



Welcome to this month's NMDC newsletter, which contains a summary of Gordon Brown's 2005 Budget and information about DCMS's Five Year Plan.

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

NMDC News

IPPR Seminar - Art, Heritage and Civil Renewal: Exploring the Links.

The second seminar for the ippr (Institute of Public Policy Research) project 'Culture, Community and Civil renewal', for which NMDC is a partner, was held on 7 March.

The seminar entitled 'Art, Heritage and Civil Renewal: Exploring the Links', included contributions from academics working in the fields of museum studies and sociology and professionals from heritage and community institutions.

The seminar was followed by an evening event at the Royal Opera House 'Why Should Government Support the Arts? Excellence, Involvement, Regeneration and Civil Renewal'. Speaking at the event Tessa Jowell stressed the importance of conveying the value of culture in order to ensure continued government support. Sir Christopher Frayling, also speaking at the event, warned against making generalisations about the value of art over centuries - the 'for all time' arguments that end in sentimentality - emphasising the importance of addressing what art means to us now.

The final seminar 'Community and Business - Arts, Heritage and Civil Renewal' will be held on 15 April and the final report is due in June 2005

Further information about the project is available on ippr's website at:
www.ippr.org.uk.

HR Forum

The HR Forum and Leadership and Development Sub Group met on 4 March. Issues discussed included NMDC's response to the Careers, Training and Leadership section of Estelle Morris' paper 'Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life' and professional employee training programmes for the museum and heritage sectors. The Forum has agreed to become a member of the Whitehall in Industry Group on behalf of NMDC. Caitlin Griffiths and Nikola Burdon of the Museums Association attended as guests to discuss their work on museum salary guidelines. Sarah Aston of the National Trust has agreed to chair future meetings of the Leadership and Development Sub Group.

UK Affairs Committee

NMDC's UK Affairs Committee met for the first time on 14 March. The role of the Committee will be to brief NMDC on developments in the wider museum sector, and ensure that national museums are properly built into nationwide programmes. There have been considerable changes in the scope and scale of national programmes in recent years. However as the NMDC report *National Dimensions* revealed, there are still hot and cold areas of partnership and collaboration, and there are also issues of capacity for both national museums and their partners. The new Committee will be working with NMDC, MLA and HLF to develop a more strategic approach. The Committee is chaired by David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool and the members include representatives of national and regional museums, the MA, MLA and the regional agencies.

Members News

IWM receives MLA Accreditation

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) received confirmation from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in mid-March that all five of its branches have received full Accredited status under the MLA's Accreditation Scheme. The Scheme, which was first launched in 1988 and has undergone a major revision in the past two years, was relaunched at IWM in November 2004 when the Standard was published. The Museum has worked for the past 18 months in identifying areas for improvement, particularly in Collections Management, in order to meet the anticipated requirements of the new Standard. In addition to awarding full Accredited status, MLA also commended the Museum for its "excellently organised process which resulted in comprehensive and well-presented applications". In order to continue to maintain its status, the Museum will now be consolidating the recent work by implementing its Documentation Plan, making collections care improvements to meet Benchmarks in Collections Care standards, carrying out improvements for disabled access and implementing Inspiring Learning For All. For further information about accreditation go to: www.mla.gov.uk/action/accreditation/00accreditation.asp

Two National Museums Shortlisted for Gulbenkian Prize

Big Pit, National Mining Museum of Wales (www.nmgw.ac.uk/www.php/bigpit) and Locomotion: the National Railway Museum (www.nrm.org.uk) have been shortlisted for this year's Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year, worth £100,000. Coventry Transport Museum (www.transport-museum.com) and Time and Tide: The Museum of Great Yarmouth Life (www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/) have also been shortlisted for the prize. Previous winners include the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh and the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law, Galleries of Justice, Nottingham (www.galleriesofjustice.org.uk.)

Winners will be announced on 26 May.

For further information visit: www.thegulbenkianprize.org.uk

NMGW consults on Vision for the future.

