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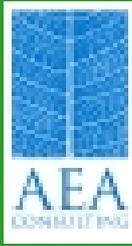
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This report sets out the collaborative work undertaken by the UK's nationally funded museums, libraries and archives with other organisations across the UK, and assesses their impact on cultural provision across the nation. It focuses on the activities in recent years of members of the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC), and is largely based on discussions with these institutions and selected partner organisations, as well as on a series of discussion days hosted by the NMDC in different regional centres in July 2003. It does not make specific reference to collaborative work between NMDC organisations themselves, and focuses on activities and initiatives that have taken place in the last few years.

For the sake of simplicity the term 'national museum' is used throughout the report to describe all NMDC member organisations, notwithstanding the fact that these also include libraries and archives.

In this report the term 'national' is used to denote institutions established by Act of Parliament as custodians of public collections that belong to the nation. It is acknowledged that the NMDC does not include all museums and other collecting institutions which carry the term 'national' as part of their name. Specific reference to their activities is not contained in this report.

Published in the United Kingdom by the National Museum Directors' Conference
ISBN 0-9531047-5-6

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Designed and printed by dsprint | redesign



National Museum Directors' Conference

NATIONAL DIMENSIONS

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CHAPTER 1

FOREWORD



1.1 Foreword

Our national museums and galleries were founded for the benefit of the whole nation. As stewards of collections that belong to the nation, they carry the potential to enhance education and learning opportunities, economic life, creativity and enjoyment for everyone across the country. The question how best to fulfil this national role is more complex, considering the geographic concentration of national museums in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast and a few other metropolitan centres. Historically, different routes have been adopted. In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, a number of national museums established branches and independent offshoots in the regions. By contrast, the last few years have been characterised by rapid growth in collaborations and partnerships with museums, galleries and other organisations throughout the UK. *National Dimensions* provides evidence of this new activity and suggests ways in which it might be both sustained and increased.

The National Museums Directors' Conference (NMDC), through its Regional Committee, commissioned *National Dimensions* to provide an overview and assessment of how the UK's national collections support cultural provision across the nation, and to help us identify practical steps to develop this important aspect of our activities. The timing for this seemed right against the background of the first phase of *Renaissance in the Regions*, itself spearheaded, amongst others, by leading national museum directors, as well as other recent developments such as the new *Action Framework for Museums* in Scotland or the establishment of Cymal in Wales.

This report is the result of six months of intensive research and consultation led by AEA Consulting, which has involved all NMDC members, as well as a broad selection of their partner institutions across the country. Contributions were also solicited from a wide range of sector professionals and policymakers. Research findings were presented and discussed at a series of discussion days held in four regional centres. These were attended by more than 100 senior professionals from non-national institutions and sector bodies. The views expressed throughout this process have all fed into this report.

Visitors to 'Paradise' at Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. 2002 exhibition organised as part of the National Gallery Touring Exhibition Partnership Scheme.



The report sets out the full range and breadth of collaborative activity between national museums and regional institutions. Much of this activity is not new, such as the long-standing informal exchanges amongst colleagues within professional networks – particularly in areas such as conservation and research. However, the report highlights a marked trend towards larger, more ambitious collaborative projects and conducted in a new atmosphere of co-operation and shared objectives between national museums and a wide and increasing number of museums, galleries and other organisations across the country. In particular:

- The large and growing number of loans, exhibitions and associated education programmes, which widen geographic access to our national collections and increase regional audiences. In 2002/03 close to 30,000 objects¹ from our collections were out on short and long-term loan across the country. This activity, which represents the most visible form of national collaboration, has mostly benefited regions outside the catchment areas of London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and other metropolitan locations with national museum presence;
- An increasing number of more deeply integrated and formalised partnerships between national museums and (one or more) regional institutions. 15 NMDC members currently have strategic partnerships with more than 30 regional institutions across the UK, of which 15 are members of the recently created Hubs in England. These have led to long-term collaborations across a whole range of activities, which extend to broad-based exchanges across the partner organisations, including formal staff development initiatives;
- A number of important collections-based initiatives, linking museums of all sizes across the UK for greater co-ordination in collecting and collections management, in which national museums tend to play a leading role;
- A range of partnerships with organisations outside our own sector, for instance within Higher Education, where ambitious collaborative projects have supported both ongoing and new research activity in national museums, also by providing access to Research Council funding.

This ever increasing activity is reflected in the growing emphasis placed on regional collaboration in our respective institutional agendas, and increasingly, the creation of senior management positions to co-ordinate partnership programmes and other collaborative work. These developments show a determination to reach a genuinely national audience and a new-found understanding of the mutual benefits that collaboration can bring regional and national institutions in developing audiences and enhancing their understanding, enjoyment and participation in our cultural heritage. These aims reflect, and are supported by, a wider political context at both national and regional level. All of this is cause for much optimism.

That said, much remains to be achieved and the situation set out in the report should perhaps best be described as ‘the end of the beginning’. Much, though not all, collaborative activity began in response to funding opportunities and not within the context of a clear strategic framework, and has been serendipitous in terms of choice of partners and programme development. The report highlights the reliance of most collaborative projects on external funding (often project-based and short-term in nature) and the difficulties of sustaining partnerships once the money runs out. This is true of the new DCMS/DfES sponsored Strategic Commissioning initiative, which, while producing some real benefits, suffers from the problems associated with funding of this nature and is no substitute for longer term consistent resourcing. We rarely quantify the contribution of core staff time and other organisational resources, which can be substantial, and this provides insufficient guidance for our corporate planning purposes. This is not a sustainable situation at a time when the allocation of institutional resources has become increasingly competitive.

¹ See Table in Section 3.4 for details

As activity across the nation increases, it seems clear that there is a requirement for each of us to articulate more precisely the nature of our national role and obligations – in terms of nationwide access to our collections, a notion of national stewardship for our respective fields of collecting etc. – and the importance that collaborations and partnerships play in meeting these as well as our own core institutional objectives. This needs to be part of a continuing dialogue between ourselves, our sponsor bodies, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and our colleagues in the regions.

The report gives us confidence that we are in a good position to move forward. Above all, we are encouraged by a general sense, shared widely across the sector, that recent years have seen a genuine rapprochement between national museums and the wider museums community. This is a marked improvement from the situation which prevailed for many decades. As new frameworks are taking shape in England, Scotland and Wales, this seems the right moment to step back, take stock of what has been achieved and chart out the road ahead.

Moving forward

Our central objectives for the coming years must be to continue developing genuinely nationwide access to our national collections and the knowledge and expertise that comes with this – thereby supporting cultural provision across the nation; contributing to the advancement of education and learning, social and economic regeneration, and not least, providing people nationwide with enjoyment and inspiration. The work of the last few years, and the network of existing relationships which each of us has formed, provides solid foundations on which we can now build.

In practice this will mean:

- Extending our loan activity for temporary exhibitions and for long-term display (with all the consequent additional access, outreach and educational programmes this leads to);
- Enhancing digital access to our collections on the internet and through other electronic media;
- Actively promoting career development opportunities through secondments, staff exchanges and other professional development opportunities, which build capacity and strengthen the profession nationwide.

There is also more scope for co-ordinating the future development of collections and related specialisation with colleagues within our respective areas of expertise, and thereby fulfilling our national stewardship role collectively.

The report highlights long-term strategic partnerships as an effective way to pursue a national access agenda, and a good framework for professional development initiatives. Many of us are in the process of widening the membership of our partnership programmes and, where appropriate, it would seem sensible to work within the developing framework of *Renaissance* as a means of reaching new regional audiences, as well as sharing expertise and skills. This is in line with, and reaffirms the aspirations expressed in the original *Renaissance* report, where the role of the national museums in supporting regional infrastructure was explicitly acknowledged. The same applies to the *Action Framework for Museums* in Scotland and the changing environment in Wales and Northern Ireland.

This need not happen to the exclusion of other relationships. There is a continued role and value in nurturing existing relationships and experimenting with new ones, outside of the set frame of long-term partnership building within the Hub and other frameworks. This will also be valuable for reflecting and addressing relationships between museums and galleries under different devolved governments, allowing better understanding of these new political and strategic contexts.

Each national museum will need to develop its partnership activities according to criteria best suited to its objectives and particular circumstances. We should not expect a single template to work for all. This also applies to the regions, each of which has a different make-up and needs. We should however ensure that collectively we achieve an equitable provision across the nation, avoiding as far as possible unnecessary concentration and 'blank spots'.

Ultimately, we will best fulfil our national role as institutions by being responsive to the needs expressed by colleagues, the regions and the people of Britain at large.

Practical next steps

The NMDC, as a forum for joint action and debate, is proposing the following practical steps, to create closer links and foster dialogue between its members and regional institutions:

- Hub leaders and directors of major non-national institutions outside England, as well as a senior representative of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, will be invited to join a new National Committee (which is to replace the Regional Committee). The new Committee will be responsible for taking forward the agenda set out in this report, acting as a forum of exchange between national and regional directors, discussing practical issues and developing programme initiatives on behalf of the NMDC.
- Hub and other non-national museum directors, and their senior staff, will also be encouraged to participate in other NMDC initiatives, and to join its working parties and committees, as appropriate.
- Regional discussion days, bringing together a mix of national and regional senior museum professionals, will become a regular feature of the NMDC's annual programme of events. These will be organised in collaboration with GLLAM, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Scottish Museums Council, Cymal, the Northern Ireland Museums Council, the Regional Agencies, the Museums Association, AIM and other key sector bodies from across the UK. They will provide the framework to debate common issues arising, to share experiences of collaboration and to network.
- We will seek to develop with HLF, and other major funders to the sector, a series of initiatives to support the development of the key areas of our national work.

Securing the future

Extending the scope and volume of national activity will have resource implications, both for national museums and their partners. These will need addressing. The report has highlighted the need to reduce dependency on short-term, project funding and instead provide longer term and more consistent resources, as well as the need to quantify the core cost implications more accurately. In England we see the *Renaissance* funding, as well as *Designation Challenge Funding*, as obvious vehicles for this, but would also expect to address this in our respective funding agreements. We will be exploring this with DCMS and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and so should our existing and prospective partners with their new regional bodies.

We need to recognise that there is at present a gap between our collective aspirations and our ability to deliver against these. Whilst here and there some additional core resources could be allocated towards national collaborations, this does not represent a sustainable position. On the other hand, even relatively modest incremental investment has the potential to produce substantial additional benefits. They should however be part of a longer term funding framework for greater effectiveness, and cannot be a substitute for core funding.

As this report demonstrates, relationships between the national museums and galleries and regional institutions are developing in ways that both exploit and place responsibilities on national and regional institutions alike, to their undoubted mutual benefit. The developing principle is that of genuine partnership which, at its most developed, sees national and regional museums as sharing the stewardship of a national collection, with a shared responsibility towards making these accessible, enjoyable and relevant to the widest possible audience across the nation. The variety and range of national institutions forbids any single definition of a national role or any single blueprint for this. However, the trend outlined clearly in this report is one that we would all wish to encourage and lay on a firmer footing by securing funding for its long-term future.

Acknowledgements

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have been consulted and have most generously shared their views and experience. Their names can be found in Appendix 1. We owe them above all the rich texture of this report.

Charles Saumarez Smith
Chair of the Regional Committee

Robert Crawford
*Chair of the National Museum
Directors' Conference*

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT



2.1 Context

The UK's national museums have played an important part in the cultural life of the nation for more than two centuries. The context of their formation, from the middle of the 18th century to the first half of the 20th century, and their subsequent evolution as institutions is closely linked with important moments in Britain's history. The evolving role of museums is reflected in a society progressively transformed by the ideas of the age of enlightenment, the industrial revolution, colonial expansion, world wars, and imperial decline, the welfare state and the emergence of a multi-cultural society in the latter part of the 20th century. They share this history with the other large collections in Britain's main metropolitan centres.

The timeline in Appendix 3 sketches out this chronological context.

A national role

'.....the South Kensington Museum exists not wholly, nor even chiefly, as an institution for the exclusive advantage of the dwellers in, and visitors to London, but that it is in truth also a great national collection, or storehouse, formed and administered for the benefit of the whole kingdom.' (1881)²

The definition of national museums as 'national' institutions is complex, considering how diverse they are in terms of size and scope, the respective context of their creation and subsequent development. That said, the majority of them are subject leaders in their respective fields of collecting. As a result they necessarily occupy a position of *primus inter pares* amongst their national peer group. This position comes with responsibilities and expectations.

The debate about the role and remit of national museums in terms of nationwide cultural and educational provision is anything but new. The first minute relating to the circulation of objects from the Museum of Ornamental Art (forerunner of the Victoria & Albert Museum) is dated August 1854 *'...one of the principal objectives of its formation [is] the circulation of specimens to local schools of art in connection with the Science and Art Department'*.³ The National Gallery has made loans with Treasury Authority since 1855 and the Loan Act of 1883 gave National Gallery trustees the power to loan its collection to other institutions. This development was met with enthusiasm by provincial galleries at the time and generated many requests for loans from regional institutions.⁴

The annals of many of the larger national collections and of the succeeding public bodies formed to support the museums and galleries sector show the 'national debate' re-occurring periodically. A recurrent theme is the gap between statements of intent, and the expectations these give rise to on the one hand, and the ability and commitment to deliver when confronted with the reality of limited resources and competing institutional priorities⁵.

At the heart of this lies the question of what constitutes the 'national role' of museums and other collections-based institutions funded from central government, and their obligations to the tax-payer across the nation – be it by way of direct interface or through collaboration with the wider museums, libraries and archives community. This has never been addressed systematically and has not until recently found an expression in the funding agreements between national museums and their sponsoring departments.

Most national museums, because of their size and international prominence, have tended to look for their natural peers in the leading collections of the world's capitals and cultural centres. This has informed the composition of professional networks and collaborative activities, particularly witnessed by the international circuit of temporary exhibitions – 'blockbusters' and others – in recent decades. This is not to say that these networks did not, at an individual level, include national peers, but overall



IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Imperial War Museum North.



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The Great Court, British Museum.

² *Science and Art Department of the Council of Education South Kensington. Report on the System of Circulation of Art Objects on Loan for Exhibition as carried on by the Department from its first establishment to the present time.* (1881) London: HMSO p.10

³ *Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department: It's History & Scope.* (1950) London: Victoria & Albert Museum p.3

⁴ By June 1883 loan requests were received from places like Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham, Stockport, Oldham, Dundee and Warrington. A report of February 1884 stated that under the Act 67 pictures had been allotted to 11 provincial galleries 'apportioning the number in each case as far as possible to the population and importance of the towns in which they were situated....'

⁵ See for example, *The South Kensington Museum: Its Functions as a National Institution.* (1875) The Art Journal p.153

international links have been more predominant than exchanges and collaborations at national level.⁶

This phenomenon, which finds its equivalent in many other countries, in particular those with a centralised structure and the historical dominance of one or a few metropolitan centres, was reinforced by a series of factors which characterised the UK during the post-war period, and in particular the period from the 1970s-1990s:

- The absence for museums of an equivalent to the national funding system for the arts, which since the Second World War has provided dedicated (if not always adequate) resources to support regional infrastructure and cultural provision, including the establishment and subsequent funding of regional theatres and, more recently, contemporary art galleries;
- Local government reforms in the early/mid-1970s (and subsequent reorganisations), which amongst others led to a widening gap in salary levels between local authority museum services and national museums. This has limited the scope for cross-sector career paths, in particular from national museums to the regions;⁷
- The shift in local authority museums from a traditional curatorial model to an increasing emphasis on education, social inclusion and economic regeneration. This is often described as having created a 'cultural divide' between regional and national museums which continued to be driven by a curatorial model – even if this has also been challenged successively, by the Thatcher and New Labour administrations;
- The increasing pressure on national museums in the 1980s, to enhance economic performance, contribution to the tourist economy and the diversification of funding streams away from government funding – i.e. an environment which was not conducive to developing national activity, and the notion of collaboration other than in terms of operational efficiency and funding opportunities.

Whilst the decades up to the 1990s therefore did not provide the most propitious context for collaboration and partnership between national museums and the wider museums, libraries and archives community, they did however see the formation of a number of branches, and the creation of new national museums outside London.⁸ These developments, often integral parts of economic regeneration schemes, substantially increased the presence of national collections across the country, often with considerable local (and regional) impact.

⁶ See NMDC *International Dimensions* (2002) for a detailed overview.

⁷ This has further been exacerbated by the increasing economic divide between the South-East and the rest of the country and its impact on property prices.

⁸ National Railway Museum York (1975), IWM Duxford (1976), National Museum of Photography, Film & Television (1983), National Museums & Galleries Merseyside (1986), Tate Liverpool (1988), Tate St. Ives (1993), Royal Armouries moves to Leeds (1996), IWM North (2002).



Saturday Art Club, National Galleries of Scotland.

Nevertheless, relationships between national museums and the wider museums community until the latter part of the 1990s were not particularly close and have been commonly described by both sides in terms of 'them and us'. As always, there were exceptions to the rule.

Changing times

In recent years, the situation has begun to shift gradually but surely, and most of the evidence presented in this report – covering activity over the last two to three years – is testimony to this changing climate.

Much of this new collaborative activity has been spearheaded by national museums looking to share national collections and professional expertise more widely than had previously been the case. This was further supported by a number of other factors:

- The shift in the national policy focus towards education, social inclusion and access, and the accompanying expectations placed on national museums to broaden their geographic reach and attract audiences which traditionally have been under-represented;
- The Government's regionalisation agenda, placing increased emphasis on equity of geographic distribution of public resources and opportunities. This has created substantial new sources of regional funding to facilitate, amongst other things, the development of regional cultural infrastructure and provision;
- Specifically, *Renaissance in the Regions*, an initiative spearheaded, amongst others, by leading national museum directors. For the first time, this has created a regional framework for central government funding of non-national museums in England;
- Devolution in Scotland and Wales, which has led to a re-articulation of the role of the Scottish and Welsh national collections in the context of cultural and educational provisions across the two countries⁹, and in the case of Wales, a changed strategic and funding context with the forthcoming establishment of Cymal (Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales) as an integral civil service department within the Welsh Assembly government;
- Additional funding sources, in particular from the lottery distributing bodies, which have injected 'new money' into the sector, upgraded and extended cultural infrastructure in some important non-national institutions across the country and provided the resources required for collaborative work amongst museums, libraries and archives. The latter is now also supported by some leading grant-making trusts and foundations.

As the following chapters demonstrate, the past few years have, as a result, been characterised by a steady increase in collaborative activity. Whilst some of this can be described as opportunistic, it also points to a new and changed '*zeitgeist*'. So much is acknowledged by representatives of different constituencies from across the museum sector whose comments have fed into this report.

There is also widespread agreement that more can be achieved, and in particular that a clearer sense of priorities and needs is required from all sides, in order to focus future efforts and resources to greatest effect across the nation. This is reflected in the foreword to this report which contains specific proposals for taking matters forward.

⁹ See the 2003 report on museums of the Scottish Executive *An Action Framework for Museums – Consultation and Response*.

CHAPTER 3

THE LAST FEW YEARS-OVERVIEW OF CURRENT ACTIVITY



3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of collaborative activities between national museums and museums, libraries and archives across the UK. The overview is based on detailed interviews with all NMDC members and on the outcome of a series of discussion days with non-national institutions held in four regional centres.¹⁰ It follows a traditional break-down into core areas of activity: stewardship, research and scholarship, access, professional development and operations. It focuses on key developments and issues, with particular reference to developments in the last few years. These are illustrated by case studies at the end of each chapter.

The survey of NMDC members reveals a wide range and growing level of collaborative activities, ranging for example from long-established loan programmes or touring exhibition schemes to more recent instances of strategic partnerships, in which a deeper level of partnership along a number of different dimensions has been forged.

Most national museums are active in a broad range of collaborative activities:

- Programmes designed to enhance the level of access to the nationals' collections (e.g. loan programmes or touring exhibitions) are most common and offered by the vast majority of NMDC members;
- Similarly, more informal activities in which conservation or curatorial expertise is shared within a professional network are widespread, as is collaboration with other museum professionals and the academic community on research & scholarship;
- It is less common to find examples where national museums have created structured training or secondment programmes in their sectors and, where these exist, take-up has not always been as strong as expected;
- Much activity is now being focused on developing strategic partnership programmes, with the largest London-based nationals leading the trend in this area.

Interviews with senior professionals in national museums suggest that institutions are placing an increased level of strategic focus on collaborative activities with regional institutions, in some cases significantly recasting their strategic plans to focus on this objective. A growing number of institutions are creating dedicated posts to manage regional partnership programmes and there is now greater discussion in the sector around the most suitable models for collaboration and 'best practice'.

