

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update...

In this issue:

[Free admission boosts sense of public ownership of museums](#)

[UK signs international declaration on Nazi looted art](#)

[Digital Britain report proposes legislation to unlock cultural assets](#)

[US museum audiences declining and getting older](#)

[Science Museum celebrates 100th birthday and unveils masterplan](#)

and much more...

NMDC NEWS

National-regional museums partnership project

National museums undertake a significant amount of partnership working with their regional counterparts, sharing their collections and expertise with museums around the UK and enabling large numbers of people across the country to access and engage with the national collections. However, NMDC believes it is timely to review developments in patterns, practice and models of partnerships and to consider a more strategic approach which could increase the capabilities and capacities of UK museums to deliver maximum benefits to the public. NMDC has therefore embarked on a new project to review and assess partnership working between national and regional museums, aiming to ensure that partnership working is as joined-up, strategic and effective as possible.

A project advisory group, chaired by Diane Lees, Director of the Imperial War Museum, has been formed and includes senior staff from NMDC members, regional and independent museums, Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The next phase of the project involves mapping current national-regional museum partnership activity across the UK. This will inform the development of a set of recommendations for use by national museums, MLA, Renaissance hubs, DCMS and equivalent bodies across the UK as they further develop regional partnership working. There will be a session at the Museums Association conference in October to discuss the research findings and draft recommendations, followed by a cross-party seminar at the House of Commons later in the autumn.

London 2012

NMDC's 2012 Group, chaired by Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, meets regularly to national museums' plans for the Cultural Olympiad and issues relating to the Games. Fran Hegyi, Senior Cultural Programmes Advisor at LOCOG, and Isabel Siddons, Programme Manager for 2012 at MLA, attended the group's meeting last month and gave an update on planning for the Games and on the various programming and activity for the Cultural Olympiad including *Stories of the World*. Issues discussed included evaluation of the Cultural Olympiad and its legacy, 2012 marketing and branding, and museum sector input on content for screening at the 'live sites' around the UK.

Meeting with Ed Vaizey MP

Members of NMDC's Executive Committee met Shadow Culture Minister Ed Vaizey MP last month to discuss museums and cultural policy. In an interview with *The Guardian* in June, Mr Vaizey set out Conservative culture policy. On arts funding, he said the Conservative party's "approach is not across-the-board cuts, but to look for smart savings." [Read the full interview](#)

PUBLIC VALUE OF MUSEUMS

Free admission boosts sense of public ownership of national museums

New public value research published by the Art Fund and the Work Foundation found that free admission to galleries is highly valued and important in making public ownership of the nation's art real in people's minds. The report, *Free to see – but what next?*, reveals that even if people do not regularly visit museums themselves, they feel free admission is valuable to society as a whole. The research also found that, despite the removal of admission fees, other barriers remain which prevent people from visiting galleries and museums, including a lack of knowledge about the art on display and a sense of being intimidated by the buildings themselves. The Art Fund hopes the report will prompt more public debate about the values the public attaches to art in public collections and how these can be increased. [Read the report](#)

Record visits to national museums for third year running

Culture Minister Barbara Follett MP has told the House of Commons that visits to national museums and galleries are at a record high for the third year running, with more than 40.3 million such visits recorded last year. Since free admission was introduced in 2001, visits to previously charging museums have more than doubled, from 7.2 million eight years ago to 16 million last year. [House of Commons record](#)

53% adults visit museums but new figures show huge local variance

DCMS has published data on museum participation in all 353 local authorities in England. Overall, 53% of adults in England have visited a museum or gallery in the last 12 months. Participation figures in individual local authorities range from 78% in the London Borough of Camden to 35% in Boston, Lincolnshire. The data from the *Active People Survey* measures museum visits for leisure purposes, including informal learning and studying or research for personal interests. Online access to collections and outreach services are not counted. A new map showing levels of museum participation across England can also be found on the [DCMS website](#). [Read research summary](#)

