



Welcome to this month's NMDC newsletter, a briefing on our activities and developments in the museum sector in the UK and beyond.

NMDC's members are the leaders of the UK's national collections and leading regional museums, operating in over 100 sites around the UK.

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

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NMDC News

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

NMDC's London 2012 Working Group, chaired by Professor Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, met at the Museum of London at the end of June. Hedley Swain, Director of Programme Delivery at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), and Isobel Siddons, MLA's Programme Manager: 2012, attended the meeting and gave an update on the plans of MLA and London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games. Key dates include the Olympic Handover from Beijing on 24 August, the Paralympic Handover and launch of LOCOG's schools programme on 17 September, and the launch of the Cultural Olympiad on the weekend of 26-28 September.

Over one hundred museums, libraries and archives across the country have signed up to host activities to mark the start of the UK's four-year cultural Olympiad on the weekend of 26th -28th September. The activities are part of *Setting the Pace*, MLA's programme to support museums, libraries and archives contribution to the Cultural Olympiad. Phase one of Setting the Pace has two elements - The People's Record, which will capture people's experience of living in an Olympic host nation; and Literature and Stories, which will use collections as creative inspiration for young poets, and as a source for story telling and performance events.

Further details about *Stories of the World*, one of the major projects for the Cultural Olympiad, which MLA is leading, will be announced in September and partners will be selected in December.

www.mla.gov.uk/news/press_releases/Olympiad_100

Collections Management

Heads of Collection Management from NMDC Member institutions met at the V&A in June. NMDC's Collections Management Committee has been formed to discuss opportunities for joint working, information sharing and to promote best practice on various aspects of collections management. The Committee's initial work plan includes disaster recovery and shared storage; harmonisation of loan agreements; and performance indicators for collections management. The Committee will also discuss long term strategy for collections management.

National Museum Jobs

NMDC's jobs website has details of over 40 vacancies around the UK, including:

- Head of Participation, National Portrait Gallery
- Head of Development, National Museum of Science and Industry
- Curatorial Assistant - Islamic Art, Ashmolean Museum of Art & Archaeology
- Assistant Curator, Film, Royal Air Force Museum
- Curator - Youth & Community Programmes, Tate Liverpool
- Collections Development Officer - International Slavery Museum, Liverpool

For details of all the current vacancies visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

Forthcoming meetings

UK Affairs Committee

11am - 1pm, 21 August, British Museum

HR Forum

11am - 1pm, 5 Sept, Science Museum

Current Issues

Review of Arts Council Funding Process

Arts Council England has published the findings of the McIntosh Review - the independent report commissioned to examine the process used to reach the funding decisions last January which proved so controversial. Baroness Genista McIntosh's report is based on conversations with over 100 witnesses and includes strong criticism of the Arts Council's handling of the funding allocation process and announcements. She makes a series of recommendations concerning Arts Council leadership, staff training and skills, transparency, openness and trust in its relationship with the arts sector, the importance of maintaining a national overview of all the organisations, and the need to bring more of an external perspective into the process, with peer review and more arts practitioners on the Board.

The Arts Council has also published a response to the Review by Alan Davey, Chief Executive of Arts Council England setting out how the organisation will address each recommendation and how the lessons learnt will be applied to future actions.

The Arts Council also commissioned a specific report examining the communication of the investment strategy which recommended that in future communications must be clearer, in particular about what might be perceived to be bad news.

The McIntosh Review, Communications Report and Arts Council's response are published in one document, available at: www.artscouncil.org.uk/downloads/investstratrev.doc

The Conservative Party has responded to the Review by publishing its report on the amount the Arts Council spends on administration, saying 86% of its income was distributed in grants this year, compared to 97% in 1997. www.shadowcms.co.uk/newsshow.aspx?ref=58

New Heritage Minister for Wales

Alun Ffred Jones has been appointed as Heritage Minister in the Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government, following the resignation of Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

Alun Ffred Jones has been an Assembly Member since 2003 and Plaid Cymru lead spokesperson on finance since last year. Before his election, he was a Television director and producer, and before that a Welsh teacher and a journalist. He is also the former Leader of Gwynedd County Council. His main political interests are in broadcasting, community development and the economy.