The funding of collaborative work is a central issue for institutions wishing to grow their activities. Most institutions are forced to be pragmatic and raise funds from a broad mix of sources including DCMS, lottery distributing bodies, external foundations, corporate sponsorship and core organisational resources. In general, the cost of regional activities is not ring-fenced and so the magnitude of national museums' resource commitments is impossible to quantify with any accuracy. In most cases it does not form an explicit part of funding agreements with their sponsor bodies, although there are exceptions to this.

¹⁰Newcastle, London, Bristol, Birmingham - July 2003

3.2 Stewardship

National museums are subject specialists, in the majority of cases holding the nation's predominant collections in their respective field. Many are also leading international players. They are national and international centres of expertise and, at least implicitly, regarded as guardians of their respective subject area(s). This role of *primus inter pares* imparts responsibilities on them – even where this is not made explicit.

Historically, this role has mostly been fulfilled in the context of professional networks, in which individual national museum professionals actively participate. It is not an area which has received much publicity, both within institutions and externally, but has been taken for granted and largely left to personal initiative at an individual level. Hitherto, the contribution of organisational resources to this has not tended to be quantified (or indeed evaluated).

Pressures on national museum resources are challenging this practice. As the drive for accountability for time and resources spent becomes the norm, the case for serving the peer community 'for free' also comes up for review and competes against other institutional priorities. This situation calls for a clarification of, on the one hand, national responsibilities and on the other sector-wide needs.

Also, national museums are inevitably drawn into addressing sector-wide issues such as the future sustainability of collecting activity and the need to co-ordinate the collective spend on acquisitions for maximum effect. Again, because of their position, national museums are well placed to play an active, if not leading, role in this.

Conservation

As centres of expertise and practice, national museums provide advice on conservation issues to institutions with similar collections. This form of collaboration is common and frequently originates informally through professional networks of curators and conservators.

For example, the Conservation Department at the National Gallery is the UK's (and one of the world's) leading centres for conservation of painting on canvas and panel. It provides conservation advice, when requested, to regional or national institutions, and as early as 1977 published a journal called the 'Technical Bulletin' which was created to disseminate the departments' specialist knowledge. Conservation advice is sought reasonably frequently and on an informal basis, and is offered on a pro bono basis.

Pro bono conservation of objects occurs less frequently and usually on an ad-hoc basis. This tends to be linked to other collaborative activities, for example loans in the context of an exhibition, where a national museum borrowing objects may be asked to conserve them as a quid pro quo.

In some cases conservation forms an important element of broader, collections based, strategic partnerships. An example of this is the partnership between the Wallace Collection and the Bowes Museum – their common focus on French 18th century Painting and Decorative Arts has led to cooperation in many fields, including conservation (see Case Study 5 in chapter 4.5).

Unlike many other areas of collaboration, there appear to be few large scale, formalised conservation based initiatives which bring together institutions from across the sector. The National Aviation Skills Initiative is an example of this, in which national museums have initiated and support a sector-wide initiative to improve conservation skills (see Case Study I in chapter 4.4).



THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The conservation studio at the National Gallery.

Collections management

In the UK, the responsibility for setting and promoting documentation standards for museums lies with the mda (formerly the Museum Documentation Association), founded in 1977 and funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Scottish Museums Council, the Council of Museums in Wales¹¹, and the Northern Ireland Museums Council. Its 682-strong institutional members include 18 NMDC members.¹²

National museums have contributed to this over the years by seconding professional staff to the mda to provide specific expertise. For example, Tate seconded a member of its copyright team to help the mda develop relevant fact sheets and training modules (see Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter).

National museum representatives also participate in mda working groups and have been closely involved in the creation of the SPECTRUM documentation standards themselves (see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter).

National museums, because of the size of their collections, have not always been in the vanguard of implementing best practice and sector standards. However, their endorsement is seen as critical by others in the sector.

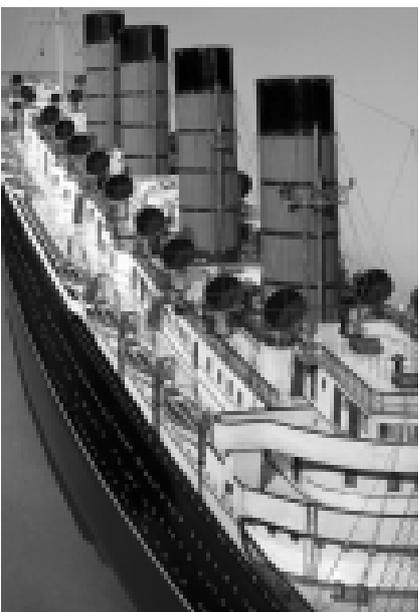
In some cases, national museums have promoted co-ordinated documentation of collections in their areas of expertise, based on the notion of 'dispersed national collections'. Models for collaboration vary significantly and depend on the number of organisations involved in the respective field of collecting, and therefore the infrastructure and resources required to support these initiatives.

A particularly successful example is the UK Maritime Collections Strategy (UKMCS) founded in 1998 with the objective of taking a strategic overview of the primary collecting areas of its member institutions. The National Maritime Museum is a lead museum and one of the originators, although the group is coordinated by a committee of 11 institutions, each leading one area of the national maritime collection. The network encourages its members to work together to co-ordinate collecting policies, share expertise and generally enhance stewardship and access to the maritime heritage (see Case Study 3 in chapter 4.4).

The National Inventory of European Painting 1200-1900 (see Case Study 2 in chapter 4.4) has been set up as an independent project in order to compile a unified online catalogue of an estimated 20,000 paintings in the UK. Initiated and supported by the National Gallery, it has its own steering group and director responsible for raising external funding. In this case, the project has to interface with a large and dispersed set of organisations (more than 250 collections).

Tate initiated 'Turner Worldwide' which is an ongoing project to bring together online over 2,000 works by Turner held in public and private collections around the world. There are over 80 participants based in the UK. The project's objective was to create a central resource of information about the artist's works, as well as a comprehensive online catalogue. It includes records for oil paintings, watercolours and drawings and aims to provide colour images through partnerships with other institutions and private collectors.

The British Library has been one of the co-sponsors, with the four Higher Education Councils and the national libraries of Scotland and Wales, of the Research Support Libraries Group, which has been looking at the creation of a network to lead and co-ordinate the provision of research information between the national libraries and university libraries in the UK. This will look at rationalising acquisition policies and the creation of better access provision for professional researchers. This is now being tested in a series of pilot projects (see Case Study I at the end of this chapter).



SCIENCE MUSEUM/SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY

Builders model of RMS Mauretania, Science Museum.

¹¹ To be integrated into Cymal - Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales - in March 2004.

¹² Two national museum directors currently (2003) sit on the mda board, one of whom is the chair.



COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL

Egyptian Gallery, Liverpool Museum.

In recent years the British Museum has conducted or participated in a number of surveys of artefacts of specific cultures, time periods and types, held in museums, galleries and research institutions across the UK. Examples of such mapping activities include Egyptian collections, Indian objects and Greek coins.

Several other national museums, for example the National Portrait Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum, are now considering different forms of thematic and collection mapping initiatives within their areas of specialisation. The Victoria & Albert Museum aims to develop networks relating to aspects of their collection and expertise in which they hold particular strength. Potential subjects include Textiles and Dress, Asia and Photography. It is intended that the first network will be launched in 2003/4. In its latest strategic plan, the National Portrait Gallery lays out its objective to take a lead in its 'sectoral field of interest'. This includes the mapping of all public collections for portraits of British sitters (commenced with the Batsford Dictionary of British Portraiture between 1979 and 1981) and sharing expertise about them with other specialists and the wider public.

Overall, this is an area where the potential to do more is recognised, as substantial fields of collecting remain uncovered by existing initiatives. However, the resource implications in terms of supporting infrastructure need to be acknowledged and ways found to share these equitably amongst partners. Whilst national museums can be expected to play a significant role in these, they cannot (and arguably should not) necessarily be expected to lead them.

Acquisitions

There are a few recent cases of joint acquisitions and shared ownership between national and non-national museums. Some of these have been encouraged by the body funding the purchase and where fundraising has been supported by putting together a joint case, in others the initiative originated within national museums.

The Purchase Grant Fund, established in 1881, and one of the most significant sources of funding for acquisitions for non-national museums, galleries, record offices and specialist libraries in England and Wales, is administered by the Victoria & Albert Museum in partnership with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Scottish Museums Council.¹³

¹³In 2002/03, 245 applications were received and 167 grants to the value of £1,054,922 awarded. See www.vam.ac.uk/resources/purchase_grant

Transfer of collections

The transfer of collections to and from national museums has occurred over the years, taking different forms dictated by respective circumstances.

There are relatively few examples of transfers of collections to national museums, although this has occurred where the long-term future of small, independent collections could not be protected adequately by existing arrangements. This can be seen in the military heritage sector where small, sometimes volunteer-run, museums based around regiments or squadrons have looked to larger institutions for long-term security. A successful example of this is The Buffs Regimental Museum which transferred its collection to the National Army Museum whilst maintaining its local presence through a management partnership with the Royal Museum and Art Gallery in Canterbury (see Case Study 4 at the end of this chapter).

The Science Museum in London is currently leading a partnership of the main science and technology museums in England which plans to research and rationalise their collections. The project is looking at the future destination of 10-20,000 objects and to transfer approximately 500 objects to partner museums where they have greater relevance to audiences. As part of this initiative the participating museums will aim to increase the coordination of collecting policies.¹⁴

It is becoming more common for national museums to transfer discrete parts of their collections to new sites, to create a new museum or branch in partnership with a non-national institution. Such collaborative initiatives have helped secure significant funds from public and private sources to create improved facilities and enable wider access to these collections, which otherwise would not, or only partially, be displayed.

Representative examples of this type of collaboration are the partnership between the National Museums of Scotland and the National Trust of Scotland for the creation of the Museum of Scottish Country Life (see Case Study 7 at the end of this chapter), the National Maritime Museum's initiative to create the recently opened National Maritime Museum Cornwall (see Case Study 1 in chapter 4.5) and the National Railway Museum's partnership with Sedgfield Borough Council to develop the Shildon Railway Village (see Case Study 2 in chapter 4.5).

In other situations, the physical transfer of collections is associated with gaining improved public access and administrative efficiency. These were the principal drivers for the agreement between the Royal Naval Museum and the Admiralty Library to consolidate their libraries in one new facility in Portsmouth and the move of The Royal Photographic Society collection to the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford (see Case Studies 6 and 8 at the end of this chapter). The National Maritime Museum, the Science Museum, the Imperial War Museum and the Historic Dockyard Chatham have also recently agreed to consolidate their ship model collections in a refurbished listed building in Chatham (see Case Study 5 at the end of this chapter).



NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Buffs Regimental Collection in the Royal Museum and Art Gallery, Canterbury.

¹⁴ *Rationalise and Interpret: A new approach to making science and technology collections accessible* is a partnership between the Science Museum London, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol Industrial Museum, The Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester, Tyne and Wear Museums, AHRB Centre for British Film and Television Studies and the British Universities Film and Video Council. Funding is currently being sought to enable the project to start in 2004/5.

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COCOREES – Collaborative Collection Management

The British Library
Bodleian Library (University of Oxford) and 11 other
libraries incl. The National Library of Scotland

COCOREES (Collaborative Collection Management for Russian and Eastern European Studies) is one of 15 pilot projects under the HEFCE funded Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) in which the British Library (BL) has taken part. The RSLP was launched in 1999 with three year funding of £30 million to explore new forms of collaboration on collections development and management amongst key libraries supporting the UK research community in their respective area. COCOREES was set up by 12 partner institutions, under the aegis of the Bodleian Library, with the following core objectives:



Gudok, 1906, no.2. A rare satirical magazine from the time of the first Russian revolution. British Library HS.74/1417. Between them, the British Library and Bodleian Library have a good range of titles of these magazines, many of which were suppressed and confiscated.

- (1) to map and describe the partners' combined Russian and Eastern European collections;
- (2) to produce a combined catalogue of periodicals; and
- (3) to assess the potential for greater co-ordination in collection activities in the future.

The project was awarded a £130,000 grant primarily towards the cost of a project manager (based in Oxford) and the creation of a website. The BL did not derive any funding from the project and committed internal resources towards its project contribution, including some £15,000 towards the cost of an additional project assistant post based at the BL. The considerable commitment of time by the Slavonic and Eastern European Departments was not costed. The project concluded in 2002, having achieved a serials listing for nearly 40 libraries and a directory of more than 70 collections, although policy work had not been concluded. Since then, the project, which has now grown to 18 partners, has secured additional funding through the Consortium of University Research Libraries' (CURL) Collaboration for Research (Co-For) programme to work on the development of policies and procedures for retaining research materials, serials de-duplication, as well as a mapping exercise of current research activity and related resource needs amongst over 300 UK based academics. As previously, consortium members have agreed to provide top-up funding out of internal resources.

Whilst it is too early to assess the project's long term impact, it has already benefited the British Library in widening the reach and use of its Russian and Eastern European collections amongst the scholarly community, as well as having established a framework which will allow the burden of subject-wide collecting to be shared amongst fellow institutions in the future, based on the notion of distributed national collections. This task is being pursued at a policy level by the Research Support Libraries Group which is now looking at the creation of a new umbrella body for this, the Research Library Network. In 2002, the BL formalised its intent to deepen its collaboration with the Higher Education Sector by agreeing a statement of strategic alliance with HEFCE, as well as a concordat with the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

www.cocorees.ac.uk

Stewardship

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mda Advisory Resources for Copyright

mda (formally the Museum Documentation Association)
Tate

In early 2003 the Copyright Officer at Tate was seconded to mda to help create a central resource and source of expertise in copyright for use by the sector as a whole. Tate had been inundated with requests for help and advice on this topic because of its expertise in this area and also because at the time it was the only museum or gallery with a dedicated Copyright Officer post. Simultaneously mda had become frustrated by a lack of in-house copyright skills. Discussions between the two organisations developed through their membership of the Museum Copyright Group and it was agreed that a secondment from Tate would be arranged. Funding for the project, to cover secondee staff costs and expenses was secured from the UK Registrars Group and Resource (now the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council).

The aim of the 15-day secondment was to create a universal copyright knowledge base at mda which could be utilised by institutions across the sector. The secondment was carefully scheduled, with days being allocated to ensure the achievement of all its aims: the production of fact sheets, workshops, a Copyright Basics training manual and a shorter version for front of house staff, and a feasibility study examining the possibility of creating a copyright database for the UK Registrars Group. During the period of the secondment, the functionality of the existing mda Advice Point was extended, allowing 15-20 museums and galleries to email the secondee for specific advice (these included National Museums Liverpool, Guildhall Art Gallery and Lincolnshire Museum). Regional museums such as Bath Museum, the Wordsworth Trust, Plymouth Museum, Portsmouth Museum, and Guernsey Museum were also involved in a Copyright Basics workshop, run during the mda annual conference. The secondee is now working in a freelance capacity and in conjunction with the mda's Provider Scheme, to develop and deliver copyright workshops across the UK.

Although the outputs from the project were largely anticipated, mda was particularly pleased that its in-house knowledge of and policies towards copyright were advanced so significantly. Within Tate the secondment was seen as an important avenue through which they could share their skills and develop resources that would benefit the sector. It was also viewed as a valuable staff development opportunity in which the secondee gained greater knowledge of sector-wide issues and the needs of smaller organisations.

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SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard

mda (formerly the Museum Documentation Association)

70 museum professionals including representatives of:

Science Museum, National Galleries of Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, National Museum of Ireland, National Museums and Galleries of Wales, National Maritime Museum, Imperial War Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum of London, The British Museum, National Museums Liverpool, National Army Museum, The Natural History Museum, Tyne and Wear Museums.

SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard was conceived and led by mda and involved 70 professionals from a range of national and regional museums. The scheme was funded out of mda core funding and was endorsed by the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Department of National Heritage.

The project aimed to develop a UK standard relating to the procedures for documenting objects and the range of processes they undergo (e.g. conservation, loan, etc.), as well as categorising additional supplementary information needed to support them. The objective was to produce both a procedural and a data standard that could be universally used but within which institution-specific procedures could be captured.

The project was run by a Steering Committee chaired by a representative from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Subject specialist working groups comprising museum representatives discussed different areas relating to collections management. Recommendations from these groups were then used to create the final publication 'SPECTRUM: The UK Documentation Standard' and an associated 'family' of implementation guides.

The collaborative nature of forming this standard was important in securing the buy-in of the sector as a whole and ensuring its adoption as standard practice. The adoption of SPECTRUM is now a central requirement of the Museum Registration Scheme.

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Transfer of The Buffs Regimental Museum to the National Army Museum

National Army Museum

The Buffs Regimental Museum Trustees

Royal Museum and Art Gallery Canterbury

The trustees of The Buffs Regimental Museum transferred their collection to the National Army Museum (NAM) as a gift to ensure its integrity and security in the long-term in the wake of succession planning issues for an ageing trustee body. Their prime objective was to preserve the future of the collection and the story of the men who served in the regiment in perpetuity.

The transfer took the form of a three-way agreement between The Buffs trustees, the NAM, and the Royal Museum and Art Gallery Canterbury, where the collection was on display. The main part of the collection remained on display in Canterbury but ownership was transferred to the NAM in London, where enquiries would be directed. NAM agreed to catalogue and conserve the collection, to develop an online database and to provide, over time, all relevant educational material. The funding for this collaboration was provided by all three partners: NAM funded the physical transfer of the reserve collections and archives; The Buffs trustees transferred their trust funds to the NAM for the benefit of The Buffs collections; the ongoing care of the collections is funded by NAM; and the housing of the collection in Canterbury is funded by Canterbury City Council Museums and Galleries service.

The transfer has created significant benefits: the potential for greater depth of cataloguing by NAM of the soldier archive and the widening of access to it; enhanced care by NAM of the reserve collections which have been transferred; and the opportunity for input into proposed new displays at Canterbury by NAM's subject specialists and conservators.

The collaboration meets the NAM's core mission to document the history of the Army and has created long-term links with an important regional museum in the South-East. The Royal Museum and Art Gallery Canterbury sees scope for the relationship with the NAM to develop further, particularly with regard to collaborating on educational initiatives.

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National Ship Model Collection Centre

National Maritime Museum
 Science Museum
 Imperial War Museum
 Historic Dockyard Chatham

Based on contacts made through the UK Maritime Collections Strategy, the National Maritime Museum, the Science Museum, the Imperial War Museum and Historic Dockyard Chatham decided to develop a joint National Ship Model Collection Centre in a Grade II* listed building at the Dockyard.

The four institutions collectively have more than 4000 ship models in storage, which are not currently accessible to the general public. The development of an open storage building, with modern access and environmental conditions, will allow the partners to open up their collections for the first time, enhance storage conditions and reduce overall costs. By developing the centre on its site, the Historic Dockyard Chatham also hopes to save a building which is on the English Heritage at Risk Register and give it purpose.

A two-tier management structure has been developed for the project: a directors group which meets as and when required, and a project team which is composed of senior representatives from each organisation. It is estimated that the scheme will cost c£17 million, of which to date £100,000 has been raised from SEEDA, and £25,000 by the partners. The scheme has submitted an application to the HLF. Subject to funding being secured, it is hoped that the project will be completed in 2008.

Proposed entrance & initial interpretation gallery - artists impression.



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Relocation of The Royal Photographic Society Archive and Collection to Bradford

National Museum of Photography, Film and Television (part of the National Museum of Science and Industry)

The Royal Photographic Society

In 2001 the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television (NMPFT) and The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) announced a partnership which culminated in The RPS collection being moved to the NMPFT in December 2002 and installed in its 'Insight: Collections & Research Centre'. The RPS collection of 270,000 images, over 8,000 items of photographic technology and 20,000 items of archive material was moved there to be held as an independent collection on behalf of the nation, and it retains a distinct identity.

The Society's collection is one of the world's greatest archives of photography and its move to Bradford, where there was already over three million unique and significant photographic items, makes the NMPFT the home to the world's most important photographic collection. This move was the result of long term dialogue between the two institutions which originated in The RPS recognising that they needed a partner to ensure their long term sustainability.

By virtue of the partnership The RPS gained new accommodation for their collection which had previously been housed in an inadequate building in Bath with poor public access. This collection had never been shown properly to the public before, and its new home will permit The RPS to support new acquisitions and refer bequests which would not have been previously possible. In addition, the transfer will facilitate The RPS in fulfilling its remit as an educational charity to promote photography, especially through increased loan activity. NMPFT has enhanced its profile through the partnership and the two collections being located together at the Museum is leading to an increased understanding and better exploitation of the national collection of photography.