41% of public satisfied with local museums provision

New data from the Government's 2008 Place Survey reveals that 41% of people in England are very or fairly satisfied with local provision of museums and galleries. Broken down by region, the highest level of satisfaction was in Yorkshire and the Humber (46%) and the lowest was in London (36%). The Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and their local services. Libraries were the most highly rated local service with 69% satisfaction. Read full [report](#)

Measuring the value of the cultural sector

The MLA is encouraging debate on the relevance and benefit of Social Return on Investment (SROI) as a way to measure the value of museums, libraries and archives. Find out more on [MLA's web-forum](#). [Read MLA's discussion document](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

New Culture Secretary

Ben Bradshaw MP has been appointed as the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, replacing Andy Burnham who has moved to the Department of Health. Mr Bradshaw was previously Minister of State for Health Services and has also been at the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs, the Privy Council Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Before election as an MP for Exeter in 1997, he worked as a journalist and was the BBC's correspondent in Berlin.

DCMS also has a new junior Minister, Siôn Simon MP, whose responsibilities include the creative industries, better regulation within the DCMS, sustainable development and the National Lottery. This is an unpaid post. Mr Simon was previously Minister for Further Education at the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. [More information from DCMS](#)

Culture Minister wants to 'mash up' art

In an interview with the *Evening Standard*, Culture Minister Barbara Follett MP said she wants to make culture more accessible to ordinary people: "Only ten per cent of art owned by museums is actually on display. We need to digitise this archived art, 'mash it up' as the kids say, and project it onto walls in public places." [Read full article](#)

Arts Manifesto launched

National Campaign for the Arts (NCA) has launched an Arts Manifesto, an advocacy tool for use in the run up to the next General Election and beyond. The manifesto, produced after extensive consultation, is not meant to be a policy wish list but a vision for the UK and the arts sector's place within it. It calls on the UK government and devolved administrations to:

- commit to sustained investment over a longer funding cycle of five years;
- facilitate greater collaboration between the sector and educators, and develop the confidence and ability of teachers and educators to deliver a comprehensive cultural education;
- institute a cultural programme to showcase the arts and culture to visiting dignitaries;
- require local authorities to address culture and the arts within their local strategic plans and to prioritise the provision of arts and culture in spatial planning policy; and
- encourage more private and corporate philanthropy by introducing new incentives and changes to the tax system.

The NCA is encouraging people to sign up to demonstrate support for the manifesto on Facebook and via their own website. [More on NCA website](#)

Scotland Museums Summit

Scottish Culture Minister Michael Russell MSP convened a meeting of over 60 museum leaders from across Scotland to discuss the following issues:

- finding a sustainable future for Scotland's industrial museums;
- funding the right balance of roles, responsibilities and resources between national and local provision;
- articulating the sector's contribution to Scottish society; and
- making the best use of limited resources.

The next steps outlined by the Minister will be the formation of a small group of individuals from the sector to look strategically at how to overcome the issues facing the sector. The larger group will reconvene later in the year. [More on Scottish Government website](#)

Creative Scotland unveils £5m Innovation Fund

Creative Scotland 2009 Ltd has created a package of projects to support Scotland's artists and practitioners. The £5 million Innovation Fund - the first Creative Scotland branded initiative, announced last year - aims to bring to life new partnerships that cross traditional boundaries. It includes funding for digital media, creative entrepreneurs, artists in residency and cross-agency working in rural areas. [More on Scottish Government website](#)

Welsh First Minister emphasises importance of museum collaboration

At a recent Q&A event to celebrate the tenth birthday of the Welsh Assembly, Michael Tooby, Director of Learning and Programmes at Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales, asked First Minister Rhodri Morgan about his thoughts regarding the importance of investing in cultural institutions, such as the museum, in order to revitalise the Welsh economy. While admitting that the next budget round will be tough, the First Minister emphasised the importance of collaborative work between institutions and also how efficiency savings will be inevitable though front line services will have to be protected.

