

Welcome to the monthly news update from the National Museum Directors' Conference. In this issue:

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and much more...

NMDC NEWS

NMDC calls for Government support for museum partnerships across the UK

NMDC is calling on all major political parties to commit to sustained Government support for national-regional museum partnership working. It is also calling for a commitment to the continuation of support and funding for the Renaissance in the Regions programme, to ensure that regional museums can continue to work with national partners to deliver excellent museum provision across the UK.

Partnerships between national and regional museums give people the opportunity to access national collections and benefit from a range of exhibitions, learning initiatives and community engagement projects. Working in partnership allows both national and regional museum partners to increase their audiences, develop innovative programmes, share expertise and develop their staff, as well as being a valuable way of maximising impact and resources.

NMDC has recently published findings of a research project which demonstrates the benefits of such partnerships. Key findings include:

- Across 16 national museums the total number of projects undertaken with partners across the UK in 2008-9 was well over 1,600.
- Loan activity is strong, with nearly 80% of survey respondents describing their loan service as good and sustainable.
- There is good provision for learning, with three quarters of loans and exhibitions in 2008-9 supported by access to specialists in learning.

The research highlighted the importance of sustained government funding – in particular *Renaissance in the Regions* funding to build regional museum capacity, and *Strategic Commissioning* funding for museum education projects; and the value of partnerships with universities. The research concluded that the major barriers to the future development of partnership working include: diminishing financial resources; the lack of comprehensive data collection; and the absence of a UK-wide museum sector delivery strategy.

A project advisory group chaired by Diane Lees, Director-General of the Imperial War Museum, and including representatives from national and regional museums, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund developed 11 recommendations for national museums and other sector bodies to improve partnership working, focussing on 8 key areas:

- Building collaborative partnerships
- Working strategically
- Sharing knowledge
- Developing best practice
- Making lending easier
- Staff development
- Joint advocacy
- Recording partnership activity

The report was launched at the House of Commons on 12 January and introduced by Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw MP, who said: "Partnerships between national and regional museums are a brilliant – and effective – way of sharing both individual items from collections and the expertise and experience that go with them." The event included a display of the 15th century Middleham Jewel which has been lent by York Museums Trust to the British Museum as part of a long-term partnership. [Full report on NMDC website](#)

DIRECTORS IN THE NEWS

In the past few weeks, three members of the National Museum Directors' Conference have announced that they are moving on.

Michael Houlihan, Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Mr Houlihan has been Director of Amgueddfa Cymru since 2003 and an NMDC member since he became the first Chief Executive of National Museums Northern Ireland in 1998. He will take up his new role later this year. [More](#) [Michael Houlihan's blog](#)

Natalie Ceeney CBE, Chief Executive of the National Archives will be leaving in mid-March, to take on a new role as Chief Executive of the Financial Ombudsman Service. She has been Chief Executive since 2005 and was previously at the British Library. The Ministry of Justice will be handling the recruitment of Ms Ceeney's successor through open competition. In the intervening period, Oliver Morley, currently Director of Customer and Business Development, will take over as interim Chief Executive. Before joining the National Archives, Mr Morley was at Thomson Reuters, with global responsibility for improving information services for customers. [More](#)

Dr Michael Fopp, Director General of the Royal Air Force Museum for the last 22 years, has announced that he is retiring. Dr Fopp will hand over his post at the end of January 2010. He will be retained by the Museum to assist a fund-raising campaign for a new project to commemorate and celebrate the enduring legacy of the Battle of Britain. In March he will also take up a new appointment as Master of the Guild of Air Pilots & Air Navigators of London. Peter Dye, currently Deputy Director General, will take over as Acting Director General from 1 February. The process of appointing a permanent successor to Dr Fopp will start immediately.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

State of the Arts conference

Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw MP and Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP gave keynote speeches at the *State of the Arts* conference in London on 14 January. Jeremy Hunt spoke first and reiterated the Conservative Party's commitment to maintaining free admission to national museums, as well as increasing the heritage share of National Lottery funding to 20%, cutting funding bodies' spend on administration to less than 5%, and encouraging philanthropy and endowment funding to promote a mixed economy of state and private funding for cultural organisations. He ended by saying he hoped the "foundations for a new golden age for the arts" would be laid under a Conservative government.

Ben Bradshaw said that he had reported to Cabinet colleagues during a recent discussion on the recession that 2009 was the most successful year ever for the cultural sector: the creative economy had grown at twice the rate of the economy as a whole in the last ten years and now equates to 10% of GDP, making it the biggest, proportionally, in the world. Mr Bradshaw stated that "there is a strong case, and if I'm still here I'll be making it very strongly, to protect investment in culture and the arts." He added that: "a flat cash or a standstill budget for our sectors over the next Comprehensive Spending Review period would still leave spending on culture 83% higher in real terms than it was in 1997."

