

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update from the museum sector and beyond.

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## NMDC NEWS

### New Chair of NMDC

Dr Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum, took over as Chair of the National Museum Directors' Conference on 1 April, succeeding Mark Jones, Director of the V&A.

Michael Dixon has been Director of The Natural History Museum since June 2004 and is currently overseeing the completion of the five year £78m project to deliver the second phase of the Museum's Darwin Centre, which opens in September. Michael was previously Director General of The Zoological Society of London, and before that worked for twenty years in the scientific, technical and medical publishing industry.

Michael has been a member of NMDC's Executive Committee and chaired the Learning and Access Committee for the past two years. During 2006/7 he was acting Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

### New NMDC Executive Committee

NMDC's executive committee also has new membership. NMDC Executive Committee members play a leading role in guiding NMDC strategy and acting as spokespersons on behalf of the group, for instance at meetings with Ministers. The current members are:

Michael Dixon, (Chair), Alec Coles, Tyne & Wear Museums; Diane Lees, Imperial War Museum; John Leighton, National Galleries of Scotland; Neil MacGregor, British Museum; Sandy Nairne, National Portrait Gallery and Nicholas Penny, National Gallery.

### New NMDC website: [www.nationalmuseums.org.uk](http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk)

NMDC's new website provides up-to-date information on NMDC's activities, grouped under the following themes:

- Economic sustainability for museums
- Contributing to the museums sector
- Museums: Contributing to society and the economy
- Museums: Contributing to the world
- Supporting our members

### NMDC Office - New Contact Details

The NMDC staff team has now moved to the Natural History Museum. Our new contact details are:  
Kate Bellamy, Head of Strategy & Communications, Tel: 020 7942 5384

[kate.bellamy@nationalmuseums.org.uk](mailto:kate.bellamy@nationalmuseums.org.uk)

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## CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

### Peer review of DCMS sponsored museums - pilot reports published

DCMS has published the results of a pilot programme to introduce a new system of self-assessment and peer review of sponsored museums. The pilots were carried out at the National Portrait Gallery, Natural History Museum and Tyne & Wear Museums. Each peer review was conducted by a panel of three individuals over three days. The panel reports include a critique of the museum's 10 page self-assessment document, an appraisal of excellence across the museums' functions and a set of recommendations for each museum to consider. Each museum provided a management response to the peer review, which in some cases included suggestions as to how the peer review process could be improved following this pilot. The self assessment document, peer review report and management response from each museum have all been published.

The peer review pilot takes forward a recommendation made by Sir Brian McMaster in his report *Supporting Excellence in the Arts: From Measurement to Judgement*, which called for a renewed focus on excellence in the cultural sector. DCMS is now evaluating the success of the pilot and considering the roll out of the system to all sponsored museums with Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) status. [more](#)

### London 2012 Cultural Olympiad – launch of *Artists Taking the Lead*

*Artists Taking the Lead*, a £5.4 million Cultural Olympiad project, in conjunction with Arts Council England, has been launched. The project will see 12 new works of art commissioned, each worth up to £500,000 each. There will be nine commissions in England and a further three, one each in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The works will be displayed in iconic and unexpected locations such as a hillside, beach or public space. Artists have until May 29 to submit a 400 word proposal. To be considered, ideas must meet four criteria. They must: be original; reflect, and be inspired, by the location in which they will take shape; leave a legacy for artists and communities beyond 2012; and celebrate London 2012 and reflect the values and vision of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. [more](#)

### *Only in London* - plans for tourism boost to capital's economy

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has announced a new £2million international marketing campaign to boost overseas visitors to the capital. Funded by the London Development Agency, the global campaign, *Only in London* will focus on the unique and exceptional experiences, sights and attractions of the city. It will also encourage Londoners to enjoy outings within their own city. The campaign will be launched in the UK this month and rolled out across Europe and North America during the summer. Visit London has also launched *Only in London 100* – one hundred examples of what makes the capital a unique place in the world to visit including its status as home to more national museums than any other capital city. [more](#)

## Scotland's Culture Minister announces museum funding

Mike Russell, Scotland's new Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution, has been setting out his priorities for the cultural sector. During a visit to the Scottish Mining Museum, Mr Russell announced that the Scottish Government would provide £1.3m for urgent structural repairs to the museum to ensure continued public access. In the Scottish Parliament, Mr Russell told MSPs that he believed Scottish Government support for museums in Glasgow required substantive discussion and would be meeting Bailie Liz Cameron and her colleagues in Glasgow to discuss the issue. The Minister will be hosting a museums summit in May to talk through the challenges facing museums and consider the best way forward for the sector which he described as "central to Scotland's cultural life".