The costs of the transfer totalled £4.5 million. This was funded by the largest ever HLF grant to a photography project (£3.75 million), as well as the National Art Collections Fund and Yorkshire Forward.

The partnership between the two institutions and the collocation of their collections has encouraged an extremely close ongoing working relationship on a range of issues including conservation, research, and joint exhibitions.



National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM AND TELEVISION

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Museum of Scottish Country Life

National Museums of Scotland
National Trust of Scotland

In 2001 a new Museum of Scottish Country Life, operated by the National Museums of Scotland (NMS), opened at East Kilbride, near Glasgow, having been established through a collaborative venture with the National Trust of Scotland.

Following the expiry of the lease on its original site, the NMS had been looking for a new venue to display and interpret its agricultural and rural life collections. The Trust, meanwhile, had recently acquired a 400 year old farm, where land and buildings demonstrated both continuity and change in agricultural practice before and after the agricultural revolution. The Trust, however, was uncertain as to the site's viability if opened to the public. As a sustainable solution to provide access to both farm and collections, the two organisations decided to join forces to create a new museum in a purpose built facility, with a historic farm, both on the Trust's site but managed by the NMS. A total of £9 million was spent on the project, raised through a combination of public and private funds.

Under these arrangements, it became viable for the Trust's farm to be developed, with a focus on conservation and preservation of farming practices, and promoting a wider public understanding of this important aspect of life in Scotland. The NMS gained a new museum in the west of Scotland, where they had not previously had a permanent presence, together with a much enhanced display space for their agricultural collections, and the Trust gained a new property to be visited by its supporters.

Although the Trust was formally responsible for the development of the project, both institutions worked extremely closely as the project progressed and developed a good relationship. A joint Project Team, supported by an Advisory Group, oversaw completion of the project, and have been succeeded by a joint Staff Working Group and an Advisory Panel to ensure that the objectives of the two organisations continue to be met.

Farmhouse, Museum of Scottish Country Life.



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⑧ Case Study

Relocation of the Admiralty Library to Portsmouth

Royal Naval Museum Admiralty Library

In 1996 the decision was taken to relocate a large part of the Admiralty Library based in Whitehall to the Royal Naval Museum (RNM) in Portsmouth. The Library remains under the ownership of the Ministry of Defence, but this portion of it is managed by the Museum through a management agreement. The decision to move was prompted by problems of limited space in central London and the detrimental impact this had on access.

The Ministry of Defence invested significant capital resources in creating a new state-of-the-art facility in Portsmouth which could be shared with the RNM's Library, and continues to maintain it. The RNM staffs and manages the new facility.

The different specialist skills and academic expertise of the two institutions complement each other well, for mutual benefit. For example, a joint manuscripts catalogue is being produced for libraries using the RNM's archival skills, an archives database (Calm 2000) provided by MoD, and with subject knowledge contributed by staff from the Museum, the Admiralty Library and an external expert on the early history of the manuscripts.

Together the move has created an improved naval library resource at Portsmouth which has not only benefited Museum staff and researchers but has also attracted a larger and more diverse audience. The good ongoing relationship between the two institutions is expected to benefit still further by the imminent move of the Naval Historical Branch, including the core collections of the Admiralty Library, to Portsmouth.

Watercolour of the ship's boats from HMS Resolution and HMS Adventure collecting ice, 1773.



3.3 Research and Scholarship

National museums have a long tradition as centres of learning and scholarship. Collections-based research is inextricably linked to their other core functions, stewardship, public interpretation and access.

Much research activity is collaborative and takes place within the context of long-established, but often informal networks, many of which are international and span museums, universities and other academic institutions, as well as the community of independent scholars and researchers. They are not defined by national boundaries.

In a national context, however, national museums provide centres of curatorial expertise, as well as access to key source material to the academic and research community through their collections.

By way of example, Tate runs its own programme of Research Seminars which regularly invite specialists from UK museums and the academic world to discuss new research projects, and Sir John Soane's Museum runs regular Study Group talks in architectural history which are well attended by specialists.

The National Archives, the British Library, the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales are important sources for academic research. This is also the case for national museums with large libraries and archives (including photographic and film archives) and research collections, such as the British Museum, Natural History Museum, Imperial War Museum, Museum of London, National Portrait Gallery, Tate, Victoria & Albert Museum (with the National Art Library) and others.

In their role as libraries and archives, these institutions engage in collaborations to develop new research tools and resources. An example of this is the validated information portal for Wales developed by the National Library of Wales (see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter).

The level of collaborative research and scholarship activity across all national museums is more difficult to quantify, certainly in aggregate form, with much activity taking place 'behind the scenes' and unrecorded.

The emphasis, time and resources devoted to research and scholarship-related activity within national museums contrasts greatly with that found in most other museums across the country. Museum professionals from across the sector frequently comment on the long-term decline in scholarship outside national and university museums – in particular in local authority museums where the priority on education and access has been at the expense of traditional curatorial work for some decades. Many therefore stress the importance of national museums' continued involvement in, and support of, research activity in their respective spheres.

Currently, most UK-based collaborative research work undertaken by national museums, outside of ongoing and mostly informal networks, tends to take place in the context of academic networks with higher education partners. These partnerships bring together complementary capabilities and research interests and, for national museums, provide access to higher education funding sources. Examples of such collaboration include the Victoria & Albert Museum's AHRB Centre in the Study of the Domestic Interior; a research project investigating the 'Ancient Human Occupation of Britain' conducted by the Natural History Museum, the British Museum and a range of universities; the collaboration between The National Archives with Cambridge University (see Case Studies 1 and 4 at the end of this chapter).

Staff exchange and secondment schemes with universities and research organisations are not widespread. Where they exist they provide valuable opportunities for staff from both sides with common interests to reinforce academic relationships, develop their research activities and pursue joint publication projects. A long-standing example of

this is the staff exchange programme between Sussex University and the Victoria & Albert Museum (see Case Study 5 at the end of this chapter).

In some instances, national museums collaborate with public sector bodies on large scientific projects. In these situations, specific museum expertise is applied for public policy purposes. Mutual benefit is generated with government funding supporting the maintenance of active research capabilities in the museums involved. The example of the collaboration between the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland and the Environment and Heritage Service of Northern Ireland, illustrates the singular contribution of museum expertise towards the creation of a comprehensive data record – in a way that complements the statutory role of a public department and yields spin-off benefits for the general public and other research initiatives (see Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter).



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The preservation department undertaking work on a parchment document, The National Archives.

Research and scholarship

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Tax Records Project

**The National Archives (formerly Public Record Office)
Cambridge University, History Faculty and Geography Department**

For the last decade, The National Archives (TNA) has been working in partnership with Cambridge University (History Faculty and Geography Department) on a comprehensive examination and re-appraisal of its records relating to English central government lay taxation from the late 12th to the late 17th century (about 26,000 documents). These are the most heavily used series of records for the period before the 19th century. They are a prime source not just for the story of taxation and state funding, but also provide rare evidence of social history, historical geography, biography and genealogy, the history of buildings, place and personal names etc. Prior to the project, these had never been researched systematically.

The resources required for such an undertaking of this order of magnitude could not have been provided out of TNA's core operating budget, or only over a very long period of time. The partnership with Cambridge University allowed substantial project funding of over £900,000 to be raised over the years from major research funding bodies and major trusts, including the Leverhulme Trust, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts & Humanities Research Board and others. The project was structured on a regional, county-by-county basis which allowed additional funding to be raised from local antiquarian societies. The project has been based at The National Archives where the records are held, and has at any one time employed up to five researchers (through Cambridge University) under the direction of a senior member of TNA staff. Cambridge led the application processes and subsequent grants administration. A project board, which included scholars from a range of universities, has guided the process, contributed expertise and helped identify and support funding approaches.

The material was recorded on an electronic database and fully integrated with the The National Archives catalogue. Information already gathered resulted in the publication of a guide in 1998, the most comprehensive account of English Government taxes before 1700 ever compiled. An online database system was launched in 2002, allowing records to be searched by date, place, type of tax and document. Research on all English counties, including London, is now completed. As a next step, TNA is proceeding with the investigation of its Welsh tax records, in partnership with the University of Wales, Bangor.

The National Archives.



Research and scholarship

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Centre for Environmental Data and Recording

National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland
The Environment and Heritage Service of Northern Ireland

The Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDAR) was launched in the mid 1990s with the objective of coordinating the collection of environmental data (both biological and geological) in Northern Ireland.

The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) is responsible for nature conservation in Northern Ireland. Its responsibilities are to protect biodiversity and geodiversity, declare sites of interest to the conservation of nature, advise on planning applications, etc. Such work requires the collection and interpretation of a wide range of environmental data from volunteers and professional organisations. For information to be accurately recorded, data must be validated by experts and then entered in to a common IT system.

The Ulster Museum contributes its own data to the initiative and, through its extensive expertise in taxonomy, is able to validate data from volunteers and other organisations. The Keeper of Botany at the museum supervises the project and other staff contribute time and expertise. The EHS funds three full time posts at the Ulster Museum who work exclusively on the CEDAR initiative.

The initiative is viewed positively by both parties: it has successfully mobilised data to drive public policy; created a rich data source for the public and other research purposes; encouraged growth of the volunteer network and has made a significant contribution to the National Biodiversity Network for the UK as a whole.

The initiative now has its own five year business plan and, following a formal economic evaluation this year, funding is to be extended to cover an additional two posts.

Research and scholarship

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'Cymru ar y We/Wales on the Web' – Information Portal

The National Library of Wales

Wide consortium of Higher Education and Public Libraries through Wales Educational Libraries Foundation

'Cymru ar y We/Wales on the Web' was conceived by the Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) as a high quality, validated information portal for use in education and lifelong learning. It comprises a wide range of over 2,000 websites relating to Wales discovered by the Wales on the Web team and suggested by participating libraries and archives. The information sources are categorised and validated centrally by a dedicated project team of two. Work started on the project in 2001.

The National Library of Wales was a natural focal point for such an initiative:

- It gave the project a national dimension and was ideally positioned to coordinate the contributions of other libraries in Wales;
- It submitted a successful bid for funding on behalf of the wider consortium to the British Library Cooperation and Partnership Programme; and
- It also contributed space, some IT infrastructure and other overheads.

The large number of participating institutions made it difficult to secure a high degree of commitment from all concerned and hard work was required on the part of the project manager to overcome inertia among many of the smaller libraries and archives. However, the project was delivered on time and to budget. The website now receives an average of 5-7,000 visits per month and is considered to be a useful learning resource.

The original funding for the project ended in March 2003. Since then, the Welsh Assembly has become interested in developing an All-Wales portal as part of the Cymru Ar-Lein initiative and Wales on the Web is now being funded as part of this new project.

Research and scholarship

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Ancient Human Occupation of Britain

The Natural History Museum

The British Museum

University of Bradford

Royal Holloway, University of London

Queen Mary, University of London

University College London

University of Durham

The Ancient Human Occupation of Britain is a five year collaborative research project between the Natural History Museum (NHM), the University of Bradford, the British Museum, Royal Holloway, University of London, Queen Mary, University of London, the University of Durham, and University College London.

The £1.2 million project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, involves field excavations, laboratory based analysis, and collections development to investigate the periodic human colonisation, settlement, abandonment and re-colonisation of Britain and the environments in which early humans lived and often failed to survive. In particular, the project will address important issues such as the earliest arrival of humans in Britain; whether 'Levallois' technology, which appeared at the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic, was an import from outside of Europe or developed from local technologies; and whether Britain was truly abandoned by humans between 170,000 and 70,000 years ago.

The project is centrally run from the NHM, one of the two main repositories for material for the project. All partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which includes an overall project plan specifying the milestones for each partner. This has been crucial in co-ordinating this multi-partner project with many disparate tasks.

The project is due to finish in 2006. Several important publications have already come out of the project and all parties believe that there is substantial benefit from the increased interaction and dialogue between the various centres of expertise, with further output to include conferences, books and an exhibition. The university partners have particularly benefited from being able to access the material at the British Museum and NHM, and the NHM has benefited from the analytical facilities at the universities.

www.nhm.ac.uk/hosted.sites/ahob/index_2.html

Research and scholarship

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5 Case Study

Staff Exchange Programme

Victoria & Albert Museum
Sussex University

Since the academic year 1989-90 there has been an annual exchange of staff between the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and Sussex University. Academics come from Sussex to work on exhibitions, galleries, or online museum micro-sites in London. Curators from the V&A go to Sussex to teach and carry out research. The scheme is designed to improve the mutual understanding of art history from different perspectives and aims to enhance skills in both professions. It is seen as an important means of facilitating academic interaction and improving dialogue.

University academics have gained significantly from exposure to the rich national collection within the V&A, and museum staff have benefited from the time to conduct research and write books. The close relationship between the institutions has created an environment in which relevant expertise can be identified and leveraged. For example, a Sussex lecturer was the senior subject specialist on the Tudor and Stuart sections of the British Galleries and wrote extensively for wall panels and labels in the galleries as well as the related chapter in the accompanying book. He worked at the Museum three of the four academic years 1998-2002. In 1997-8, another history of art lecturer (a Byzantine specialist) curated an exhibition of 19th century views of Constantinople, a museum resource hitherto largely untapped. In two further examples, V&A exchange fellows at Sussex led teams of university students in the curating and labelling of gallery displays at the V&A on photography (1991-2) and early printed books (1992-3). This was in addition to their teaching responsibilities at the university.

For both groups, the scheme is seen as an important element of career development. This is reflected in the keenness of staff to participate. The academic development of students at Sussex has also been aided through their exposure to museum professionals.

Negligible costs are involved in managing the project, and each institution pays for the travelling costs of their staff.

3.4 Access

*'.....if articles belonging to the Central Museum were circulated among the schools of art, and publicly exhibited, the instruction given in the schools would be aided, the formation of local museums encouraged....'*¹⁵

*'....it may be judged reasonable that the advantages accruing from [the collection] should be rendered as general as possible.'*¹⁶

The large majority of national museums are for historical reasons based in London, the nation's capital, as would naturally be the case for national institutions founded in the 18th and 19th century. In some cases it was recognised early on that their audience was geographically broader. The same applies to national museums based in the three other capital cities, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

Being located in one of the most visited cities in the world, the audience of London's national museums is international as well as national. Their local catchment area comprises Greater London and reaches well into the South-East of England, i.e. the most populated parts of the country. In total, national visitors account for anything between 80% and 15% of total annual visits.¹⁷

That said, a number of national museums and their branches are based outside the capital cities, and their number has increased in recent decades. They span across the country although there is no even coverage, with no national museum presence for example in the West Midlands (with the exception of RAF Cosford) and the North-East (although Tyne & Wear Museums are in receipt of central government funding).

¹⁵ Circular issued by the Board of Trade: Department of Science & Art. August 1854.

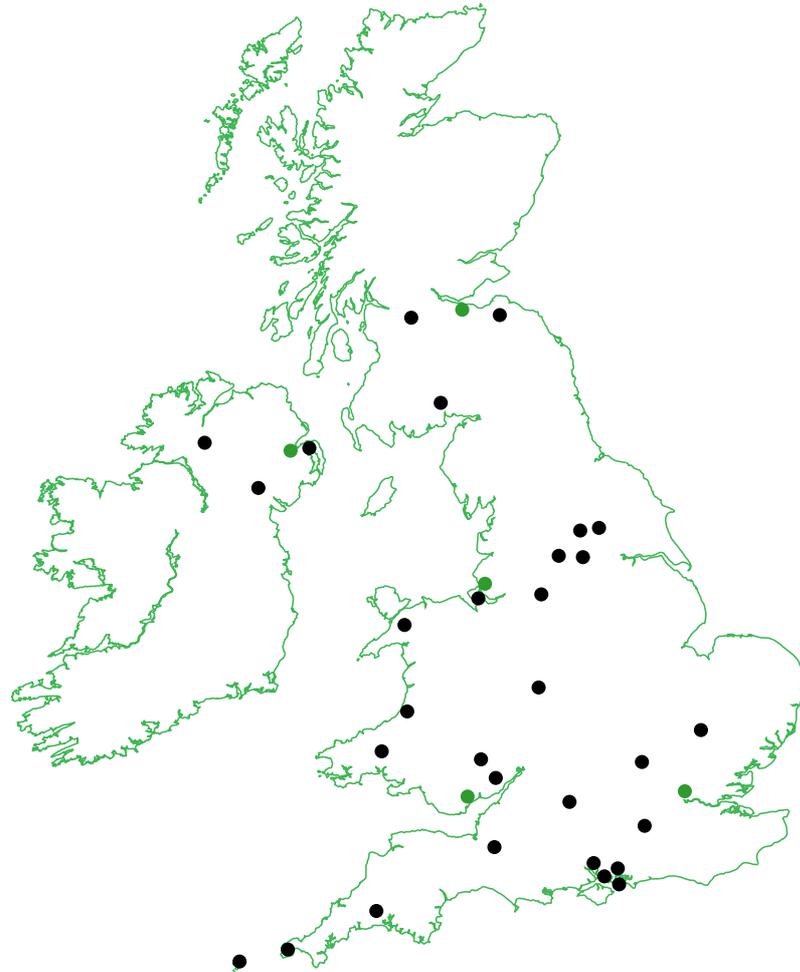
¹⁶ First Statutes & Rules of the British Museum 1759 in *National Museums*. (1988) Museums & Galleries Commission p.5

¹⁷ Based on 2000/01 figures. The upper and lower end are represented by the Science Museum with 80% national visitors, and the Royal Armouries London with 15% national visitors.

Central Hall, Natural History Museum.



NMDC Members and Branches



Note: A green dot has been used to denote cities with two or more NMDC member organisations, including branches.¹⁸

The issue of equality of geographical access to national collections therefore inevitably arises, a question which has been debated on a recurrent basis since the 19th century, and which national museums have sought to address in different ways over time, with varying degrees of success.

Perhaps one of the best known examples of this was the 'Circulation Department' established by the forerunners of the Victoria & Albert Museum specifically to address this issue, which formed touring exhibitions called 'Circulating Museums' to travel to provincial Art Schools. The first of these was organised from 1855-1859 and a second ran from 1860-1863.¹⁹ The Circulation Department, later known as the Regional Services Department, operated until 1978 when it was closed for lack of funding.

¹⁹During the subsequent 17 years 1864-1880, 258 collections were sent out by the Department, many of them as loans to permanent museums. Examples of special collections sent out for public exhibition by the Circulation Department at South Kensington Museum from 1864-1880:

| Place | Dates | Length (days) | Objects | Paintings, Drawing etc. | No. of Visitors |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Bristol | June 1864 | 5 | 257 | 701 | 90,055 |
| Great Yarmouth | Dec 1865 & Jan 1866 | 32 | 629 | 542 | 5,609 |
| Wolverhampton | May-Oct 1869 | 149 | 209 | 545 | 222,705 |
| Leicester | Aug-Sept 1870 | 33 | 216 | 179 | - |
| Tunbridge Wells | Nov 1872 | 10 | 86 | 47 | 1,200 |

¹⁸Edinburgh: the National Galleries of Scotland (five branches), the National Museums of Scotland (four branches), and the National Library of Scotland. Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool (seven branches) and Tate Liverpool. Belfast: National Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland (two branches). Cardiff: National Museums & Galleries of Wales (three branches).

Appendix D List of Special Collections for Public Exhibition sent out 1864-1880 in Science & Art Department of the Committee of Council of Education South Kensington: Report on the System of Circulation of Art Objects on loan from the South Kensington Museum for exhibition: As carried on by the Department from its first establishment to the present time. [1881] London: HMSO.

By 1885 over 13,000 individual objects were on loan to 30 provincial museums. *Victoria & Albert Museum Circulation Department: Its History and Scope* (1950) p.1.

Loans

Today, short-term and long-term loans are some of the most common forms of exchange between national and non-national institutions. During the last financial year, a total of more than 30,000 works and objects from national collections were on loan to non-national institutions. Of these, 4,683 were short term loans, often related to temporary and touring exhibitions. The remaining represent long-term loans to institutions designed to complement and enrich local displays. In many instances, this has allowed objects to be placed in context.