The Conference was organised by RSA and Arts Council England and will become an annual event. Videos of the event, as well as transcripts of Ben Bradshaw's and Jeremy Hunt's speeches, are available on [the RSA website](#). The *Guardian's* arts correspondent, Charlotte Higgins provided an analysis of Jeremy Hunt's speech in her [blog](#) [More press coverage](#).

Conservatives propose national strategy for cultural education

Shadow Culture Minister Ed Vaizey MP has given a speech on cultural education, proposing that "spending on cultural education [be] brought together and made subject to a single coherent national strategy." Mr Vaizey argued that "there is a clear role for central government here to act as a co-ordinator, resource, and funding organisation for these plans and strategies". and said he was "open to the idea of, at a national level, merging some of the plethora of cultural education initiatives and quangos into one coherent, national, agenda-setting funding body."

Discussing specific funding streams from the DCSF and the Arts Council for music and dance education, he said that "confusion and duplication might have been ok when times were good. Now government spending is coming under ever increasing pressure and scrutiny, it is both unacceptable and unsustainable." He issued a challenge to the cultural education sector "to have honest discussions about what in each of your areas really works and is worth enhancing, prioritising or replicating; and what could either be done more effectively or efficiently by another organisation... or even not at all." CulturePolitick.com

Conservative draft manifesto

The Conservative Party have published the chapter of their draft manifesto that covers DCMS policy. "Chapter Two: Mending Our Broken Society" includes the pledge to return the Lottery to its "original purposes" and cut administration costs, and to investigate new ways to increase philanthropy. There is a commitment to "develop a measure of well-being that encapsulates all it means to live a good and fulfilling life", and references to the importance of sport in binding people together. A separate culture manifesto is expected to be published before the election. [Mending our Broken Society](#)

Confidence in Scottish culture

In a speech at the Celtic Connections Festival, Scotland's Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop MSP anticipated benefits for Scotland's cultural scene if the Scottish government attains increased responsibilities. Ms Hyslop said: "I firmly believe that a Scotland with more control over its own affairs - a Scotland more confident in itself - would see fresh creativity shine through as a result. In turn, a more confident nation leads to an even more creative one - a virtuous circle of increasing confidence and creativity."

Last month, the Minister also chaired the third meeting of the Museums Think Tank, which is seeking solutions to the challenges facing the museums sector in Scotland. [Scottish Government](#)

Also

The Liberal Democrats will be publishing a manifesto on culture on 4 February. We will have a full report in next month's newsletter.

MUSEUM SECTOR NEWS

Private investment in museums fell by 37% last year

Private sector investment in culture in the UK fell by 7% to £654.9m in 2008/09, down from the record high of £687m in 2007/08. Headline figures from Arts & Business's *Private Investment in Culture* survey show that investment from all three private sector sources - business, private donations and trusts and foundations- declined by 6-7% compared to the previous year.

The greatest fall in private investment was to museums, with funding falling by 37.5% from £124m to £81m. This decline is exaggerated by the extraordinary one-off donation of £20m by Sammy Ofer to the National Maritime Museum in March 2008, but even excluding this it is the biggest fall in any sector. Over the same period, private investment in the heritage sector increased by 6% to 225.5m.

Survey respondents reported that private investment in 08/09 accounted for an average of 15% of their organisation's total income, with 53% from public sector funding and the remaining 32% raised through earned income.

Arts & Business's Chief Executive Colin Tweedy pointed out that it is still "a remarkable achievement" that cultural organisations have secured close to £665m from the private sector in the current economic climate. Based on market trend analysis, Arts & Business predict the worst is yet to come, with 2010/11 being the low-point for private investment in the cultural sector.

The full report, with detailed analysis by sector and region, will be launched at symposium in London on 26 March.

Review of funding for university museums

The Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) is currently conducting a review of funding for university museums in England. HEFCE's Museum, Galleries and Collections Fund supports museums and galleries in the higher education sector where the cost of stewardship goes beyond what universities could be expected to meet from mainstream funding for teaching and research. The review, announced in December, is considering how far the activities of the museums and galleries meet core HEFCE policy aims and are activities of a kind that HEFCE funding should support. All HEFCE-funded museums have been asked to provide detailed submissions supporting their case for continued funding.

NMDC Chair, Dr Michael Dixon, has written to Sir Muir Russell, who is leading the HEFCE review. In his letter, Dr Dixon emphasises the important role university museums play within their local communities providing learning opportunities to everyone, including those outside the HE sector. He also stressed the importance of university museums partnerships with other cultural organisations, and their contribution to the UK's economy and international standing.