Mr Russell has also briefed MSPs on the cost of establishing Creative Scotland, the new body replacing the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen which will come into being in 2010. Opening a debate in the Scottish Parliament, the Minister confirmed that the new body will cost £3.3m, which will be funded by the Scottish Government.

The Minister has also announced that a working group had been established to recommend the best national arrangements to support the traditional arts, and a similar working group looking at literature and what can be done to support existing talent and promote new talent. [more: press releases](#)  
[Scottish Parliament Official report](#)

## Sustainability and museums

The Museums Association has published a report on its consultation on sustainability in its broadest economic, social and environmental sense. Following meetings with museum directors and senior managers, Maurice Davies, Deputy Director of the Museums Association, has said that museums lack long-term strategies for dealing with sustainability issues. Suggestions for specific activities by sector bodies include:

- Publishing case studies, guidance and training on planning for sustainability;
- Advocacy/policy-level work encouraging funders to take more account of sustainability in their funding and policies;
- Procurement from green/ethical suppliers;
- Advice on specialist museum areas, such as the NMDC-led review of collections-care standards and improving energy efficiency of museums in historic buildings; and
- Interest-free loans or 'invest to save' funding for energy-saving equipment and systems.

The MA hopes to have discussions with other sector bodies about developing some of these ideas. [more](#)

## DCMS Sustainable Tourism Framework for England

Culture Minister, Barbara Follett MP, has launched DCMS's *Sustainable Tourism Framework for England*, saying the tourism industry needs to adopt more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways of working in order to secure its long term future and to combat climate change. The framework document identifies six challenges to help the environment and secure the long term future of the tourism industry including: minimising environmental impact and resource use; addressing the impact of tourism transport; improving the perception of jobs in the sector to attract a diverse range of people; and making better use of facilities by reducing the seasonality of demand. The Government will be working with the industry to address all these issues. A formal review will be undertaken in three years time. [more](#)

## Enjoy Every Minute – VisitEngland campaign to boost domestic tourism

VisitEngland has launched a £3m 'Enjoy Every Minute! Campaign aiming to encourage Britons to see spare time – evenings, lunch breaks and weekends - as an opportunity to take a trip in England. The campaign begins with print advertising, followed by TV advertising in May and June. The campaign will also feature partnership activity such as joint TV slots with organisations including the National Trust.

VisitEngland has also appointed James Berresford as its first Chief Executive. He is currently Director of Tourism at Northwest Development Agency. [more](#)

## Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit

The *Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit*, published by the Living Places Partnership, aims to ensure cultural and sporting facilities are embedded in the planning process alongside other key areas of provision such as healthcare and transport. The toolkit is intended to help built environment professionals find new ways to deliver sustainable communities through culture and gather the evidence they need to recommend culture-led plans for regeneration. It will also help local government cultural officers navigate the planning system, so that they can make the case for museums, libraries, theatres and sports facilities in the right way and at the right time. The Living Places Partnership includes MLA and other leading cultural bodies, Government Departments and the Homes and Communities Agency. [more](#)

## Childhood arts experience has strong impact on adult arts attendance

New research published by Arts Council England confirms that being encouraged to engage in the arts when growing up has a significant impact on the chances of being an active arts consumer as an adult, even when a range of other socio-economic factors have been taken into account. The analysis based on data from DCMS's [Taking Part survey](#), found that the effect of childhood experience is almost as strong as the effect of education - suggesting that parents may be as important as the education system in determining whether children grow up to be interested in and engaged with the arts. [more](#)

## Promoting informal adult learning - £100k challenge fund for museums

Museums feature prominently in *The Learning Revolution*, the Government's White Paper on informal adult learning. The strategy, published last month by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, recognises the contribution informal adult learning makes to the well-being of the nation. It outlines four initiatives to promote and support informal learning:

- An Informal Adult Learning Pledge inviting organisations to become ambassadors for learning and commit to using their influence to create and sustain an informal learning culture;
- A Festival of Learning in Autumn 2009 supported by a national campaign to promote the benefits of informal learning;
- An 'Open Space' Movement encouraging public organisations to open their facilities for informal learning groups at low or no cost;
- A £20m Transformation Fund to invest in creative new approaches to reach and engage new learners.