London 2012 Open Weekend 24-26 July

A national public campaign to promote London 2012 Open Weekend has been launched. Last year, London 2012 Open Weekend showcased more than 650 events across the UK, attracting 750,000 people. All registered events will be listed on the London 2012 website and will also be included on the London 2012 map. To register your event, [visit the London 2012 website](#).

Wedgwood Museum wins Art Fund Prize

The Wedgwood Museum in Stoke-on-Trent has won the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for museums and galleries. The judges, chaired by David Puttnam, praised the way the museum uses its internationally-renowned collection to take visitors on a 250-year tour of British social, design and industrial history, while remaining firmly embedded in the local community. This year the public was also a judge in the first ever People's Choice poll. Over 27,000 people voted on guardian.co.uk, also choosing the Wedgwood Museum as their clear winner. [More on Art Fund website](#)

The Art Fund launches new 'Art Saved' resource

The Art Fund has launched a new 'Art Saved' section on its website, which enables users to search all works the charity has bought for the nation and locate them on a custom built Google map. The works can be searched by keyword or theme, location or artist. Related works are displayed on each page, providing additional information about an artist, collection or museums in the area. The site also features 'The Art Cloud', a composition of artists' names, media and genres which is altered by user searches and changes constantly. [Visit Art Saved website](#)

New targets for diversity in public appointments

The Government has launched new targets for diversity in public appointments. The aim is that by 2011, 50% of new appointments will be women, 14% will be disabled people and 11% will be people from ethnic minorities. A new cross-government action plan, *Opening Doors - Increasing Diversity*, sets out action over the next year to increase the visibility of the appointments system, ensure transparency and accountability and tackle the barriers people face in putting themselves forward. It includes a mentoring scheme to work with high potential applicants and a media campaign to promote opportunities in public bodies. Last year 32% of DCMS appointments were women, 4% were people with disabilities and 9% were people from ethnic minorities. [More from Government Equalities Office](#)

Charity Commission guidance for trustees in the economic downturn

The Charity Commission has produced guidance for trustees in the economic downturn: *Big Board Talk: the conversation all charities need to have*. The guidance provides a checklist with fifteen questions trustees need to ask to review the way they operate. It is intended to help structure a discussion as an agenda item at a trustee meeting, away day or planning meeting. The Charity Commission strongly encourages trustee boards of all charities to use the checklist, which is organised into four broad areas: strategy; financial health; governance and making best use of resources. [Read Big Board Talk](#)

Guide on children's and cultural services working together

A new guide, *Culture for All*, aims to encourage partnerships to flourish between schools, extended services and arts and cultural organisations that will benefit children, young people and families. The booklet, published by the MLA, Arts Council England and the Training and Development Agency for Schools, provides overview of how children's services and cultural organisations can work together as partners and as joint providers. It is intended for everyone involved in providing, commissioning or coordinating cultural services for children and young people. [Culture for All is available from TDA website](#)

Engaging young adults in the historic environment

The Heritage Environment Advisory Council for Scotland has presented Scottish Government Ministers with a report on strategies for engaging young adults in the historic environment. The recommendations include measures to promote the value of the historic environment in secondary education and raise capacity within the sector. The report is accompanied by case studies from the UK, Europe and America which demonstrate how young adults can be successfully engaged in the historic environment. [More on HEACS website](#)

10% increase in new volunteers for National Trust

More than 55,000 volunteers now work for the Trust and this year 139 National Trust volunteers will receive awards to mark 25 years of service with the charity. [More on National Trust website](#)

Volunteering in museums research results published

Museums Galleries Scotland have published research on the impact of volunteering in the museums and galleries sector, including the impact on individuals and the wider community. 90% of respondent museums have volunteer staff and nearly a quarter are entirely run by volunteers [Read full report](#)