Mr Thomas resigned on 18 July after a series of errors including being accused of smoking in a public place and naming the wrong winner of a book prize. The Plaid Cymru minister quit saying his position was not "sustainable". <http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/presreleasearchive/2420952/?lang=en>

Collections for People

Collections for People: Museums' Stored Collections as a Public Resource presents the findings of a research project on current use of collections in store, led by Suzanne Keene of University College London. The research was supported by the AHRC, MLA, the Collections Trust, The Pilgrim Trust and the Museums Association and was based on surveys of museums and users. There are an estimated 200m items in UK museums collections. The research found that:

- 74% of museum respondents think collections are insufficiently used
- 97% of museums report a steady or increasing demand for access to collections
- Only 13% of museums strongly promote public access to stored collections

Factors associated with having more users of stored collections were mainly those influenced by management priorities and motivation. Museums that publicise access provide for groups as well as for individuals and those that have designated or national collections commonly have more users of their stored collections.

The report recommends that museums advertise and market availability of collections, as they do with other services, telling visitors how to access or visit collections in store. It also recommends that standards for accreditation should include benchmarks for collections access and use. www.ucl.ac.uk/storedcollections

£70m Funding For Community Organisations

Secretary of State for Communities, Hazel Blears MP has announced a £70 million fund to support and develop local organisations that provide a vital focal point for community life in England. The *Communitybuilders Fund*, a joint programme between the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Office of the Third Sector, is the largest single initiative outlined in the Government's White Paper, *Communities in control: Real People, Real Power*. www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/886884

British Council Arts and Creativity Action Plan

The British Council has published its response to the key findings of a nationwide consultation with the UK's arts and cultural sector. The three month consultation was launched after fears were raised over the proposed shape and future direction of the British Council's global arts programme earlier this year. The new Action Plan aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of the British Council's cultural relations' mission in building trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people. The Council has announced that it is committed to:

- Maintaining its sector expertise in visual arts, dance & drama, music, film, design & architecture, literature and creative economy and adding a new media function;
- Reinvesting in its international network of professional expertise including specialist posts and external advisors
- Establishing a new external advisory function for the arts
- Increasing co-operation with key partners.
- An substantial increase in its global Arts budget to £30m

www.britishcouncil.org/home-press-250708-arts-consultation.pdf

Promoting Public Engagement on Science Issues

Ian Pearson, the Minister for Science and Innovation, launched a consultation to develop a Science and Society Strategy, at Thinktank in Birmingham on 18 July. The Minister noted the role of museums like Thinktank in promoting genuine dialogue and public debate on science issues. The government is seeking views on how to improve communication, generate interest, increase participation and convey the relevance of science, as well as how to build confidence in scientific research and inspire more young people to become scientists. The consultation runs until 17 October and the final strategy and implementation plan will be published towards the end of the year.

<http://interactive.dius.gov.uk/scienceandsociety>

One in Twelve Heritage Sites at Risk

English Heritage has launched the Heritage at Risk register revealing that 1 in 12 of the 70,000 sites assessed is at high risk of neglect or decay or inappropriate change. 20 % of scheduled monuments, registered battlefields and protected wreck sites are at risk, as are 3.2% of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings. The new Heritage at Risk project extends the formula of the Buildings at Risk Register, which since it began in 1998 has seen 45% of entries saved, to scheduled monuments and archaeology, registered historic landscapes, parks, gardens and battlefields and wreck sites. English Heritage is encouraging local authorities to use the Heritage at Risk register to prioritise their own resources and ensure that heritage implications of their actions are considered.

In response to a Parliamentary Question last month, Margaret Hodge revealed that 15% of the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register are in public ownership. www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.14144

World Heritage Sites

The UNESCO World Heritage Site Committee has added nineteen new cultural sites and eight new natural heritage sites to the World Heritage Site list, and has agreed to the enlargement of four others. The World Heritage Site covering Hadrian's Wall has been extended to create the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* World Heritage Site stretching from Northern Ireland to Germany.

