

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update.

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NMDC News

NMDC Budget Response

DCMS funded museums will have their budgets cut by 0.5% in 2010-11, as part of DCMS's contribution to the £5bn value for money savings announced in the Budget. In a statement, NMDC Chair, Michael Dixon said: "At a time of recession and three years out from the Olympics, museums are not a luxury. They give people affordable, inspiring and uplifting things to do and places to go with their families. Museums attract audiences from home and abroad - creating faith in Britain and in the future. Museums are reliant on both private as well as public funding, so they are already feeling the impact of recession. We hope the Government continue to do their best to protect the front-line of museums, and their audiences, from the full effect of budget cuts." [More on Budget 2009 below.](#)

Museums at Night – 15-17 May

Museums at Night is a national campaign led by Culture24 and funded by MLA and NMDC to promote museums, galleries, heritage sites, libraries and archives in the UK. Over a hundred venues across the country have signed up to take part in the weekend celebration with events including special night-time screenings, talks and torchlight tours. Events can still be added to Culture24's events listings via the [Culture 24 website](#). Special events include:

- Candlelit curator-led tours of the Sir John Soane's Museum
- Premier of a new planetarium show *Ice Worlds* at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich
- Battleship Boogie: 1940s dance onboard the HMS Belfast
- Victorian Magic Lantern show at the National Media Museum, Bradford
- Late night tours and treasure hunts at the Discovery Museum, Tyne & Wear Museums
- Spending the Night in the shelter at the Cabinet War Rooms.
- Free film screening and late opening at the National Gallery's exhibition *Picasso: Challenging the Past*
- Muslim women's music at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

[See the Culture24 website for full details of these events and more.](#) [The MLA website has a useful summary of PR opportunities.](#)

New Royal Armouries Management Team

Royal Armouries has made two new appointments to head its management team: Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley as Director-General and Master at Arms and Janice Murray as Chief Executive Officer.

Lt Gen Riley is a former commander of British Forces in Iraq and one of Britain's most senior generals, and has served tours in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Central America and Sierra Leone. In 2003–04 he was General Officer Commanding British Forces in Iraq and subsequently served as Deputy Commander of NATO ISAF in Afghanistan. He is visiting fellow of modern history at the University of Birmingham and chair of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum and Archive Trust. He will take up his new position in June, when he leaves the Army.

Janice Murray has been on secondment to the Royal Armouries as Interim Chief Executive from the National Railway Museum, where she is Head of Cultural Planning, since November 2008. She is currently chair of York@large, the city's strategic cultural partnership, and is a former director of the

Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. She will be responsible for the operational and curatorial performance of the museum. Janice will be the Royal Armouries' representative member of the NMDC.

TOURISM

NMDC Briefing on Tourism

NMDC has produced a briefing paper on museums and tourism, highlighting the role of museums as drivers of British tourism, the fifth largest industry in the UK. The briefing is packed with facts and figures and analysis of the role of museums in building the UK brand, including:

- Eight of the top ten UK visitor attractions in 2008 were museums and galleries and three UK museums - British Museum, Tate and National Gallery - were in the top ten most visited international museums in 2008;
- The UK ranks 6th internationally both in terms of the number of visitors arriving from overseas and in international receipts, behind USA, France, Italy, China and Spain;
- The international tourism market has grown rapidly in recent years, with visits to the UK increasing from 11.6 million in 1982 to 24.7 million in 2003. However, the UK share of total international tourist spend has slipped from 6.5% in 1980 to 3.8% in 2007;
- World-renowned cultural assets act as a magnet for potential tourists from many parts of the world, with visitors citing Britain's culture and heritage-related assets and activities (including the country's many free museums) as key reasons for coming here. In 2007/8 15.2 million visits were made by visitors from overseas to 18 UK museums.
- At least £350 million a year is generated by overseas visitors attracted by major museums and galleries.