The National Museums and Galleries of Wales are currently consulting publicly on the organisation's Vision for the future. Representing Wales's varied cultural identities, promoting sustainability locally, nationally and internationally, and supporting the creation of a truly bilingual country are all part of the agenda. Your help and involvement will be central to how these contemporary issues are debated and presented in ways that are fresh and challenging. The consultation is an opportunity for everyone interested in the museum or its work to have their say on the future direction of the organisation over the next few years.

Michael Houlihan, Director General of NMGW explains:

"Our plans for the future are exciting and ambitious. We are confident that they will appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds living in Wales as well as those visiting the country. We are committed to ensuring that we use our past to create a museum for the future. "Visitors will be coming to very different museums in five to ten years time. We'll be offering a far more challenging type of experience and dealing with far more difficult issues."

"We are encouraging people to become part of the Vision by going to www.amgueddfa-cymru.org and telling us what they think. Internet kiosks have also been set up at each of our museums so visitors can surf the website while at the museum. A hard copy of the Vision questionnaire is also available by contacting any of the museums."

The public consultation ends on 22 April 2005

1871 Census Goes Online

The 1871 census is available online, in full, for the first time. Thanks to a new initiative by The National Archives and Ancestry.co.uk, you can search the index by name and look at scans of original records of the famous, and not so famous, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/census.

This latest launch means visitors to the National Archives website will now be able to trace their families through four successive censuses, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901.

NMM Collections Reform Seminar

The National Maritime Museum hosted a seminar on their Collections Reform Programme on 23 March.

The NMM are planning a new library and archive facility on their Greenwich site, vastly improving access to their extensive collections on paper, which comprise 46% of the entire collection. Their innovative programme for collections reform, giving a practical solution to storage issues, involves grading the collections from A to E. Grade A is given to important parts of the collection requiring on-site storage for frequent access. Grade D is given to parts of the collection that only require infrequent access and can be stored long distances from Greenwich, where storage costs are lower. Grade E is given to a very small percentage of the collection that is best suited to disposal or dispersal.

Speaking at the seminar, DCMS's Richard Hartman described the scheme as a pioneering exercise that can be used as a model for other DCMS sponsored bodies.

For further information visit the NMM's website at: www.nmm.ac.uk

Spoliation Panel Report on Benevento Missal

The Spoliation Advisory Panel has ruled that the Beneventan Missal, which was acquired in good faith by the British Library, was most probably looted from the Metropolitan Chapter of the Cathedral City of Benevento during the Nazi era and must be returned as soon as possible. The Panel has recommended to Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell that legislation should be introduced to permit restitution of objects spoliated during the Nazi era. In the meantime, the British Library has accepted the recommendation and is discussing arrangements to loan the missal to Benevento.

For further information and to download the panel's report findings go to: www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms047_05.htm

Trustee Appointments

The Prime Minister has made the following trustee appointments in National Museums, all for four year terms: Admiral the Lord Boyce GCB OBE DL for the National Maritime Museum; Fiona Rae for the Tate Gallery; Bonnie Greer and Francis Finlay for British Museum.

New Head of National Advisory Services at National Archive

Nick Kingsley, former County Archivist of Gloucestershire and Chairman of the National Council on Archives, took up the new post of Head of National Advisory Services at the National Archives in Kew last month.

The National Advisory Services department was formed in April 2004 by bringing together functions of the Historical Manuscripts Commission with those of the Records Management Advisory Service, launched the previous May. It is responsible for advising all record keepers throughout the public and private sectors on the long-term care of and access to records, managing the process by which Public Records are deposited in other repositories and advocating the importance of archives to policy makers, funding bodies and the general public.

For further information go to: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

BBC and NPG Collaboration

The National Portrait Gallery and the BBC are producing an exhibition and television series that have for the first time been jointly developed by the two organisations.

'The World's Most Photographed' is a completely integrated project consisting of an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery of around 100 photographs, a BBC TWO series and an associated book exploring the way photography has been used and manipulated to construct the image of 10 figures from history – from international stars to world leaders and politicians.

The exhibition will run from 6 July to 23 October 2005, with the television series being broadcast during the summer.