MLA seeks views on Museum Accreditation Scheme

The MLA is seeking the views of museum professionals on the future of museums and how to strengthen and update the Museum Accreditation Scheme. An online questionnaire is available as part of the wider consultation. There will also be a series of consultation events across England and Wales. [More on MLA website](#)

Consultation on age discrimination in services and public functions

The Government is consulting on proposals for a new legal ban on harmful age discrimination in services and public functions. The consultation paper proposes an exemption to enable age-based concessions and discounts to continue. The closing date for comments is 30 September. [Read further details](#)

SPOLIATION

Legislation on return of cultural objects looted during the Nazi era

The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Bill has successfully completed its passage through the House of Commons with cross-party support, and is now being considered in the House of Lords. The Bill gives the trustees of 17 national museums the power to return certain cultural objects on grounds relating to events occurring during the Nazi era. The Bill has been substantially redrafted in Committee stage but its purpose remains unchanged. Trustees will be able to transfer an object from its collections if it has first been recommended by an advisory panel and approved by the Secretary of State and, for cases involving Scottish institutions, Scottish Government Ministers. The remit has been extended to cover National Museums Liverpool, Kew Gardens and the national collections in Scotland and the title has been changed to more accurately reflect its contents and purpose. The Bill now includes a sunset clause so it will automatically expire 10 years after the Act is passed.

In the debate on the Bill on 26 June, Culture Minister Barbara Follett welcomed the Bill with its strict restrictions on Trustees' power of disposal, and said that the Government "remain absolutely committed to protecting our national collections and will resist all attempts to see them broken up."

[Full details on Parliament website](#)

UK signs Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets

46 countries including the United Kingdom have signed a new declaration on Holocaust era assets, including affirming an urgent need to strengthen and sustain efforts in order to ensure just and fair solutions regarding cultural property. The Terezin Declaration followed the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference organised by the Czech Republic on 26-30 June. With regard to looted art, the declaration states:

"Recognising that restitution cannot be accomplished without knowledge of potentially looted art and cultural property, we stress the importance for all stakeholders to continue and support intensified systematic provenance research, with due regard to legislation, in both public and private archives, and where relevant to make the results of this research, including ongoing updates, available via the internet, with due regard to privacy rules and regulations."

The declaration reaffirms commitment to the 1998 Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art and recognises the progress that has been made in research, identification and restitution of cultural property in some states. [Read Terezin Declaration](#) [More on Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference](#)

COPYRIGHT

Digital Britain report proposes legislation to unlock cultural assets

In its report, *Digital Britain*, the Government last month set out plans to develop an effective framework to deal with orphan works. Orphan works are works that remain in copyright where, even after a diligent search, the owner cannot be identified or found. Recent research estimates that there are 25 million orphan works in UK museums including photographs, film and sound recordings. The Digital Britain report recognises that important cultural assets remain under lock and key because of the legal difficulties associated with using these works. The Government proposes to introduce legislation to enable commercial schemes for dealing with orphan works to be set up on a regulated basis. [Digital Britain report](#)

Responding to the *Digital Britain* report, Dame Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, emphasised the need to digitise of the 'goldmine' of content held by national institutions. [Read full statement](#)

In from the Cold, a new report by the Strategic Content Alliance and the Collections Trust calculates the scale of orphan works problem based on a survey of 500 museums. The report argues that the cost of due diligence research to find rights owners means that these works are often not included in digitisation projects, creating a 'black hole' of 20th century content. As well as calling for changes to the current legislation, the report emphasises the need for museum staff to have an informed and proportionate understanding of the nature of the risks associated with the use of 'orphan works'. [Read the report](#)

New copyright and Intellectual Property tools for public sector

A new copyright and IPR toolkit for public sector bodies has been developed by the Strategic Content Alliance (SCA). The SCA are running a series of free workshops around the country over the next few months to launch the toolkit. [Details about the SCA and the workshops can be found on their blog](#)