NMDC argues that developing and promoting museums' offer could help to attract new visitors to the UK, encourage them to stay longer and improve the the quality of the visitor 'welcome' in the UK. NMDC is calling on the Government to involve museums in the development of tourism policy to ensure full consideration of museums' offer, potential, knowledge and experience, and to invest in transport infrastructure and public spaces in which museums operate to improve the visitor experience. [Read the full briefing paper on our website.](#)

Conservative Party Tourism Summit

The Conservative Party held a Tourism Summit in Brighton just before Easter. Speaking at the event, Jeremy Hunt MP, the Shadow Culture Secretary, highlighted the importance of tourism to the recovery of the UK economy, saying the industry could generate an additional £22 billion for the economy and 50,000 jobs. He identified quality assurance, workforce skills and environmental sustainability as priorities, and said a Conservative Government would incentivise local authorities to prioritise tourism and establish an inter-departmental ministerial group to deal with issues such as planning, immigration and transport that have a direct impact on tourism. [Read more in the Conservative Party press release.](#)

Government launches new Tourism Advisory Council

DCMS has announced the membership of the new Tourism Advisory Council, which will be chaired by Tourism Minister Barbara Follett MP. The group includes high-level executives from the hospitality and transport sectors as well as tourism agencies. The Council will meet three times a year and is intended to provide direct regular contact between the Government and the industry. [DCMS press release.](#)

In a parliamentary question on 20 April Culture Secretary, Andy Burnham MP, confirmed that he would be convening a joint meeting of ministerial colleagues shortly to discuss cross-cutting issues relevant to promoting the visitor economy. [Full written answer in Hansard](#)

£1.8 million campaign urges Europeans to “see more of Britain for less”

VisitBritain has launched the European phase of its £1.8m *Britain for Less* campaign. The campaign across 18 countries is VisitBritain's largest campaign in Europe for some time. Building on the benefit to European visitors of the exchange rate, the campaign aims to make visitors money go further with a range of deals on transport, places to stay and go, eating out and shopping available on the website: www.britainforless.com. [More details of the campaign on the Tourism Trade website.](#)

£400,000 boost for London tourism campaign

Four central London boroughs have added £400,000 to the £2m *Only in London* tourism campaign, announced by the Mayor of London last month. The additional funding is provided by the City of London, Camden, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, who represent around 50 per cent of tourism spend in the capital. [GLA press release](#)

BUDGET 2009

Cuts to DCMS and national museum budgets

DCMS funded museums will have their budgets cut by 0.5% in 2010-11, as part of DCMS's contribution to the £5bn value for money savings announced in the Budget. DCMS's budget for 2010-11 has been cut by £20m, just under the cross-government average of 1.5%. £5m of the cut will come from savings within the Department. In allocating the budget cuts, the Culture Secretary has said that he aims to protect the delivery of front-line services; focus on genuine efficiencies, taking into account where savings have already been made; and, where appropriate, identify funds that have not yet been allocated.

Arts Council England funding cut by £4m

The Budget also included the announcement of a £4 million cut in Arts Council England funding for 2010/11. The ACE has said it will not reduce planned investment in the arts organisations it funds on a regular basis but will look to finding savings from existing and planned new projects. The latest £4million cut is in addition to the £6.5million per annum savings in the ACE's running costs announced as part of the original Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. [Arts Council statement](#)

Role for cultural sector in action to boost employment opportunities

The Chancellor announced that the Government would be guaranteeing everyone aged between 18 and 24 who has been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for around 12 months an offer of a job, work placement or work-related skills training. The Government will fund 250,000 jobs in the public and private sector, including 150,000 new jobs created through the Future Jobs Fund. The Fund will enable local authorities and third sector groups to submit innovative bids for jobs that will make Britain a better place and improve their local community. In addition to the Future Jobs Fund, the Government will offer 100,000 job opportunities in the sectors of the future that will help Britain grow. DCMS is looking at ways to involve the cultural sector and is inviting views from its sponsored bodies. [Department for Work and Pensions press release](#)

Philanthropy

The Budget did not include major incentives to promote philanthropy, but states that the Government continues to explore ideas to improve Gift Aid and has commissioned research into the effect of redirecting higher-rate relief from donors to charities. In the meantime a small amendment to the substantial donor regulations will increase the current relievable gifts threshold of £100,000 in a period of six year to £150,000 over the same period. The Budget announced further informal consultation to develop new anti-avoidance rules around substantial donors to charity, with a view to legislating in 2010. The Government will also make a number of minor changes to the tax rules for non-domiciled UK residents to reduce their administrative complexity. [Full Budget report and related documents on HM Treasury website.](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