The World Heritage Committee also agreed to give the French government six months to report on the success of its efforts to save the Lascaux cave paintings in The Dordogne from a damaging invasion of fungi, before the site is placed on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/newproperties/>

The Future of Stonehenge

A public consultation on proposals to improve Stonehenge's landscape setting and presentation to visitors in time for the 2012 Olympics has been launched. The Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan has been developed by English Heritage on behalf of a group of heritage and government organisations to take forward the Government's commitment to make environmental improvements at Stonehenge, following the Transport Minister's decision, in December 2007, to cancel the scheme for improvements to the A303 road at Stonehenge. The revised proposals include improvements to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre and closure of the A344 adjacent to the Stones. www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.14171

Manifesto for Children's Arts

A Manifesto for Children's Arts was launched in London on 21st July, asking Government, local authorities, arts organisations and the media to do more to implement Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, promoting the right of the child to participate fully and freely in cultural and artistic life. The Manifesto, produced by Action for Children's Arts, calls on Government to ensure that creativity, play and the arts is at the heart of the curriculum and that all children have full and equal access to cultural activities.

<http://childrensarts.org.uk/index.php>

DCMS Campaign for More Public Appointments for Women

Culture Minister, Margaret Hodge MP, has launched a publicity campaign aimed at persuading women from all walks of life to apply for positions on the boards of arts and sports bodies. At present only one in three of those filling the 600 or so governing posts on DCMS arts and sporting bodies are women the Minister has set a firm target to raise this proportion to fifty per cent. DCMS also wants to see more people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people on boards. The publicity campaign will see 130,000 leaflets distributed around the country and made available through public bodies in the sector and other professional associations. It will be supported by targeted PR activity, paid advertising and inserts placed in sector magazines.

www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases/5271.aspx

Changes to Charities' Exemptions from Licences for Public Performance of Music

The Government has launched a consultation on certain copyright exemptions which apply to charities playing recorded music in public. The Office of the Third Sector is calling on charities to respond to the consultation which includes options to remove the exemptions that they have from paying royalties to copyright holders for the public performance of music. Two licences are required to play music to a public audience. One is from the Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL), which represents performers and the owners of sound recordings, and the other from the Performing Right Society (PRS) which protects the rights of the composers and lyricists. Currently, all charities are exempt from having to apply for and purchase the PPL licence. The options are:

- Removing all exemptions for charities so that they would require two licences, from PPL as well as PRS;
- Narrowing the scope of both exemptions so smaller charities will need no licence, but charities with turnover of over 20,000 a year will require two licences; or
- Removing both the exemptions so all charities will need two licences but restrict royalties to "equitable remuneration."

The closing date for the consultation is 31 October. www.ipo.gov.uk/consult-musiclicensing.htm

Headley Museums Archaeological Acquisition Fund

The Headley Trust, one of the Sainsbury Family's Charitable Trusts, has launched The Headley Museums Archaeological Acquisition Fund. The scheme, run in association with the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, provides funding towards purchase of artefacts classed as Treasure and non-treasure artefacts which are more than 300 years old. Together the two funds can provide up to 87.5% funding for these objects. The new fund extends the Headley Museums Treasure Acquisition Scheme, which has made over 80 grants of up to £10,000 since it was launched in 2004. www.headley-archaeology.org.uk

National Heritage Memorial Fund Exhibition in Parliament

To mark National Veteran's Day on 27 June, the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) held an week-long exhibition at the Houses of Parliament, depicting some of the most iconic items and places in the UK it has helped to save for the nation. NHMF was set up in 1980 to provide a year round 'living' memorial to the fallen by saving the nation's most outstanding pieces of national heritage, when there are no other sources of finance available.

www.hlf.org.uk/NHMFWeb/LatestNews/

Engaging Places - Call for Education Providers

The Engaging Places Schools Codevelopment Network Project is a key component of the Engaging Places strategy and aims to bring around 20 schools and learning providers together, through a series of workshops, to identify how to maximise the opportunities new curriculum approaches offer in helping young people to learn using heritage and the built environment.