The MLA has signed the *Learning Revolution* pledge and aims to encourage 3,000 individual museums, libraries and archives to sign the informal learning pledge by March 2010. MLA has also launched a £100,000 Challenge Fund to encourage museums, libraries and archives to do more to open up their spaces and resources to self-organised groups of learners. MLA will also convene an Adult Learners Board to oversee the development of a framework for informal adult learning. [More: MLA DIUS Press release](#)

## Inspiring Learning for All Toolkit relaunched

The MLA has relaunched a new improved *Inspiring Learning For All Toolkit* website, aligned to key Government policy frameworks such as *Every Child Matters* and the Informal Adult Learning White Paper. It introduces the generic social outcomes that MLA has been developing over the last 3 years, demonstrate the wider community contribution of museums, libraries and archives. [more](#)

## Sign up to Shine Week, 6-10 July 2009

MLA is encouraging museums, libraries and archives to link their events for children and young people into *Shine Week* (6-10 July) to raise the profile of the sector's work. *Shine Week* is the national festival celebrating and showcasing the talents of all children and young people, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and managed by Creativity, Culture and Education. To register visit the [Shineweek website](#).

### Arts & Business Private Investment In Culture - full report published

*Arts & Business Private Investment in Culture 2007/08* report is now available. The report examines the scale of private investment in the UK and has in-depth analysis on prevalent issues facing cultural organisations including the recession, the value of the cultural industries, the UK sponsorship landscape and cultural attitudes and attendance. Arts & Business figures for 2008 showed a 25% increase in individual giving, a 7% decline in corporate sponsorship and an overall year on year increase of 13% to £687million. [more](#)

### DCMS Capability Review recommends urgent improvement of leadership and management

The Cabinet Office has published a Capability Review of DCMS. The review concluded that the Department has made progress in focusing and strengthening its external relationships and improved its use of evidence, but improving the internal leadership and management of the Department remains an urgent priority. The review concluded that the Department could do more, through the sector strategies being developed, to create clarity in its role and to add value. The Department's response to the review said the priorities for action for the next six months are:

- improving the quality of leadership, management and staff development;
- improving how teams work together in the new structure; and
- driving through the transformation of corporate services with pace and ambition.

Pointing to recent achievements, DCMS said that the risk-based NDPB framework and stronger stakeholder networks have led to reduced administrative burdens and moved the Department towards more strategic engagement with its NDPBs, and that there has been improved collaborative working through DCMS/NDPB groups for finance, procurement and research. [more](#)

### Conservatives propose *Renaissance for Libraries*

Ed Vaizey MP, Shadow Culture Minister, has given a speech setting out the Conservative Party's policy on libraries. It includes *Renaissance for Libraries*, a four-year programme, managed by MLA to inspire local authorities to invest in their library services and to bring the mediocre up to the standards of the best. They also propose to introduce a voluntary Charter for Libraries and Reading for local authorities; introduce a national library card; establish, through the MLA, a development agency for libraries; and abolish the Advisory Council for Libraries. [more](#)

### Art Fund Director steps down

The Art Fund has announced that David Barrie is to step down as Director and Trustee this spring after seventeen years leading the organisation. Mr Barrie will be in office until the end of May 2009 to see a number of projects through to completion and ensure a smooth succession. The process of recruiting a new Director begins immediately. Under Mr Barrie's Directorship, The Art Fund has given almost £55 million to help secure over 400,000 works for 447 public collections all over the UK. [more](#)

### Museums Association cuts posts in staff restructure

The Museums Association has undergone a staff restructure in order to face down the effects of the economic downturn. Caitlin Griffiths, Head of Professional Issues, now leads a department covering professional development, workforce issues, training and event production. Maurice Davies, Deputy Director now oversees policy, programmes and the content of the MA's annual conference. Sharon Heal, Head of Publications, is responsible for the programming of one-day conferences. The posts of Head of Events, Systems Manager and Marketing Assistant have been made redundant. [more](#)

### Science and Heritage research grants

The Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council are taking forward a joint £8.1m programme entitled *Science and Heritage*. The programme will support leading-edge research which will explore new ways to understand the cultural and physical nature of heritage and to prepare for the challenges that cultural heritage will face in the 21st Century. Applications are now invited for Interdisciplinary Research Grants of up to £800,000 involving at least two collaborating institutions, and for post-doctoral fellowships in heritage science. [more](#)

### £21m Heritage Lottery Fund award announced

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery (SNPG) is one of six heritage projects to receive funding in the latest round of awards from the Heritage Lottery Fund. SNPG has been awarded £4.53m for *Portrait of a Nation*, a major project to double its gallery space. The Scottish Government has provided a grant of £5.1m for the project. The HLF grant comes just as the gallery is about to close to the public in order to start the refurbishment process.