Art fund recession survey finds budgets cuts and rising visitor numbers

The Art Fund has published the results of its nationwide survey of how museums and galleries are faring in the recession. More people are visiting museums across the UK but those institutions are suffering budget cuts - and the disparity looks set to widen as museums expect visitor numbers to rise and budgets to tighten further over the next six months. Key findings include:

- 35% of museums are seeing an increase in visitors and expect trend to continue;
- 65% of museums have had budget cuts in the last six months;
- 60% of museums which receive public funding expect a drop in funds this year;
- 50% have purchased an object in the last six months and almost half of those museums achieved a discount of more than 10%. However, only 24% of museums said they intend to purchase an object for their collections in the near future.

Income and donations of cash and objects seem as yet largely unaffected: 50% responded that there has been no change in corporate sponsorship; 22% have seen a decrease; 14% an increase.

Over 300 museums participated in the survey, which covers the period between September 2008 and March 2009. The survey will be repeated every six months. [Summary of the survey and links to press coverage.](#)

Stories of the World 2012 exhibition project launched

Stories of the World, one of the major projects of the four-year London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, was launched last month. The programme will feature collections from around the world reinterpreted by young people, local communities, historians, artists and other fresh voices. It will create over 35 exhibitions and events hosted by 59 venues across the UK. The £6 million programme is organised by the MLA in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). The exhibitions are intended to leave a lasting legacy by attracting new audiences to museums and fostering creativity in the young.

Projects include a unique collaboration between Edinburgh and Glasgow museums exploring celebrations and world festivals, and their influence on Scottish cultural life; *Journeys of Discovery* led by young people and the North East Regional Museums Hub; and *Rhythms of the Year* exploring how seasons are celebrated throughout the world lead by the National Museum of Northern Ireland and partners. [Stories of the World website and prospectus.](#)

London 2012 Open Weekend - 24-26 July

London 2012 has announced the return of *London 2012 Open Weekend* and is encouraging sports, arts and culture organisations to register events to showcase their work. Supported by BP, *London 2012 Open Weekend* will take place 24 - 26 July 2009, and will run every year until 2012. Last year over 700,000 people attended events all over the UK to mark the inaugural Weekend, which celebrated the launch of the Cultural Olympiad. [Further details on the London 2012 website.](#)

Digital Britain - a call for a more focused cultural offer

Leading cultural organisations have written to DCMS Minister Lord Carter describing the huge opportunity further to exploit publicly-funded cultural assets online, in new ways and for new and larger audiences. The letter, responding to the *Digital Britain* report, argues that by working together, cultural organisations and the Government can enrich the online experience, support formal and informal learning and incentivise people to engage creatively with the online world. Furthermore, a more unified, comprehensive and better marketed offer from cultural institutions would be a powerful driver of online engagement for people in every part of the UK, would help raise the profile of culture and the arts in the national curriculum and promote Britain as a leading destination for cultural tourism.

The letter is signed by Directors and Chief Executives of Culture24, British Library, The National Archives, V&A, Tate, National Portrait Gallery, MLA, VisitBritain, Collections Trust and UKOLN and describes how some of these organisations have become digital publishers and curators and are modelling what could be called a new kind of public sector broadcaster. The signatories have declared their intention to work together to achieve the outcomes described. [Read the full letter.](#)

The Prime Minister and Lord Mandelson were among the speakers at the *Digital Britain* Summit held at the British Library on 17 April, to debate how best to equip Britain for a digital future. Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library spoke in the session on equipping society for the digital future. [Further details of the summit including video and transcripts.](#)

£44.5 million Lottery funding to sustain the arts through recession

Arts Council England will invest an extra £44.5 million in artists and arts organisations over the next two years to help maintain artistic excellence during the economic downturn. These counter-recessionary measures were announced by Chair Dame Liz Forgan, in a speech at an ACE-sponsored seminar, *Maximising the importance of arts and culture through the economic downturn*, on 24 April. The new funds have been made available by the ACE radically reducing its Lottery cash balances over the next two years to £30m a year. The initiatives include:

- *Sustain* – a new £40m rapid response fund for arts organisations suffering as a result of the recession which is designed to address short-term needs (such as cash flow) and long-term sustainability. It is a fixed two year programme and will offer grants from £75,000 to £3 million between now and March 2011;
- A £4 million increase in the *Grants for the Arts* budget over the next two years;
- £500,000 support for the Town Centres Initiative (see below) to enable more artistic activities to take place in empty retail spaces. Hundreds of artists across the country are already helping to reinvigorate ailing town centres by taking over empty retail space for creative activities and it is hoped this new fund, which will award grants of £1,000 to £10,000 will enable many more to do so.

[Further information on Arts Council England's action on the recession.](#) [Read Dame Liz Forgan's full speech.](#)

Art on the high street – Town Centres Initiative

The Government has announced new measures and up to £3m to help communities find creative ways to reduce the negative impact empty shops have on the high street, including temporarily converting empty shops into local art displays, learning centres or social enterprises. The new provisions include special planning application waivers, standard interim-use leases, and the temporary leasing of shops to councils for use as cultural, community or learning services.

Speaking at the launch of the guidance *Looking after our Town Centres*, Culture Secretary Andy Burnham MP said: "Culture and creativity are part of the answer to tough economic times. I believe that, now more than ever, we should play to our strengths as a creative nation. [Communities and Local Government press release](#)

Conservative review of the creative industries

Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP has launched a review of the creative industries, chaired by former BBC Director General, Greg Dyke. The review will examine ways in which the Government can ensure that the UK remains an international hub for content creation and distribution, including reforms of the intellectual property regime, improvement of the UK's digital infrastructure, and workforce skills. The review will conduct its inquiry over the next few months and report in the autumn. [Read the review's terms of reference.](#)

The Conservative Party will also be launching the *Conservative Arts and Creative Industries Network* in May. Tories who work in the arts and creative industries have been invited to join. [For further details contact the Shadow DCMS team.](#)

Culture Secretary orders inquiry into public library service in the Wirral

Culture Secretary Andy Burnham MP has intervened in the public dispute about proposed library closures in the Wirral, calling a local inquiry to test whether the Council's plans are consistent with their statutory duty to provide all residents with a comprehensive public library service. The move follows Mr Burnham's request to Wirral Council in February to work with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) on the proposed restructuring of library services.

Responding to the debate prompted by the action in the Wirral, Roy Clare, Chief Executive of the MLA has set out factors that should be considered in shaping a modern library service. Read more: [Roy Clare's full statement](#), [DCMS Press release.](#)

Giving and Philanthropy Ambassador appointed

Dame Stephanie Shirley has been appointed as the Government's Giving and Philanthropy Ambassador. Dame Stephanie will work to support Ministers and the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in championing giving and philanthropy and will oversee preparations for the Philanthropy summit this autumn. Read more: [Interview in *The Times*](#), [Profile in *Public* magazine](#).

New Members Sought for Acceptance in Lieu Panel

MLA is seeking applications for new members of the Acceptance in Lieu Panel which advises Ministers on the suitability of objects offered in lieu of inheritance tax. Members must have demonstrable expertise in specific areas of the fine and decorative arts and knowledge of the associated commercial market. [Full details on MLA website](#).

UK National Heritage Science Strategy – first report published

The first of three reports which will underpin the development of a national strategy for heritage science has been published. The report focuses on the role that science plays in the management of the UK's heritage, and makes suggestions about where increases in understanding could improve current practice. Specific issues include the need for improved management of environments for display and storage; the long term survival of heritage assets; and further investigation of the rate of decay and thresholds at which decay processes are initiated for a range of materials. The project is keen to receive views on the report by the end of May. [Read more on Heritage Science Strategy website](#).