For further information go to: www.npg.org.uk/live/wowmp.asp

If you have any comments on the NMDC Newsletter or would like to contribute to a future edition, please contact Claire Henry: chenry@iwm.org.uk

Current Issues

BUDGET 2005

The Chancellor announced his budget on 16 March. The following summary outlines areas of particular relevance to Museums.

Creativity in Industry

In his speech, the Chancellor told the House of Commons, "our aim must be that Britain becomes the world's leading location for research-based, science-based and knowledge-based industries." The Budget Report includes the following detail:

- To help to improve the business impact of cultural creativity, the Government will provide £12 million over 2 years from 2006-07 to the Arts Council England and others to promote excellence in management and leadership within the cultural sector. This will ensure that a larger number of talented high-flyers in cultural organisations will be able to develop commercial and business leadership skills, encourage the leadership talents of leading ethnic minority figures in the arts, and create new opportunities for business-arts collaboration.
- The Chancellor has asked George Cox, Chair of the Design Council, to review how best to ensure that SMEs are able to apply creativity and innovation to improve their performance and productivity. The DTI will launch a study of the value and productivity impact of creativity and design in businesses, helping firms to identify how creativity can improve their performance."

(Source: Budget Report, Chapter 3: Meeting the Productivity Challenge http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/AA7/1F/bud05_chap03_229.pdf)

Roy Clare, Chair of NMDC's Leadership Working Group and a member of the Sector Skills Council Board, welcomed the announcement of new funding for leadership and management in the Cultural Sector, which should help to parallel and effectively extend the work of the Clore Leadership Programme.

Volunteering

The Government is investing up to £100 million over the next three years in a new national framework for youth action and engagement in response to the Russell Commission report published on 16 March (available to download at: www.russellcommission.org). This will include a volunteering opportunities fund rising to £40 million by 2007-08. The Government is making this fund available to match contributions from business. The framework will ensure young people have a choice of a range of opportunities from introductory 'tasters' to a more sustained commitment, covering diverse activities in fields such as health, heritage and culture, community safety, sport, conservation and education. The Heritage Lottery Fund has pledged £5 million through their Young Roots programme in 2005-06 and Sport England has pledged £1 million a year from their programme for young people to volunteer in sports activities.

(Source: Budget Report, Chapter 5: Building a Fairer Society http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/AA7/40/bud05_chap05_209.pdf)

Gift Aid

As announced in the 2004 Pre-Budget Report, this measure will stop charities simply reclassifying admission fees as donations on which Gift Aid can be claimed, and will also extend the types of charities that can benefit from the exemption which currently allows certain charities to offer free admission to donors without that being treated as a benefit when deciding whether Gift Aid applies. (further information at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/budget2005/revbn27.htm)

Challenge Fund for Arts and Culture Innovation

Tessa Jowell has announced a £6 million challenge fund to boost innovation in arts and culture. The Quality and Innovation Fund - part of the DCMS spending settlement for the next three years - will focus on three priorities, supporting new work and new audiences, young talent, and a cultural offer for all children and young people. Examples of types of projects that could be supported include new museum displays using cutting edge technology and 'Sleep-over' events for children in museums.

Funding will begin in 2007, and grant award decisions will be made by a 'Star Chamber' of experts from the culture sector.

For further information go to: www.culture.gov.uk/

DCMS Five Year Plan

DCMS published their Five Year Plan 'Living Life to the Full' on 17 March. 'Looking after the nation's cultural assets' is one of 10 key commitments set out in the plan, which describes museums, galleries and the historic environment as 'key to understanding ourselves, our communities and our nation'.

The plan outlines support for 'Growing Talent' in the sector, including developing Creative Apprenticeships and continuing support for the Clore Leadership Programme. Under 'Maximising Investment' DCMS proposes to refine the way they judge and measure their organisations 'developing more sensitive measures of public value that better reflect what people want'. They will work with the cultural sector to realise efficiencies, allowing organisations to keep efficiency gains to 'do what they do best' e.g. 'display, explain and preserve objects'. They will also 'encourage bodies such as Arts Council England, Museums Libraries and Archives Council and English Heritage to significantly strengthen their roles as development bodies for their sectors'.