APPOINTMENTS AND HONOURS

English Heritage Chair – Baroness Andrews OBE

Baroness Andrews OBE has been appointed as Chair of English Heritage. Baroness Andrews served as a junior minister at the Department for Communities and Local Government from 2005 until last month: her responsibilities included planning and heritage, culture and regeneration as well as the third sector. She takes up her new role at the end of July. She was previously the founder Director of the charity Education Extra. [DCMS press release](#)

New Director of Art Fund – Dr Stephen Deuchar

Dr Stephen Deuchar, Director of Tate Britain, has been appointed as the new Director of The Art Fund.. He will take up his new post in January 2010. [Art Fund Press release](#)

New Chief Executive for the Arts and Humanities Research Council

Professor Rick Rylance has been appointed as Chief Executive and Deputy Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Professor Rylance is currently Head of the School of Arts, Languages and Literatures at the University of Exeter. [AHRC press release](#)

British Council appoints Advisor for Arts and Creative Economy

The British Council has appointed Graham Sheffield, Artistic Director of the Barbican, as its Advisor for Arts and Creative Economy. He takes up the post on 1 July, in parallel to his ongoing role with the Barbican. [British Council statement](#)

Tony Burton leads new Civic Society Initiative

Tony Burton, formerly the National Trust's Director of Strategy and External Affairs, has become the Director of the Civic Society Initiative. The initiative, funded by the National Trust and RIBA, among others, aims to ensure provision of a national voice and support for the civic society movement following the collapse of the Civic Trust earlier this year. [More about Civic Society Initiative](#)

Honours

Andrew Motion, Chair of the MLA was awarded a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Michael Clarke, Director of the National Gallery of Scotland was awarded a CBE. Harry Reeves, Deputy Director of Culture at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; Virginia Tandy, Director of Culture at Manchester City Council; and Dr Margaret Faull, Director of the National Coal Mining Museum, were awarded OBEs.

MLA CHANGES

MLA regional team for London

The MLA has announced that it will create a new regional team for London to replace the last remaining MLA agency, MLA London, by April 2010. The changes follow an independent review of MLA's investment in the capital and have been agreed with the Mayor of London who has a statutory responsibility for culture and power to appoint the chair of MLA London. The new structure also proposes a London sub-group of MLA's Board. [Read MLA statement](#)

MLA Acquisitions, Export and Loans team moving to Birmingham

MLA's Acquisitions, Export and Loans Unit will move from London to join MLA's main office in Birmingham. The Unit manages the Government's acceptance of cultural in lieu of inheritance tax (AIL), the Government Indemnity Scheme and export licensing. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and the expert AIL Panel will continue to meet in London. [Read MLA statement](#)

In response to a Parliamentary Question from Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister Barbara Follett MP reported that the cost of moving the Unit would be £350,000-£400,000. [House of Commons record](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

MLA Informal Adult Learning Challenge Fund 2009-2010

The MLA is inviting applications for a new £100,000 Challenge Fund to promote adult learning. MLA is looking for partnership bids with self-organised groups of adult learners to support the use of museum, library and archive spaces and resources in new ways. Museums can apply for grants of up to £5000 for projects to be delivered by the end of March 2010. [Application details on MLA website](#)

MLA invites applications for museum apprenticeships

Museums in England are being invited to apply for the MLA's Museum Apprenticeships. The MLA has pledged funding for up to 50 placements over the next two years as part of the Creative Apprenticeship developed by Creative & Cultural Skills, providing £5,000 for each year of each apprentice's employment. National Museums Liverpool and Tate Liverpool are both currently running successful Creative Apprenticeship schemes. The deadline for first round of applications is 17 July 2009. There will be a second round of applications in Autumn 2009. [Full details on MLA website](#)

