26fisk.html?ref=arts

www.fisk.edu/pdfs/pressreleases/FiskCrystalBridgesRelease_09_25_07_revised.pdf

US National Museum of African American History and Culture Online

The US National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is due to open in Washington in 2015, has established an online presence where visitors can see some of the content of the museum and help contribute to it. The website uses social-networking technology to allow visitors to contribute content and build their own community. A Memory Book allows people to submit stories, photographs or audio recordings about themselves or a moment in African American history. The website also includes instructions for identifying and preserving photographs, diaries and legal documents.

nmaahc.si.edu/ www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/25/AR2007092501923.html

Poll Shows Europeans Value Culture and Expect More from the EU

The results of a survey of views on culture of 26 000 citizens in the 27 EU Member States was presented at the first European Culture Forum in Lisbon 26-28 September. Findings include:

- 89% of Europeans perceive a greater need for culture to be promoted at EU-level;
- 77% of Europeans feel that culture is important in their lives;
- 76% of the respondents consider that Europe's cultural diversity is the defining characteristic of Europe, and that this diversity actually helps to increase the impact of European culture.

For further details see: ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/eurobarometer_en.html

Danish Museum Diverts Acquisitions Budget to Security

The Art Newspaper reports that the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen has used two thirds of its acquisitions budget to upgrade its security system. The Museum used the funds over a three year period, with government permission, on the basis that it would be easier to find sponsors to fund the purchase of new works of art, than an upgrade of the security system. www.theartnewspaper.com

Yale to Return Peruvian Artefacts

Yale University has signed a preliminary agreement to return title to Peru of more than 350 artefacts and several thousand fragments that were excavated at Machu Picchu from 1911-15 by history professor, Hiram Bingham. The agreement establishes collaboration between Yale and Peru on an international travelling exhibition. Yale will also advise on a new museum and research centre in Cuzco, due to be completed in 2009, and contribute to a programme of academic exchanges.

www.yale.edu/opa/newsr/07-09-14-01.all.html

Visitors Increase at Free Baltimore Museums

The Baltimore Museum of Art and The Walters Art Museum introduced free admission a year ago, with the help of funding from Baltimore City and county officials. The Baltimore Sun reports that both museums have seen a substantial increase in the number of visitors over the last year, increased diversity of visitors and report an increase in donations. www.artbma.org www.thewalters.org

www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/galleriesmuseums/bal-fe.to.museums30sep30,0.193518.story

Claim for Restitution of Works of Art in Dutch Museums

The heirs of a Dutch Jewish art dealer, Nathan Katz, have filed a claim for 227 works of art that were recovered in Germany at the end of the Second World War, handed over to the Dutch government and are now held in Dutch museums.

The claim will be studied by the Restitution Commission, which advises the government on the return of cultural property that was lost, sold or stolen after the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands. The Committee is currently handling 44 cases. www.restitutiefcommissie.nl/en/diversen/persbericht_inzake_katz.html

www.nytimes.com/2007/09/26/arts/design/26clai.html?_r=1&ref=arts&oref=slogin

Forthcoming NMDC Meetings

UK Affairs Committee

Wednesday 10 October, 2pm, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle

Marketing Group

Wednesday 17 October, 2pm, National Maritime Museum

NMDC Meeting

Friday 16 November, 11am, V&A

HR Forum

Friday 7 December, 11am, Museum in Docklands

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

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

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