

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update...

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and much more...

NMDC NEWS

DCSF Directors' Museum Away Day

On 12th March senior officials from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) visited the Natural History Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum as part of an away day organised by NMDC. The visit was hosted by Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery and David Bell, Permanent Secretary at DCSF, and began with a tour of the Natural History Museum's Darwin Centre. DCSF Directors then enthusiastically participated in a 'Nature Live' session in the Darwin Centre's Attenborough Studio, where they had the opportunity to handle meteorites from the museum's collection, experiencing first hand the unique resources of museums and the power of objects for learning.

Following a presentation by Dr Honor Gay, Head of Learning at the Natural History Museum and David Anderson, Director of Learning and Interpretation at the V&A, on the importance of museum learning and how museums deliver on a wide range of DCSF objectives, there was discussion of how the Department and museums could work more closely together. DCSF Directors then undertook a tour of the Sackler Centre for arts education at the V&A, where they were able to see some of the different learning activities offered by the V&A in action.

DIRECTORS IN THE NEWS

Nicholas Penny, Director of the National Gallery; Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery; and Andrew Burnett, Deputy Director of the British Museum are among the signatories of a letter to the *Observer*, published on 28 February, which calls on the Government to protect funding for arts and humanities. The letter, signed by 14 directors of cultural institutions and university vice-chancellors, argues that "the challenges facing the country and the world cannot be addressed without the arts and humanities" and asserts that literature, philosophy and history are just as important as science and technology, engineering and maths. It continues "even in narrow economic terms, it must be wrong to neglect the importance of the creative economy and the importance of a rich and vibrant museums, galleries and cultural sector for tourism. [Letter](#)
[Observer article](#) [Editorial](#)

Dame Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library, has written an article for the *Times*, published on 7 February, describing how the British Library "reimagining its relationships with both private and public sector partners". The British Library has just announced a new partnership Amazon to make 65,000 largely out-of-print 19th Century titles available on Amazon via CreateSpace's Print on-Demand service and as free downloads for Amazon Kindle owners. [The Times](#) [British Library](#)

GOVERNMENT

DCMS Digital Minister resigns

Siôn Simon MP has resigned as a Minister at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). He was appointed last year with responsibility for steering the Digital Economy Bill through the House of Commons: the Bill is currently being debated in the House of Lords. Mr Simon also announced that he will stand down as an MP at the election and that he plans to run for the position of elected Mayor of Birmingham, when such a position is created. [Guardian](#) [Siôn Simon's website](#)

Scottish Government Budget approved

The Scottish Parliament has approved the Scottish Government's spending plans for next year. The total budget for Cultural Collections in 2010-11 is £78.9m, down from £79.6m in the current financial year. The budget for tourism is £43.9m, down from £48.8m this year. Creative Scotland, Historic Scotland and the National Performing Companies will all receive a slight increase in funding. The budget includes restrictions on public sector pay; restricts access to multi-year pay deals in 2010-11; and seeks the agreement of NDPB Chief Executives to waive part or all of any bonus entitlement.

[Budget](#)

POLITICAL ARTS MANIFESTOS

The Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats have each published manifestos on their respective cultural policies.

The Future of the Arts with a Conservative Government

The Conservative Party's two-page manifesto on culture outlines an approach based on a mixed funding economy, excellence and access. Specific proposals include:

- establishing a new administrative status for national museums and other cultural non-departmental bodies, giving them independence to be effective and entrepreneurial fundraising bodies;
- returning the National Lottery to its original four core aims;
- encouraging museums and arts organisations to raise money for endowments;
- introducing multi-year funding agreements for the most successful institutions;
- reducing the administration costs of the main arts funding organisations;
- rationalising arts funding in schools and consolidating funding streams;
- reforming the rules surrounding philanthropy to make it possible for donors to give works of art while still alive under the acceptance-in-lieu scheme, and reforming Gift Aid. They also propose to change the guidelines to allow arts organisations to reward their donors. The overall effect of these tax changes is intended to be fiscally neutral.