The HLF has announced six awards worth a total of £21m. The other recipients are: Great Dixter, Sussex - £3.79m; St James Priory in Bristol - £3m; Castle Hill and Ranfurly House in Dungannon, Northern Ireland - £2.24m; Epping Forest, Essex - £4.76m; and 'Experience Barnsley', Yorkshire - £2.6m. [more](#)

### UK success in European Union funding programme

A report published by the European Commission confirms that 60% of UK applications in 2008 to the Culture programme, the main fund available from the European Union to support arts and cultural projects, were successful. 15 of the 25 applications submitted were approved, including projects led by Tate and the British Library. This is the highest success rate of any participating country submitting more than one project and more than twice the overall success rate of 26.9%. In total 68 UK cultural organisations will participate projects funded by the programme. [more](#)

### Tate and VisitBritain help launch Google Street View

Tate has developed an application for Google Street View enabling users to explore locations depicted in works from the Tate collection by artists such as Turner and Constable, and compare these locations now with the view the artist saw.

VisitBritain has also worked with Google to create a visual guide in Street View which features sights in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Cambridge, Leeds and Oxford with links to [Vvisitbritain.com](#), where users can explore VisitBritain's destination guides. [more](#)

### Trustee Appointments

- Ben Thomson has been appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the **National Galleries of Scotland**. Mr Thompson is the Chairman and former Chief Executive of Edinburgh-based investment bank Noble Group. A former Scottish international athlete and graduate in physics from Edinburgh University, he has been a Governor of the Patrons of the National Galleries of Scotland since 2003. [more](#)
- Hannah Rothschild and Gautam Dalal have been appointed as Trustees of the **National Gallery**. Hannah Rothschild is a freelance TV and film director, writer, journalist and broadcaster specialising in the arts. Gautam Dalal is a Chartered Accountant and a Senior Audit Partner in KPMG's London office.
- Sir John Guinness CB, former Chairman of British Nuclear Fuel, and Mrs Gilly Drummond OBE DL, President of the Association of Garden Trusts, have been reappointed as Trustees of the **National Maritime Museum**.
- Richard Wilkin LVO MBE, former Director-General of the Historic Houses Association, has been reappointed as a Trustee of the **National Heritage Memorial Fund**. [more](#)

### EU Public consultation on copyright - responses published

The replies to the public Consultation on the Green Paper *Copyright in the Knowledge Economy* have been published. The Green Paper focused on the role of copyright in fostering dissemination of knowledge for research, science and education and was intended as the starting point for a structured debate on the long-term future of copyright policy in these fields. UK institutions were well represented among the 372 responses, including submissions from NMDC, the Museum Copyright Group, Museums Association and individual museums. [more](#)

## IN PARLIAMENT

### Lords debate impact of recession on archaeology

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Glasgow asked what steps the Government were taking to mitigate the effect on archaeologists of the recent contraction in the building industry. The Earl informed the House that of the 6,500 professional archaeologists in work last year, approximately one-fifth have lost their jobs in the past six months. Lord Redesdale raised concerns about the loss of expert knowledge caused by the lay-offs. Replying for the Government, Lord Davies of Oldham said the Government supported skills development initiatives by English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund and emphasised the amount of resources that the Government is putting into enhancing and protecting the skills base across the economy. [more](#)

### Praise for Darwin200

The House of Lords held a debate on 19 March to call attention to the celebrations of the bicentenary of Charles Darwin. Lord Davies of Oldham praised the Darwin200 collaboration of organisations across the UK, supported by the Natural History Museum, British Council, Wellcome Trust and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. He also noted Darwin's anniversaries are also being well commemorated in countries around the world. [more](#)