Lord Howarth of Newport called a debate in the House of Lords on 5 January on funding for university museums, arguing that dedicated funding is essential if the excellence of the university museums and galleries is to be preserved. He called for new accounting procedures to ensure the £10m HEFCE funding currently ring-fenced for museums does not "go into the general maw of a reduced block grant to the universities". Lord Young of Norword Green, Minister at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, said: "The Government fully recognise the importance of university museums and galleries and the immense value of the collections that they hold on behalf of the nation." He continued: "The Government's policy is to continue to invest in higher education museums and galleries through special funding." Responding to concerns that the criteria of the review were too narrow, Lord Young said he was confident the review would take into account the fact that university museums "are not merely part of higher education research but are also a... valuable resource to the public generally and a tourist attraction as well." [Lords debate \(5 January\)](#)

On 12 January, Lord Young told the House of Lords that the review findings are due to be presented to HEFCE in February and discussed by the HEFCE Board in April. The report and HEFCE's response will be published after the board's consideration.

Ten members of the House of Lords, including former Ministers and museum Trustees, also signed a letter in *The Times* on 20 January raising concerns about the core funding of the university museums in England. [The Times](#)
[HEFCE Review](#)

Campaign to purchase Staffordshire Hoard

The Art Fund has launched a public campaign to raise £3.3m by 17 April to purchase the Staffordshire Hoard for Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent. The three major UK political party leaders, as well as a growing list of celebrities, have backed the campaign. £53,500 was raised from public donations in the first week of the campaign. The Art Fund has also given a grant of £300,000 and Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils have each donated £100,000. [The Art Fund](#)

Kids in Museums calls for flexible family tickets

Kids in Museums has launched a new Flexible Family Ticket campaign aiming to ensure that family discounts for charging museums and exhibitions reflect the many shapes of modern families. Education Secretary Ed Balls MP is supporting the campaign and the DCSF has provided £25,000 funding to enable Kids in Museums to carry out research asking for families' experiences on family tickets. It hopes to publish the results in March and, in the light of the findings, to propose a more flexible format for museums to adopt.

The demand for flexible family tickets is just one point in the *2010 Kids in Museums Manifesto - 20 ways to make a museum family friendly*. The manifesto, launched at the British Museum last month, has been compiled entirely from visitors' comments, and makes many new points, emphasising in particular that being interactive and hands on does not need to mean high-tech. "Dressing up and getting messy are as important as buttons to push."

Museums and galleries are being encouraged to show their support for manifesto by adding their name to the list of places that aspire to be family friendly. [Kids in Museums](#)

£750,000 capital investment for Scottish museums

Scottish Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop MSP has announced an additional £750,000 of capital funding for Scotland's Recognised Collections of National Significance. 36 collections across Scotland are eligible to apply for the funding from the Recognition Scheme, which is managed by Museums Galleries Scotland. Allocations will be announced in the spring. Total capital funding through the Recognition Scheme in 2009/2010 now totals £2.32 million.

Museums Galleries Scotland estimates that Scotland's museums and galleries welcome an estimated 25.3 million visitors per year, generating £800 million for the economy. [Museums Galleries Scotland](#)

...Love Museums – campaign for to promote advocacy skills

The Museums Association (MA) has launched ...*Love Museums*, a six-month programme of activity to support museums in improving their advocacy skills. The project aims to improve the skills, ambitions and confidence of museum staff to undertake advocacy work; create a more active and engaged community of museum advocates that speak for their organisations and the wider sector; and complement the work already being undertaken by other organisations and bodies to make the case for museums.

The MA will offer a series of free training workshops and a range of online resources, including case studies and information sheets on advocacy-related topics. The first four training workshops are currently open for booking and more dates will be added in due course. [Museums Association](#)

Britain Loves Wikipedia competition to upload museum images

Throughout February 2010, museums in England and Scotland will be offering unprecedented access to collections to the public, as part of a collaborative project with Wikimedia UK. *Britain Loves Wikipedia* was launched at the V&A on 31 January, and is a month-long series of competitions and events in participating museums, designed to encourage the public to take digital images of collections for inclusion on Wikipedia (the world's fifth most popular website).

The project, organised by Wikimedia UK in collaboration with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Collections Trust and Culture 24, aims to enhance the content available to the public on Wikipedia, raise awareness of the treasures contained in our museums and introduce new audiences to the nation's cultural collections. [Britain Loves Wikipedia](#) [MLA website](#)

Art Fund to research museum collecting habits

The Art Fund is to undertake a comprehensive survey of museum collecting over the last five years. The research will look at acquisitions since 2005 and will focus on what was collected, the most significant objects saved, what was missed out on and sources of funding. It will also look at the issues surrounding collecting in UK museums, and other challenges they face. Curators and managerial staff of museums and galleries will be invited to complete an online questionnaire between 8 February-5 March, which will be followed up with a number of one-to-one interviews. The overall results will be published in the spring, but individual responses will remain anonymous.