[The Future of the Arts](#)

In an interview with the *Guardian*, Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP said: "I am confident that over the next parliament we can increase the amount of money going into the arts." [Guardian](#)

Mr Hunt and the Shadow London Minister, Justine Greening MP, have also announced that a Conservative Government would transfer control of the Royal Parks to the Mayor of London. The eight Royal Parks in and around London are currently the responsibility of the DCMS. [Shadow DCMS website](#)

The Power of Creativity

The Liberal Democrats' proposals are not a statement of formal party policy but set out the vision of Culture Spokesman Don Foster MP. The document says the status of arts and creativity must be raised: "We need to stop treating the arts and creativity as an added extra, surplus to requirements, and advocate for their central importance as powerful drivers of our national identity, global standing and affluence." Proposals include:

- creating a new administrative status for national museums that will enable them to be more enterprising and independent, "while ensuring they have a voice at the heart of government";
- establishing a new Cabinet Committee on creativity to encourage Government departments "to utilise the arts and creative industries to contribute to wider policy objectives";
- promoting cultural diplomacy, including instituting a rolling cultural programme led by Number 10 to highlight the importance, diversity and success of the arts and creative industries to visiting international dignitaries;
- promoting philanthropy by giving more political recognition to major donors, and extending the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme to encourage donations of works of art to museums;
- changing the way the National Lottery is taxed to generate more money for good causes well as for the Treasury;
- offering children a more creative education by freeing up the curriculum and increasing the amount of time trainee primary school teachers spend learning about the arts and creativity.

MUSEUM SECTOR NEWS

Museums top list of leading visitor attractions

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) has published visitor figures for 2009. Eight out of ten of the top visitor attractions are national museums and another, the Tower of London, is home to part of the Royal Armouries collection. The most visited sites are the British Museum (5.57m visits), National Gallery (4.78m) and Tate Modern (4.75m).

Most of ALVA's members have reported a rise in visitor figures in 2009, with an average rise of 10.9%. Visit to the National Maritime Museum were up by 15% and visits to the V&A, National Gallery, Natural History Museum, National Museum Cardiff, Lady Lever Art Gallery, National Waterfront Museum, National Gallery, and British Library were up by 9% or more. Visits to National Museums Liverpool were up by 14% on 2007.

The largest rise in visitor figures were at National Trust properties, with increases of 20% or more at many properties. ALVA members are reported to remain optimistic about the immediate future, with 82% of them expecting to maintain or increase visitor figures in 2010. ALVA's 42 members include the majority of Britain's biggest visitor attractions and they are responsible for managing some 1,598 tourist sites. [ALVA](#)

National institutions call for removal of barrier to mass digitisation

Several national museum directors and chief executives of other cultural institutions signed a letter to The Times on 3 February opposing amendments to the Digital Economy Bill. The letter argued that proposed amendments to the Orphan Works Clause 42 of the Bill would pose one of the greatest barriers to mass digitisation of content by the UK's leading national institutions. Orphan works are those where the copyright owner cannot be traced, meaning they cannot generally be used in digitisation projects. An estimated 40% of some national institutions' collections are orphan works. The Digital Economy Bill proposes a system that allows a cultural or educational organisation to apply for a licence for the use of these works.

Clause 42 of the Bill was debated in Committee in the House of Lords on 8 February. The Government introduced an amendment inserting a supplementary section on orphan works (adding Section (116C) to the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988). This defines what constitutes an orphan work and what kinds of "reasonable search" users must undertake before being allowed to utilise an orphan work. Users must also publish notice of the proposal to enter the interest in an orphan works register, in a way designed to bring the proposal to the attention of the owner of that interest. This amendment was approved by the Lords.

The next stage of the Bill in the House of Lords, report stage – further line by line examination of the Bill – is scheduled for 1 March. The Bill will then move to the House of Commons. [Times letter](#)
[Digital Economy Bill](#) [Committee debate on Clause 42](#)

50% cut in funding for National Heritage Memorial Fund

The Times reports that DCMS will halve its allocation to the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) in the next financial year. The NHMF will receive £5m in 2010-11 instead of the £10m previously allocated. This means the fund's acquisition budget for next year is now in effect down to £1.7 million, as £3.3 million of its funds are already committed. The NHMF is the fund of last resort for the nation's heritage, funding emergency acquisitions. Over 1,200 iconic objects and places which have been purchased with assistance from the NHMF over the last 30 years. NHMF's budget was doubled to £10m in 2007 following the recommendations of the Goodison Review and campaigns by the museums sector. [The Times](#)