The QCA are seeking to identify a wide range of schools and a variety of learning providers (heritage organisations, architecture centres, museums/galleries, arts organisations) to build a national network of schools who can become centres of excellence for built environment education. For more information about the project and signal your interest contact Louis Moreno, lmoreno@cabe.org.uk

DCMS Funding Agreements

DCMS has published the 2008-11 Funding Agreements for its non-departmental public bodies. The documents provide a brief summary of how sponsored bodies, including national museums, will contribute to the delivery of DCMS's Strategic Objectives and how performance will be measured.

www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/5241.aspx

VAT on Cultural Heritage Repair and Maintenance

The European Commission is considering a proposal which would mean member states would be able to apply a reduced VAT rate for maintenance and repair of cultural heritage. If it is adopted the Directive would give the UK Government the option to reduce the costs of maintaining and repairing historic assets from January 2011. The Directive which considers flexibility on VAT for a range of purposes, including environmentally beneficial products and locally supplied services, has not yet been approved by Member States. Heritage and environment sectors are encouraging the UK government to support the Directive and recognise the benefits of foregoing tax on repair and maintenance of cultural heritage. The Council Directive can be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/COM\(2008\)428_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/COM(2008)428_en.pdf)

Arts & Business reshapes English delivery

Arts & Business (A&B) is reorganising its operations in the English regions. A&B has closed its London regional office and a new National Arts Team is being formed in London to oversee A&B's London and national arts strategy. Arts & Business brings together businesses and arts organisations to create partnerships to benefit themselves and the community. www.aandb.org.uk

New guidance on CRB checks for volunteers

The Cabinet Office have published guidance to help organisations that use volunteers to be clear about when they do and don't need to carry out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on volunteers. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/080604_crb.aspx

Funding for Arts Entrepreneurs

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has set up the Breakthrough Fund to support exceptional arts entrepreneurs, committing £4.5m over three years (with the possibility of continuing the scheme beyond this). The Foundation has announced the names of the six individuals who will receive grants of up to £300,000 each this year, the first year of the scheme. They include the directors, CEOs, producers from Battersea Arts Centre, Bigga Fish, Punchdrunk and the Oh Yeah Music Centre in Belfast and an independent curator. The process of seeking nominations for the second phase of the scheme will begin over the summer. www.phf.org.uk/news.asp?id=259

Powerbrokers International Leadership Placements

The Cultural Leadership Programme is offering a range of international placements for people from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. The third round of Powerbrokers International Leadership Placements includes a four month placement as Assistant Curator at the National Museum of Singapore. The closing date for applications is 15 August. www.culturalleadership.org.uk/opportunities/powerbrokersinternationalleadershipplacements/default.aspx

New Vocational Qualification for Museums, Libraries and Archives

MLA East of England has been working with Anglia Ruskin University and sector employers to develop a new Cultural Services Foundation Degree, a vocational qualification for museums, libraries and archives. The course aims to encourage new entry routes into the sector that are accessible to a wide range of applicants. Much of the course will be work-based supported by online resources, and it will provide support for career progression. www.mlaeastofengland.org.uk/current-work/workforce/cfd

In Parliament

Andy Burnham Gives Evidence to Select Committee

Culture Secretary, Andy Burnham MP, and Jonathan Stephens, Permanent Secretary at DCMS, gave oral evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 17 July, on issues arising from the Department's annual report.

Following the Committee's report on Tourism, the Chair, John Whittingdale MP, asked Andy Burnham about the 20% cut budget cut for VisitBritain. Mr Burnham said that in a tight spending round the decision was taken to invest on the ground in the tourism product and invest in heritage. He went on to say, "some of the best help we can give the industry is for our department to get right the quality of the cultural offer."

MPs also questioned Mr Burnham about implementation of the McMaster Report including free access weeks, performance peer review and ten year funding agreements. Mr Burnham said that peer review of performance was being piloted in national museums and that discussions with HM Treasury on ten year funding agreements were ongoing.