Loans from NMDC members to non-national UK institutions (2003)²⁰

| Institution | No. of objects on short-term loan in the 2002/03. | No. of objects currently on long-term loan. | Total no. of objects on short and long-term loan. |
|---|---|---|---|
| British Museum | 724 | 286 | 1010 |
| Fleet Air Arm Museum | 0 | 32 | 32 |
| Imperial War Museum | 56 | 372 | 428 |
| Museum of London | 312 | 1,410 | 1,722 |
| National Army Museum | 69 | 164 | 233 |
| National Gallery | 68 | 20 | 88 |
| National Galleries of Scotland | 105 | 621 | 726 |
| National Library of Scotland | 38 | 0 | 38 |
| National Library of Wales | 776 | 6 | 782 |
| National Maritime Museum | 37 | 11,236 | 11,273 |
| Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland | 244 | 830 | 1,074 |
| National Museums & Galleries of Wales | n/a | n/a | 5,085 |
| National Museums Liverpool ²¹ | 400 | 330 | 730 |
| National Museum of Science & Industry ²² | 128 | 2,253 | 2,381 |
| National Museums of Scotland ²³ | 757 | 1,200 | 1,957 |
| National Portrait Gallery | 165 | 491 | 656 |
| Royal Air Force Museum ²⁴ | 15 | 350 | 365 |
| Royal Armouries | 7 | 1,413 | 1,420 |
| Royal Marines Museum | 30 | 16 | 46 |
| Royal Naval Museum ²⁵ | n/a | n/a | 100 |
| Royal Navy Submarine Museum | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Sir John Soane's Museum | 2 | n/a | 2 |
| Tate | 342 | 63 | 405 |
| Victoria & Albert Museum | 407 | 1,824 | 2,231 |
| Total | 4,683 | 22,921 | 32,789 |

²⁰ All figures supplied by NMDC members and includes all branches and sites.

²¹ NML: short term loans estimate.

²² NMSI: estimates for the Science Museum's loans.

²³ NMS: long term loans estimate.

²⁴ RAF Museum: estimates.

²⁵ RNM: estimates.

²⁶ Aggregate figures for such exchanges are not readily available but this is clearly an extremely important activity involving the museum sector as a whole.

Loan activity is reciprocal; hence national museums also continuously borrow works from non-national collections, in particular for exhibitions and occasionally for permanent display.²⁶ For example, a relationship between the Churchill Archives Centre and the Cabinet War Rooms has allowed important documents on Churchill's life to be displayed in London for many years now. Most recently, this relationship has deepened and the institutions are now collaborating on the use of the Archive's collection in interactive displays for a new Churchill Museum (see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter).

The benefits of loan activity are substantial:

- The transfer of objects to regional institutions widens geographical access to nationals' collections and widens audiences beyond the natural catchment of the institution;
- Long-term loans to regional institutions allow objects to be displayed in a context – for example drawing on local associations or the complementary nature of the regional collections;
- For the receiving institutions, the receipt of an important long-term loan can lend local profile and reinforce fundraising or development activities;
- For national institutions with collections of large items (e.g. aircraft, trains, machines, etc.) there can be practical benefits in the relief of conservation and storage costs.

These benefits are recognised widely by institutions in the sector and are illustrated in a typical case study at the end of this chapter: a long-term loan of aircraft by the Royal Air Force Museum (see Case Study 12 at the end of this chapter).

The loan activity of national museums is seen as very important by institutions in the regions and there is demand to increase availability beyond current levels. The Museum of London scheme illustrates the latent demand that can be released by a well-structured loan programme (see Case Study 4 at the end of this chapter).

National museums face a range of issues in contemplating future expansion of lending activity, depending on the size and nature of their collections, their conservation requirements and, not least, the implications of managing increasing loan volumes with existing collections management resources. Some of the most frequently recurring issues include:

- Availability of 'star items': loan requests for key items in national collections need to consider the difficulty for national museums of parting with these over prolonged periods of time or at regular intervals without affecting the integrity of their own displays and disappointing visitor expectations. There is the added complication of competing demands for these items from the international lending circuit for blockbuster exhibitions on which many of the nationals depend for their own programmes. There is a case for more active dialogue between borrower and lender to exploit more actively national collection holdings beyond the most obvious iconic works;
- Conservation and security standards: the balance between preservation and access can be a difficult one to strike against the background of increasing awareness of the (immediate and long-term) hazard of moving objects. Also, receiving venues cannot always meet security and environmental standards expected by national institutions and some loans may necessitate upfront investments in their infrastructure. Thankfully, the lottery funded investment in museum infrastructure across the nation has substantially improved the situation in this respect.
- Cost: the cost of packing, transport and insurance has risen inexorably in recent decades.²⁷ Although this applies to a greater extent to temporary exhibitions, these may sometimes be covered by external, project-based funding, whereas the cost of transport in the context of straight lending activity needs to be borne out of existing organisational resources.

Overall these issues are well understood by non-national museums whose greatest concern has been in greater transparency about the lending criteria and process applied by national museums.

In response to this the NMDC has recently published detailed guidelines for loans, 'Loans between National and Non-National Museums: New Standards and Practical Guidelines'. These represent a joint and consultative effort between national and non-

²⁷The Government Indemnity Scheme plays an important role in facilitating loans by providing borrowers with an alternative to commercial insurance. GIS covers loans in transit, in storage and on display in the borrowing institution. The borrower is required to underwrite a minimum liability for each loan object.



BODELWYDDAN CASTLE, NORTH WALES

A Sense of Occasion, new displays at Bodelwyddan Castle.

national museums, and have now been adopted by the entire NMDC membership as a framework for future lending activity.²⁸

Some national museums are also in the process of reviewing their loan activity with the intention of improving documentation and examining the possibility of increasing the level of curatorial input around lending activity – from identification of items to presentational and interpretation issues at the receiving venue – and of using loans as an opportunity to develop the dialogue and co-operation between institutions. Such a consultative approach is also seen as a way to overcome some of the issues described earlier.

In some cases, a significant long-term loan has formed the basis of a deeper partnership that involves providing detailed curatorial input for the displays, the development and upgrade of facilities, and a long-term commitment to providing temporary exhibitions from the national's collection. Such a long-standing relationship is illustrated in the National Portrait Gallery's 15-year partnership with Bodelwyddan Castle Trust and its recent initiative to upgrade and redevelop the galleries there (see Case Study 10 at the end of this chapter).

Exhibitions

The creation of, and participation in, touring exhibitions is an important way of extending the reach of national museum collections beyond their metropolitan catchment. Often they are the basis on which closer relationships can build and from which a broader set of activities and collaborations can develop.

Four out of five national museums (and all London-based nationals) have been involved in collaborative exhibitions with non-national institutions in recent years. Of the remaining, most have collaborated within their national peer group and/or are engaged in planning exhibitions with non-national institutions in the near future.

Non-national institutions see significant benefits from bringing major exhibitions from national collections to their region. The most frequently cited ones are:

- Boosted visitor numbers and the added audience development benefits (as an example, see the collaboration between Sir John Soane's Museum, University College London and the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle, Case Study 14, at the end of this chapter);

²⁸ www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/images/publications/loans_standards_guidelines.pdf

- Gain of profile and prominence amongst local/regional policymakers and stakeholders – an important factor in terms of advocating the role of museums in a local/regional context;
- The ability to exploit funding opportunities from both public and corporate sources as a result of the profile and status of the national partner (as an example, see the National Museums and Galleries of Wales 'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan - Sharing Treasures' partnership scheme in Case Study 8 at the end of this chapter).

Both national and non-national museums recognise the high financial and organisational complexity involved in these ventures, which always depend on external sources of funding (to meet direct cost) as well as claiming substantial staff input from all sides. For example, the British Museum's 'Buried Treasure: Finding Our Past' exhibition is organised among its long-term Partnership UK members in order to build on existing relationships. In this case, the national museum was also able to lend its profile to attract corporate sponsorship to help defray costs for the partnership venues (see Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter).

Frequent mention is made of differences in curatorial culture and priorities which can lead to conflicting objectives if these are not addressed at the early exhibition planning stages. In particular, the emphasis of many regional museums on education and social inclusion dictates different, non-traditional approaches on interpretation and exhibition display. This can clash with more traditional curatorial practices prevalent in national museums and their natural focus on international and metropolitan audiences. As a result, many see the most successful exhibition partnerships as being those where concept and curatorial initiative is shared, in some cases devolved to the regional partner. For example, in the National Gallery's Touring Exhibition Partnership Scheme, the themes are agreed jointly between the partners and each institution takes lead responsibility for the curation of a specific exhibition on a rotating basis (see Case Study 5 at the end of this chapter). The Tate Partnership Scheme likewise devolves the curatorial lead for its joint exhibitions to its partners (see Case Study 3 in chapter 4.5).

On the other hand, there is a recognition of the role and value of 'packaged' touring exhibitions, in particular for the benefit of smaller venues with limited in-house curatorial and technical resources.

The uneven geographic distribution of touring exhibitions is frequently commented on, and the concentration of activity over the last few years around a relatively small number of institutions – usually large regional venues – and the fact that the 'winners' tend to be institutions located at a long distance from London. It suggests the South-East as being at a disadvantage, lying within the wider catchment of London and therefore competing with national museums for core audiences.

This suggests reviewing the level and structure of provision and exploring the possibility of extending the circuit of venues across the country. This is already being considered actively by a number of national museums (e.g. the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and Tate).

Education

Education is central to the role of museums and is enshrined in their mission as public institutions. Funders, both public and private, have been putting increasing emphasis on this aspect of museum activities in recent years and substantial funding has been targeted towards developing these.

In this area, regional museums (as well as smaller and independent museums in metropolitan centres) have often been pioneers, in particular in developing an understanding of, and engaging with new and non-traditional museum audiences in

order to extend their local visitor base and respond to local and regional social policy agendas. This has resulted in some of the most creative and innovative partnerships with national museums – some of which are of quite an experimental nature.

Education programmes are often a key element of partnerships around touring exhibitions. Regional partners tend to be in the lead, conceptually, and responsible for implementation of programmes in their own locality. This results in projects carefully targeted at local audiences. National museums see the value of these collaborations in extending their own knowledge of educational practice and testing new ways of engaging with non-traditional audiences, some of which are capable of being fed back into their own programmes. A good example of such collaboration is 'Living Lives', an exhibition curated by 120 people from a range of different community groups in a partnership between Nottingham Castle Museum and the National Portrait Gallery (see Case Study 11 at the end of this chapter).

National museums are also involved in a series of educational partnerships with other institutions, in particular universities, to experiment with new ways of engaging the public in aspects of scientific research and higher education. National Museums Liverpool are involved in an innovative partnership with Liverpool John Moores University to give the public remote access to a new robotic telescope based in the Canary Islands. Here national museums provide the interface with the public in ways which the partner institutions could not easily achieve on their own (see Case Study 9 at the end of this chapter).

In other cases, national institutions have forged partnerships with non-educational organisations to develop resources, information bases and exhibitions for general educational purposes. The British Library's partnership with Derbyshire County

'Living Lives' Members of the Selection Team outside the National Portrait Gallery.



NOTTINGHAM CASTLE MUSEUM



Sparking Reaction, Science Museum Exhibition, Sellafield Visitors Centre.

Libraries and the Peakland National Park Authority is an example of such collaboration (see Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter). The Science Museum has also recently worked with BNFL to create an interactive exhibition at their Sellafield Visitor Centre to explore the debate around nuclear power and electricity generation in the UK. In this example, the Science Museum was granted total editorial control to ensure that an independent view was expressed.

Because many educational projects explore new ways of working between partner institutions and with new and different audiences, they can be time consuming, often requiring substantially greater input and co-ordination effort than initially anticipated. With greater experience in these areas, these issues are beginning to be recognised, feeding into better resource planning and more efficient models of collaboration. An example of such an innovative working model was the partnership between the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland and the University of Ulster to create a student-curated exhibition as part of their History and Irish Studies (see Case Study 7 at the end of the chapter).

The Strategic Commissioning initiative launched by DCMS has injected additional funds to support educational partnerships between national museums and the regions. This will provide a context to test, assess and evaluate collaborative models and concepts for mutual benefit (see Case Study 6 at the end of this chapter).

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Peakland Heritage

The British Library Co-operation and Partnership Programme

The British Library

Derbyshire County Council, Libraries and Heritage Department

Peak District National Park Authority

Launched in 1999 the British Library's (BL) Co-operative Partnership Programme (CPP) was established in response to its 1998 strategic review that had identified the need for increased regional collaboration. This was particularly in the areas of collections development and management, and increasing access to the Library's own holdings to new audiences. Its first round resulted in 19 partnership projects being awarded grants of a total of £650,000. The second call added another 10 projects with grants of £400,000 in total. A central team was created to develop the programme, manage the process and co-ordinate the work with other BL departments. The entire programme cost was funded out of the BL's core budget.

Peakland Heritage, a project initiated by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Libraries and Heritage Department in association with the Peak District National Park Authority, was aimed at producing a web-based learning resource covering the early history of the Peak District up to the creation of the National Park (the history, ecology and management of which being the subject of a separate NOF funded web project) by bringing together historical material (maps, newspapers and printed books) scattered in various libraries and archives within the area, as well as drawing on the material in the British Library's collections. The primary target audience were Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils, but the project was also conceived to serve students, researchers and the general public.

The project was implemented within a very short period of nine months from June 2001 during which considerable DCC officer time was spent on researching material and the creation of metadata, much more than had originally been anticipated. This meant other projects had to be put on the backburner. The £36,000 CPP grant was principally spent on web design, digitisation and fees for researchers and writers. The CPP office facilitated the project's access to resources within the BL, which was the largest source of images (including prints, maps, manuscripts).

The outcome has been qualified a great success by all parties, with the website hitting 5000 visits per month in spring 2003. The project, completed on time due to the efforts of the local project team, raised the profile of the BL in the region, drawing attention to its holdings to a local audience. The project has now been integrated into the department under the aegis of the local studies development librarian and will continue to be managed by it, thus demonstrating its alignment with local needs.

Peakland Heritage goes live 20 March 2002.



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'Buried Treasure: Finding our Past', Touring Exhibition

The British Museum

National Museums and Galleries of Wales

The Manchester Museum

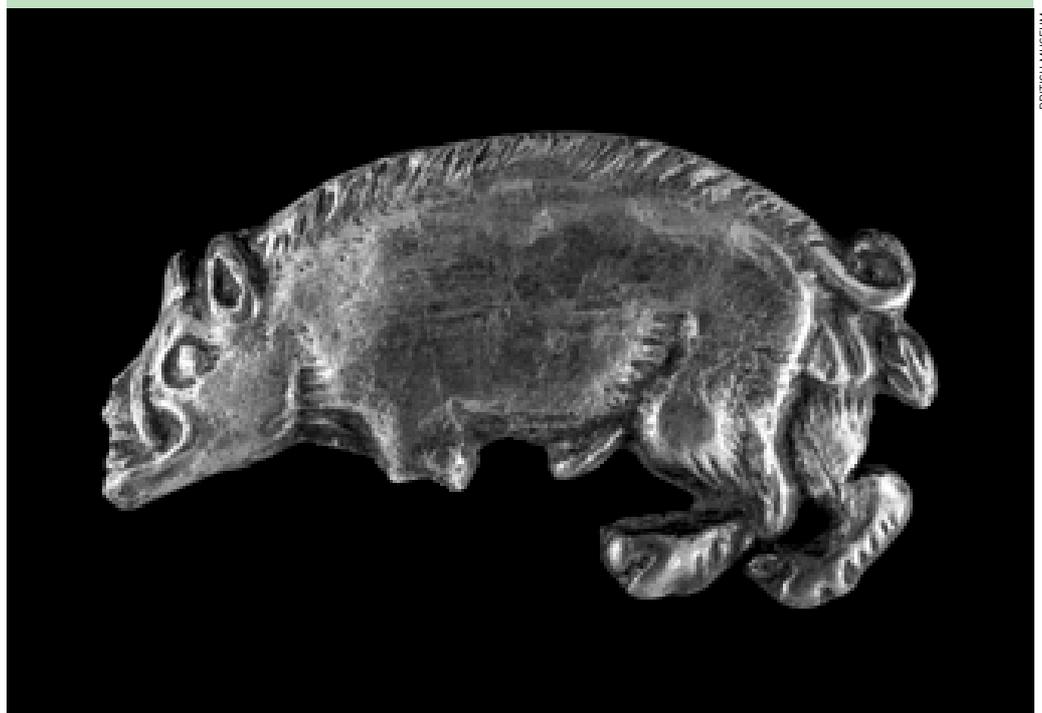
Tyne and Wear Museums

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

'Buried Treasure: Finding our Past' is a major exhibition of British Archaeology, conceived by the British Museum and organised collaboratively with the National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff and three regional museums, all of whom are part of the British Museum's Partnership UK Scheme. The exhibition illustrates the pivotal role played by the public in unearthing hidden treasures, such as the Winchester Gold and the Mildenhall Treasure. It highlights the success of the statutory provisions of the Treasure Act and the voluntary Portable Antiquities Scheme, in safeguarding archaeological finds and their contexts that are fundamental to our understanding of the history of the British Isles and the rest of Europe.

The exhibition will include some of the finest objects from the British Museum's collections and each of the partners is also contributing important objects. Regular project meetings chaired by the British Museum have discussed key elements of the project and sub-groups have taken forward particular aspects of the work. The British Museum has funded a large part of the exhibition cost from its own budget. It has also secured major commercial sponsorships for the exhibition which will cover a significant element of the direct costs of the British Museum and the partners. The partners are themselves responsible for the balance of their local costs.

The Chiddy Boar, medieval silver-gilt livery badge of Richard III from the late 15th century. Found in East Sussex, 1999.



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Display relationship between the Churchill Archives Centre and the Cabinet War Rooms and development of the Churchill Museum

Cabinet War Rooms (a branch of the Imperial War Museum)
Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College Cambridge

The Cabinet War Rooms (CWR) and the Churchill Archives Centre at Churchill College Cambridge have a long-standing partnership which centres on the display of the Churchill Papers. This dates back to 1995 when the papers were purchased by the HLF on behalf of the nation and placed in the care of the Sir Winston Churchill Archives Trust. The Trust maintains the papers at the Churchill Archives Centre, but has been systematically seeking to improve access.

Facsimiles of Churchill's papers from 1938-45 form a permanent display in the CWR, and until recently there were additional temporary displays of original documents relating to different aspects of Churchill's life, for example 'Churchill and the Queen', 'Mrs Churchill' and 'Churchill and the Generals'. Displays were selected jointly and were installed by staff of both institutions.

The relationship has brought considerable benefits to both institutions. The CWR displays highly relevant and nationally important material in a cost-effective way using their temporary exhibition space. The Churchill Archives complied with the public access conditions of the HLF grant, making the papers accessible to a mass audience, with the bonus of a central London location.

The relationship between the CWR and the Churchill Archives Centre has grown since the collaboration was initiated and both institutions are now working closely on the new Churchill Museum due to open in the CWR in 2005. A CWR researcher is working with the Churchill Archives in Cambridge to establish suitable material for the museum. Documents from the Churchill Archives will feature largely throughout the exhibition but in particular will form a central part of the display, which will be an electronic, interactive timeline of Churchill's life. The new museum and the documents from the Churchill Archives will help to establish the CWR as a centre for information about Churchill. The Churchill Archives will gain an even larger showcase for its documents, and it is hoped that the increased profile will attract more visitors and researchers to its facilities in Cambridge.

Views of the proposed Churchill Museum.



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Museum of London Loan Scheme

Museum of London

The Women's Library

A number of non-national museums in London

Initiated in 1999, the purpose of the Museum of London's (MoL) Loan Scheme is to make its collection accessible to non-national museums in London, by encouraging loan requests and providing a fast track, reduced-cost, simplified loans procedure.

The impetus for the scheme was the MoL's desire to increase its level of support for local museums, a number of whom were redeveloping their displays and strengthening their exhibition programmes. The loans programme was promoted through presentations to local museums and through personal contacts. To encourage use of the scheme, the MoL absorbs packing and transport costs and charges half the normal cost for security and condition photography.

The introduction of the new loans procedure triggered an increased level of loan requests and repeat requests from a number of core partners, including the Hackney Museum, the Kingston-upon-Thames Museum and The Women's Library. The latter has limited holdings of three-D material and the MoL loans have been pivotal to their exhibitions. The Library's forthcoming 'Art for Votes' Sake' has involved much collaboration with the MoL in terms of using their expertise in the selection of objects and researching the exhibitions content.

In total, 312 objects are currently on short-term loan and 1410 objects are on long-term loan as part of the scheme. These are formalised in more than 70 discrete loan agreements with different non-national institutions. Demand was so strong and pressure so great on MoL's in-house resources that the museum had to introduce limits on the number of items that could be borrowed in an individual request and the use of objects requiring significant conservation work.

For the MoL, the project demonstrates its commitment to non-national museums in London and ensures that its collections are visible in local exhibitions and permanent galleries. The non-national partners enhance their displays and gain professional support from the MoL, including help identifying relevant objects and accessing MoL information systems.

The MoL loan scheme has been working successfully for three years. It is intended that the scheme will continue in its current form as well as being promoted through the London Hub.