Renaissance £4.8m under-spend in 2009-10

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is predicting a significant under-spend on the *Renaissance in the Regions* programme for 2009-10. MLA has asked for £4.8m less than the original 2009-10 allocation, a figure which is more than 10% of the total *Renaissance* budget. Treasury restrictions relating to end of year flexibility mean that MLA will not be able to carry forward funds to the next financial year, as they have done in previous years. MLA's under-spend will enable DCMS to redistribute funds to other projects before the end of the financial year. In a statement published on the *Museums Journal* website, MLA Chief Executive Roy Clare says: "spending it right takes priority over spending at any cost." [Museums Journal](#)

DCMS funding for Cutty Sark

DCMS has announced it will provide the final £3m funding to complete the restoration of the Cutty Sark next year. The £46m project will restore the 19th century clipper's fabric, raise the ship three metres in the air above the dry dock, improve access and transform facilities for functions and events. 90% of the original ship survived the fire in 2007, as it had already been removed for conservation. The DCMS funding adds to £23m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and donations from the London Borough of Greenwich, the Greater London Authority and thousands of private donors. [DCMS](#)

Wedgwood Museum threatened by £134m pensions deficit

The Wedgwood Museum Trust is in dispute with the company set up to manage the Wedgwood Group pension plan after the company went into administration last year. There is a £134m shortfall in the pension scheme for some 7,000 former Wedgwood employees. The Museum, a charitable trust, is the only surviving solvent organisation associated with the scheme. Five of the museum's staff are members of the pension scheme. Wedgwood Pension Plan Trustee Ltd is pursuing the museum for the £134m shortfall, and may force the sale of the collections. The *Museums Journal* reports that DCMS has provided £200,000 funding to enable the museum to remain open while the legal status of its collections is resolved. The Wedgwood Museum won the Art Prize in 2009 following a major redevelopment. [The Sentinel](#) [Museums Journal](#)

Cultural organisations submit evidence to Iraq War inquiry

Evidence submitted to the Iraq Inquiry by leading cultural organisations says "shortcomings in the UK's planning and implementation of the 2003 Iraq invasion and occupation led to a fundamental failure to protect Iraq's cultural property." Thirteen organisations including the Museums Association, the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the National Trust have jointly submitted written evidence. The evidence highlights five main failures in the planning and implementation of the Coalition Forces' invasion and subsequent occupation, including the relative secrecy of pre-invasion planning and how proceeds from illicit trade in looted antiquities helped fund the insurgency. [UNESCO](#)

Review recommends closer links between Kew and national museums

An independent review of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has recommended closer links with the UK's national museums, and has suggested that NMDC, of which Kew was a member until 2003, could be "a useful vehicle for such engagement". The review, led by Sir Neil Chalmers, former Director of the Natural History Museum, recommends establishing an inter-departmental liaison group involving the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and DCMS, "to ensure that both Defra and Kew receive the expert advice on matters of policy and best practice that lie within DCMS's remit." The review also recommends that Government funding for Kew should rise in line with the overall trend in DCMS funding for national museums. [Consultants' report](#)

Gift Aid reform may reduce donations to arts charities

The first meeting of HM Treasury's Gift Aid Forum took place on 8 February. The aim of the forum is to consider structural and process improvements to Gift Aid, payroll giving and reliefs for gifts of shares and property, and to formulate recommendations by 30 September 2010. The Forum received a presentation on HMRC-sponsored Gift Aid donor research into options for reforming higher rate relief. This research indicates that arts charities are likely to lose out if a new composite rate of 23% is adopted as a measure to redirect government support for charities from (donations from) higher-rate tax payers to (donations from) basic rate tax. [HM Treasury](#)

Museum Accreditation: The Way Forward

MLA has published *Accreditation: The Way Forward*, its response to consultation on the development of the Museum Accreditation Scheme. MLA plans to simplify the processes relating to accreditation. The standard will be re-presented as a more focussed set of requirements, and there will be increased flexibility for museums to demonstrate success. There will also be increased emphasis on the visitor experience, and museums will need to demonstrate their responsiveness to their communities. With regard to national museums' participation in the Scheme, MLA sees "Accreditation as part of national museums' leadership role within the overall community of museums", and says "DCMS and other Government Departments have a role to play here."