### Science Museum exhibition explains intellectual property

In a debate in the House of Lords on online piracy, Liberal Democrat spokesperson Lord Clement-Jones praised the Science Museum's exhibition, *Wallace & Gromit present A World of Cracking Ideas*, as a superb example of public education about the world of copyright and the importance of protecting intellectual property. The exhibition, which is supported by the Intellectual Property Office, shows some of the great inventions of our time and shows visitors how they can protect their intellectual property through patents, trademarks, designs and copyright. [more](#)

### 4.4 million educational visits to leading museums and galleries

Don Foster MP asked a parliamentary question about the number of educational visits to museums and galleries. In response, Barbara Follett MP said in 2007/08 3.5 million children aged under 16 attended organised educational sessions at DCMS sponsored museums and nearly 900,000 educational visits were made to Renaissance hub museums. [more](#)

Andy Burnham said that in the last 12 months he has visited 12 museums in an official capacity. [more](#)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### China invests in culture to boost economy

China is to set up three major cultural groups to give a boost to the cultural industry, as well as the nation's overall economy, during the financial crisis. The Vice Minister for Culture, Ouyang Jian, announced plans to set up first-class international companies in digital cultural content, cartoon and animation and showbusiness. *China Daily* reports that Ouyang said: "We see the financial crisis as an opportunity to develop our culture industry at home and abroad." [more](#)

### Recession hits US museums – jobs cut as Met endowment loses \$800m

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has cut 74 positions and warned it could cut another 10% of its work force by July. The Chairman of Trustees, in a detailed statement on the economic position of the museum, said that the museum's endowment, which funds 30% of operating expenses, had lost at least \$800 million, 25% of its value since June 2008. The statement described a "concurrent softening" of other revenue streams including corporate and private philanthropy and reduced visitor spending. Municipal funding from the City of New York has also been cut by 1.7m this year with bigger cuts expected next year. The museum has announced the closure of fifteen of its satellite shops around the United States and instituted a recruitment freeze. [more](#)

Many other museums have also announced cuts:

- The **Minnesota Museum of American Art** in St. Paul, which had existed in various forms since 1927, has closed indefinitely citing the economic situation as the cause. [more](#)

- The **Detroit Institute of Arts** has cut 63 posts, 20% of its staff, as part of a \$6 million cut to its \$34m annual operating budget. [more](#)
- The **J. Paul Getty Trust** is cutting its operating budget by nearly 25% for the coming fiscal year, in response to investment losses that have totalled \$1.5 billion since July and nearly \$2 billion since mid-2007. Opening hours have been reduced by 10% but despite this visitor numbers are up at the two sites - the Getty Center and Getty Villa, which have free entry. [more](#)
- The **Walker Art Center**, Minneapolis, has cut its budget by \$1.1 million (5%) this fiscal year and will reduce expenses by a further \$900,000 in the next fiscal year. [more](#)
- The **Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles** (MOCA) has reduced staff by 20% and is cutting operating expenses to achieve an annual saving of approximately \$4.4 million. [more](#)
- In Canada, the **Art Gallery of Ontario**, Toronto, has confirmed it has identified 61 full-time posts for possible layoff in order to cut costs. Another 47 temporary positions are also being considered for cuts. The Gallery has a €10m deficit. [more](#)

### Museum reviews collections policies in response to sanctions

The sanctions imposed by the American Association of Art Museums of Directors (AAMD) on the National Academy Museum (NAM) for selling collection items to fund operating costs seem to have been effective in changing the museum's policies and practices. The AAMD and NAM have issued a joint statement describing planned steps by the NAM to improve its economic situation, including a restructure of its governance practices to include more rigorous fiscal oversight; the institution of a comprehensive fundraising programme; and the formation of a strategic, long-range plan and a strengthened collections management policy. Plans to sell further two further paintings have been withdrawn. [more](#)

The Indianapolis Museum of Art has launched a database of items it is deaccessioning following systematic evaluation of its collection. The database gives details of disposal including auction dates. [more](#)

### New York considers legal restrictions on deaccessioning

A Bill has been introduced in the New York State Legislature which would make it illegal for museums to use the proceeds from the sale of artworks "for traditional and customary operating expenses". The legislation also defines the criteria under which an artwork could be deaccessioned. The Bill has been drafted in collaboration with the Museums Association of New York (MANY), and prompted by the NAM sale and announcement by Brandeis University that it would close the Rose Art Museum and sell the collection. [more](#)