The research will update the Art Fund's 2006 research *The Collecting Challenge*, which looked at collecting activity across UK museums and galleries between 2000 and 2005. For further details, please contact Sally Wrampling, Head of Policy and Research, on 020 7225 4837 or swrampling@artfund.org

Museums get involved in British Tourism Week

The fourth annual British Tourism Week (BTW) takes place from 15 - 21 March 2010. VisitBritain is coordinating a programme of events aimed at raise awareness of the size, value and importance of Britain's £114 billion visitor economy. Tourism businesses, including museums, are being encouraged to participate, register events on the website and invite local politicians to visit. [British Tourism Week](#)

International conference on diversity in museums

A major international conference, *From the Margins to the Core*, at the V&A on 24-26 March will bring together museums, heritage, cultural and community organisations, to explore the shifting roles and increasing significance of diversity and equality in contemporary museum and heritage policy and practice. Contributors to the conference include academics, policy makers and practitioners from around the world, as well as several UK national museum directors. The four conference themes are: embedding diversity; connecting or competing equalities; social justice; and drivers for change. Key discussions will explore how satisfactorily the sector is likely respond to new equality legislation where issues around sexuality and gender identity, faith and age sit alongside more established equalities of gender, race and disability. The conference is being organised by the V&A and Leicester University. [From the Margins to the Core](#)

Delivering Major Arts & Museum Capital Projects More Efficiently

Turner & Townsend, which has supported the Natural History Museum with cost management services on the £78m Darwin Centre Phase 2 building, has published a summary of key issues that will allow arts organisations and museums to deliver capital projects more efficiently. [More](#)

DCMS announces grants to mark Holocaust Memorial Day

Culture Minister Margaret Hodge MP marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January by announcing grants to the Jewish Museum and the Wiener Library to help meet relocation costs. Each institution will receive £100,000 from DCMS resources made possible by under-spends identified elsewhere. The Jewish Museum is set to re-open in North London on 17 March after a major redevelopment project. The Wiener Library, formed in 1933, plans to relocate in 2011 to Russell Square in London: it is one of the world's leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era. [DCMS](#)

Empty shops transformed in creative and learning centres

MLA has secured a £100,000 grant from the Government's Learning Revolution Transformation Fund to transform two town centre shops into creative and learning centres. The projects aim to provide new informal adult learning opportunities, particularly for people from disadvantaged groups. A former shoe shop in Taunton will be converted into a base for the *Our Place, Your Place: Taunton project*, which will bring residents together to share memories, thoughts and pictures of the town as well as learn about how Taunton is changing. An interior design shop in Blackburn will become the base for *Project Our Place: Arts in the Heart of Blackburn*. [MLA website](#)

UK's first museum school

The Guardian featured an article on the Langley Academy in Berkshire, the first in Britain to commit itself to museum learning across the entire curriculum. The Academy was officially opened last November and works in partnership with a range of local and national museums, including Slough Museum, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, The River & Rowing Museum and the V & A. Pupils have at least 12 museum visits a year and the school also has its own museum. The Academy is being seen as an opportunity to evaluate the long-term impact of museum learning's planning, delivery and development within the UK secondary system. Its main sponsor is the charitable foundation of Sir Martyn Arbib, a major benefactor and trustee of the Henley Museum. [The Guardian](#)

China-UK Connections Development Grant

The British Council has launched the eighth round of the China-UK Connections Development Grant. The grants will enable one member of staff from an organisation to visit counterparts with the aim of furthering the face-to-face discussions needed to develop projects. The deadline for applications is Friday 26 February 2010 for visits taking place before 30 October 2010. [British Council](#)

Also

The Collections Trust has published a new guide to copyright for cultural heritage organisations. [More](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

English Heritage given unrealistic diversity targets say MPs

A report by the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee says that DCMS gave English Heritage "unrealistic targets" to increase the number of visits to historic sites by people from under-represented groups. The report, *Promoting Participation with the Historic Environment*, notes that "with no clear evidence of how the target levels might be achieved, English Heritage opted instead to focus on increasing its income from visitor attractions, at the expense of activities to increase participation." The Committee says it supports the principle that the nation's heritage should be accessible to all, but concludes that DCMS "did not convince us that having a target focussed on increasing visits from those in underrepresented groups to historic sites served a useful purpose." The Committee's recommendations include that DCMS should:

- undertake a full examination of the costs and benefits of achieving targets before setting them; and balance this against other spending priorities.
- identify more direct and cost-effective ways of measuring its impact, and that of its sponsored bodies
- agree what its sponsored bodies will deliver before it releases the related funding.
- collate information about what works in attracting new audiences across sport, culture and the arts, and disseminate it across its sponsored bodies, to avoid duplication of effort.