FUNDING AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

£5.5m to help close the widening generation gap

The Government has launched a £5.5m programme to bring older and younger generations together in their communities. In 2008 for the first time there were more people over the age of 65 than the number of people under 16. The *Generations Together* programme will fund 12 intergenerational projects across the country where young and older people can engage with each other on equal terms, break down barriers and challenge negative stereotypes. The programme is inviting local authorities, in partnership with voluntary organisations to bid for up to £400,000 for projects bringing together people under 25 and people over 50. [A summary of the programme can be found on the DCSF website](#). The full prospectus and application form are available via the [Every Child Matters website](#).

£10m Government funding for Inspiring Communities Project

Museums are mentioned in the criteria for the new £10m *Inspiring Communities* scheme launched by the Government last month. *Inspiring Communities* will support people in deprived communities to develop innovative campaigns and activities designed to raise the achievement of young people, broaden their horizons and build up self esteem. Museum visits are suggested as an example of activities that break the cycle of generational underachievement by broadening young people's horizons and experiences. Funding will be made available to up to 15 neighbourhoods who will receive up to £450,000 and expert help over the next two years. Applications are invited from partnerships that include a local authority, local secondary school and local third sector organisations. [The Communities and Local Government press release](#) lists the 64 areas that are eligible to apply.

Scottish Culture Minister comments on funding for Glasgow museums

Scottish Culture Minister Michael Russell MSP visited the Burrell Collection and new Trongate 103 museum in Glasgow on 21 April and met the Chair and Chief Executive of Culture and Sport Glasgow. In a statement issued on the day of the visit, the Minister said: "Glasgow is a world-renowned city of culture and it is of no doubt that its museums and galleries are of great value... Of course it is for Glasgow, as is the case with every other local authority, to support and fund its own museums and galleries. There is often a parallel drawn between funding of Glasgow's museums and funding of the National Museums and Galleries based in Edinburgh and other locations around the country. This is not a fair comparison to make. The national collections are precisely that - national collections that belong to the people of Scotland - in exactly the same way that Glasgow's collections belong to the people of Glasgow. That said, there is clearly an issue here that needs to be looked at. That is why I look forward to engaging with all those involved at the museums summit early this summer." [Scottish Government press release](#)

Funding awarded to 12 of Scotland's top collections

Twelve collections across Scotland have been awarded a total of £446,000 funding through the Recognition Scheme. Funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Museums Galleries Scotland, the Recognition Scheme ensures important collections are identified, cared for, protected and promoted to a wider audience. Recognition funding is awarded to projects that increase access to recognised collections. [Further details from Museums Galleries Scotland.](#)

DCMS funding for new tourist attraction in Greenwich

Culture Minister Barbara Follett MP has announced that DCMS will provide £700,000 for *Discover Greenwich*, a new interpretation and education centre for the Old Royal Naval College and Maritime Greenwich. *Discover Greenwich* will help visitors navigate their way around the World Heritage Site and will include an exhibition hall, a learning suite and a temporary exhibition gallery. It will also house a Tourist Information Centre. DCMS's £700k grant represents the balance of funding needed following a grant of £1.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £2.8m from The Greenwich Foundation, and £500k from other charitable foundations and individuals. [DCMS press release](#)

Funding for projects promoting Wales' cultural identity

Welsh Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones AM has announced an investment package of £860,000 for Welsh museums, archives and libraries to develop a series of innovative and collaborative projects to promote Wales' cultural identity and benefit local communities. £460,000 will go to local museums and fund improvement of facilities, oral history projects, learning programmes and work to encourage community volunteering. £200,000 will fund projects to increase access to a wide range of historical material held by local archive services across Wales. A further £200,000 has been allocated to inspire learning through Welsh museums, archives and libraries. [More details on Welsh Assembly Government website.](#)

New projects for *Their Past Your Future*

The Museum's Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has announced the third and final phase of the *Their Past Your Future 2* (TPYF2) programme with 39 new projects from around the country. These will join the 81 previous TPYF2 projects developed by regional museums, libraries and archives that have been initiated in the past two years. Supported by the Big Lottery Fund, TPYF2 explores the effects of 20th and 21st century conflict on all areas of society, focusing on the themes of remembrance and commemoration, citizenship, diversity, conflict resolution and peacekeeping. There will be events, workshops, exhibitions and educational activities taking place all over the England until March 2010. [See the project website for more details.](#)