The full transcript is at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcmds/uc1000/uc100002.htm

Tourism

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has published its two volume report on tourism, in what it describes as a challenging period for the tourism industry. In the past decade there has been little growth in the domestic tourism sector which accounts for 80% of the value of the industry. The remaining 20% comes from inbound tourism. Inbound tourism grew significantly between 2004 and 2006, yet the UK has still under-performed in comparison to the world average and it is projected that the UK's global share of the market will continue to fall.

The Committee said cuts to VisitBritain's budget were "extraordinary" and "baffling", particularly in the run up to London 2012 and should be reconsidered. VisitBritain's grant-in-aid funding will fall from £49.9m in 2007-8 to £40.9m in 2010-11. The report also mentioned the lack of incentives for local authorities to perform tourism initiatives. The Committee expressed concern about the apparent low priority given to tourism within DCMS and the lack of confidence the industry appears to have in the Department.

The Committee also urged the government to consult on the proposal for double Daylight Saving Time in summer to promote tourism.

NMDC submitted evidence to the inquiry, which is published on p380 of Volume II of the report, highlighting the major contribution of museums and galleries as visitor attractions and the need for investment in the public spaces and transport systems in which museums and galleries operate.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomeds/133/13302.htm

Tourism in Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government has published two discussion papers by the consultants who are advising Visit Wales on future arrangements for marketing and managing visitor destinations in Wales. The papers set out their initial conclusions and outlining some general options for the future.

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/new/s/080625marketing/?lang=en>

Arts Council of Wales Support for Capital Projects

The Audit Committee of the National Assembly for Wales has published a report on the Arts Council of Wales's support for major capital projects. The Committee said the provision of arts facilities is still insufficient at community and national levels and that there is scope to make better use of the limited funds available through developing more effective partnership working with local authorities, capitalising on available European funding, and evaluating the outcomes achieved from capital investment in arts infrastructure to date to inform future investment.

www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld7127-e.pdf

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has published its report on the draft Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill designed to enable the United Kingdom to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. The Committee welcomed the Bill and also reassurances from the Ministry of Defence that the legislation would not impose constraints on the military and would formalise existing practice. The Committee called for clarification on the new offence of dealing in cultural property unlawfully exported from an occupied territory, suggesting the Government should publish a list of occupied territories. The Committee also recommended changes enabling dealers to accept an item in order to carry out due diligence inquiries without risk of committing an offence. The Bill has been published in draft and is expected to be brought before Parliament in the autumn.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomeds/693/69302.htm

Raising Profile of Archives in Parliament

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Archives had its first meeting in the House of Lords on 8 July. The group discussed major issues facing the sustainability of Britain's archive collections with a panel of leading sector experts including Professor Lisa Jardine CBE, Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive of The National Archives and Sue Wilkinson, Director of Policy & Sustainability at MLA. The panel emphasised the need to act now to save our archival heritage. A key issue discussed was the challenge of archiving digital material. The purchase of archival material by foreign collectors was also raised and it was agreed that the development of a philanthropic culture in the arts could be one way of saving archives and keeping collections within the UK.

At a separate National Council for Archives event in Birmingham, Shadow Culture Minister Ed Vaizey urged the archives world to engage more with individual MPs by offering site visits and archive material for their websites.

www.ncaonline.org.uk

Draft Heritage Protection Bill

As this newsletter was going to press, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee published their report on the Draft Heritage Protection Bill. The report raised a number of concerns particularly over the cost of implementing the changes in the legislation. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomeds/821/82102.htm

International Issues

State of Emergency for Pompeii

The Italian Government has declared a state of emergency for the Pompeii World Heritage Site, citing threats to public security and to the site itself. Renato Profili, the former prefect of Naples, has been appointed by the Government to map out a strategy to combat neglect and degradation at the site. The state of emergency will last twelve months and allows for extra funds and special measures to be taken to protect the site.