Plated brass Suffragette belt buckle depicting 'The Haunted House' image, 1908.

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The National Gallery Touring Exhibition Partnership Scheme

The National Gallery
 Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery
 Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The National Gallery's partnership with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery and the Laing Art Gallery was set up to create an annual exhibition of 20-30 works over a four year period, drawn largely from the National Gallery, to tour each partnership venue. The themes are agreed jointly between the partners although each institution takes lead responsibility for the curation and design of a specific exhibition on a rotating basis. Around the exhibitions themselves, collaboration also occurs along educational, outreach and marketing dimensions, although each institution is responsible for implementing its own programme in these areas.

The partnership was initiated to allow visitors in the South-West and North-East of England to gain improved access to some of the masterpieces in the National Gallery and to encourage new visitors to each of the three venues. The exhibition programme, now in its second year, has demonstrated that there is a strong appetite for great works of art in the regions, with impressive attendances of 70-90,000 being generated in each of the partner institutions.

The partnership has been funded by the HLF and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Some additional local funding has been secured from friends organisations to cover unexpected incremental costs of the project.

The partnership has been a success for all partners. The regional partners have been able to raise their profile both nationally and regionally. Their staff have also benefited from access to the expertise and resources of a national institution. The National Gallery has widened access to its collection and is learning more about the educational and outreach activities of its regional partners.

'Paradise' at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2002 exhibition organised as part of the National Gallery Touring Exhibition Partnership Scheme.



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'Understanding Slavery' Education Project

National Maritime Museum

National Museums Liverpool

Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery

British Empire & Commonwealth Museum

London Hub

London Museums, Archives and Libraries Council

'Understanding Slavery' is a Strategic Commissioning project formed by a consortium consisting of the National Maritime Museum (NMM), National Museums Liverpool, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, and the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum and funded by the HLF and DfES (total external funding of £350,000 has been awarded).

The overall aim of the project is to establish a national overview of slavery as a subject area in the National Curriculum, and to develop effective resources for Key Stage 2 and 3 relating to citizenship and history at both a national and regional level. The project is in its early days and consultation is planned with key educational audiences to ascertain their needs before the final educational resources are created. However, by way of example, the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum is intending to use its share of funding to enhance existing educational material by employing professional actors, and having replicas of objects made for handling sessions.

The limited time in which to formulate the original bid created some logistical problems in its early stages. Governance of the project has now been established through a steering group comprising representatives from each regional partner which is chaired by the Project Manager. Both the Head of Curatorial Group, NMM, and the Head of Education, NMM, are the joint project champions and sit on the steering group, reflecting the fact that this is perceived as a collections and education-based project. A project manager has been employed to draw up a consultation brief and manage the project, which is due for completion in March 2004.

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Teenage Kicks' Student-Curated Exhibition

National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland
University of Ulster, School of History and International Affairs

The 'Teenage Kicks' project involved the creation of an exhibition by a group of second year students at the University of Ulster as part of their course work in either History or Irish Studies. The University encourages students to expand their creativity in their second year and this was seen as an opportunity to work creatively and to enhance students' understanding of presenting public history.

The students met with the curators of the Ulster Museum, and used the facilities of the museum and the expertise of its staff to mount the exhibition. It was originally intended that the students would mount an exhibition based on the collection of the museum. In the end, there was less direct interaction with the collection than was originally hoped and the students collected their own objects and designed and presented an exhibition based on the subject of conflict in the lives of young people. During this process the students worked in close partnership with designers, curators and other staff, both within the Ulster Museum and other branches of National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland.

The partners had not worked together previously and recognised from the beginning that the project was experimental. Partly as a result of this a number of problems were encountered in project management, funding and logistics. In particular, the length of time required to design and mount the exhibition was not accurately forecast, the full costs associated with the project were not anticipated, and the logistics of bringing students 65 miles to Belfast proved problematic.

Despite these difficulties the exhibition opened successfully and the project was evaluated positively by the partners. The University of Ulster viewed the teaching process as particularly positive and creative and hopes to continue the partnership in future years. The National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland saw the process as an extremely useful way of participating proactively in education.

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'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan - Sharing Treasures' Partnership Scheme

National Museums and Galleries of Wales

The Council of Museums in Wales

Oriel Ynys Mon Anglesey Local Authority Museum

Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery

Wrexham County Borough Museum

'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan - Sharing Treasures' is a partnership project between the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW) and local museums in Wales. In 2001 the Welsh Assembly Government initiated discussion with NMGW and the Council of Museums in Wales (CMW) as to how the profile of National Collections could be improved throughout Wales by the loan of new items and the highlighting of existing loans. In 2002 CMW was allocated an extra £40,000 to begin a pilot programme with three local museums: Oriel Ynys Mon, Anglesey; Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery, Brecon; Wrexham County Borough Museum. This is a long-term project and will be developed and extended further after the pilot phase.

The objective of the partnership is to widen access to national collections by establishing close bilateral contacts with regional institutions. The partners are encouraged to initiate ideas for exhibitions based on the national collection, often with local connections and exploiting joint expertise. For example, Anglesey suggested a collaboration around a collection of botanical drawings with strong local relevance and is working jointly with NMGW on researching an associated publication.

The regional partners have benefited from improvements to facilities through CMW funding, and view the relationship with NMGW as an important development opportunity for their staff. The partnership has raised their local and regional profiles significantly and increased their confidence in seeking further relationships with other partners. The partners are hopeful that the strong political mandate which lay behind the project will lead to the renewal of the partnership and associated funding for a further five years and to a widening of the institutions involved.

Glan Ely Education Gallery at National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff.



Access

9 Case Study

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The Liverpool Robotic Telescope

National Museums Liverpool
Liverpool John Moores University, Astrophysics Research Institute

National Museums Liverpool (NML) is a partner in a £2.5 million project with Liverpool John Moores University to establish the world's largest fully robotic telescope, based on La Palma in the Canary Isles. The objective is to create a world-class research facility allowing for maximum flexibility in terms of user access, including the community of amateur astronomers, schools and the general public.

NML will provide a public interface for the project via its Planetarium, where observations from the telescope can be directly beamed. It is particularly involved in the public education and understanding of science and technology aspects of the project and co-ordinates the observations of amateur astronomers via an interface between both the professional and amateur communities. 5% of the telescopes time is set aside for Public Understanding of Science and Technology (PUST); the remaining 95% of the telescopes time is dedicated to academic research and teaching. Without the public and educational aspects of the project the ERDF criteria would not have been fully satisfied and funding might not have been secured. It was therefore critical that NML was a co-applicant on the initial ERDF bid in 1995, which was then the primary source of funding. To date the benefits for NML have included raising its profile in astronomy and physics forums and gaining access to grant-awarding opportunities from scientific research bodies not normally associated with museums. The project is expected to have a positive impact on audience development and to extend the educational provision of the institution.

The telescope went live in July 2003 and is now undergoing final commissioning. It will be fully operational from 2004. It is felt that the project represents a unique learning opportunity for the public to improve their understanding of astronomy.

Access

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Long-term Loan and Strategic Partnership With Bodelwyddan Castle

National Portrait Gallery
Bodelwyddan Castle Trust

Bodelwyddan Castle is a 19th century gothic masterpiece created from a house of late 16th or early 17th century origins. For many years a girls' school, the Castle was acquired by Clwyd County Council in 1982 with the intention of restoring its fabric and lost decorations and instituting it as an independent trust.

The objective of the original project was to recreate the impression of a set of interiors that had developed gradually over the years, much like the fabric of the castle itself. In partnership with the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) the aim was to create a setting for a collection of 176 19th century portraits from the NPG's collection, including works by the pre-Raphaelites and John Singer Sargent.

During the period since 1988, Bodelwyddan Castle has operated as one of three regional partnerships of the NPG. In 1999/2000 it was decided to work with the Bodelwyddan Castle Trust to upgrade the first floor galleries as part of the NPG's programme of deepening its relationships with its partners and developing its educational and interpretational role. Funding of £255,000 from the HLF and over £200,000 from DCMS was secured in 2001 and a major programme of building and redisplay was embarked on. On April 30 2003 the new galleries of the Castle were reopened.

The galleries include new, leading-edge interactive displays as part of three themed rooms. The interactive element of the display includes access to the Woodward Portrait Explorer, an interactive touch-screen presentation of the NPG's collection. Much improved temporary exhibition spaces also allow the trust to mount a more varied set of exhibitions, some of which will be based on the NPG's collection.

The Artist's Studio, new displays at Bodelwyddan Castle.



Access

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'Living Lives' Collaborative Exhibition

National Portrait Gallery
Nottingham Castle Museum

In 2002 Nottingham Castle Museum approached the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) with the idea of creating an exhibition with a strong social inclusion dimension, as part of its exhibitions and access initiative.

The project was designed to offer approximately 120 people from various community groups an opportunity to participate in the process of creating a photographic exhibition which would be shown in Nottingham. The participants visited the NPG to view its archives, meet with staff and structure an exhibition on the theme of personal heroes. It was felt that this topic and the process would encourage attendance from groups who were not traditionally visitors to the museum, as well as attracting school children and tourists during the summer period.

The relationship between Nottingham and the NPG was open and collaborative, the NPG being keen not to influence the process unduly. The project required significant input from its collections management, exhibitions, curatorial and education staff. The NPG absorbed all its own staff costs, paid for framing of the works and one-way transport. Nottingham covered the cost of participants' travel and the remaining direct costs, although it also obtained outside sponsorship from New College Nottingham (one of the main further education colleges in the city).

The 'Living Lives' exhibition was shown in the Castle Museum in the summer of 2002 and brought large numbers of non-traditional visitors from the community groups involved in the project into contact with the museum. The NPG was pleased that access to its photographic collection was widened and that the institution gained practical experience of managing a highly participative process which could be applied to future collaborations.

Member of the Selection Team looking at the Beckhams on the Woodward Portrait Explorer.



Access

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Long Term Loan of Three Aircraft

Royal Air Force Museum
Tangmere Memorial Aviation Museum

During the 1990s, following the establishment of the Tangmere Memorial Aviation Museum as an independent trust, the RAF Museum agreed to loan the regional museum three important aircraft, two of which had strong local connections to RAF Tangmere. The loans, which are on a three-year basis and are fully documented, have been renewed regularly ever since.

The loans of the aircraft were closely associated with the success of the Trust's initiative to raise funds for new facilities and to improve the display and care of its collection. Over the years, the relationship has deepened: in particular, the regional museum has gained access to the RAF Museum's maintenance expertise and it draws on the national museum for more general information and advice, especially from its library. The RAF Museum is pleased that the relationship with Tangmere widens access to its collection, promotes interest in its displays at Hendon and Cosford, and reduces pressure on its storage and display resources.

At the point of the last renewals, the RAF Museum considered the return of one or more of the aircraft for display in their new facility at Hendon where their world record-breaking achievements would have fitted in well with the exhibition theme of "Milestones of Flight" and could have influenced potential sponsors favourably. It was soon recognised that both Tangmere and the RAF Museum benefited more from retaining the status quo. Both institutions agreed to prolong the long-term loans subject to external factors and the continued success of Tangmere. Tangmere believes that in the long term its relationship with the RAF Museum will grow even closer.

Access

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'Life and Death at Sea' Touring Exhibition

Royal Navy Submarine Museum
 Aberdeen Maritime Museum
 Members of the UK Maritime Curators Group

Aberdeen Maritime Museum and the Royal Navy Submarine Museum are both members of the UK Maritime Curators Group, a nationwide grouping of maritime museums (including national, local authority and independent organisations) formed with the intention of developing a national strategy for maritime collections.

Although many large scale touring exhibitions are initiated by national museums, in this instance Aberdeen decided that it would lead the creation of a major exhibition and that it would invite other members of the UK Maritime Curators Group to co-operate. Aberdeen did not expect such an enthusiastic response to its invitation. Nine museums have agreed to be display venues and 13 will contribute objects to the exhibition, which will open in April 2004 and run for two years.

Aberdeen is taking on the bulk of the work on the project and is creating the exhibition, organising loan agreements, ensuring space fits display criteria and submitting requests for sponsorship. Other institutions, such as the Royal Navy Submarine Museum are not expected to commit significant managerial resources although their curators liaise closely with Aberdeen and there is an agreement to pool direct costs. Aberdeen believes that it would have incurred material effort in any event to create an in-house exhibition.

Aberdeen sees benefits in having gained access to funding for improved security and display. It also believes that stronger relationships with other museums should ensure better access to loans for future exhibitions.

Access

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14 Case Study

'Election Entertainment' Exhibition

Sir John Soane's Museum

University College London, History of Art Department

Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The 'Election Entertainment' exhibition was created in 2001 as the result of a collaboration between Sir John Soane's Museum and University College London (UCL). The exhibition was curated by Prof David Bindman of their History of Art Department.

The exhibition focused on William Hogarth's 'An Election' series, which was shown in the context of other works on the theme of elections dating from the 18th century to the present day. Many of the prints and drawings were borrowed from the British Museum. Prof Bindman was assisted by his students from the UCL/British Museum History of Print MA course in the research of the exhibition and four of their essays were included in the exhibition catalogue which was compiled jointly by Sir John Soane's Museum and the students.

It was always the intention that the exhibition would be transferred to a regional venue to ensure that the Hogarth pictures were shown outside London. The Laing Art Gallery was chosen because of its geographical location and the strength of its 18th and 19th century collections, which were used to supplement the exhibition in Newcastle; the Laing also devised an innovative educational programme to complement the exhibition.

External funding for the project was secured from the Designation Challenge Fund and a private donation was secured by Sir John Soane's Museum to defray the costs of transportation; the Tyne and Wear Museums' Business Partnership contributed to the costs of the showing at the Laing to mark its tenth anniversary; and the Laing itself covered the remaining cost of the education programme and customising the exhibition for display in Newcastle.

By working together the Laing and Sir John Soane's Museum were able to bring to a North-Eastern audience (more than 54,000 people visited the exhibition in Newcastle) an internationally celebrated series of paintings that otherwise would have been seen only by London visitors. In this case the strength of the partner's collection complemented the original exhibition and led to an enhanced display.

View of the Laing Art Gallery exhibition.



3.5 Professional Skills and Staff Development Initiatives

Staff training, professional development and career planning are recognised by the whole museums community as significant areas of need. 'Human capital' – in terms of skills and knowledge base, as well as advocacy and leadership – is the key factor to deliver the sector's mission, and the large majority of museums' financial resources are spent on it every year. The future of the sector depends on a thriving museum profession, which offers exciting and rewarding career opportunities, and attracts and retains committed and talented people at each generation.

Sector-wide debate around this topic has gained marked prominence in recent years. The most frequently cited areas of concern include:

- A management and leadership skills deficit, originating through the lack of more formalised career planning which recognises the growing demands on those who run museums and who are faced with an increasingly complex political, social and economic environment;
- The future of the curatorial profession, which is undergoing change in terms of the balance between the (traditional) scholarly role, collections management responsibilities and the interface with users and the public. There are also specific concerns around certain areas of subject expertise where succession issues are now looming.

Some sector-wide initiatives have been set up in response to these in recent years. These include the Museums Association's Continuing Professional Development schemes: the Associateship (AMA), and Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA). The AMA is supported by a voluntary UK-wide network of mentors and a central requirement of the former is at least 10 days Continuing Professional Development (CPD).²⁹ More recently, the Clore Duffield Leadership programme was established for senior museum professionals and will receive its first applicant in 2004. Resource commissioned substantial research in sector workforce development requirements in 2003, to inform strategy and policy development work in this area.³⁰ And the NMDC itself, through its own subcommittee on leadership, has established a mentoring scheme 'Leadership Network' which aims to build individuals' capacity and strengthen and sustain leadership within institutions.³¹

In terms of collaborative activities between individual national museums and regional counterparts, relatively few are currently focussed on staff development and related issues, although informal training and staff exchanges form part of many of the more established partnerships.³²

The National Aviation Skills Initiative (see Case Study 1 in chapter 4.4) represents one of the few structured training programmes comprehensively addressing a clearly defined segment of the sector. Most other examples of collaborative training programmes are focused on specific skills or are designed to overcome shortages in a particular geographical area, as exemplified by the Somerset Museum Training Consortium.

Museum management-related issues are the focus of Tate's well-established annual seminar for senior managers of both national and non-national institutions, which addresses strategic issues in the sector (see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter).

Other initiatives tend to be small and localised – such as the National Army Museum's one-week courses for regimental curators and trustees twice a year at Chelsea,³³ or the Somerset Museum Training Consortium which was formed by a group of museums and a higher education partner to address the lack of professional training provision in the area (see Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter).

²⁹ As of July 2003 851 people were registered for the AMA scheme. 54 people were registered for the FMA scheme.

³⁰ See DEMOS report: *Towards a Strategy for Workforce Development*.

³¹ <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/leadership.html>.

³² For example, The British Museum has put in place the infrastructure to provide regional advice on the development of volunteer schemes. It is currently providing such advice to the Manchester Museum.

³³ The course is free and participants completing the course receive a certificate that is recognised by The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council for registration purposes.

200 successful secondments in the museums, archives and libraries sector took place under the 'Sharing Museum Skills Millennium Awards', a Resource-managed scheme that ran over three years and was funded by a grant from the Millennium Commission. National museums have participated extensively in this programme; for example, the Victoria & Albert Museum had 32 in-and out-secondments.

Outside of this scheme, secondments between national and non-national museums are largely organised on an ad hoc basis in response to specific requirements and requests. Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter shows the role the Imperial War Museum played in giving operational experience to a newly appointed curator of a new small independent military museum.

Examples where secondments have been offered in the more structured context of a programme have experienced a relatively poor take-up. This is usually due to stretched staffing resources in secondee organisations and the lack of funding for appropriate back-filling arrangements. For example, the National Gallery offers two sets of secondments to professionals from regional museums. National Gallery bursaries are available for conservators to work in its conservation department for a period of six weeks. Through the Pilgrim Trust it also funds the secondment of regional curators to the National Gallery to research their collections in London. The disappointing take-up of these secondments is believed, in part, to be associated with the thin level of coverage in regional curatorial and conservation departments and the correspondingly high opportunity cost of secondees' time.

Secondments seem to work best when they are part of longer-term partnerships where specific professional skills are contributed by national museums in the context of a specific project. This activity tends to take place on a pro bono basis and can only feasibly be contemplated by the larger national museums.³⁴

³⁴ Examples include the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, which has seconded a team to develop the new Swansea Waterfront Museum, or the Victoria & Albert Museum which has contributed substantial senior and other staff time and expertise towards the design and development of the new Sheffield Millennium Galleries (see Case Study 4 in chapter 4.5).

Professional skills and staff development initiatives

① Case Study

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③

Somerset Museum Training Consortium

Fleet Air Arm Museum
Somerset County Museums Service (Convener)
South Somerset Museum and Heritage Service
Sedgemoor District Museums Service
Strode College (Centre Manager)

The Somerset Museum Training Consortium was formed by the Fleet Air Arm Museum and a group of local partners in 1996 to address the lack of professional museum education in the area. This was a commonly perceived need amongst the museum community in Somerset, particularly because there was no Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) regional assessment centre in the West Country.

To meet this county-wide need the Consortium used a grant of £5,000 from the Area Museum Council to establish an assessment centre at Strode College for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Cultural Heritage. The NVQ has four levels and an emphasis on visitor services and the care and management of collections. It offers assessment of units G2/G3 demanded of one of the routes to achieving the professional qualification, the AMA. The College organises the physical administration of the qualification. Consortium members provide the assessors and internal verification for the qualification.

The steering group that established the project is now the management committee of the Consortium. This oversees the development of the scheme to meet the evolving needs of the local museums and the structure of their training programmes.

The scheme has provided access to a qualification of national standard, successfully raised the standard of professionals in the area, and established a goal to which museum employees can aspire. To date 30 people have started preparation for assessment of their competence.

Professional skills and staff development initiatives

② Case Study

Work Experience for Newly Appointed Curator

Imperial War Museum
Combined Military Services Museum

The Combined Military Services Museum (CMSM) in Maldon, Essex is a new independent military museum which is backed by the local authority and receives assistance from the MoD. The trustees of the museum had recently appointed a new curator and the Chairman of the trustees approached the Imperial War Museum (IWM) to arrange a temporary placement in order for her to gain an understanding of operations of the IWM and to develop experience which would be helpful in the daily running of the new institution.

The placement in 2003, lasted for six weeks. In that time, the curator was introduced to the range of IWM facilities, was given an overview of working practices across the institution and gained first-hand knowledge of the IWM's approach to curatorship, exhibition management, and collections management. The aim was to focus on the areas that would be of most practical use to a new museum, for example, documentation, conservation, health and safety, and provide a support network.