### President Obama Makes Culture Appointment

President Obama has established a staff position in the White House to oversee arts and culture in the Office of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs. The post will be held by Kareem Dale, a lawyer who was last month named as special assistant to the president for disability policy. The appointment follows considerable discussion in the US press about whether President Obama would appoint a 'culture tsar'. *The New York Times* reports that the new post is likely to focus on coordinating the activities of the three federal cultural agencies: the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Although there have been staff members assigned to culture under previous presidents, they have usually served in the First Lady's office. [more](#)

### Germany launches new cultural voluntary service

The German Federal Foreign Office and the German UNESCO Commission have launched a new voluntary service: *kulturweit*. This international voluntary programme enables young people aged between 18 and 26 to get involved with cultural policies abroad. The new voluntary service will involve 6-12 month placements with the Ministry's long-term partner organisations: the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Educational Exchange Service, the German Archaeological Institute and the German UNESCO Commission. [more](#)



### Getty Museum partnership with Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze

The J. Paul Getty Museum and Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze have announced a new long-term collaboration beginning this summer with a special exhibition of a masterpiece of Etruscan bronzework known as the Chimaera of Arezzo. Getty Director, Dr Michael Brand, described the new collaboration as the 'silver lining' of the Getty's involvement in the controversy over looted antiquities in recent years. The Getty returned 39 items to Italy in 2006 and a marble and limestone Aphrodite, one of the signature works in the Getty's antiquities collection will also be returned to Italy in December 2010. [more](#)

Meanwhile, former Getty curator of antiquities, Marion True, has appeared in court in Rome to defend herself against accusations that she knowingly bought antiquities that had been illegally excavated. *The New York Times* reports that she told the court, "If ever there was an indication of proof of an object coming from a certain place," or an illegal excavation, "we would deaccession it and return the object, regardless of the statute of limitations." [more](#)

### Yale University files lawsuit over a Van Gogh

Yale University has filed a suit to assert its ownership of the Van Gogh painting *The Night Café*, *The Associated Press* reports. The work, painted in 1888, has been in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery since 1961. In 1918 it belonged to the Russian industrialist Ivan Morozov, whose property was nationalized during the Communist Revolution. His great-grandson is now seeking the return of the painting as well as financial compensation. [more](#)

### Guerilla artists hangs portraits in Dublin galleries

A secondary school teacher has admitted painting and hanging two paintings depicting Irish Taoiseach Brian Cowen naked on the walls of the National Gallery of Ireland and the Royal Hibernian Academy. *RTE News* reports that the man may be prosecuted for alleged criminal damage after he was captured by CCTV putting glue on to the gallery walls before hanging the pictures. [more](#)

## NATIONAL MUSEUMS' NEWS

The **V&A's** Theatre and Performance Galleries opened on 18 March providing a fresh perspective on the Museum's collections relating to drama, dance, opera, circus, puppetry, comedy, musical theatre, popular music and projected images. More than 250 objects are on display including a first folio of Shakespeare's plays compiled in 1623. The galleries replace those at the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden, which closed in 2007. [more](#)

The **British Museum's** pre-eminent collection of medieval material has been redisplayed in the Paul and Jill Ruddock Gallery of Medieval Europe, which opened by David Cameron MP last month. The gallery integrates art and archaeology, presenting treasures ranging from jewels to ecclesiastical vessels, walrus-tusk reliquaries, scientific instruments and some of the earliest printed images, in their widest historical context. [more](#)

The **British Museum** has unveiled plans for a £135m expansion to provide a new exhibition space and state-of-the-art conservation and science laboratories. The design by architects Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners incorporates five linked pavilions and facades in glass and stone. Each building will operate on seven levels, including three underground storage basements. The building will feature roof cells to reduce heat loss and minimise energy consumption. £90m has been raised and a planning application has been submitted. If approved the expansion will be opened towards the end of 2012. [more](#)

The revised plans for **Tate Modern 2** have been granted planning permission. The 11-storey, brick-clad pyramid by architects Herzog & de Meuron is more compact than in the previous scheme and intended to integrate better with the existing building. The new design also includes opening up the oil tanks of the former power station. The internal configuration is more flexible to allow for future changes in the programme and will increase Tate Modern's ability to display artworks by some 65%. The revised building also sets new benchmarks for sustainability and energy use in museums: using 54% less energy, and emit 44% less carbon than building regulations demand. The project is due to be completed in 2012 at an estimated cost of £215 million at 2012 prices. To date Tate has raised £74 million, which represents a third of the overall costs. [more](#)