A draft set of revised scheme requirements is due to be published for consultation this spring. The revised standard will be launched at the Museums Association conference in October 2010. [MLA](#)

Museums at Night 14-16 May

Over 80 museums have already registered after hours events for Museums at Night 2010. The weekend of events on 14-16 May coincides with the Europe-wide celebration, Nuit des Musées. Events already listed include Tate Modern's tenth birthday celebrations, an adult sleepover at the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, and torchlight tours at the Royal Armouries, Fort Nelson. The May edition of *BBC History Magazine* will include a 16-page guide to the event and Culture24 will be distributing an extra 100,000 copies of the guide. Museums at Night is funded by MLA and organised by Culture24. [Culture24](#)

Open Weekend will challenge audiences to participate

Open Weekend, an annual UK-wide celebration counting down to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, will take place on 23 – 25 July this year. Cultural organisations and venues across the UK are invited to register events which offer a 'challenge' for the public to participate. Examples of 'challenges' include creating a piece of art, performances and dance, workshops and treasure hunts. [London 2012](#)

Touring Exhibitions Group celebrates 25 years

The Touring Exhibitions Group (TEG) is celebrating its 25th birthday this month. TEG is the professional body in the UK concerned with all aspects of organising and touring exhibitions. Its annual TEG Marketplace, a networking opportunity for everyone involved in touring or hiring exhibitions, takes place this year at Leeds City Museum on Friday 19 March. [Touring Exhibitions Group](#)

Promoting informal adult learning in museums, libraries and archives

MLA, in partnership with the Local Government Association, has launched *Building Learning Communities* to promote informal adult learning in museums, libraries and archives. The publication includes case studies of learning opportunities and is intended to assist local authorities as they become lead accountable bodies for informal adult learning. [MLA](#)

Also

MLA has introduced a new brand which is intended to be more reflective of the organisational values of the 'new MLA' and work better with external partners' branding. It has been developed in-house, using existing resources. [more](#)

Culture 24 has created a comprehensive list of all 225 UK museums currently on Twitter. [Culture 24 - Museums on Twitter](#)

The appeal to acquire the Staffordshire Hoard now stands at over £1m with almost £500,000 coming from members of the public. A further £2.3m needs to be raised by 17 April. [more](#)

DCMS and the think tank Demos have launched a new year-long Policy fellowship, to explore the impact of the arts, culture, heritage and sports on wellbeing and quality of life in the UK. The first fellow is Samuel Jones. [more](#)

The Art Newspaper is preparing its annual report of world-wide exhibition attendance figures and is inviting museums to submit data for exhibitions held in 2009. [more](#)

AWARDS

Art Fund Prize long list announced

There are 11 museums on the long list for this year's Art Fund Prize instead of the usual ten because of the "outstanding" quality of applications received. The £100,000 prize is awarded to the museum or gallery for a project completed in the last year that the judges deem demonstrates the most originality, imagination and excellence. This year the judging panel is chaired by the broadcaster Kirsty Young. The long list, which includes five NMDC members, is as follows:

- **The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford**, for its £61m redevelopment;
- the £12million expansion of **Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust**;
- the new **Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle**;
- **Hampton Court Palace, Surrey** for *Henry VIII; heads and hearts* and its associated programming;
- the redeveloped **Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry**;
- the rescue and restoration of the **Leach Pottery, St Ives**;
- the **National Army Museum, London** for *Conflicts of Interest*;
- the **Natural History Museum, London** for the **Darwin Centre**;
- **The Royal Institution of Great Britain**, for *Science in the Making*;
- **The Towner, Eastbourne**, a local authority gallery redeveloped as a public art space;
- **The Ulster Museum, Belfast** following its three year redevelopment.