For the CMSM curator, the placement represented a valuable introduction to operational issues such as documentation standards. As a direct result of the experience the museum has strengthened its relations with individual professionals in the IWM. The IWM is now providing advice on a number of artefacts in the CMSM collection.

Imperial War Museum, London.



Professional skills and staff development initiatives

③ Case Study

Tate Seminars

Tate

Range of participants from national and non-national institutions.

Begun in 1999, the Seminar Scheme was developed by Tate for senior staff in galleries around the country. Run over two/three days, the scheme is hosted by Tate and draws on the expertise of its staff in a range of disciplines. Topics are selected on the basis of demand as well as the current strategic issues of the day. These have included subjects such as Revenue Generation and Organisational Planning, Governance and Strategic Development, Interpretation and Education.

The seminar is made up of sessions led by senior Tate staff with experience of the issues under discussion. Each session is structured to provide the opportunity for the participating professionals to discuss mutually relevant issues. Places are strictly limited to 15-20 people to facilitate this type of exchange.

Attendees are charged a fee to cover the expenses of the scheme, which is not a profit-making venture. The Tate contacts prospective attendees by mailing a draft programme for the seminar, which as of last year was broadened to include national as well as non-national museum participants.

The scheme is evaluated via feedback forms issued to participants and the results of these are fed into the programme the following year. The results of these evaluations have been positive to date: participants have highlighted the value of the dialogue with senior professionals in their respective fields. The seminars are also viewed as valuable in building cross-institutional links. For example, as a direct result of contacts made through the Seminar Scheme two participants (from Manchester Art Gallery and the Ulster Museum) were able to explore the possibility of transferring an exhibition between their two institutions.

Tate Turbine Hall, London.



3.6 Operations

Collaboration and partnerships on operational matters tend to be driven by specific savings and efficiency objectives. In these pragmatic rather than strategic relationships the specific role and contribution of the national museum is less distinct than in other areas.

Marketing

Formal collaborations on marketing activities are mostly initiated by smaller national organisations or their branches, where there are distinct efficiency benefits or local advantages from pursuing joint activities.

Joint marketing initiatives can be extremely cost-effective methods of pooling promotional funds for smaller institutions with restricted budgets. There are examples of such initiatives operating among military heritage sites in Hampshire (for example the Royal Marines Museum see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter) and among visitor attractions in Yorkshire (for example the Royal Armouries).

In another example, the Welsh Slate Museum, a branch of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales has acted as a champion of the Padarn Forum, a broad initiative of local organisations who are involved in the development of Llanberis village as a broadly based centre of local tourism (see Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter).

Collaboration between national and non-national organisations has also included the joint development of friends organisations, with a view to developing new audiences (for example the Royal Armouries collaboration with English Heritage).

Information technology

There are currently relatively few examples of collaborations based around the procurement of new technology, although the potential to exploit synergies and joint purchasing powers is recognised, in particular where there are strong similarities in infrastructure requirements. Significant synergies were realised through the joint procurement of a new library system by the National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh Library (see Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter).



Fron Haul, former slate workers cottages at Welsh Slate Museum, Llanberis.

Operations

① Case Study

②

③

Joint Procurement of a New Computerised Library System

The National Library of Scotland
University of Edinburgh Library

The National Library of Scotland and University of Edinburgh Library launched a joint procurement exercise for a new computerised library system in 1998, a project that was driven by the need to save money and time.

The partners initially envisaged that they would share the cost of selecting a new system but that independent versions would be implemented in each organisation. As the project progressed the libraries deepened their partnership and decided to jointly purchase a single system which would be shared. The system hardware is maintained and stored at the university and a joint service agreement has been put in place. This yielded considerable savings on hardware, software and running costs.

The collaboration was facilitated by a steering group and cross-representation on each institution's procurement group. This helped to resolve apparently conflicting institutional priorities at the start of the project. To date the system works well-meeting institutional needs and interests on both sides. The organisations provide mutual support and backup to each other.

A new project between the National Library and the University of Edinburgh to jointly procure a digital object management system has also developed from this successful initial partnership.

Operations

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② Case Study

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The Llanberis Project

Welsh Slate Museum (a branch of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales)
A range of local public and private partners

The Llanberis Project originated in 1996 when the director of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW) consulted local organisations as part of its HLF bid for renovating the museum. The level of enthusiasm and support for this initial objective led to subsequent meetings of the parties and the establishment of the Padarn Forum, focused on improved destination marketing for the Llanberis locality as a whole.

The Forum comprises local and national politicians, public bodies such as the Snowdonia National Park and the Welsh Development Agency, Gwynedd Council and representatives of most visitor attractions in the area. The Forum is chaired by the Director of the NMGW who can act as an impartial arbiter of local views.

The first project sponsored by the Forum won two year's of EU funding in 1998 for a dedicated two person team. It encompassed marketing, public transport links, infrastructure development and sign posting. A subsequent three-year project is now focusing more exclusively on improvements to the village infrastructure itself.

The Forum has succeeded in harnessing the collective efforts of local parties to enhance Llanberis as a visitor destination. The Welsh Slate Museum is one of several important visitor attractions in the area. The Forum has allowed a collective rather than competitive strategy to be developed that encourages visitor spending power to be spread widely.

Operations

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③ Case Study

Defence of the Realm Joint Marketing Initiative

The Royal Marines Museum
 Hampshire County Council
 42 visitor sites, mostly in Hampshire

The Defence of the Realm Joint Marketing Initiative was first set up in the 1980s as an independent organisation to coordinate marketing and help develop the overall heritage sector in Hampshire. The initiative waned in the late 1990s but was reinvigorated in 1997 by Hampshire County Council, who adopted a central coordination role and provided the major share of the funding. In addition, a grant of £70,000 was secured through the ERDF KONVER programme.

The initiative's objectives were to increase day visitors and staying visitors by 40,000 and 10,000 p.a. respectively over a three year period starting in 1998. It has coordinated a joint marketing brochure, a discount voucher scheme, a group visit guide and has represented its members at important travel fairs. Administration of the initiative is managed by Hampshire County Council and the group meets once a year to review programmes and budgets.

The initiative is extremely cost-effective for its members, who individually contribute only modest amounts. A formal evaluation in 2001 indicated that the initiative had far exceeded its goals in terms of visitor growth.

Following the end of the KONVER funded project, the initiative has successfully continued in a slightly reduced format. The primary source of funding is still Hampshire County Council, with support from other local authorities and participating sites. The main promotional vehicle is a high quality colour brochure. An ongoing visitor survey also provides useful benchmarking data for participating institutions and group meetings now include outside speakers of relevance to the group.

Opposite:
 Red Hands, Wallace Collection.



CHAPTER 4

FORMS OF COLLABORATION —A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

As illustrated in the previous chapter, collaboration between national museums and the wider UK museum community takes place in many different ways, across all areas of activity. Few are strictly comparable. Nevertheless a number of basic forms of collaboration can be identified. Their merits and the most common issues they face are discussed in this chapter – not for any prescriptive reason, but as a prompt for thinking about future forms of collaboration, and the best way of maximising their impact.

Hallmarks of success

The evidence gathered as part of the research for this report, and in particular the examples provided by the case studies selected by individual NMDC members, suggests a number of basic success factors which apply to any form of collaboration. These do not require elaborate commentary and can be summarised as:

- Clear definition and articulation of each partner's objectives;
- Realistic assessment of resource implications – in particular 'hidden' costs;
- The right balance of 'cost and benefit' between partners;
- Mutual awareness, understanding and respect of local context and needs;
- Appropriate project management and communication mechanisms.

The 'human factor' is often described as a key element. Experience shows that collaboration has a much greater chance of meeting its stated objectives if conceived over a longer period of time, recognising the need to factor in time for relationship building and the benefit of building on existing relationships. This need not, however, act as a barrier to explore new partners and extend partnership networks beyond those organisations and individuals one knows and feels comfortable.

Pitfalls

Conversely, collaborations usually underachieve or fail because of a combination of any of the following:

- Lack of alignment of collaboration objectives and their position in the context of wider organisational priorities;
- Unrealistic assessment of organisational requirements, in particular (but not exclusively) from partners with the smaller resource base;
- 'Form following funding': a dependence on external sources of funding which end up shaping the nature of the collaboration/project in ways which are no longer aligned, or in conflict, with partner priorities and objectives;
- Poor communication within organisations by senior managers who have made partnership commitments, leading to lack of buy-in and ownership of projects at the departmental level where collaborative activity is located.

The above principles could be said to apply to any form of collaboration. In the case of national museums, a series of specific issues have been identified. These include:

- The degree to which the principle of collaboration with non-national (and in the main smaller) organisations is properly embedded in institutional strategy and (more importantly perhaps), priorities at senior management level;
- The extent to which this is backed by a commitment to devote the necessary level of internal resources (staff and other) out of (usually tight) core institutional funding towards this, over and above any external source of funding to cover direct project costs;
- Linked to the above, the ability to articulate the benefits of collaborations and distinguish between their use as an instrument to meet core institutional objectives (in terms of stewardship, scholarship, access etc.) and as an objective in its own right, based on the notion of a 'national role'.

The following chapters evaluate four types of collaboration, and assess their roles and function; strengths and weaknesses; and their ability to serve as models for future forms of collaboration.

4.2 Professional Networks

National museum professionals are part of widely networked communities, national and international. Nationally, these tend to be defined by particular fields of expertise and interest. Many of these networks are informal and have grown organically over the years. Some of them have formalised into societies, associations and other forms of groupings with their annual cycle of meetings, publications and other communication tools. The extent to which individuals within national museums participate in these networks depends on their own personal initiative.

Historically, a lot of collaborative activity has originated as a result of professional contacts from within these traditional networks, forged by individuals early on in their careers – former fellow students and colleagues etc. This type of collaboration is still widely found in the field of, for example, conservation and research.³⁵ Many museum professionals stress its importance in maintaining standards and sharing knowledge across the sector.

These types of collaborations are based on personal initiative and often happen outside of a set institutional framework. They tend to be opportunistic and serendipitous in their development. In many cases, they do not get registered at institutional level and therefore remain beneath the surface, rarely publicised internally, let alone externally.

Little attempt has been made at quantifying their collective impact and the resource implications. Although not explicit, the principle ruling these sort of relationships tends to be that of reciprocity and the notion of *quid pro quo*. This is a fine balance practiced by successive generations of museum professionals, which is characteristic of the ecology of the sector (as indeed of other parts of the cultural and the wider not-for-profit sector). This principle is now coming under attack as a result of years of consecutive institutional belt-tightening which has, in particular, forced larger institutions such as the national museums to consider carefully the allocation of staff time and resources to core institutional priorities.

That said, many of the more formal forms of collaboration set out in the following chapters can be traced back to these traditional networks and personal contacts, highlighting the importance of the 'human factor'.

There is every reason to support the ongoing existence of this informal, network-based collaboration, acknowledging the personal initiative on which it depends. This requires encouragement from senior management and a degree of guidance as to the level of staff time and departmental resources that can be devoted to this type of activity.

To be set against this is the risk of relying too much on personal networks as a source of more formal collaborative activities. The self-perpetuating nature of partnerships between groups of institutions who have tended to work together historically has been recognised as an issue for future consideration. Although this is no argument against traditional networks, these should not create undue 'barriers to entry' in the partnership game.

4.3 Discrete Projects

Many collaborations between national museums and their regional counterparts take place within the context of discrete projects with a finite lifespan.

These projects often arise as a result of external funding opportunities and are driven by the requirement to form consortiums in order to deliver the project objectives and/or meet funder criteria.

³⁵ Groups such as the British Association of Painting Conservators - Restorers or the UK Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic works are illustrative of these professional networks, as are the English Art Museums Directors' Conference, Biology Curators Group and the Group for Education in Museums.

In most (though not all) cases, national museums tend to lead these consortiums – both in the bidding phase and subsequently in project management terms. That said, they also participate in projects as minor partners where their contribution does not warrant the leadership role.

Project initiation and the choice of partners often relies on professional networks as described in the previous chapter. This can lead to ad hoc choices of partners, in particular where deadlines imposed by funders require rapid formation of project consortiums. This puts organisations of lesser profile, and with limited or no involvement in these networks, at a disadvantage.

The benefits of project-based collaboration, whilst specific to each case, can be summarised in terms of:

- Access to funding not otherwise accessible – this applies in particular to higher education funding (only accessible through collaborations with universities and other academic institutions) as well as regional and EU funding programmes requiring a consortium-based approach;
- Requirement for a clear definition of outputs and a finite timetable;
- Pooling of resources and expertise – of particular benefit to smaller partners who would not otherwise have the breadth of skills or infrastructure to deliver a project;
- Opportunity to experiment with new forms of working.

By contrast the most frequently cited drawbacks of project-based collaboration include:

- The danger of ‘form follows funding’ – in the case of projects overly shaped by funder criteria instead of partner objectives;
- The difficulty to claim overhead costs against project budgets, thereby putting the burden on the organisational capacity of the organisation managing the project;
- Their short-term nature and consequently often lack of time to address differences in organisational cultures and perspectives, thereby increasing the propensity for disagreement between partners.

The experience illustrated in the following case studies shows that project-based collaboration works best:

- In areas where the application of new technology can be shared e.g. digitisation projects; where innovation is highly valued e.g. education and social inclusion projects; or in discrete exhibitions, conferences or festivals where collective contributions are a prerequisite for success;
- Where there is a balanced contribution between partners or where the project governance is clearly inclusive, creating a sense of equity between participating organisations;
- When there is a well-resourced project management function – this is often provided directly by or receives significant administrative support from a national museum.

Looking at the future, there will always be a role for project-based collaboration, outside of the context of longer term partnerships. Not only is there a place for pragmatic response to new funding opportunities, which will continue to present themselves, but there is also benefit in collaborations which are not necessarily conceived for the long-term but focus on meeting discrete objectives or can act as laboratories for new and innovative ways of working. Being more explicit about the experimental nature of some of these projects, and acknowledging that there is a degree of open-endedness attached to them, would go some way towards addressing some of the issues and conflicts outlined above. This is also the responsibility of funders.

Discrete Projects

① Case Study

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'Moving Here'

The National Archives (lead)

Consortium of 30 partners incl: The British Library, Museum of London

'Moving Here' is a web-based resource for lifelong learning created to explore, record and illustrate the story of migration into the UK. Its particular focus is on the Caribbean, Irish, Jewish and South-Asian communities over the last 200 years. The site offers online versions of over 150,000 original items, including photographs, personal papers, government documents, maps and art objects, as well as sound recordings and video clips.

The project was originally conceived by The National Archives (then Public Record Office) and the National Maritime Museum, but lacked funding for implementation. In 2001, the NOF Digitise programme provided an opportunity to put together a consortium of 30 organisations of local, regional and national museums, archives and libraries from across the UK, chosen for the relevance of their collections. A £2.5 million grant, covering project-related staff, technical equipment and digitisation costs, was secured. The project has been led by a team, up to 12-strong, based at The National Archives, which set all the technical guidelines for the project, co-ordinated the development of the site content, administered the grant claims and ensured ongoing communication between the project partners. The project has been run by a project board meeting monthly and comprising the Chief Executive of The National Archives and two other lead partners. A steering group with wider consortium representation has met on a quarterly basis. The development of content and learning resources was undertaken by the central team with the help of many contracted writers, editors, researchers and technical developers.

A project of this size faced a number of challenges, in particular the creation of a coherent catalogue of material, the timely delivery of digitised material and metadata in the format agreed. Particular problems were encountered with smaller partners who had underestimated the task of identifying and recording material, had not budgeted for staff costs or could not commit the internal resources to it. But delays were also encountered with larger partners, due to changing responsibilities. These issues were largely overcome by the existence of a strong central team.

Overall, the project has provided a new model for sharing materials and information between archives, museums, libraries and community groups at national, regional and local level for the delivery of cultural resources. In delivery terms, the project has benefited from a large institution as the lead partner with substantial project experience, and with access to a large pool of expertise. At the same time, partners were included in the key decision-making bodies, thereby achieving a truly collaborative outcome. Funding for the project runs out in March 2004, by which time the project will be substantially completed. There are no definite plans for its future development, although the site will continue to be hosted on The National Archives server.

www.movinghere.org.uk



Roy the fishmonger at his shop in Soho Road, Vanley Burke Collection, 1970.

Discrete Projects

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② Case Study

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D O Hill Bicentenary Festival

National Galleries of Scotland
The Scottish Society for the History of Photography

The D O Hill Bicentenary Festival celebrated the anniversary of the birth of the famous Scottish photographer in May 1802. Conceived at the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Society for the History of Photography (SSHoP), the initial idea for a conference rapidly gained momentum and the interest of a wide range of interested parties. Following a meeting of interested parties and the formation of a Steering Group, the range of activities was widened to include exhibitions, an education programme and other public events.

The focal point of the festival was the National Galleries of Scotland's (NGS) extensive collection of calotype images made by D O Hill and his associate Robert Adamson between 1843 and 1848. This formed the basis of the central exhibition of the festival, 'Facing the Light.' Exhibitions in more than 10 additional institutions illustrated other aspects of the D O Hill story, drawing on their relevant collections.

An education project was a significant component of the festival. The project was designed to increase advocacy and understanding of the photographer's work through school resources, activities and workshops. In addition, an international conference, held in conjunction with the Royal Society of Edinburgh, attracted 90 delegates from the UK and overseas. Participants included world authorities on the history of photography and curators of major collections.

As the planning of the project evolved it became clear that coordinating the festival would require human and financial resources beyond the means of SSHoP. Funding of £50,000 was secured from the HLF and Lloyds TSB Scotland and a project leader and education officer were subsequently appointed. Participating institutions financed their own contributions and NGS provided significant assistance in kind in the form of office space and administrative support.

The involvement of NGS gave the festival an important base and reference point that clearly signalled its status and importance, although the national museum itself was not leading the project or providing project management.

The independent, dedicated and fully-resourced project management function ensured good coordination of an extremely broad set of activities, many beyond the festival's original remit and conception. There were significant advantages from the project team being based in NGS facilities and having close contact with the leading curatorial expertise in the subject.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery.



Discrete Projects

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③ Case Study

The Three-cornered Gallery

The Wallace Collection

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts/UEA

The Three-cornered Gallery was a project initiated by Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 2000 as part of the DCMS IT Challenge. It aimed to create a digital library of images from three collections of very different focus (Wolverhampton's 20th century collections, the Wallace Collection's 17th-19th century Western European paintings and the Sainsbury Centre's collections of non-Western Art) in order to explore the connections between artworks from different times and places in an innovative way. It was specifically envisaged that the output would be used by schools and educators and that it would be predominantly visual so that it could be used by learners with reading disabilities and by communities who use English as a second language. The project lasted a year.

The project was led by Wolverhampton who contacted and secured the involvement of the other two partners. Once project funding was secured, Wolverhampton contracted with the IT developers, managed the editorial process and liaised with the partners. The Wallace Collection and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts were asked to provide images of their collections, to contribute supporting information and were involved in collective meetings to review the development of the final product.

As the digital library took shape, the short project timescale left little time for the three partners to discuss their differing educational and art historical approaches and how to properly integrate these within the end product. The experience of this project showed that partnerships need time to build the team, agree goals and methods and recognise differing skills. The time was not available, either before the application was submitted, or during the development stages because of the rapid deadlines set by the funding body.

The output from the project was a website available on the internet as a resource for schools. It is used by schools all over the world and currently receives 7,000 virtual visits a month.

All parties felt that the project would have benefited from clearer agreement at the start around its objectives and the editorial style of the end product. It was also felt that the project would have benefited from closer ongoing contact during the course of the project to ensure that a shared understanding of the approach was developed.

www.3corneredgallery.com

4.4 Strategic Initiatives

The museum sector faces a series of long-term challenges which, to a greater or lesser extent, affect all of its members, large and small. Most of these are related to the future sustainability of museums' core activities, all of which belong to the 'subsidised economy' – i.e. depend for their existence on external funding support. The growing scope and level of museum activity over time has inflated costs without concomitant revenue increases. Factors contributing to this have included:

- In terms of collecting: the explosion in market values (for acquisitions);
- In terms of preservation: the rising cost of meeting increasingly sophisticated standards of conservation;
- In terms of access: rising competition and visitor expectations and the increasing cost of visitor operations in terms of facilities, services and promotion;
- In terms of general management: the cost of professionalisation and the added cost of IT systems and provision, with limited efficiency gains and savings to offset these.

None of these issues can be addressed by any single institution, but require joint action. Many are best addressed through joint collaborative initiatives, usually amongst a group of institutions bound by a common area of collecting, or else geographic proximity.