PARLIAMENT

Progress on establishment of Coroner for Treasure

The Government has introduced amendments to the Coroners and Justice Bill to create a Coroner for Treasure, as recommended by the British Museum. The amendments also extend the time during which prosecutions for non-reporting of Treasure can be brought. The Justice Minister Lord Bach said the reforms would speed up treasure investigations and encourage better reporting of finds. Lord Bach also said the Government was willing to have further discussions on a proposal to extend the duty to report Treasure finds to those in possession of objects as well as the finders of such objects. This would make it harder for people to sell unreported Treasure finds on eBay and elsewhere. [Read House of Lords debate](#)

MPs pledge to discover museums, libraries and archives

MLA held a reception at the House of Commons on 29 June to inform MPs about the work of museums, libraries and archives. MPs from all over England showed their support for the sector locally, by signing a certificate of commitment to discover one museum, library or archive in their constituency that they have not visited before and to encourage their constituents to do the same.

[More on MLA website](#)

[back to top](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canadian Government pledges 5 years stable funding for culture

The Canadian Heritage Minister has announced a five year funding package for the cultural sector saying the "sector needs stability in this time of economic uncertainty." The package, which maintains a stand-still budget for most cultural programmes from 2010-2015, has been widely welcomed by the cultural sector. The announcement includes a two year extension of a fund to restore museums and heritage sites, with \$30 a year until 2015. This programme will also receive \$60 million over the next two years as part of Canada's economic stimulus package. Other programmes promised stable funding include the Canada Cultural Investment Fund, which will get £33.8m a year to 2015 to help arts and heritage organisations diversify their revenue through endowments and other initiatives. [Read Canadian Heritage statement](#)

£10.4m funding increase for arts in New Zealand

The Government of New Zealand has announced additional funding of \$7.1m over the next four years for the arts council, Creative New Zealand. The Royal New Zealand Ballet is also receiving an extra \$3.4m. Arts Minister Christopher Finlayson says the funding will protect New Zealand's cultural assets during the economic downturn and relieve some of the pressure from falling sponsorship and donations. [Read government statement](#)

Exhibitions cancelled as recession bites

A survey by *The Art Newspaper* suggests that a growing number of exhibitions are being cancelled because of the recession. The paper has identified over 20 important shows that have been cut or postponed in the next 18 months. Museums in the United States have been worst hit as sponsorship is withdrawn and endowments fall, but this has had a knock on effect for UK museums with international touring exhibitions. [The Art Newspaper article](#)

US arts museum audiences declining and getting older

American audiences for art museums are getting older, and their numbers are declining, according to new research released by the National Endowment for the Arts. The U.S. rate of attendance for art museums fell from a high of 26 percent in 1992-2002 to 23 percent in 2008, comparable to the 1982 level. The steepest decline in visits to art museums was among 45-54-year olds, a drop of 29% since 2002. [Read more on NEA website](#)

Head of Finance steals €15.5m from Dutch arts funding body

An international police hunt has been launched for the former head of finance of the Dutch national arts funding body, the Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture (BKVB), after €15.5m was discovered to have been stolen from the organisation. Clemens Kahmann, head of finance at BKVB for nine years, is alleged to have deposited €10m in a private bank account in February this year through 203 separate deposits of €50,000 each. *The Art Newspaper* reports that €50,000 is the maximum allowed to be given out in each artist subsidy at the BKVB. [Read more in The Art Newspaper](#)

Acropolis Museum opens

The new Acropolis Museum has opened in Athens. Bernard Tschumi's design includes a glass-walled Parthenon Gallery on the top floor providing a panoramic view of the Acropolis and modern Athens. The museum has 14,000 sq m of exhibition space and a 180 seat theatre. The €130 million construction was co-financed by the Greek Government and the European Regional Development Fund. It is expected to attract 3m visitors a year, with entrance fee of €1 for the first six months, rising to €5 in January 2010. [Visit the museum's website](#)

Mitterrand appointed as French Culture Minister

Frédéric Mitterrand, the nephew of the late president François Mitterrand, has been appointed France's culture minister. He is a TV personality, writer, producer and film director, who was last year appointed Director of the Villa Medici French Academy in Rome. [Ministry of Culture statement](#)
[Guardian article](#)