The Plan also sets out the vision for 'Creative Sparks' – a commitment that all children should have access to high quality cultural resources including museums, libraries, archives and theatre.

The share of lottery funding for current 'good causes' was confirmed until 2009. However, if the UK is successful in its bid for the 2012 Olympics the Games will become one of the main Lottery causes after 2009. DCMS plan to consult widely from September 2005 to February 2006, to learn where people, especially lottery players, think the money should be spent in the future. The consultation will lead into policy decisions by Ministers in spring 2006 and an announcement in June 2006 about arrangements for the future.

To download a full copy of the Five Year Plan go to:

www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2005/dcms_5yr_plan.htm

DCMS Consultation on Voluntary and Community Sector

DCMS has launched a consultation on 'A Giving Culture: Getting the best out of the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and DCMS'. Building on their strategy document 'Engaging with the Voluntary and Community Sector', published in 2004 the document makes a series of research, partnership and policy recommendations. For further details go to:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/consultations/2005+current+consultations/a_giving_culture.htm

Responses should be made by 30 May.

Better Case for the Arts Debate

The Wallace Foundation produced a study last month entitled 'Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts', seeking a 'broader understanding of the arts' full range of effects'. Following this, the Arts Journal website hosted a 'weblog' on the subject 'Is there a better case to be made for the arts?'.

To view the weblog go to:

www.artsjournal.com/muse/

The RAND study can be downloaded at: www.wallacefoundation.org/WF/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/ArtsParticipation/GiftsOfTheMuse.htm

Transformational Grants Programme Consultation

DCMS is carrying out a consultation on the Big Lottery Fund's Transformational Grants Programme, which aims to inspire communities to transform, revitalise and regenerate where they live, through major infrastructure investments. The proposed overall budget is £140m, planned over a three-year period with £20m to be set aside for development grants. The remaining £120m would comprise one very large project (circa. £50m) possibly linked to a TV programme and subject to public voting, and smaller grants under a separate strand between £10 - 25m. Responses by the end of April 2005.

To view the consultation draft and further details go to: www.culture.gov.uk/global/consultations/2005+current+consultations/big_lottery_fund_transformational_grants_programme.htm

Export Stops

Three temporary export bars were placed in March on: a cast iron fire basket, designed by, Charles Sargeant Jagger; a marble 'capriccio' by Benedetto Pistrucchi; and a set of nineteen watercolours, entitled 'Designs for Blair's Grave' by William Blake. For further information go to: www.culture.gov.uk/cultural_property/default.htm

Transfer of Cultural Property Functions to MLA

A number of cultural property functions are to be transferred from DCMS to the MLA following recommendations in the 2004 Goodison report.

The functions concerned include the acceptance in lieu scheme and the government indemnity scheme, which are currently split between the MLA and DCMS, and the issue of export licenses for the export of cultural goods, and for providing the secretariat for the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art, which is currently carried out by DCMS. Goodison pointed out that these were all executive functions, which sat uneasily in DCMS, which was otherwise a strategic body.

With the exception of the issuing of export licenses, the transfer of these functions is planned from 1 April 2005. MLA will take on responsibility for issuing export licensing from 1 May 2005, which will allow for the installation of IT equipment to enable the issuing of the licenses.

MLA Disability Experts Database

The MLA has launched a new online tool to help organisations meet their disability access needs.

Providing online access to a database of over 200 disability trainers, auditors and consultants who have an interest or experience in working with museums, galleries, libraries and archives, Disability Experts is the first database of its kind in the cultural sector.

Visit Disability Experts on the MLA website at: <http://disabilitydatabase.mla.gov.uk/>

New Remit for Culture Online

Culture online the DCMS funded website that commissions web-based cultural projects, is to receive an additional £3million to spend on interactive projects in 2005-2006.