National museums have either initiated and or played a significant role in a number of 'strategic' initiatives of this type. This reflects their position as *primus inter pares* in their respective collecting areas, as well as the level of resources and organisational capacities they can draw on. This does not necessarily mean adopting a dominant role, but to provide leadership and resources where required and act in a co-ordinating role. It can also mean working through a separately structured project management or membership organisation.

So far, the number of strategic initiatives have been relatively limited. They have included:

- Large, national initiatives have been formed in several subject fields, focusing on collecting strategies, collections documentation and research (for example the UK Maritime Collections Strategy or the National Inventory of European Paintings 1200-1900, see Case Studies 2 and 3 at the end of this chapter);
- More focused initiatives have been created in specific sectors or regions to address training requirements and perceived shortages of skills (for example the National Aviation Skills Initiative see Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter and the Somerset Museum Training Consortium see Case Study 1 in chapter 3.5);
- A range of relatively small-scale, localised marketing initiatives perform a simple but valuable role of pooling restricted budgets to attract visitors to a given region.

The main characteristics of these strategic initiatives are:

- Their long-term nature. In most cases they are open-ended with no particular time limit;
- Their tendency to grow organically, sometimes originating out of a project, or in a serendipitous fashion. They also tend to evolve in terms of membership, role and scope;
- Their by and large 'egalitarian' nature, even where for practical reasons a national museum or a cohort of large institutions might lead them;
- In general, their dependence for core activities and administrative structure on the resources of their members.

As a particular form of collaboration, the benefits of strategic initiatives tend to be described as follows:

- They move at their own pace and provide the flexibility to evolve and adjust their scope and remit in response to need;
- Being issues-based, they tend to have a clear focus;
- They are self-selecting in terms of membership and as a result can usually count on relatively high levels of commitment from the partners involved;
- They provide a context for other forms of collaboration amongst members (exhibitions, conferences, specific projects etc.).

In the best examples, strategic initiatives build sector-wide coordination and deepen institutional exchange.

The flip-side of strategic initiatives' long-term and evolutionary nature is their difficulty to secure funding to support infrastructure requirements. This is a particular issue where the membership is large and requires a separate management set-up. The costs associated with this tend not to be eligible for the traditional sources of funding, which usually focus on discreet, project-based rather than ongoing, recurring costs. This puts the onus on the larger organisations in the initiative and national museums in particular.

Both national and non-national museums recognise the scope to increase the number of initiative-based collaborations, in particular in the field of collections management – developing the notion of 'dispersed national collections'. In this area, national museums have a natural leadership role to play, due to their own holdings and the level of curatorial resources they can draw on. This is widely regarded as a starting point from which to develop other areas of co-operation – in particular public access (digital, publications, exhibitions) as well as training and skills development.

Strategic Initiatives

① Case Study

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③

National Aviation Skills Initiative

Imperial War Museum Duxford

Fleet Air Arm Museum and other national aviation museums

Midland Air Museum and a range of other non-national aviation museums

The National Aviation Skills Initiative involves 10 national and regional museums. The initiative aims to raise conservation standards across the sector and especially amongst smaller aircraft museums, which would not otherwise have access to conservation training. Particular issues relate to historic aircraft conservation and limited covered space at aircraft museums.

The scheme was initiated by the Imperial War Museum Duxford in 2001 and is led by a steering group comprising one representative from each participating institution. The initiative has worked closely with the British Aviation Preservation Council to facilitate contact with the larger aviation preservation community.

To date, the primary objective has been the compilation of a c£800,000 bid to the HLF to fund a training scheme and the creation of a national training centre at Duxford. It is intended that tutors from the scheme will make site visits to aviation museums in order to advise and train local personnel. The training centre is to be complemented by a network of workshops, of which one has so far been funded.

So far three residential courses have been run on a pilot basis, focusing on a range of conservation issues in the sector. It is felt that the scheme has already significantly raised standards and morale in smaller institutions. For participating national museums, the opportunity to act as a tutor is viewed as an important means of professional development for the individuals involved.

William Gibbs from the Fleet Air Arm Museum's Engineering Department working on a Vampire plane.



Strategic Initiatives

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② Case Study

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The National Inventory of European Paintings 1200-1900

The National Gallery

More than 130 other UK collections

The project to create a National Inventory of European Paintings 1200-1900 was initiated by the National Gallery in 2000 with the objective of compiling a unified online catalogue of the estimated 20,000 paintings held by more than 250 collections in the UK. In addition to the need to document and digitise the dispersed national collection, it is estimated that significant research is required on approximately half of these pieces.

Although initiated by the National Gallery, the project was established with an independent structure under the guidance of a steering committee drawn from regional curators, the National Trust and the National Gallery. An independent director was appointed to lead the process of gaining national support and raising funds. The National Gallery supports the initiative financially by covering the salary of the director. Although the director's office is based in Glasgow, the National Gallery occasionally provides space for meetings and some minor administration.

The project has been welcomed by regional collections and is seen by many as a first step in encouraging further national collaboration in stewardship and scholarship in this particular field. It is felt that the project will help address the decline in curatorial expertise in regional museums that was highlighted in the 2001 'Renaissance in the Regions' report. The initiative has recently merged with the Public Catalogue Foundation, a project with similar aims and objectives.

Despite this positive reception, the project has experienced greater difficulties than it had originally expected in securing funding. HLF funding has not been forthcoming because the project did not have a sufficient educational focus and other potential funding sources had closed their bidding round. The project has since applied successfully for funding to the Getty Grant Program to fund the research element of the work and support has been secured from the Pilgrim Trust, who have given money for grants to regional museums for research on their collections. An application remains outstanding with the Arts & Humanities Research Board (AHRB) to create the first phase of the database. AHRB funding was investigated after the project entered a collaboration with two leading history of art departments (Birkbeck College and Glasgow University) and the Visual Arts Data Service.

Strategic Initiatives

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③ Case Study

UK Maritime Collections Strategy (UKMCS)

National Maritime Museum

30 other maritime heritage organisations

Founded in 1998, the UK Maritime Collections Strategy (UKMCS) takes a strategic overview of the primary collecting areas of more than 30 member institutions. The UKMCS aims to be a cross-domain, maritime cultural community, working together to promote public awareness and enjoyment of the UK's wealth of maritime collections, by facilitating the enhancement of their stewardship and interpretation.

The specific objectives of the scheme are to:

- Work towards co-ordinating individual collection and preservation policies, developing 'spheres of interest and expertise' for key museums and sharing resources in partnership where appropriate to do so. (DCMS Priority Four-Modernising Delivery);
- Participate in joint ventures to increase public awareness of and access to collections, including using digital technology. (DCMS Priorities One and Two-children and young people; wider community);
- 'Share' collections between museums and institutions via short- and long-term loan and transfer, where this is in the best interest of public access and the development of collections. (DCMS Priorities One, Two and Four-children and young people; wider community; Modernising Delivery);
- Identify and advocate opportunities to develop national and regional partnership projects that support educational, economic and cultural re-generation particularly of maritime communities. (DCMS Priorities One, Two and Three- children and young people; wider community; economic contribution).

The scheme is overseen by a committee made up of senior representatives from 11 lead museums (who have strengths in different areas of maritime heritage). The National Maritime Museum (NMM), which holds approximately 50% of the nation's maritime collection, coordinates UKMCS and is one of the scheme's originators. The NMM covers the cost of promotional material and administers the website, which is a crucial communication tool between the members. Very few other direct costs, other than staff time, are incurred in administering the scheme.

The initiative has successfully created a strong network of museums interested in and willing to pursue synergistic activities as they arise. One of the most important outcomes has been the allocation of responsibilities for collecting in different areas to different organisations (for example 19th century marine engineering for NMSI, or Offshore Marine and Gas industries for Aberdeen Maritime Museum). The initiative was held up as an example of best practice in discussions regarding national subject networks in Resource's 'Renaissance in the Regions' report.

The UKMCS originated from the UK Maritime Curators Group which has met twice a year since 1991 to discuss strategic curatorial issues and share expertise. These meetings are important in building close personal relationships between curators and form an effective network where collaborative opportunities can be discussed. This has encouraged the group of maritime museums to develop projects beyond the original scope of the UKMCS. Examples include the current collaboration, led by Aberdeen Maritime Museum, to create the 'Life and Death at Sea' Touring Exhibition which will open in April 2004 (see Case Study 13 in chapter 3.4); the Understanding Slavery Project (see Case Study 6 in chapter 3.4); and the plan to create a National Ship Model Collection Centre (see Case Study 5 in chapter 3.2).

4.5 Strategic Partnerships

A growing number of national museums now operate partnership programmes which are strategic in their remit and represent a different depth of institutional engagement compared to other forms of collaboration.

These partnerships are characterised by the following:

- A 'top down' initiation process, with aims and objectives often defined by the national museum;³⁶
- Long-term agreements (often for a period of three to five years but with the intention on both sides to renew on a 'rolling basis'), formalised through the exchange of letters or a memorandum of understanding;
- Senior management involvement at the point of initiation and right through implementation, in terms of membership of steering groups etc.;
- Strong bilateral contact across the departments of organisations involved, often encouraged by secondments or informal ongoing sharing of expertise;
- Multiple funding sources, often including a substantial commitment of core staff resources from the partners.

Seventeen such partnerships have been identified, including one which is currently in the process of being formed. These are listed at the end of this chapter.

The origin and nature of strategic partnerships varies significantly, but many are driven by an agenda to broaden geographical access to national museums collections. This has favoured partnerships with organisations geographically distant from London, in particular.

In terms of size and shape, strategic partnerships typically conform to one of two models:

- An exclusive, bilateral partnership between two institutions, particularly where there are strong similarities in their collections or strategies; or
- A consortium-based approach, led by the national museum, which often involves a selection of partners chosen for their regional position.

Whilst many partnerships are initially driven by activities aimed at widening geographic access (in particular loans or exhibitions) they tend to develop over time to cut across the whole range of museum activities, including staff training. In some cases, partnerships have been the basis for the creation of new institutions (for example the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, see Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter) or to strengthen the position of organisations which have been through a change of status (for example the Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust or the Bowes Museum, see Case Studies 4 and 5 at the end of this chapter).



National Maritime Museum, Cornwall.

³⁶ Some notable examples, such as the Victoria & Albert Museums Special Partnership with Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust are exceptions to this (see Case Study 4 at the end of this chapter).

The main benefits of strategic partnerships compared to project-based collaboration are all derived from their long-term nature. They are commonly described in terms of:

- Time and scope for all partner organisations to get involved in the setting of objectives;
- Time to address differences in organisational cultures and practices;
- Room for initiatives at departmental levels;
- Opportunities for staff development. These can be as significant for the national museum as for the partner institution(s).

Regional partners cite a number of benefits from having a long-term association with a national museum:

- It provides direct, and in most cases free, access to a substantial pool of expertise and organisational resources;
- It helps build audiences in the regional institution and supports associated education and outreach activities, which are important elements of their mission;
- It enhances the profile of the regional institution and can encourage greater commitment from local and regional funders for new developments and plans.

Successful strategic partnerships have been described as 'relationships of equals', i.e. based on an open dialogue about objectives and priorities and a balance in the (relative) commitment of energies and resources from each partner.

In terms of resourcing strategic partnerships, no single model seems to apply. In some cases external funding has been secured to pay for staff and associated costs (for example the Tate Partnership Scheme, see Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter). In others the national museum resources the initiative entirely out of in-house resources (for example the V&A/Sheffield partnership, see Case Study 4 at the end of this chapter), although this is rarely quantified or specifically allocated in corporate budget. The former is seen as preferable, and more sustainable, as it recognises the additional demand on core organisational resources which are always underestimated, and reduces the partnership's reliance on the goodwill of individuals within the partner organisations. On the other hand it creates a dependency on external sources of funding which can be detrimental to long-term planning and a sense of continuity.

Non-national museums have raised the issue over the criteria applied by national museums in selecting their 'strategic partners' and the extent to which these privileged relationships, necessarily limited in number, naturally favour a relatively small number of prominent regional institutions. This sentiment has been reinforced by the formation of the Hubs and an expectation that national museums will seek to deepen relationships with Hub leaders, a number of which are already partners. This raises questions over how equality of access to national collections will be achieved within this new framework.

As strategic partnerships become a central feature of national museums' national strategies, these issues will require clarification.



Volunteers working alongside Museum staff. Westland Aerospatiale Gazelle arriving at the Fleet Air Museum, October 2002.

Strategic Partnerships – Overview

| NMDC member | Partner(s) | Nature of partnership |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| The British Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast, National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland • Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery • Bolton Museum and Art Gallery • Cardiff, National Museums and Galleries of Wales • Exeter City Museums and Art Gallery • Glasgow Museums • Hampshire County Council Museums Service • Horniman Museum and Gardens • Leicester City Museums Service • The Manchester Museum • Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service • Tyne and Wear Museums • York Museums Trust | <p>The Partnership UK Scheme is a broad initiative aimed at making the national collection visible throughout the country, augmenting the partners own material, developing displays, sharing expertise, building new audiences, and staff development in its partners, as well as providing the British Museum with the opportunity to benefit from partners' expertise in many different areas. The partners are intended to act as a conduit to the cultural life of their regions including other parts of the museum sector. The nine English Hubs are all represented in the scheme.</p> <p>(See Case Study 2 in chapter 3.4)</p> |
| Cabinet War Rooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churchill Archives Centre | <p>A long-standing display partnership has developed into both partners working on the new Churchill Museum due to open in 2005.</p> <p>(See Case Study 3 in chapter 3.4)</p> |
| National Army Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Buffs Regimental Museum at the Royal Museum and Art Gallery, Canterbury. | <p>This partnership secures Buffs collection a local presence through a management partnership with the Royal Museum and Art Gallery Canterbury.</p> <p>(See Case Study 4 in chapter 3.2)</p> |
| The National Gallery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery • Laing Art Gallery, Tyne & Wear | <p>A touring exhibition partnership that was set up to create an annual exhibition over a four-year period that would tour each partnership venue.</p> <p>(See Case Study 5 in chapter 3.4)</p> |
| National Galleries of Scotland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duff House • Paxton House | <p>A long-term loan/display partnership. The NGS permanently display over 100 works at these sites.</p> |
| National Maritime Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Maritime Museum Cornwall | <p>The National Maritime Museum Cornwall was created in partnership with the NMM and other regional partners, predominantly around the NMM's collection of small boats. There is continual liaison over curatorial, exhibition and business-related issues between the NMMC and the NMM. (See Case Study 1 at the end of this chapter)</p> |
| National Museums & Galleries of Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriel Ynys Mon Anglesey • Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery • Wrexham County Borough Museum | <p>The 'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan - Sharing Treasures' Partnership Scheme is aimed at widening access to national collections particularly through joint exhibitions.</p> <p>(See Case Study 8 in chapter 3.4)</p> |
| National Museums & Galleries of Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swansea Waterfront Museum | <p>The NMGW in partnership with the City and County of Swansea has formed the National Waterfront Museum Swansea company to deliver a new National Waterfront Museum. It will include exhibits from both partners' collections, and is due to open in summer 2005.</p> |

Continued overleaf

Strategic Partnerships – Overview *Continued*

| NMDC member | Partner(s) | Nature of partnership |
|---|---|--|
| National Railway Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sedgefield Borough Council | Shildon Railway Village is being created in partnership by the NRM and Sedgefield Borough Council. The complex will include the newly refurbished Timothy Hackworth Museum, and a publicly accessible NRM collection centre. [See Case Study 2 at the end of this chapter] |
| National Museum of Photography, Film and Television | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Royal Photographic Society | The Royal Photographic Collection is now housed at the NMPFT and there are plans to collaborate on exhibitions, conservation and research. [See Case Study 6 in chapter 3.2] |
| National Museums of Scotland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Trust of Scotland | In partnership, the NMS and the NTS established and now run the Museum of Scottish Country Life. [See Case Study 7 in chapter 3.2] |
| National Portrait Gallery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beningbrough Hall ● Bodelwyddan Castle Trust ● Montacute House | A display partnership providing NPG curatorial input, and in the case of Bodelwyddan Castle, involvement in the redevelopment of their galleries. [See Case Study 10 in chapter 3.4] |
| The Natural History Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bristol City Museums & Art Gallery ● Oxford University Natural History Museum ● Cambridge University - Sedgwick and University Zoological Museum ● Hancock Museum, Tyne and Wear ● Sheffield Galleries & Museum Trust ● Leeds City Museum ● The Manchester Museum ● National Museums Liverpool | This partnership scheme initiated in 2003, links institutions with significant natural history collections and will focus on staff training, exhibition design and collection database creation. |
| Royal Naval Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Admiralty Library | The Royal Naval Museum library and the Admiralty Library are now housed together in Portsmouth. [See Case Study 8 in chapter 3.2] |
| Tate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lakeland Arts Trust ● Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust ● Potteries Museum & Art Gallery ● Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service: Castle Museum Norwich ● The New Art Gallery Walsall | The key aim of the Tate Partnership Scheme is to encourage the partners to develop exhibitions drawing on Tate's collection. The scheme also includes training and seminars. [See Case Study 3 at the end of this chapter] |
| Victoria & Albert Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust | This Special Partnership focusses on the joint development of the Millennium Galleries in Sheffield and includes joint exhibitions, training programmes and secondments. [See Case Study 4 at the end of this chapter] |
| The Wallace Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Bowes Museum | This partnership focuses on joint exploitation of collections, and the sharing of expertise. [See Case Study 5 at the end of this chapter] |

Strategic Partnerships

① Case Study

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Partnership with National Maritime Museum Cornwall

National Maritime Museum

National Maritime Museum Cornwall

The National Maritime Museum Cornwall (NMMC) was created from a partnership between the National Maritime Museum (NMM), Cornwall Maritime Museum, South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall County Council and Cornwall College, who together formed a charitable trust to build and run the new venture.

The NMM had spent a number of years seeking a suitable waterside site that could provide public access to its extensive small boat collection - numbering over a 100 boats ranging from a traditional coracle to an offshore powerboat - the majority of which had never been seen by the public. At the same time, Cornwall Maritime Museum in Falmouth was keen to move to a larger and more prominent waterfront site. Simultaneously both made applications to the HLF for the same site; the HLF agreed to support them if they combined to form one project giving rise to the National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

This new independent museum, opened in March 2003, consists of the NMM national collection of small boats, and supporting material, on long-term loan, and a suite of galleries relating to the maritime heritage of Cornwall. Funding for the £27 million project was raised from a variety of external sources and the NMM itself contributed over £1 million in terms of staff and resources. Overall, the project was managed by the Trustees of the new NMMC Company. Two of the 12 Trustees are nominated by NMM and the NMM Director is invited to NMMC Trustee meetings.

The NMM supported the development by providing a research team of up to six posts based at NMM Greenwich and contributed to the research, development and final production of the exhibitions. NMM direct support continues in the form of a curator being seconded to Cornwall from Greenwich. There is continuing close liaison between the two museums over curatorial, conservation, exhibition, operational and business issues. NMM and NMMC are exploring opportunities for exchanging temporary exhibitions and for cross-marketing and promotion through websites and the media. The NMM branding associated with the new Falmouth museum has been particularly helpful in launching the scheme.

The collaboration has resulted in a strong set of benefits to both major partners. The NMM achieved its purpose of finding an appropriate regional home for its previously inaccessible and underused small boats collection. The new museum plays an important role within the framework provided by the UK Maritime Collections Strategy and NMMC is identified as the lead museum developing collections and subject expertise in its area. The Cornwall Maritime Museum in turn succeeded in increasing public awareness of its unique Cornish collection and gained a sophisticated, modern showcase. NMMC continues to be operated as a wholly-independent charitable trust relying on its visitors and its engendered income for its long-term revenue and capital funding.

Strategic Partnerships

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② Case Study

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Shildon Railway Village

National Railway Museum (part of the National Museum of Science and Industry)
Sedgefield Borough Council
The Timothy Hackworth Museum at Shildon

The National Railway Museum (NRM) has a railway vehicle collection of a size far exceeding what it can use and display on its own premises in York, despite an active loan programme with a total of 1,576 objects on loan to more than 70 institutions throughout the UK (including 1,116 to STEAM).

A desire to spread the NRM collection around the country, and the lack of funding available to increase its accommodation in York, led the NRM to seek partners in the development of a reserve collection centre, with innovative access for visitors. 30 expressions of interest were received and after a process of evaluation the Timothy Hackworth Museum at Shildon, managed by Sedgefield Borough Council, was chosen. The museum offered a location of great significance as a centre of activity from the very dawn of railway history, as well as tremendous space. Importantly, the museum is located in County Durham, an area with access to regeneration funding.