www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/arts/design/26ruin.html

US Proposals to Relax Restrictions on Tax Benefits for Donated Objects

The Wall Street Journal reports that in the United States Senators Charles Schumer and Charles Grassley are developing proposals to change tax legislation to allow partial-gift donors to take ever-larger deductions as their art work appreciates, and extend the 10 year deadline for donors complete divestment of artwork to 20 years.. The move follows concern about a fall in donations after restrictions on fractional giving - donating small stakes in artwork over time - were introduced in 2006. The changes could be introduced to tax legislation later in the year.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121667821980971651.html>

Stolen Picasso Recovered in Brazil

BBC News reports that police in Brazil have recovered an engraving by Picasso that was stolen from a museum in Sao Paulo. *The Painter and the Model* was taken in a daylight robbery from the state-owned Estacao Pinacoteca museum in June.

Police said a man arrested on suspicion of trying to steal a cash machine, had led them to the engraving, wrapped in a plastic bag and hidden in an attic, apparently in perfect condition. Another Picasso and two paintings by Brazilian artists stolen in the same robbery have not yet been recovered.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7515875.stm>

Louvre's New Islamic Wing

President Sarkozy has laid the first stone of the Louvre's new Islamic art wing. When it opens in 2010, it will be Europe's biggest purpose-built exhibition space for an Islamic Art Collections, with 3,000sq m of gallery space created in a courtyard of the Louvre and will contain more than 2000 objects. The total cost of the project is €86m. HRH Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia has contributed €17m, one of the biggest private cultural donations made in France. *The Guardian* reports that M. Sarkozy used a speech at the Louvre to position France at the heart of geopolitics, saying France "does not want a clash of civilisations between east and west."

www.louvre.fr/

www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/jul/17/art.france

National Museums' News Round Up

Grants and Donations

Lord Ashcroft, the Conservative peer, international businessman and philanthropist has donated £5m to the **Imperial War Museum** to fund a new gallery for Victoria Cross and George Cross medals. He also agreed to loan his own Victoria Cross collection - the largest in the world - to the Museum for a period of ten years. His collection of 152 medals from the Crimean to Falklands wars will be displayed in the new Lord Ashcroft Gallery, alongside the 50 Victoria Crosses and 29 George Crosses already held by the Museum. The new gallery is due to open in 2010. www.iwm.org.uk

The **Museum of Liverpool** has been awarded a confirmed grant of £11 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) after the successful completion by National Museums Liverpool of a Stage Two application, subject to partnership funding. The grant will be used to fit out the museum, which is currently under construction at Liverpool's Pier Head, and is due to open in 2010/11. The Museum has already secured additional investment of £43m from a variety of other sources. www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

The **British Library** has received a donation of £1m from the commercial vehicle manufacturer, Paccar Inc. to assist in the development and implementation of a world class technology platform which will digitise the Libraries resources for global access. www.bl.uk

A long standing friend and supporter of the **Ashmolean Museum**, who wishes to remain anonymous, has presented the Museum with an 18th century white porcelain sculpture of an osprey by Johann Joachim Kaendler. The Museum has described the piece, commissioned by the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland for the Japanese Palace in Dresden, as one of the most superb additions ever made to the Museum's European ceramics collections. www.ashmolean.org/news/news/index.php?id=81

National Museums Scotland has received a £1 million grant from The Moffat Charitable Trust, a significant contribution to the £46.4 million redevelopment of the Royal Museum building. This major grant brings the total raised to date to over £41 million, including major grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£17.8m) and the Scottish Government (£16m). www.nms.ac.uk/press_release_moffat.trust.aspx

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales has secured a further three years funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to develop Celf Cymru Gyfan - ArtShare Wales, the visual arts partnership programme to extend access to the national art collection. Amgueddfa Cymru now plans to widen the scope of ArtShare Wales, both in terms of eligible partner venue and projects delivered.

www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/news/?article_id=448

The Simon Sainsbury Bequest to the nation is on public display for the first time at **Tate Britain**. All eighteen paintings from the Bequest have been brought together before they enter the permanent collection displays at the **National Gallery** and Tate. The works, five of which were donated to the National Gallery and thirteen to Tate, were given by philanthropist and collector Simon Sainsbury (1930-2006) in one of the most significant bequests of paintings ever made to the nation.