HERITAGE

BBC2 documentary on English Heritage

To mark English Heritage's 25th anniversary, a new BBC series is offering an insight into the workings of an organisation that describes itself as "driven by expertise and passion to protect England's heritage and the desire to become more open, reasoned, and consistent in its approach." The four-part series, which began on 24 April, follows the development of different projects with which English Heritage is involved and explores the decision making process. [View past episodes on BBC iplayer.](#) [More on issues raised in the programme.](#)

The Civic Trust for England goes into administration

The Civic Trust for England, the organisation that runs Heritage Open Days, has gone into administration. The Trust, founded in 1957, is the umbrella body for over 750 Civic Societies in England and campaigns for better places for people to live, work and play. The Heritage Open Days are funded by English Heritage, and provide four days of free access to properties of architectural or cultural interest that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. They were begun in 1994 as part of the Council of Europe's European Heritage Day initiative.

The North of England Civic Trust, The Civic Trust for Wales and the Scottish Civic Trust are also independent charities and not affected. [BBC News has further details.](#)

New guidance on managing heritage assets

English Heritage has published new guidance for Government Departments and agencies on managing heritage assets. The report describes best practice for periodic inspections, forward work plans and asset management programmes. [Managing Heritage Assets can be downloaded here.](#)

Red Wheel Plaques unveiled for transport heritage

The Transport Trust has launched a nationwide programme to mark sites of historical interest with Red Wheel Plaques. The plaques are part of a wider scheme to commemorate and promote awareness of Britain's globally important legacy in the development of transport on rail, road, water and in the air. There is also a new website – www.transportheritage.com providing a directory of hundreds of sites of historic significance in the heritage of transport in the UK. As well providing information on each site's history and context, the website promotes physical visits with maps, satellite images, opening hours and even local weather forecasts.

Public appointments

The Prime Minister has re-appointed Admiral the Lord Boyce GCB OBE DL and Lord Sterling of Plaistow GCVO CBE as Trustees of the National Maritime Museum for a 2nd term. Lord Sterling is Chairman of the **National Maritime Museum**, as elected by the Board of Trustees. [Number 10 press release.](#)

Scottish Culture Minister Michael Russell MSP has announced the reappointment of Ian Barr, education and cultural policy consultant and practicing artist, to the Board of Trustees of the **National Galleries of Scotland**.

PARLIAMENT

Correction

In last month's newsletter we quoted Lord Glasgow's statement in the House of Lords debate that 1 in 5 archaeologists are out of work. This was a misrepresentation of the data from the Institute of Archaeologists. The latest report on the subject shows that 345 archaeological jobs may have been lost in the quarter from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009, representing 8.6% of the jobs in commercial archaeology and 5.0% of the entire UK archaeological workforce. [Institute for Archaeologists report.](#)

Operational independence of the Science Museum.

In a written parliamentary question, Derek Wyatt MP asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if he will take steps to increase the operational independence of the Science museum. In a holding reply, Culture Minister Barbara Follett MP said: "In common with other national museums, the Science Museum already has a high level of operational independence from Government, with its own director, management board and board of trustees. The museum has also established a trading company which allows it to operate on a more commercial basis. We have regular dialogue with the museum on a range of issues, including how we can continue to find more flexible ways of working, while maintaining appropriate good practice for a body in receipt of Government funding." [Hansard Record](#)

INTERNATIONAL

Keeping art and climate, controlled

The New York Times on 5 April included a detailed article on work by UK national museums and the National Trust to encourage international review of the sustainability of environmental conditions for care of museum collections. [Read the article.](#)

US legislation to encourage donation of works of art

A bill to promote charitable giving of works of arts to museums has been introduced in the United States Congress. The Artist-Museum Partnership Act 2009, a bipartisan bill, would allow an artist to donate his or her work and be eligible for a tax deduction equal to the fair market value of the donated work. Current legislation only allows for a tax deduction of the cost of the paper, canvas, or other materials used in creating the work. Since 1969, when the law changed to limit the deductibility of artistic works, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of donations of this kind. The wording of the Bill aims to prevent any potential abuse of the tax system, for example by requiring written appraisals of the donations and that the use of the work of art must be related to the purpose of the institution that receives it. The American Association of Museums is encouraging its members to lobby their representatives to support the Bill. The Bill was first introduced to Congress in 2005. [Read the draft Bill.](#)