The public can vote for their favourite institution and leave comments for judges on the Art Fund Prize website. The Leach Pottery is currently ahead in the public poll. A short list of four will be announced at the end of May and the winner will be announced on 30 June. [Art Fund Prize](#)

Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award shortlist announced

The Great North Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne is one of six museums on the shortlist for this year's Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award. Beningbrough Hall and Gardens, York, which hosts much of the National Portrait Gallery's 18th century collection, is also on the shortlist, along with: the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum Coventry; the Highland Folk Museum, Newtownmore; the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent; and St Nicholas Priory, Exeter.

A panel of judges, chaired by Jenny Abramsky, Heritage Lottery Fund Chair, chose the shortlist from over 200 museums nominated by visitors. Each shortlisted museum will be visited, anonymously, by several families who will assess the museum against the Kids in Museums Manifesto. The winner will be announced in April. [Kids in Museums](#)

FUNDING

HLF announces initial support for major projects

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced initial support for major redevelopment projects at St Fagans, Cardiff, the Science Museum and The Piece Hall, Halifax. St Fagans' £8.7m HLF bid will modernise galleries and create a 'Green Pavilion' where people will be able to watch archaeologists at work. The Science Museum's £6.34m HLF bid will contribute to the creation of the Treasury Galleries, a redevelopment of four floors of the museum. This is part of a £100m masterplan to reinvigorate the museum's total public gallery space. The £7m restoration project at Piece Hall will open up the courtyard as a civic space. Each project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award. [Heritage Lottery Fund](#)

£1.5m Designation Development Fund grants announced

MLA has announced £1.5m funding for to 26 collections from the new Designation Development Fund. The grants spread across the country and range in value from £20,000 to £100,000 and include £50,000 for the Ashmolean Museum to create an online learning resource for its Egyptian Collection and £81,000 for the Sir John Soane's Museum to create a digital network of Soane's buildings and drawings. [MLA website](#)

£750,000 for Collections of National Significance in Scotland

The Scottish Government has allocated £750,000 capital funding for museums and galleries that care for Recognised Collections of National Significance. 36 collections across Scotland are eligible to apply for the funding. The Recognition Scheme is managed by Museums and Galleries Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. [Museums Galleries Scotland](#)

MLA funding for Creative Apprenticeships

MLA has announced a third round of funding to help museums recruit Creative Apprentices. The Creative Apprenticeship Scheme has been developed by Creative & Cultural Skills. An apprenticeship is a mix of practical work experience and training for young people, leading to a qualification. MLA will contribute to the employment costs of 50 Creative Apprentices in the museums sector over the next two years. The deadline for applications is 14 May for posts recruited before the end of August. [MLA website](#)

Effective Collections Fund

The next deadline for applications to the Museums Association's Effective Collections Fund is Friday 5 March 2010. Funding of up to £10,000 per project is available for museums to review their collections and make better use of them and up to £25,000 for exemplar projects that include loans and transfers. [Museums Association](#)

Additional support for Arts sponsorship in Scotland

The Scottish Government has announced additional funding of £50,000 for the Arts & Business sponsorship grant scheme which provides match funding for first-time arts sponsors. [more](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

City of Culture 2013 shortlist announced

Culture Minister Margaret Hodge MP has announced the final four cities vying to become the UK's first City of Culture in 2013. They are Birmingham, Derry/Londonderry, Norwich and Sheffield. The winner will be announced in the summer, based on the recommendation of an independent panel of judges. [DCMS](#)

National Trust *Going Local* strategy and free entry weekend

The National Trust has launched its new strategy *Going Local*, outlining plans to broaden its audiences and ensure its properties are community spaces which involve local residents. Seaton Delaval, the Trust's newly acquired Northumberland property is cited as an example of the new approach, with local residents writing pieces for the Guidebook, local groups using rooms for activities and meetings, and a local café owner running a stall selling refreshments. [Guardian](#)

The National Trust is also offering free entry to its properties, countryside and coastal car parks on 20-21 March. Visitors need to download a 'Bonus Time' voucher from the Trust's website. [National Trust](#)

Test drive the arts in Northern Ireland

Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council are funding *Test Drive the Arts*, a new initiative to encourage first-time users to visit theatres and performing arts events across Belfast. Free 'guest' tickets are being offered online to anyone who has not been to a particular venue, company or organisation in the last three years. Programme will be rolled out across Northern Ireland from April. www.testdrivetheartsni.org