The Committee also recommends that English Heritage should develop an action plan to increase the diversity of its workforce, develop an action plan that addresses the obstacles to visiting heritage sites and reverse the 20% decline in educational visits to its own sites. The Committee has asked English Heritage to report back in three months setting out the actions being taken and the progress made.

The Committee's inquiry followed the National Audit Office report *Promoting Participation with the Historic Environment*, published in July 2009, which made recommendations to improve DCMS's performance management and English Heritage's work to promote participation. [Committee of Public Accounts report \(January 2010\)](#) [National Audit Office report \(July 2009\)](#)

London tourism campaign benefits economy

Figures published by the Greater London Authority show that the £2 million *Only in London* campaign, launched by the Mayor of London last spring, generated nearly £100 million in economic benefits to the capital – a return of around 50 to 1. More than 2.1 million tourists visited London during the third quarter of 2009 – up 11% on the same period in 2008 – and spent an additional £172 million, 17% more than the previous year. [Greater London Authority](#)

VisitBritain forecasts tourism recovery in 2010

VisitBritain says that recent figures on visits to the UK in 2009 suggest that the tourism industry has reached a turning point. During the first 10 months of 2009, 300,000 more inbound holiday visitors chose the UK as a holiday destination. In the three months to October, leisure and business inbound visitors spent £5bn while in the UK, a 3% increase on the same period of 2008. Visits from North America were up by 11% in the three months to October. VisitBritain forecast that in 2010 the volume of inbound tourism will rise by 0.8% to 30.4million, with inbound visitor spending rising by nearly 4% to £17.1 billion.

Arts Council England consults on future priorities

Arts Council England has launched *Achieving great art for everyone*, a consultation on future priorities for the arts. The consultation will inform a ten-year strategic framework and the Arts Council's future investment decisions. The consultation documents set out new ways of working, new funding programmes and five new long-term goals that will drive the Arts Council's three functions: championing, developing and investing. The consultation runs until 14 April 2010. [Consultation document](#)

Creative learning raises standards

Creative learning practices in schools are improving standards across the curriculum and pupils' personal development according to Ofsted's latest report, *Learning: creative approaches that raise standards*. The report is based in visits to 44 schools, including 18 which are Creative Partnerships schools. Ofsted remarked that Creative Partnership schools have seen "notable improvements in their levels of achievement and in measurable aspects of personal development, such as attendance". [Ofsted report](#)

New arts jobs for young people

Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw MP has announced that 167 new arts apprenticeships will be created in London by the New Deal of the Mind partnership, funded by the Government's Future Jobs Fund. These include design assistants, marketing and press assistants and fundraisers at organisations including the British Library, the Lyric Hammersmith, the Young Vic and the Royal Court. A further 56 jobs have been created in association with Essex-based Theatre Resource, which is one of the biggest disabled-led arts organisation in the UK. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has committed to contributing 10,000 jobs within the Future Jobs Fund: 5,000 in culture and 5,000 in sport. [DCMS](#)

Diamond Jubilee celebrations 2012

The Government has announced that there will be an extra bank holiday in 2012 as part of the celebrations to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The late May Bank holiday will be moved to Monday 4 June and there will be an extra bank holiday on Tuesday 5 June. A programme of events for the Jubilee Weekend in June will be organised by Buckingham Palace. DCMS will be responsible for co-ordinating the Government-led aspects of the celebrations. [DCMS](#)

Community Celebrations programme

The Legacy Trust is seeking applications for its *Community Celebrations* programme. A total of £4m will be awarded to five community celebrations marking the London 2012 Olympics. The Legacy Trust is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, DCMS and Arts Council England to help communities across the country build a lasting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Legacy Trust has also launched a tendering process to find a host organisation to take on the project management of its national programme *somewhere*, which aims to help young people gain access to spaces to do the things they love doing. [Legacy Trust](#)

Nominations for UK's favourite Lottery projects

Nominations are open for the annual National Lottery Awards which aim to highlight the positive difference which Lottery funding makes to people, places and communities. There are seven award categories open to any project that has received Lottery funding since 1994. The deadline for nominations is 12 February. [National Lottery Awards](#)

Record year for London Theatre

London theatres had another record year in 2009 with higher attendance and box office takings than in any previous year. Box office receipts reached almost £505m in 2009, up 7.6% on the previous record year in 2008 and attendance figures rose by 5.5% to 14.25m. [Society of London Theatres](#)

Also

The Government has announced that in future it will put forward fewer sites for consideration by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. A new 'Tentative List' of candidate sites will be drawn up for submission to UNESCO in 2011, with the first nomination going forward from 2012. [More](#)