Sketchbook stolen from Picasso Museum

A sketchbook of drawings by Pablo Picasso has been stolen from the Picasso Museum in Paris. The book, dating from 1917-1924, contains 33 drawings in pencil. BBC News reports that the museum was closed at the time of the theft, which occurred between the evening of 8 June and noon on 9 June. There was no sign of a break-in and alarms were not set off. [More from BBC News](#)

In Venice, police have recovered a canvas by the celebrated French impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir which was stolen 25 years ago in Rome. [Read more](#)

In the United States, customs officers have seized a Pompeii wall fresco from a Manhattan auction house which was reported stolen in Italy 12 years ago. [Read more](#)

US court orders return of treasure from Spanish shipwreck

The Spanish Government has won a two-year legal battle against commercial marine archaeologist firm Odyssey Marine Exploration. A court in Florida has ordered the company to turn over almost \$500m in gold and silver coins salvaged from a Spanish shipwreck, believed to have sunk in 1804. Odyssey, which says it will appeal the decision, is currently in negotiation with the British Government over salvaging the wreck of the HMS Sussex which sunk in 1694. [Read more in the Telegraph](#)

90% fall in museum visits in Mexico City

Visits to some of Mexico City's museums have fallen by as much as 90% since the outbreak of the H1N1 virus. Local newspaper, *La Jornada*, has reported that five of the city's non-government-owned museums were petitioning the government for help and were accusing it of ignoring the cultural sector's needs after the influenza shutdown. [Read LA Times article](#)

NEWS FROM NMDC MEMBERS

A master plan for the future of the [Science Museum](#) was unveiled at a press conference to launch Science Museum's 100th birthday celebrations. The plans developed with architects Wilkinson Eyre include new entrances, new galleries and a rooftop exhibition space and destination cafe. [more](#)

Dragon's Den panellist James Caan has been appointed to the [Science Museum](#) Advisory Committee. The 12 person committee plays an active role in championing the museum and advising the Director on museum strategy. James Caan will have special responsibility for promoting the interests of the Museum with Government, business and the media. [more](#)

The [Natural History Museum](#) has welcomed its 25 millionth visitor since free entry began in December 2001. The number of visitors to the Museum has more than doubled in this time, reaching 3.7million last year. [more](#)

The [V&A](#) has launched a new website with full details of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) offered by the museum. The museum offers 21 NVQs covering different areas of museum operation from archaeological practice to live events. Last year the V&A became the first museum to have its in-house training nationally accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The V&A provide NVQs for staff from other museums and can also provide on-line assessment for people in other cultural and arts organisations in Britain and internationally. [more](#)

The [International Slavery Museum](#), Liverpool and [Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths & Museum](#), part of Tyne & Wear Museums, have both reached the semi-finals of the National Lottery Awards 2009 in the Best Heritage Project category. They are competing against eight other projects for the chance to win the award, decided by a public vote. Voting is open until midday on Friday 10 July. To cast your vote [visit the National Lottery Good Causes website](#)

[Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales](#) is marking the 60th anniversary of its Outreach Collection, the first national museum loan service of its kind in the world. Formerly known as the Schools Loan Service, the Outreach Collection now lends objects to community groups, television and film companies, special interest groups and institutions such as prisons and young offender institutions. Last year the collection was used by over 99,000 people.