www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2008/15842.htm

Awards

St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, part of Glasgow Museums, is being recognised for its contribution to educating people about religion. The museum is receiving a Shap Award, which is given to an organisation or person which makes an outstanding contribution to Religious Education. St Mungo Museum is one of just three museums around the world dedicated solely to Religious Life and Art. www.glasgowmuseums.com/news.cfm

The website of the **British Library's** *Sacred* exhibition has been commended by the annual Nominet Best Practice Challenge Awards for enabling cross-cultural knowledge.

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/sacred/homepage.html

RAF Museum Cosford's Access and Learning Team have won an Education Business Partnership Award for working with a Birmingham inner-city secondary school. The Museum has also been awarded a Silver Award by Servicemark, the National Standard for Customer Service.

www.rafmuseum.org.uk/cosford/news/article.cfm?news_id=88

Revised plans for the £215m extension to **Tate Modern** have been unveiled, with a new design by architects Herzog and de Meuron intended to integrate the new building with both the existing building and the local environment. The building will have better facilities for learning programmes and the gallery spaces will be more flexible to allow for future programme changes. The revised building design also sets new benchmarks for both sustainability and energy use, exploiting heat emitted from the former power station's relocated transformers. The scheme will use 40% less energy and 35% less carbon than building regulations demand. The project is due to be completed in 2012. To date Tate has received £70m towards the overall cost, including £50m from Government.

www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2008/15959.htm

The **Sir John Soane's Museum** has launched a campaign to fund a new renovation project "Opening up the Soane". The project, which involves opening rooms that have been closed to the public for over a century, is the last significant restoration project left for the museum to undertake and will complete more than 20 years of careful and successful restoration. www.soane.org

The **British Library** has announced its strategy for moving low use collections to its Boston Spa site from January 2009. www.bl.uk/collectionmoves/

Professor Phil Redmond CBE has been appointed as the new Chair of **National Museums Liverpool**, taking over from Loyd Grossman. Professor Redmond will take up his new position on 1 August for a period of 4 years. He is probably best known for his work in television as creator of Grange Hill, Brookside and Hollyoaks. He became Deputy Chair of Liverpool's Capital of Culture Board in 2006 and was appointed Creative Director in September 2007. Both he and his wife have long-standing links with and are major benefactors of National Museums Liverpool. www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases/5298.aspx

Scientists at the **Natural History Museum** have identified for the first time how the structures that make butterfly wings shimmer, and seemingly change colour, actually work. Understanding how these nanostructures in butterfly wings cause optical effects may enable the structures to be replicated for use in modern technology.

www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2008/july/news_14968.html

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum has now welcomed five million visitors since it reopened just over two years ago. Around five thousand people on average visit the museum every day.

www.glasgowmuseums.com/news.cfm

The **British Library** Sound Archive has acquired the audio recordings of the Survey of Anglo-Welsh Dialects, a unique, in-depth investigation into the local vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar of English in Wales.

www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archive/cat.html

The Ministry of Defence has launched a public consultation on the early transfer of some historic armed forces' service personnel records to **The National Archives**. The Files include records of soldiers, sailors and airmen who served between the wars, in addition to files of the Home Guard during the Second World War.

www.forums.mod.uk/feedback/PublicConsultation.htm

The **Museum of London**, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, the Confucius Temple Museum and the Imperial College in Beijing, has launched a new photographic exhibition on London and Beijing to coincide with the Beijing Olympic Games. It will run for two months. The Museum is additionally loaning items for London House in Beijing among these will be the Olympic Torch from 1948.

To highlight the transfer of responsibility from the DCMS to the GLA, the **Museum of London** is hosting an exhibition about the role of the Museum in London in the GLA foyer. This two month show coincides with a series of talks and events for GLA staff by Museum staff. www.molg.org.uk

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If you have any comments on the NMDC Newsletter or would like to contribute to a future edition, please email the Editor Emily Candler at news@nationalmuseums.org.uk