The Guardian reports that the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London has told staff that the financial deficit currently at around £600,000 might rise to £1.2m, and that the ICA could close by May if radical steps are not taken. [More](#)

The Historic Houses Association, which represents 1500 historic houses and gardens in private ownership, has launched a manifesto, *Inspirational Places – the Value of Britain's Historic Houses*, calling for support from all political parties in the run-up to the General Election and beyond. [More](#)

IN PARLIAMENT

Tax incentives to promote lifetime giving to museums and universities

During a debate on the tax system in the House of Lords on 28 January, Lord Howarth of Newport argued for tax incentives to encourage philanthropy, particularly lifetime giving to museums and universities. He said: "The Government should ease the complicated restrictions on what charitable organisations can claim from gift aid in relation to admissions charges and the benefits that come from belonging to supporters' organisations. Those restrictions make it harder to build up the crucial long-term relationships between institutions and donors. Importantly, also, tax relief should be extended, as in the USA, to cover the gift of objects that would be valuable additions to the collections of museums, galleries, libraries and archives. Our "acceptance in lieu" scheme works well if the donor has died. Comparable benefits through income tax and CGT relief should be available to the living who wish to donate important cultural objects"

Digital Heritage Bill

Tom Watson MP has introduced a Digital Heritage Bill, "to enable specified institutions to make digital copies of cultural artefacts for archival purposes notwithstanding the existence of any intellectual property right; and for connected purposes." This change was one recommendation of the Gowers Review on Intellectual Property on which the Government is currently consulting. The Bill, a Private Members Bill, will now be printed and will have a Second Reading debate on 12 March, but is unlikely to become law because of lack of parliamentary time. [Digital Heritage Bill](#)

[Tom Watson's full speech](#)

[Consultation on Gowers Review](#)

National museum education programmes

In a Parliamentary Question, Jeremy Hunt MP asked what free educational schemes DCMS operates in national museums. Culture Minister Margaret Hodge MP responded that the 'Strategic Commissioning' programme, joint-funded by DCMS and DCSF, has provided £15.3m from 2003-2011 to enable national museums and their regional partners to develop free educational and community programmes. Over 300,000 school children were said to have benefited from this programme to date.

Free museums a sign of a more tolerant, democratic and open society

In a House of Lords debate, Lord Harrison of Chester described free access to museums as a prime example of the progress that has been made over the past decade in making the United Kingdom "a more tolerant, democratic and open society". He said that the increased visitor numbers and diverse visitor profile at Museum of Liverpool shows how "our national treasures are thrown open to the people." He also praised capital investment in museums including the Ashmolean and International Slavery Museum in which "we democratise the art and history of our country" [Hansard](#)

Also

Culture, Media and Sport Oral Questions in the House of Commons on 18 January included discussion of national lottery funding for heritage. [More](#)

In a Scottish Parliament debate on the newspaper industry, Christopher Harvie MSP suggested that some of the money used by "quangos, museums and universities" to produce free publications should be diverted and channelled instead into the free press. [More](#)

Northern Ireland's Acting First Minister Arlene Foster MLA opened a debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly on tourism and the work of Tourism Ireland. [More](#)

APPOINTMENTS

Ruth Mackenzie will be the Cultural Olympiad Director

Ruth Mackenzie, currently an expert adviser at DCMS, has been appointed Director of Culture for the 2012 Games. She will lead the LOCOG Culture team and report to Cultural Olympiad Chair Tony Hall and the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Board. She will be supported by a team of artistic advisers who will continue in their current roles: Martin Duncan, Craig Hassall, Sir Brian McMaster and Alex Poots.

Ruth Mackenzie's previous roles include General Director of the Manchester International Festival, Artistic Director of Chichester Festival Theatre and General Director of Scottish Opera. She was special adviser to two Culture Secretaries, Chris Smith and Tessa Jowell (1999-2002). She has also worked on a consultancy basis for the Barbican Centre, Tate, BBC, London Symphony Orchestra and Young Vic. She was awarded an OBE for her services to the theatre in 1995. [London 2012](#)

Museum Trustees

James Knox, Managing Director of The Art Newspaper, and **Richard Burns**, partner in an investment management firm, have been reappointed to the Board of Trustees of the **National Galleries of Scotland**. [More](#)

The Prime Minister has re-appointed **Sir David Omand** as a Trustee of the **Natural History Museum** and extended the appointment of **Professor Jacqueline McGlade** for a further eighteen months. [More](#)

The Foreign Secretary has appointed **Sir John Scarlett KCMG OBE**, until last year Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, to be a Trustee of the **Imperial War Museum**. [More](#)

Also

Tom Bewick, Group Chief Executive of Creative & Cultural Skills, has been appointed as Chief Executive of Enterprise UK. Enterprise UK is a business-led organisation which aims to increase entrepreneurship in the UK. It is primarily funded by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. He will take up his new post on 6 April. [More](#)