Creative Scotland Chief Executive announced

The Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, the new national arts and culture body, will be Andrew Dixon. He has been Chief Executive of the NewcastleGateshead Initiative for the last five years, and has thirty years' experience of working in the arts, media and creative industries. Mr Dixon's appointment will be effective from the date that Creative Scotland is formally established. However, as Chief Executive Designate, he will participate in board meetings from now on. [Creative Scotland](#)

UK National Commission for UNESCO

Professor William Morgan has been appointed as the new chair of UK National Commission (UKNC) for UNESCO. Sue Davies, who currently chairs UKNC's Culture Committee, has been appointed as one of two new Vice-Chairs. UKNC has also launched a new website featuring video, podcasts, news feeds from UNESCO and an interactive map of UNESCO sites and programmes in the UK. [UNESCO](#)

The internet and the future of global cultural relations

Counterpoint, the British Council's think tank, has launched 'Cloud Culture: the future of global cultural relations', a report by Charles Leadbeater. He argues that over the next ten years, the rise of cloud computing technology will profoundly change the way we use the internet and result in a global explosion of culture and self-expression. But the potential for more open, diverse and collaborative cultural relations "is threatened by governments and media and technology companies that want to get the cloud under their control." [British Council](#)

IN PARLIAMENT

Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP asked the Government for details of the allocation of **funding for major capital projects** including the British Museum World Conservation and Exhibition Centre and the British Library Newspaper Archive in 2009-10 and 2010-11. Figures provided by DCMS in response show a total sum of £9.97m has been allocated in the current financial year and £21m in 2010-11. Mr Hunt also asked for details of funding allocations in each of the next five years. The Government responded that it was still discussing the funding profile with the bodies concerned. [more](#)

In response to a question from former Culture Secretary Lord Smith of Finsbury, the Government reported that there were over **16m visits in 2008-9** to national museums that charged for admission in 2001 and are now free. [more](#)

In response to a question from Andrew Rosindell MP, Margaret Hodge reported that **DCMS Ministers have visited the Natural History Museum eight times** in the past 12 months. They have visited the British Museum four times and the Science Museum once. [more](#)

DCMS has provided details of Government grants to **national and local museums in Yorkshire and Humber** from 1996-2010 in response to a question from Hugh Bayley MP. [more](#)

Lord Avebury asked a written question about the future display **V&A's musical instrument collection** following the closure of the museum's musical instruments gallery. Some instruments will be displayed in other galleries within the V&A. The museum has also agreed to the long-term loan of key objects to the Horniman Museum and expects to make further loans to other institutions. [more](#)

APPOINTMENTS

The Prime Minister has appointed historian **Professor Hew Strachan** to the Board of the **Imperial War Museum**. [more](#)

Tony Hall, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House and Chair of the Cultural Olympiad, has been raised to the House of Lords. His appointment as a non-party-political peer was recommended by the House of Lords Appointments Commission. [more](#)

VisitBritain has appointed **Paul Gauger** to the new role of Global Leader for 2012 Games Media. His role is to promote the nations and regions of Britain to broadcast media worldwide and to advise the tourism industry on 2012 media **opportunities**. [more](#)

The European Commission has appointed **Jan Trzuszczynski** as **Director-General for Education and Culture**. He is the first Polish national appointed at this level within the European Commission, and will manage a budget of €1.4bn. He will take up his duties from 1 May 2010. [more](#)

NEWS FROM NMDC MEMBERS

National museum websites

The *Times* has compiled a list of "The 10 best museum websites" which includes the V&A, Science Museum and National Archives. [more](#)

Meanwhile, Kunstpedia has analysed the popularity of more than 680 art museum websites worldwide and placed the V&A in the top five. [more](#)

The [National Portrait Gallery](#) has launched its archive catalogue on the web with over 15,000 file-level descriptions of all types of records. The documents include details of a double shooting in the public galleries in 1909, measures taken to ensure the safety of the collections during the First and Second World Wars and the papers of former Gallery directors. [more](#)