In addition to commissioning new projects, Culture Online's team of technical and creative specialists will offer consultancy support to other Government Departments and NDPBs. For further information visit the Culture Online website at www.cultureonline.gov.uk

New Cultural Hubs

Estelle Morris launched three pilots last month that will explore new ways of providing high quality cultural opportunities for young people. The pilots, which will take place from September in Durham, Bournemouth/Poole and Telford, will link education and cultural organisations, focusing initially on the arts, museums, libraries and archives. Specialist colleges and other schools in these areas will come together with local cultural organisations jointly to plan and deliver a comprehensive programme of arts and other cultural activities for children and young people. Each hub will hold a shared budget made up of up to £0.5m of Arts Council funding, with additional contributions from each of the schools involved. The hubs will be managed locally by a Steering Group involving Arts Council England, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the relevant Local Education Authority and the Specialist Schools Trust.

For further information about the scheme go to: www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms045_05.htm

MA Diversify bursaries for ethnic minority candidates

The Museums Association is offering six one-year bursaries to candidates of African, Caribbean, Asian or Chinese descent to enroll in a full time postgraduate museum studies course and do three months' work experience in regional museums in England. The MLA has committed nearly £500,000 to the scheme as part of their Renaissance in the Regions programme, following their 2004 'Diversify!' report that identified creating a more diverse workforce as a priority for museums.

The deadline for applications by CV and covering letter is 28 April. For further information visit the Museums Association website at:

www.museumsassociation.org

To download the 'Diversify!' report go to:

www.mla.gov.uk/action/regional/00renaiss.asp

NCA Arts Manifesto

The National Campaign for the Arts (NCA) launched its Arts Manifesto in January, which lays out key recommendations to improve the arts in Britain. They have also produced a draft letter for members to send to their MP during the 'election season', asking them to support the manifesto.

These can be accessed from the NCA website at www.artscampaign.org.uk/campaigns/arts%20manifesto.html

Human Remains Code of Practice

The UK Government and the Welsh Assembly Government announced last month their intention to issue a Code of Practice setting out how to approach issues surrounding the holding and return of human remains held in museums. The Code is being produced by a Drafting Group chaired by Hedley Swain from the Museum of London with representatives from a variety of museums and heritage organisations, in response to the consultation document 'Care of Historic Human Remains' which was jointly published by DCMS and the Welsh Assembly in July 2004. For further information on the announcement and the Code of Practice Drafting Group go to: www.culture.gov.uk/cultural_property/default.htm

Better Places to Live

Tessa Jowell has published a personal essay on 'Better Places to Live: Government, Identity and the Value of the Historic and Built Environment', in which she examines the relationship between Government and the heritage sector. It sets out a case for strengthening the relationship between communities and the historic and built environment, as a way to better understand our identity and what it means to be British in the 21st Century. The essay can be downloaded at: www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2005/better_placesto_live.htm

Government's Skills White Paper

The Government published its Skills White Paper on 22 March which, together with the '14-19 Education and Skills White Paper' published on 23 February, sets out for the first time a coherent lifelong learning strategy to tackle the skills needs of the nation. Both papers can be downloaded at: www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/skillsgettingon/

"70 Cents for Culture" campaign

The "70 Cents for Culture" campaign was officially launched at the European Parliament in Brussels on 15 March. The campaign, led by the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) in partnership with the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), aims to increase the funding for the new EU Culture 2007 programme to the value of 70 cents per European citizen. Further information can be found at: www.efah.org/en/70cents.htm. You can support the campaign by filling in the manifesto online on the ECF website: www.eurocult.org. Follow the "70 Cents for Culture" link and click on the "Support 70 Cents" tab

Appointment of new Chair and Deputy Chair of ICOM UK

Jack Lohman and Hassan Arero have been appointed as the new Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the International Council of Museums UK (ICOM UK). Jack Lohman is Director of the Museum of London Group and Professor of Museum Design and Communication at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts in Norway. Born in Kenya, Hassan Arero is Keeper of Anthropology at the Horniman Museum and a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

ICOM promotes the development and advancement of museums and the museum profession at an international level. Established in 1946 it now has over 17,000 members in 147 countries. ICOM UK is the national committee of ICOM and aims to promote the aims and objectives of ICOM, to represent the interests of ICOM members in the UK and to raise awareness of museum developments at an international level. Visit <http://uk.icom.museum> for further information.