US Congress investigates management of asbestos at the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Secretary, G Wayne Clough, has given evidence to a Congressional panel on the handling of asbestos in the Smithsonian Museum. The Committee on House Administration, which oversees the Smithsonian Institute, called the hearing after an exhibits specialist at the National Air and Space Museum, who has been diagnosed with asbestosis, told *The Washington Post* that workers had not been told about the presence of asbestos in the museum. Mr Clough told the congressional panel he had ordered free health screenings for all employees and former employees and a "complete review" of safety policies and procedures. He said that since 1990, more than \$15.5 million has been spent from the Smithsonian's capital program for asbestos abatement. [Committee on House Administration.](#)

Art critic wins Pulitzer Prize

New York Times art critic Holland Cotter has won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, "for his wide ranging reviews of art, from Manhattan to China, marked by acute observation, luminous writing and dramatic storytelling." He's the first art critic to get win the Prize in 35 years. [Pulitzer Prize website.](#)

Getty announces 24% budget decrease and cuts 205 posts

The board of the J. Paul Getty Trust has announced that its endowment budget will be \$216m this year, a 24% reduction on the previous year. The new budget reflects reduced income from the Getty's endowment, which has declined by about 27% since July to \$4.2bn. 205 staff posts will be cut representing 13.8% of the Getty's current staff. Other budget provisions include extending timing for projects, and pay cuts of 6% for senior leadership. Free admission and current visiting hours will be maintained, though the car parking fee will increase by 50% to \$15. [Statement from Getty Trust President and CEO.](#)

Huge queues to visit empty museum building

35,000 people queued for up to two hours to look inside the recently completed Neues Museum building in Berlin as part of its open heritage day weekend, in March. The museum, the fifth building on the Museum Island Berlin, opens to the public on 16 October. [More on Staatliche Museen zu Berlin website.](#)

CULTURAL PROPERTY

Online guide to international cultural property law

The International Foundation for Art Research has launched a website compiling foreign cultural property laws and other information affecting the ethics and legality of transferring cultural property. The resource also creates a database of catalogues raisonnés for artists. Read more: [Art Law & Cultural Property website](#), [Art Newspaper article](#).

Spoliated works of art returned to Oppenheimer heirs

Hearst Castle in California has returned three Italian Renaissance paintings to the heirs of Jakob and Rosa Oppenheimer, who were the owners of the Galerie van Diemen art gallery in Berlin in the early 1930s. Following a two year review the State of California, which manages the castle, concluded that they had been subject to a forced sale. Under the family's agreement with the state one of the paintings will remain at the castle, the opulent 165-room home built by newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst. Guides will be schooled in its history and make a point of explaining it during their tours. The other paintings are expected to be sold at auction. [Hearst Castle statement.](#)

Meanwhile, the New York Times reports that the heirs of the German Expressionist painter George Grosz have filed a lawsuit against the Museum of Modern Art in New York, saying it had refused to return two paintings and a watercolour by Grosz that were left behind when he fled Germany in 1933. The artworks were left with the art dealer, Alfred Flechtheim, who was persecuted by the Nazis and fled Germany. [New York Times article.](#)

Rijksmuseum Painting claimed as loan collateral

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has faced claims from two banks for a painting that was allegedly used twice as loan collateral before it was purchased by the museum. The Rijksmuseum bought Gerrit Adriaensz Berckheyde's *Golden Bend* from Dutch businessman Louis Reijtenbagh last year. The painting is currently on temporary loan to the National Gallery of Art in Washington. JPMorgan Chase & Co, seeking repayment of a loan from the previous owner, has lodged a claim in a New York court to obtain Reijtenbagh's art collection including the Rijksmuseum painting, claiming it was used as collateral for the loan. Dutch bank ABN Amro has also made a claim for the Reijtenbagh art collection, and now has one of the most valuable pieces in the collection, a self-portrait by Rembrandt, in its possession. Read more: [Reuters](#), [NRC Handelsblad](#).