Helen Browning OBE has been appointed as Director of External Affairs at The National Trust. Ms Browning, an organic farmer, joins the Trust from the Soil Association where she was most recently Policy Advisor, and will begin her new role in mid March 2010. She replaces Tony Burton, who left the Trust in June 2009 to head up the Civic Societies Initiative [More](#)

Jim North, currently Chief Executive of the Scottish Arts Council, has been appointed by Arts Council England as Area Executive Director, North. The appointment is the final one to its new Executive Board – the streamlined national leadership team that will lead the re-structured organisation from April 2010. Creative Scotland is due to replace the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen later this year as the development body for arts and cultural industries in Scotland. [More](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US museums continue to cut budgets despite endowments recovery

The Art Newspaper reports that despite the recovery in US museums' endowments as the stock markets rose towards the end of 2009, museum directors are continuing to cut or freeze their budgets. The Art Newspaper has established a survey of 25 leading museums and the February edition includes an overview of finances of several of these institutions. Many museum endowments fell by around 25% in the twelve months to June 2009 but have started to recover in the past six months, with many now up by 12-14% on last year's low. The endowment of the Museum of Modern Art, New York endowment dropped from \$818m to \$669m in June 2009. The Metropolitan Museum endowment fell by 26% to \$1.86bn in June 2009. [The Art Newspaper](#)

New York museums debate legislation to restrict deaccessioning

Representatives from museums in New York have met to discuss proposed legislation, developed in collaboration with the Museum Association of New York, that would prohibit museums from using proceeds from the sale of artworks "for traditional and customary operating expenses" (as opposed to new acquisitions, a purpose that is generally considered acceptable). The legislation was first proposed in March 2009 prompted by concern that the recession is pushing museums to consider collection sales to meet operating costs.

The Museum Association of New York has just conducted a survey of its members which revealed widespread support for the major elements of the deaccessioning bill. However the survey also found that only 75% supported the notion that collecting institutions should inform the public about the extent of their permanent collections, and 58.3% supported informing the public about deaccessioning activities. [Museum Association of New York](#) [New York Times](#)

Spoliation claim for Vermeer in Kunsthistorisches Museum

The Austrian Commission for Provenance Research is undertaking research on Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* in the collection of Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, following a claim that it was purchased in a forced sale in 1938. The Commission will pass its findings to a council which makes recommendations to the Austrian Government on whether disputed works of art in public collections should be restituted to heirs. [More](#)

Berlin's Court of Appeals has ruled that a collection of posters seized by the Gestapo should remain in the Deutsches Historisches Museum. [More](#)

Picasso painting damaged by visitor at Met Museum

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has issued a statement reporting that Picasso's painting, *The Actor* (1904-5), was damaged when a visitor attending an adult education class lost her balance and fell onto it. The painting, worth an estimated \$130m, has a 6 inch tear in the lower right-hand corner. The Museum's curatorial and conservation staff expect the repair to be unobtrusive. [More](#)

US museum changes at the top

The Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York has appointed designer and entrepreneur, Bill Moggridge, as its new Director. Mr Moggridge designed the first laptop computer in 1980 and was co-founder of design company IDEO, and is the first design practitioner to head the museum. He succeeds Paul Thompson, who left the museum in July to become Rector of the Royal College of Art in London. [More](#)

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles has appointed Jeffrey Deitch, a commercial art dealer and independent curator, to be its new Director. [More](#)

Dr. Michael Brand stepped down as Director of the J. Paul Getty Museum at the end of January, nearly a year before the end of his 5 year contract. *The Los Angeles Times* reports that he will continue to receive his salary until his contract expires in December. David Bomford, Associate Director for Collections at the Museum, will serve as Interim Director of the Museum until Brand's successor is named. [More](#)

Comment pieces: [LA Times](#) [New York Times](#)

Also

Claude Monet's painting, *Beach at Pourville*, has been recovered nine years after it was stolen from the National Museum in Poznan, Poland. The work, which was acquired by the museum in 1906, is the only painting by Monet in a Polish art collection. [More](#)

Spain has unveiled its cultural programme for its six-month presidency of the European Union. Spain's Cultural Minister Angeles Gonzalez-Sinde said the programme had several priorities: "the strengthening of the identity of European culture and the promotion of cultural tourism; the promotion of digital culture and the encouragement of a legal market and the digitalisation of content; and the promotion of culture as an engine for social and economic development." [More](#)

The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, has developed a widget for the iPhone. This free iPhone app enables users to admire a different painting from the museum's collection every day. [More](#)