**Tate** has announced that John Everett Millais's *Dew-Drenched Furze* (1890), widely regarded as one of the great achievements of his later art, will be donated to Tate by one of the artist's great

grandsons, Geoffroy Millais. The painting will significantly enhance Tate's representation of the artist's highly acclaimed later landscapes. [more](#)

The **British Library** Board has accepted the recommendation of an independent group of world experts in the care of historic manuscripts that the Lindisfarne Gospels can be temporarily loaned to appropriate institutions. The Board agreed the manuscripts can be loaned for a period no greater than three months, at intervals of not less than seven years. This is a major shift in position by the British Library Board, and it means that the Lindisfarne Gospels could be loaned to an institution in the North East of England as early as 2010. The Board rejected a proposal for a permanent 'outpost' in the North East specifically to house the Lindisfarne Gospels, citing its statutory duty to keep the national collection intact. [more](#)

**Tyne & Wear Museums**, the museum service managing 12 venues across Tyne & Wear, has merged with Tyne & Wear Archives Service, the record office for Newcastle upon Tyne, Sunderland, Gateshead, South Tyneside and North Tyneside. [more](#)

**Tyne & Wear Museums** has won three prestigious North East awards in one week. TWM was awarded the Public Sector Organisation of the Year for Tyneside and Northumberland in the North East Business Awards. The exhibition *North Face, Photographs from the National Portrait Gallery*, was the winner of the Renaissance North East: Museum Award in the Journal Culture Awards. *CultureCast*, Tyne & Wear Museums' audio arts magazine podcast series won in the Best Podcasting/Webcasting Campaign category in the North East Digital Awards. [more](#)

The **Royal Armouries Museum** in Leeds is one of the first organisations in the country to be awarded the *Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge*, recognising it as a provider of quality, safely managed educational experiences for young people. [more](#)

The **Natural History Museum** has unveiled TREE, a new permanent artwork celebrating the life and legacy of Charles Darwin. The slice through a whole oak tree has been inlaid into the ceiling of a gallery behind the Central Hall, becoming the largest botany specimen on display at the Museum and the first contemporary art work permanently installed in the Grade I listed building. [more](#)

The Open Air Laboratories, led by Imperial College in partnership with the **Natural History Museum**, Open University and other universities, parks and the Met Office has launched a Soil and Earthworm Survey, asking members of the public to take part in the first community-led study of the natural world. [more](#)

**National Museums Liverpool** has produced a children's book, *Something Wild...at the Walker Art Gallery*, to encourage young visitors to explore and enjoy the gallery. The book is aimed at 5-9 year olds and their parents, schools and learning practitioners and has been produced in partnership with Liverpool Childcare and Family Information Services. A large format of the book is available free to primary schools, after-school groups and other groups based in Liverpool. A smaller version is on sale in the Gallery and available to borrow while visiting. [more](#)

**The Ashmolean** has launched a public fundraising appeal in the final phase of its major redevelopment. With a donation of £50 or more, donors can have their name or a dedication inscribed on the Benefactors Bridge, linking the galleries at the heart of the Ashmolean's new building. [more](#)

The **Royal Air Force Museum** has re-launched its online collections database, Navigator, with the inclusion of over 16,000 new images from the portfolio of the renowned aviation photographer Charles Brown. Navigator provides public access to over 50,000 object records, most of which include images. [more](#)

The **Imperial War Museum** is marking the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War with a programme of exhibitions and events across its branches including *Outbreak 1939*, a new special exhibition at Imperial War Museum London and *Undercover - Life in Churchill's Bunker* at the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms marking the seventieth anniversary of the Cabinet War Rooms becoming operational. [more](#)

**The National Archives** has published the latest results of the local authority archive survey. The survey reveals a huge disparity in archives across the country, and identified preserving digital records as one of the major challenges. No archive service yet has an active digital preservation programme. [more](#)

## NATIONAL MUSEUM JOBS

The [NMDC jobs website](#) has details of vacancies around the UK, including:

- Principal Curator, East Asia, National Museums Scotland
- Schools and Families Education Officer, Sir John Soane's Museum
- Exhibition Coordinators, V&A
- Community Project coordinator, British Museum
- Web Content Coordinator, Science Museum
- Conservator, Royal Armouries

For details of all the current vacancies visit <http://www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk>

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>