Getty to return fresco to Italy

The J. Paul Getty Museum has announced it will return a Roman fresco fragment dating to the third quarter of the 1st century B.C to the Italian Ministry of Culture this month. The wall fragment, which features a landscape scene, came into the Museum's collection in 1996. J. Paul Getty Museum Director Michael Brand said the decision to return this fragment is based on a newly published image of which the Museum became aware about a year ago that included another fresco fragment that was being repatriated to Italy by a private collector. He continued: "We greatly value the relationship we have with our colleagues in Italy and appreciate the opportunity for scholarly dialogue, which can enrich our understanding of our cultural heritage and help bring to light objects such as this one that should be repatriated". [Getty press release](#)

Archeological Site Damaged By Museum Construction

The *Art Newspaper* reports that the Indonesian Minister for Culture and Tourism has made a public apology after the Government ignored urgent warnings and failed to halt a controversial new museum and visitor centre in Mojokerto, East Java, which caused extensive damage to important archaeological sites. The site is the capital of the Majapahit kings, Hindu rulers of the largest empire ever established in Southeast Asia. [Read the full article.](#)

National Museums News Round-Up

[Tate](#) has made more than 400 video and audio downloads available for free on iTunes U - an education-focused part of the iTunes Store. The files include a series of films that use social networking site Twitter to bring the audience's questions directly to artists like David Hockney.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Dr. Barham Saleh, visited the British Library on 30 April and met Dame Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the [British Library](#) and Neil MacGregor, Director of the **British Museum**. The Deputy Prime Minister expressed a particular interest in the ongoing work the British Library and British Museum is doing to further develop cultural links as part of the UK/Iraqi bilateral relationship.

Scientists at the [Natural History Museum](#) have found that the diversity of dinosaur species was already on the decline millions of years before the mass extinction event. This changes the current theory about how and when dinosaurs became extinct. Until now, the common theory was that all dinosaurs, except the ancestors of birds, were wiped out at one time, perhaps by a huge meteorite, at the end of the Cretaceous period 65m years ago. Museum scientists found that most species, such as those in the theropod group, like *Baryonyx* and *T.rex*, had already declined millions of years earlier. The research findings have been reported in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* journal.

The [Great North Museum: Hancock](#) opens on 23 May, housing collections from the Hancock Museum and Newcastle University's Museum of Antiquities, Shefton Museum and Hatton Gallery. The £26million Heritage Lottery Fund building is part of the wider Great North Museum project involving the redevelopment of the city's magnificent Victorian Hancock Museum, the management of the Hatton Gallery and the development of an off-site store and resource centre. The project has been led by Newcastle University in partnership with **Tyne & Wear Museums**, Newcastle City Council, the Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The [Scottish National Portrait Gallery](#) (SNPG) closed on 5 April as work began on the £17.6m *Portrait of the Nation* project to refurbish the galleries and reinterpret the collections. The Gallery will reopen in the autumn of 2011. While much of the SNPG collection will be going in to storage for the duration of the project, many of the works will be on display at other sites around Scotland and the UK.

[The British Library](#) has appointed Farrells as its architectural partner to work on the Master Planning of its nine acre site at St Pancras, London. The plans will be presented to the British Library Board in September.

The [Royal Air Force Museum](#) has teamed up with Streetmap to show potential visitors a short video of what the museum has to offer. Go to www.streetmap.co.uk, type in the Museum's postcode "NW9 5LL" and click on the film projector symbol located on the map.

[The Science Museum](#) has won the Silver award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence 2009. The Gold award was won by Harewood House, Leeds.

[Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery](#) has launched a redesigned website: www.bmag.org.uk.

National Museum Jobs

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

- Curator of Naval History, National Maritime Museum

- Collections Project Assistant, Natural History Museum
- Manager, the Smith Centre at the Science Museum
- National Partnerships Manager, National Museums Scotland
- Finance Manager: Capital Projects, V&A
- Project Manager: Visitor Services, Tate

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

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