Museums and Galleries Month 2005

This year's Museums and Galleries Month will take place from 1 to 31 May. The year's theme is Objects of Desire; the art of collecting.

Museums and Galleries are invited to nominate their 'top object', and email a low-resolution digital picture and short caption to info@campaignformuseums.org.uk to be included in a changing set of objects of desire to be showcased on the MGM website at www.may2004.org.uk/

Science in Society Report

MORI published a report last month for the Office of Science and Technology that examines public attitudes to science and scientists. The report called 'Science in Society: Findings from Qualitative and Quantitative Research' found that over 80% of adults think science makes a good contribution to society and that science will make our lives easier. More than half (56%) of UK adults have taken part in a science-based activity in the last year, outside work. 23% of respondents had visited the Natural History Museum and 19% had visited the Science Museum in the preceding five years.

To download the full report go to: www.policyhub.gov.uk/home/science_mori05.asp

Museums and Lottery Funding

On 17 March the National Gallery hosted 'Game Plan: Museums and Lottery Funding', a conference organised by the Museums Association and the Heritage Lottery Fund looking back on the last 10 years of HLF funding and forward, to the future of Lottery Funding in Museums.

In the last ten years, museums and galleries have received £1.16bn from the HLF, a third of its total grants. The HLF has supported more than 1,300 projects, refurbishing national, regional, university and independent museums. It has also created 150 education posts and 100 new education spaces.

Speaking at the conference Estelle Morris praised the work of HLF in the museum sector and talked of 'positioning museums at the centre of national life'. However, she warned that changes to the national lottery would mean that museums might not receive as much funding as they have in the past.

Authors of the DEMOS report 'Capturing Cultural Value' and report to HLF 'Challenge and Change: HLF and Cultural Value', John Holden and Robert Hewison stressed the need for HLF to find new ways of communicating the value of heritage in order to secure their share of lottery funding in the future (both publications can be downloaded from the Demos website at www.demos.co.uk/catalogue).

The MA's report on the conference can be viewed at www.museumsassociation.org

Tourism and the American Market

VisitBritain (www.visitbritain.com) have launched a new consumer magazine for luxury travel and lifestyle in Britain called 'So British'. Aimed primarily at the US market, the magazine features articles, interviews and inside tips to 'respond to the needs of the luxury discerning customer'. A recent survey by VisitBritain of 600 American visitors to the UK has identified that the 'key product driver of visit satisfaction is Britain's history and heritage'. Overall, levels of satisfaction and 'loyalty' to Britain were high although 'value for money' and 'local food and drink' experiences were identified as weak points.

The 'So British' magazine has an accompanying website at www.sobritish.org.

Embedding Diversity in Galleries

Engage, the international association for gallery educators, artist educators and other arts and education professionals, held their national conference 'Embedding Diversity in Galleries' at the National Gallery on 22 March. Drawing on research undertaken by engage as part of the European Social Fund (ESF) funded Creative Renewal programme, the seminar explored practical ways in which galleries and the arts sector can implement change.

Speakers at the conference described case studies from positive action schemes in arts organisations for students and arts professionals to improve workforce diversity. These included: the MA's *Diversify* Scheme, which creates bursaries and traineeships within museums and galleries for minority ethnic individuals; Tate Modern's Artist Educator Training Programme, to encourage further participation by ethnic minority artists in arts education and Arts Council North West's Positive Action Trainee Programme which provides comprehensive professional development opportunities for individuals from African, South Asian, Caribbean and Chinese descent.

The accompanying publication 'Embedding Diversity in Galleries' contains details of the case studies and the results of the research. To order a copy contact engage at info@engage.org 020 7244 0110. www.engage.org

New Website for Tourists to England

The Government has invested £10million in EnglandNet, a new website providing 'a virtual high street for tourism' which allows visitors to see all the attractions, accommodation and travel information for a specific area, providing links to local websites where they will be able to book their holiday. The site, which will go live in May, can be accessed at www.englandnet.co.uk/.