[Tate](#) has launched its first App for iPhone and iPod touch. The app offers users an interactive interpretation of the latest installation in the Unilever Series Commission, *How It Is* by Polish artist Miroslaw Balka. There is also a secret game level that is unlocked through GPS when users are near Tate Modern. This is the first in a series of Tate Apps that will be launched this year. [more](#)

[National Galleries of Scotland](#) (NGS) and the [National Gallery](#) have announced that Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* will tour to three venues in Scotland this summer. The painting, which the Galleries acquired last year, will then go on tour for 10 months to three venues in the United States as part of a new partnership agreement between the National Galleries of Scotland and The High Museum of Art in Atlanta. NGS will be sending a series of exhibitions over the next four years to Atlanta and to other institutions in the US to raise the profile of the Galleries and its collection in North America. The first exhibition of Venetian masterpieces will also include Titian's *Diana and Callisto* which the Galleries have been offered the chance to purchase in 2012. [more](#)

[The National Archives](#) has launched a new Academic Strategy setting out its plans to improve the services and support for scholarly users. The strategy, which has been developed after consultation with academic organisations, seeks to strengthen the Archives relationship with the academic community and includes plans for improved communications with historians and learned societies. [more](#)

Newcastle's [Discovery Museum](#) is working with the British Film Institute (BFI) to install a *BFI Mediatheque* – an ever-expanding digital jukebox of material from the BFI National Archive, which visitors can access free of charge. More than 1,500 film and television titles will be available from this Spring, most of which are not available on DVD or online. The BFI plans to install a Mediatheque in every nation and region of the UK to increase access to its collection. [more](#)

More than 200,000 people have visited the [Ulster Museum](#) since it reopened last October, making it the busiest visitor attraction in Northern Ireland. [more](#)

[National Museums Northern Ireland](#) is seeking young people to join its 'Rhythms of the Year' Youth Panel to work with museums staff on a major exhibition to coincide the London 2012 Games. [more](#)

The [V&A](#) and [British Museum](#) are working together to build a national collection of Middle Eastern photography, funded by £100,000 from The Art Fund. The collection will be known as The Art Fund Collection of Middle Eastern photography. Once the Collection is complete, the two museums will work towards a major exhibition showcasing the Collection in 2012. [more](#)

[The Royal Observatory, Greenwich](#), in partnership with the Science and Technology Facilities Council's Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Zooniverse are launching *Solar Stormwatch*, a new web project using a vast network of volunteers to spot and track solar storms and analyze data to support the latest solar research. [more](#)

[The Wallace Collection](#) is inviting parents to celebrate Mother's Day with "A Parents' Guide to Museum and Gallery Visiting", an hour long session with tips on how to make visits enjoyable for the whole family. [more](#)

[Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery](#) has launched an online prints shop. [more](#)

Nuclear apprentices from British Energy, part of EDF Energy, have been studying the engineering systems of HMS Alliance at the [Royal Navy Submarine Museum](#). 50 students have studied at the museum since the New Year. [more](#)

[Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales](#) is opening up the debate on whether Wales needs a National Science Museum. A conference at the National Museum Cardiff on 18 March, *The Scientific Heritage of Wales: The Way Forward*, aims to give those with an interest in the topic an opportunity to discuss how Wales' contribution to the development of science can be presented. [more](#)

The [Natural History Museum's](#) ichthyologist (fish expert) Dr Ralf Britzich has identified four new species of spiny eels from Myanmar and India. The Museum has published the first images of live fish from these species on its website. [more](#)

The [British Museum](#) has issued a statement on the decision to lend the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Museum in Tehran in July 2010. [more](#)

NATIONAL MUSEUM JOBS

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

- Head of Marketing, National Museum Wales
- Project Manager (Visitor Attraction), Royal Armouries
- Marie Curie Research Fellow, Natural History Museum
- Collection Registrar, Tate
- Technical Web Manager, Imperial War Museum

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

And finally...

When the Dutch curator and collector Dirk Hannema declared he had discovered an unknown Van Gogh painting in 1975, he became the laughing stock of the art world. Now, 25 years after his death, Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum has confirmed that he was right after all. [Daily Telegraph](#)

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email or change your contact details, please email: Christine.toogood@nationalmuseums.org.uk

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