NEWS FROM NMDC MEMBERS

An international architecture competition has been launched to design **V&A at Dundee**, a £47m gallery to host touring exhibitions and research into contemporary design. The Dundee project is being led by the University of Dundee with support from the Scottish Government, City Council and Abertay University. The 7,000 sq metre centre will be built over the River Tay, next to RSS Discovery, and is due to open in 2014. The V&A has committed to showing touring exhibitions in Dundee for 10 years. Funding for the £47million project is anticipated to come from the Scottish Government, other public bodies and private donations. In response to a [parliamentary question on 13 January](#), Jim Murphy MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, said that he had urged the Scottish Government to find the £15m necessary for the project. [More](#)

The Great British Art Debate is a four-year partnership project between [Tate Britain](#), [Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums](#), Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service and Museums Sheffield, intended to stimulate debate about the impact of British art on the public's perception of Britishness. It is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund, and by the MLA's Renaissance programme. The first of four major exhibitions sharing works from the four museums has opened in Norwich. The public will be invited to take part in an online debate from March 2010 at www.greatbritishartdebate.org [More](#)

Preparatory building works have begun on the new **Tate Modern** development. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson launched the start of the work on 6 January. The new building will provide over 5000sqm of new gallery space and over 1300sqm of new space for learning programmes. The £215m project is due to be completed in 2012. To date Tate has raised £76.5 million. [More](#)

The [Natural History Museum](#) held its first sleepover event on 16 January for groups of 8-11 year old children. *Dino Snores*, which included torch-lit tours of the Dinosaur gallery, sold out quickly and the event will be repeated monthly. [More](#)

The [National Slate Museum Llanberis](#) has been granted the Sandford Award for heritage education. The Awards are made annually and are non-competitive, recognising quality and excellence in the educational services and facilities at a site. [More](#)

[The National Gallery](#) is to show an exhibition of artwork made by young men detained in Feltham Young Offenders Institution. The 55 works in this show – which include paintings, prints, sculptures, drawings and collages – were produced during the first year of a National Gallery outreach programme, *Inside Art*, which was undertaken by groups of 18 to 21 year-old men at Feltham. *Inside Art* has been funded by The LankellyChase Foundation for three years, from 2009 to 2011. [More](#)

[Ulster Museum](#) assisted a proposal of marriage in December by arranging a special display case holding an engagement ring, to which visitor Andrew Houston was able to direct his girlfriend's attention. The accompanying card, created by an Ulster Museum designer, stated: "This ring was presented to Laurel Oliver by Andrew Houston on Saturday 5th December, 2009, the day of their engagement." CCTV footage of the proposal was shown by *BBC News*. [More](#)

New digital resources

[The Ashmolean Museum](#) has launched a major online source - Eastern Art Online: Yousef Jameel Centre For Islamic and Asian Art, which provides global access to the University of Oxford's Islamic and Asian Art collections held at the museum. [More](#)

A new archive containing many of the key artistic works produced against the backdrop of the Troubles has been unveiled at the [Ulster Museum](#). The digital resource, which is included in the Museum's Troubles gallery, has been collated by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and contains examples of work from over 80 artists. [More](#)

[The British Library](#) has launched a new interactive history timeline which allows students and teachers to explore collection items chronologically for the first time. Scanning through centuries of images, audio-visual and printed material, users will be able to explore various themed timelines: 'everyday life', 'music and literature' and 'politics, power and rebellion' on one screen. [More](#)

[National Museum Wales](#) has launched a free electronic resource designed to help people understand Wales's role in the transatlantic slave trade. The toolkit has been created out of a multi-faceted project run by the National Waterfront Museum called Everywhere in Chains - Wales and Enslavement. [More](#)

[Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery's](#) Pre-Raphaelite Online Resource has won a BETT (British Education and Training Technology) award. The awards celebrate the best and most

innovative technology solutions available for UK classrooms. This is the fourth award that the website has received since it was launched in July 2009. [More](#)

[The National Archives](#) has won an e-Government National Award for the online 1911 census service. The 1911 census project, one of the most ambitious digitisation projects ever undertaken, involved digitising more than two kilometres of paper census returns containing information collected from 36 million people. The project was made possible through a partnership between The National Archives and findmypast.co.uk. The online census received 24 million searches in the first month after its launch. [More](#)

NMDC JOBS

Our jobs website, www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk currently has details of over 35 vacancies at museums around the UK including:

- Front of House Manager, Natural History Museum
- Education Manager, Merseyside Maritime Museum
- Assistant Registrar, National Media Museum
- Assistant Curator, Entomology, National Museums Scotland
- Archive Cataloguer (Scharf), National Portrait Gallery

For details of these jobs and many more visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

And finally...

Twenty members of staff at the **National Railway Museum**, including the Acting Director Helen Ashby, built a snow model of the record breaking Mallard locomotive, outside the entrance to the museum before opening hours on 7 January. [More](#)

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