New Artistic Director at ICA

The ICA has appointed Ekow Eshun, writer and broadcaster, to be their new artistic director. Eshun, who has worked with the University of Arts, London, Tate Members and the London Arts Board, will assume the role from 2 May. For further information visit: www.ica.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=13995

CulturEuro Seminars

EUCLID, the official UK Cultural Contact Point, appointed by the European Commission and the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, are running a series of CulturEuro seminars for the arts and cultural sector, providing information and a summary of existing and future opportunities to access funding from the European Union. The CulturEuro seminars will be held in 21 major cities, including Derry on the 18th May (The Millennium Forum) and Belfast on 19th May (Belfast City Council).

For full details of the CulturEuro seminar series and to book online, visit

www.euclid.info/uk/seminars

MUREX and LiS 2005

MUREX, a national exhibition for museum resources, is taking place on the 20 - 21 April 2005 at the NEC, Birmingham, running alongside the Library + information Show (LiS). Museum and Library suppliers will be exhibiting at the events and there will be a seminar programme with Chris Batt, MLA Chief Executive; Tom Wiley, Chief Executive, National Youth Agency; and Mark Fisher, MP and Author 'Britain's best museums and galleries' as keynote speakers. There will also be an expert panel discussion on the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). For further information:

www.museum-expo.co.uk

Parliamentary Report

The Market for Art

Following their enquiry which focused on ways of supporting and encouraging living artists and the production of new work, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee will publish its Sixth Report, The Market for Art (HC 414) at 10.30am on Wednesday 6 April. The report will be available via the parliamentary website from 3pm on the day of publication at:

www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/culture_media_and_sport.cfm

Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships

The Culture Media and Sport Committee published last month its Fourth Report, Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships (HC 296). According to the report, the nation's maritime heritage is being neglected. While the plans to establish a new Ships Unit to oversee the sector are welcomed, the Committee is not satisfied that the Unit will receive sufficient funding and calls for an increase of funds, additional direct grant-in-aid for ships in the Core Collection and for English Heritage to reconsider its abandonment of the sector. View the report at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcomeds.htm

Environmental Assessment Bill

Under this new bill, introduced in the Scottish Parliament, public sector plans must be scrutinised for their environmental impact. Go to: www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/billsInProgress/enviroAssess.htm for more information

CMS Report: Public Libraries

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee published its Third Report, Public Libraries (HC 81), last month. The report calls for urgent action to reverse the decline in visitors, lending figures and the fabric of the library estate.

Recommendations focus on libraries' role in the promotion of reading and the need for effective mechanisms to ensure all public libraries reach the high standards expected of them by the public. The Report was critical of local authorities that charge library users for using the internet. MLA welcomed the report, including the suggestion that consideration be given to specific Lottery funding for public libraries, managed by the MLA. To download the report go to:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcomeds.htm

Theatre Report

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's Fifth Report, 'Theatre' (HC 254), published last month, recommended that lottery money for theatre improvements should be repaid if the theatre changes use and that there should be a benefit for the Lottery if such a theatre is sold within 10 years of refurbishment. The report also recommended that ACE should re-focus its lottery capital programme towards maintenance of publicly funded and not-for-profit theatres, rather than any further expansion. The report criticised low pay in the sector, calling for improved financial support for actors and backstage staff alike. The full report can be downloaded at

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcomeds.htm

Forthcoming Meetings

National Museum Directors' Conference

Friday 8 April 2005, 11am, IWM

Joint Advocacy Group

Monday 11 April 2005, 11am, IWM

Marketing Group

Friday 15 April, 11 am, British Museum

PR Group

Friday 22 April, 11.30 am, Cabinet War Rooms

Learning and Access Committee

Tuesday 17 May, 2pm, National Portrait Gallery

NMDC Executive Committee

Thursday 26 May 2005, 11am, IWM

Friday 16 September 2005, 11am, IWM

UK Affairs Committee

Tuesday 14 June, 12 noon, British Museum

HR Forum

Friday 17 June, time and venue t.b.c.

www.nationalmuseums.org.uk

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