Four of [Amgueddfa Cymru's](#) museums - St Fagans, the National Slate Museum, the National Waterfront Museum and the National Wool Museum - were represented at this year's Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC, in which Wales was the guest nation. The festival, inaugurated in 1967, attracts a million visitors from across the USA and around the world. [more](#)

The [National Media Museum](#) is celebrating the designation of Bradford as UNESCO's first City of Film. The museum was part of the consortium that successfully campaigned for designation by showcasing Bradford's rich film heritage as well as its "commitment to sharing understanding and enjoyment of film through the National Media Museum and the City's annual film festivals." Bradford will now be part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, which promotes cultural industries around the world. [more](#)

[The Ashmolean Museum](#) has acquired a painting by Titian through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme and a grant from The Art Fund. The scheme enables items deemed to be of historical or artistic importance to be given in place of inheritance tax and is administered by the MLA on behalf of the Government. [more](#)

[Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery](#) is the first museum to offer an online resource for studying the art of the Pre-Raphaelites, using Microsoft's cutting-edge Silverlight technology to bring pixel perfect definition to the screen. Over 2,000 fine and decorative artworks will be available using a plug-in to provide deep zoom functionality so that viewer's can see individual brushstrokes, pencil etchings and even frays in the canvas. [more](#)

An art teacher has won the [National Portrait Gallery's](#) BP Portrait Award with a portrait of his daughter. Peter Monkman, Director of Art at Charterhouse School, won £25,000 and a commission, at the National Portrait Gallery Trustees' discretion, worth £4,000. [more](#)

The [National Portrait Gallery](#) has launched a new marketing campaign which highlights the hidden stories behind its portraits of well known Britons. The campaign - which encourages people to *Take another look* at the Gallery's permanent collection - builds on research which showed that its visitors enjoyed picking up unexpected information behind the portraits. The first sitters featured in the campaign include singer and florist Lily Allen, statesman and prisoner Winston Churchill, nurse and hotelier Mary Seacole and war secretary and knitting pioneer Lord Kitchener. [more](#)

[Sir John Soane's Museum](#) held a major fundraising event - *The Sarcophagus Party* - in May, commemorating a three-day party give by Soane in 1825 to celebrate his acquisition of the great sarcophagus of Egyptian King Seti I. The Soane's education team held a series of creative workshops for London College of Fashion performance design students, asking them to design a set of extravagant masks to be worn at the event.

[The National Gallery](#) is launching a new outreach programme encouraging young men detained in Feltham Young Offenders Institution to engage with the creative arts. The workshops will take place in Feltham's new on-site Art Academy. [more](#)

[The National Gallery](#) is the first gallery to make its paintings accessible through a downloadable iPhone application, enabling a mini tour of the Gallery to be taken anywhere in the world. An application called *Love Art* features 250 paintings from the collection along with around 200 minutes of audio and video content. [more](#)

The [National Galleries of Scotland's](#) 2009 Art Competition for Schools received a record-breaking 5,796 entries this year, a 44% increase on last year. Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills, will speak at the event to congratulate the winners whose work will be on display at the National Gallery complex until October. [more](#)

[Imperial War Museum North](#) has selected Topotek 1 as preferred designers for a proposed develop of the museum's external spaces. The new design will include a new quayside walkway, landscaped

garden, water sculpture, children's play area and space for future exhibits and art installations. IWMN will now begin the task of fundraising and seeking partners to help realise the project. [more](#)

The [Imperial War Museum's](#) annual film festival in November and December will be sponsored by the independent documentary film and television company, October Films, who are offering a student filmmaker the chance to win a paid internship at their headquarters in London. [more](#)

[National Museums Liverpool](#) has launched a new online game *Escape from the Mummy's Tomb!* inspired by the new Ancient Egypt gallery at World Museum Liverpool. [more](#)

[The British Library's](#) new Director of Strategic and Marketing and Communications is Frances Brindle. She was previously Global Marketing Director for the Financial Times. [more](#)

NATIONAL MUSEUM JOBS

Our jobs website, www.nationalmuseumsjobs.org.uk currently has details of over 30 vacancies at museums around the UK including:

- Diversify Museum Traineeship, Tyne & Wear Museum
- Director of Learning, Tate
- Scientific Instruments Conservator, National Maritime Museum
- Programme Manager - Higher Education and Creative Industries, V&A
- Ecotoxicology Research, Natural History Museum

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

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://nmdcgit.nmdc.webfactional.com/news/newsletters/>