The two partners jointly developed a £10 million project to develop the new facility. Approximately half of the funding was secured from the HLF and half has come from regional funding including the RDA, and ERDF. Sedgefield Borough Council has also contributed £600,000 to the scheme. By September 2004 the Timothy Hackworth Museum will have been refurbished with a publicly accessible NRM collection centre built alongside. The complex will be renamed the Shildon Railway Village and will also include historic buildings and landscape as well as the collection centre.

The creation of a national railway museum in Shildon has generated much local interest, and the new complex is seen by Sedgefield Borough Council as an important element in regenerating the area. The economic impact of the development on the local area is estimated at £1 million per annum. As recently as 1984 Shildon was still a railway manufacturing town and it is intended that the new museum becomes a central heritage institution in the region. The NRM has been consulting with local schools and volunteer support groups, and is developing an active events programme for the community.

The Shildon Railway Village will allow the NRM to fully house its collection, create space for more frequent changes of displays at York, and enable the museum to increase its loan programme with both Shildon and the broader museum community. The partnership with Shildon is conceived as an interactive one with the objective that visitors will be offered continuously changing displays in a long-lasting partnership.

Construction site at Shildon, 2nd December 2003.



Strategic Partnerships

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③ Case Study

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Tate Partnership Scheme

Tate

Lakeland Arts Trust

Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

The New Art Gallery Walsall

In 2000 the Tate Partnership Scheme was formally established around a group of five regional partners, selected after an extensive consultation process. The scheme initially secured three years of funding totalling £337,000 from the HLF. An additional £444,000 has recently been secured for an additional two years. The aim of the scheme is to encourage partners to develop exhibitions drawing on Tate's collections. The curatorial lead for these exhibitions is fully devolved to the partners, each developing its separate programme based on its own collection and regional audience. In many cases, partners are keen to use the Tate exhibitions as a catalyst to further scholarship within their own institutions and to deepen the public's engagement with their collections.

The original intention was that each partner would develop one major and two smaller exhibitions over a three-year period. In the end several of the partners developed three large exhibitions. The process for creating the exhibitions follows an interactive route managed by the Tate National Programmes Officer. Proposals are originated by the partner and are then discussed with Tate curators in order to establish a list of available works.

The partnership is managed through annual meetings of senior partner representatives to review budgets and performance against HLF criteria. Curators meet annually at a dedicated forum to share relevant experience and to discuss forthcoming plans. In between these meetings there is ongoing informal communication on a project basis. High demand for certain works requires tight coordination of loans, a process which is managed by Tate's National Programmes Officer. Long partnerships allow for advance planning and can provide the mechanism for lending iconic works that are usually in constant demand for the national collection's own displays. For example Epstein's 'Rockdrill' was loaned to The New Art Gallery Walsall earlier in 2003 where it has particular relation to the Garman Ryan Collection.

The scheme is described as a genuine two-way relationship by Tate and its partners. For example, Norwich lends items of its designated collection to Tate as part of the scheme. This has included a significant loan of the Norwich School of Painters in 2000.

Through the scheme, Tate has been able to make its collection available to new audiences across the country. The partners have increased their audiences, improved their local and national profile and in some cases have gained greater commitment from local and national funders for new developments and plans. Norfolk believes that its long-standing relationship with Tate (which pre-dates the formation of the current partnership scheme) lent significant profile to the organisation and helped secure its bid of £12m to HLF to create two new galleries and refurbish the original castle museum.

The scheme encompasses training and staff development through a series of seminars on topics requested by the partners, such as marketing and technician skills, and individual sessions are also arranged across Tate's activities. This element of the scheme is coordinated by the National Programmes Officer. Tate is now considering developing the scheme further by creating a programme of secondments.

Strategic Partnerships

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4 Case Study

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Special Partnership

Victoria and Albert Museum
Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust

In 2000 a special partnership was formally launched between the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) and Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust. For the V&A the overriding aims were to extend its work into the regions, to make its collections more available outside London and to develop a northern audience. Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust aimed to strengthen its local and regional profile by association with a London national museum.

The V&A's relationship with Sheffield first developed when Sheffield Development Corporation approached the V&A in 1995 to invite it to consider the possibility of creating a V&A of the North in the city, as part of its regeneration plans. The V&A made it clear that it was not seeking an outpost, but was looking to work in partnership, assisting Sheffield in the development of proposals for a new Millennium Gallery. In Sheffield's subsequent bid to the Millennium Commission it was described as a limited partner. The Museum worked closely with Sheffield throughout the development of the galleries, the proposals to set up a Trust, and thinking about the relationship between the new Millennium Galleries and Sheffield's existing museums and galleries. This long period of close, informal working resulted in the formal 2000 agreement to collaborate on three major exhibitions in each five-year phase of the 10-year contract. The first of the major exhibitions of V&A collections, 'Precious', was jointly curated as the blockbuster exhibition to launch the new Millennium Galleries in 2001.

The agreement is not limited to the contract to work on exhibitions, but includes collaboration on the creation of new galleries (e.g. the metalwork displays), as well as management systems, marketing, the creation of a Friends organisation for the newly independent trust and staff development.

The V&A allocated considerable resources out of its core funding for the preparation of these exhibitions. Sheffield covered the costs of transport and couriers as well as local costs.

For the V&A, the resource implications have been justified by the depth of the partnership, the wider access to its collections and the professional development opportunities this has presented for its staff. A senior staff member of the V&A continues to sit as a member of the Trust's board and secondments to and from Sheffield have been actively encouraged (e.g. as part of the Sharing Museum Skills Millennium Awards scheme). A joint staff training programme is under development.

Sheffield believes it gained enormously from being associated with the V&A, which lent weight to its profile as a new institution and allowed it to access skills and expertise in its formative stage. Staff from Sheffield continue to benefit from the expertise within the V&A: for example by technical staff working alongside the V&A's teams to gain knowledge of the technical and handling issues associated with major exhibitions and from training opportunities. An existing V&A cooperation on middle management training with the British Museum and the National Portrait Gallery is now being widened to include Sheffield.

Strategic Partnerships

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⑤ Case Study

Strategic Partnership

The Wallace Collection

The Bowes Museum, County Durham

The Wallace Collection and the Bowes Museum agreed a partnership in 2001 to encourage the sharing/transfer of expertise and the joint exploitation of their collections. The Bowes Museum's collection of French 18th century Painting and Decorative Arts has similarities with the Wallace Collection, and both have their origins in 19th century private collecting in Paris.

The Bowes Museum was only recently reinstated as an independent trust, having been run by Durham County Council since the 1950s. Funding had declined in latter years and little investment made. As a result, the curatorial staff and expertise had been eroded.

The collaboration between the two institutions was formalised by the exchange of letters setting out the general parameters of the partnership. There has been significant collaboration on exhibitions and more ad hoc sharing of expertise through conservation advice, marketing collaboration etc. Planned initiatives include curatorial secondments and collaboration on education projects.

In 2002 the Wallace Collection made available to the Bowes Museum its successful French Marquetry exhibition, which was mounted with pieces from the Bowes' own collection using the original exhibition structure. In return, the Bowes Museum's temporary exhibition 'The Road to Impressionism' was shown at the Wallace Collection in May 2003.

As the partnership has matured, stronger bilateral relationships have emerged within individual departments and deeper informal contact now occurs between the two institutions.

Each partner covers the direct cost of staff time associated with collaborative activities. For example the Wallace Collection has allocated £5,000 of its core budget, to account for curatorial time and associated costs, to its regional partnership activities. Increasingly both parties would like to find opportunities for the funding of joint initiatives. One example of this is the possibility of the Bowes securing funding for a furniture conservator who would then train at the Wallace and benefit from its world-class expertise in this field.

The Wallace Collection has also recently set up a similar partnership with the Holburne Museum Bath and is in discussions with Waddesdon Manor. The ultimate aim is to create a network of four museums with significant collections of 18th and 19th century European paintings and decorative arts.



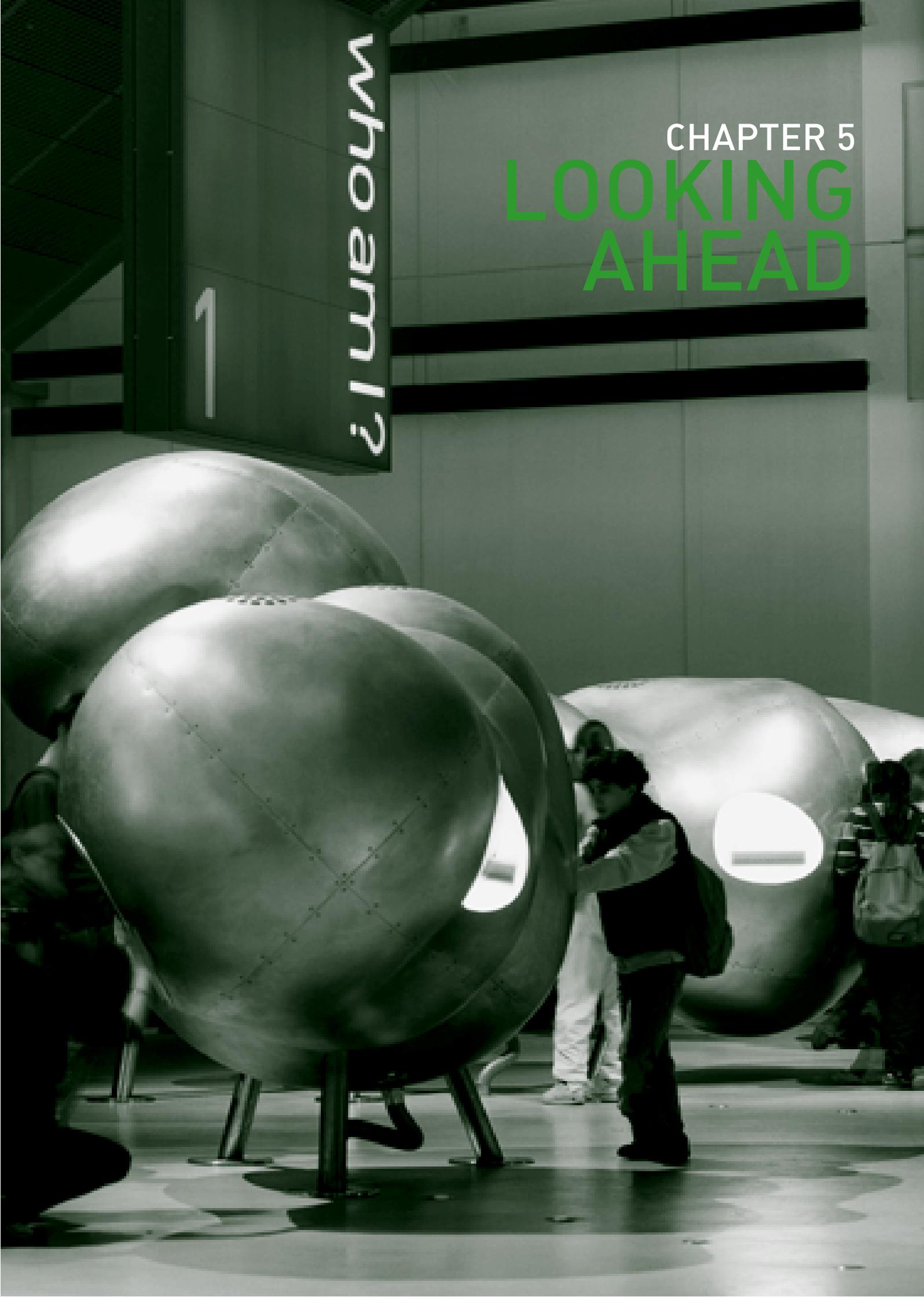
School group at the Wallace Collection.

Opposite:
Who am I, Wellcome Wing,
Science Museum.

Who am I?



CHAPTER 5
LOOKING
AHEAD



5.1 Looking Ahead

Discussions with national museums and a wide sample of representatives drawn from the wider UK museum community, have raised a number of issues which all sides believe need addressing in order to build on the work achieved to date and increase the collective impact of future collaborative activity on nationwide cultural provision.

Articulating the ‘national role’

There is a strong consensus that a clearer articulation of what constitutes the national role of national museums will clarify responsibilities, set realistic expectations and provide a framework against which priorities can be agreed and finite resources allocated.

This is first and foremost a task for national museums themselves and for their sponsor bodies. It will not be achieved by a blanket approach and will need to consider the respective position of each national museum in relation to its national constituencies, which varies significantly from case to case. That said, a set of roles common to all have been identified in terms of:

- Advocacy – for the role of museums in the life of the nation. This applies particularly to national museum directors and other senior staff, with a high public profile;
- Access – to national collections for audiences nationwide. This must include developing virtual access to collections and related interpretative content; and
- Curatorship – in their respective fields of collecting.

The issue of the national role, and its translation into a set of objectives defining the scope and nature of future national activities, needs to be distinguished from those ongoing aspects of collaborative work which are concerned with the effective delivery of national museums’ core activities. These include areas such as education, outreach and audience development work, research activity, professional training and staff development.

By clarifying their different motives for collaborations and partnerships and expressing these in corporate plans and public statements of strategy, national museums will achieve greater focus in developing future national programmes and will encourage regional organisations to step forward with their own proposals for collaboration.

Regional needs and priorities

The needs and priorities of museum communities differ greatly from region to region. This is due to different social and economic circumstances as well as geographical factors, not least their distance to London and hence physical access to the metropolis. It also reflects the different ecologies of regional museum communities (e.g. in terms of density, average size and location, the ratio of independent to local authority museums etc.) These differences find their expression in the strategies and policies currently developed by the respective Regional Hubs, SRAs/RAs and regional bodies (development agencies, cultural consortia, assemblies etc).

This situation requires different approaches to regional collaboration – with a different mix of activities. Discussions have for instance revealed the need to address the requirements of regional institutions closer to London, which are not natural candidates for the more traditional forms of partnership such as exhibitions, as they fall within many national museums’ own catchment area. The need to consider the role of national museums based in regional centres, and how these might fit into the emerging network of regional Hubs, has also been raised.



Talking Traditions Exhibition, Museum of Liverpool Life.

COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NATIONAL MUSEUM LIVERPOOL

Communication

There should be important benefits from creating greater awareness of national museums' national collaborative work in the museums sector as a whole. To date, there has been a lack of understanding of the objectives and aspirations informing national museums' work and, as described in previous chapters, partnerships have often been formed in a serendipitous way, often based on existing professional links. Broader and more frequent communication of the nationals' existing work and objectives would widen the set of potential partners and reduce what is perceived by many regional institutions as a barrier to entry.

Furthermore, enhanced information and experience sharing – be it within organisations, amongst national museums themselves or across the museum community as a whole – would improve collective learning opportunities. This report is a first attempt at addressing this.

The discussion days hosted as part of this project have also revealed a significant interest on the part of both regional and national museums to 'compare notes' on an ongoing basis. Existing sector gatherings (conferences or seminars) are not seen as providing the right context for this, either because of their size (for national events), their regional or subject focus.

There is therefore a need, both at national museum and at NMDC level, to invest in better communication. At national museum level, this highlights the importance of a central 'point person' with co-ordinating and communication responsibilities for collaborative activities. Although a number of national museums have created these posts, others have not. Within the NMDC, the Regional Committee provides a forum for discussion and planning which has the potential to include non-national voices. There is also room for a more regular NMDC-led dialogue between national and regional museum professionals.

Resource implications

This report has highlighted the extent to which collaboration-based work depends on the availability of external sources of additional funding. It has also shown how this funding rarely covers the full project cost, with the result that all partnerships, to a greater or lesser extent, consume core organisational resources, in particular staff time. This input is rarely budgeted or indeed properly evaluated, thereby understating the true cost of collaborative work. Only in very few instances have national museums made specific allowances for it in their annual budgets.

This situation is unlikely to be sustainable in the context of ever tighter core budgets and the increasing accountability requirements for resources spent. It raises even bigger questions in terms of the feasibility of growing national activity in the future. The same applies, perhaps to an even higher degree, to partner institutions in the regions which tend to be even more constrained by tight resources.

Addressing this will require a clearer positioning of national activity within the hierarchy of organisational objectives and explicit identification of resource implications in annual budgets and corporate plans. With a more transparent identification of resource requirements, national partnerships could be incorporated in funding agreements with the sponsor departments. They could also be addressed as part of the evolving *Renaissance* funding framework, and the new strategic and funding context created by devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Over and above this, funders, public and private, should be encouraged to review their eligibility criteria for project funding and allow a greater proportion to be directed towards supporting organisational capacity, rather than solely direct project costs. Models for this are provided by Higher Education funding systems where the principle of 'top-slicing' is well established. For some funding institutions this would represent a fairly radical departure from current practice. This will require a concerted dialogue. Regional museums will have as much, if not more, to gain from this and should work jointly with national museums towards this aim. This should also be done in partnership with the newly constituted regional bodies through which substantial additional regional funding can be expected in the forthcoming years.

APPENDIX 1
PEOPLE
CONSULTED

APPENDIX 2
LIST OF CASE
STUDIES

APPENDIX 3
TIMELINE

Appendix 1: People Consulted

Attendees at regional discussion days – July 2003

Graham Allen *Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery*
 Janita Bagshaw *The Royal Pavilion, Libraries & Museums, Brighton & Hove*
 Janet Barnes *York Museums Trust*
 Paul Barnett *Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery*
 Peter Berridge *Colchester Museums*
 Patricia Birley *Roman Vindolanda, Chesterholm Museum*
 Deborah Boden *Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery*
 Kate Brindley *Arts & Museums Wolverhampton City Council*
 Paul Brough *Cornwall Record Office*
 Rickie Burman *Jewish Museum, London*
 Frances Carey *The British Museum*
 Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen *Courtauld Institute Gallery, London*
 Alec Coles *Tyne & Wear Museums*
 Peter Cowling *National Maritime Museum Cornwall*
 Tom Craig *Wiltshire County Council*
 Tim Craven *Southampton City Art Gallery*
 Janet Davies *Victoria & Albert Museum*
 Maurice Davies *Museums Association*
 David Dawson *Somerset County Museums Service*
 Nick Dodd *Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust*
 Laura Down *Tate*
 Caroline Dudley *Royal Cornwall Museum*
 Richard Dunn *Royal Engineers Museum*
 Judith Elsdon *American Museum in Britain*
 Paul Evans *Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds*
 Clive Fisher *Borough of Poole Leisure Services*
 Graham Fisher *London Libraries Development Agency*
 Andrew Fox *North East Lincolnshire Museums Service*
 David Fraser *Derby Museums & Art Gallery*
 Mary Fridlington *The Natural History Museum, London*
 Steve Garland *Bolton Museum & Art Gallery*
 Rosalyn Gee *Swansea Museum*
 Chris Green *St. Albans Museums*
 James Green *Harris Museum & Art Gallery*
 Mary Greensted *Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum*
 Gareth Griffiths *British Empire & Commonwealth Museum*
 Christoph Grunenberg *Tate Liverpool*
 Brian Haigh *Kirklees Cultural Services*
 Camilla Hampshire *Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter*
 Angela Haynes *South West Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 Tim Heyburn *Ipswich Museum*
 Robin Hill *Hereford & Worcester County Museum*
 Richard Holdsworth *Historic Dockyard Chatham*
 Robin Holgate *Museum of Science & Industry Manchester*
 Isabel Hughes *South East Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 Sam Hunt *South West Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 Rachel Hunter *Scottish Museums Council*
 Ron Inglis *Nottingham City Museums & Galleries*
 Judith Ingram *National Museums & Galleries of Wales*
 Susan Jeffrey *Paisley Museum & Art Galleries*
 Rhianon Johns *South West Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 Dawn Kemp *Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh*
 Lesley-Anne Kerr *Museums, Libraries and Archives West Midlands*
 Guy Kilminster *Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council*
 Vivien Knight *Guildhall Art Gallery, London*
 Roger Levy *Yorkshire Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 Mike Lewis *Swansea Museum*
 Henrietta Lidchi *Department for Culture, Media & Sport*
 Judy Lindsey *Dorset County Museum*
 Barry Littlewood *Museum of British Road Transport*
 Ian Lawley *Potteries Museum & Art Gallery*
 David Mander *London Archive Regional Council*
 Nicholas Mansfield *People's History Museum*
 Alison Marsh *Historic Dockyard Chatham*
 Keith Merrin *Bedes World*
 Keith Nichol *Department for Culture, Media & Sport*
 Joanne Orr *Durham County Council Cultural Services*
 Michael O'Hanlon *Pitt Rivers Museum*
 Ian O'Riordan *Edinburgh City Museums & Art Galleries*
 Alex Petrovic *Department for Culture, Media & Sport*
 Rosemary Preece *National Coal Mining Museum for England*
 Stephen Price *Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery*
 Rachael Pringle *South West Museums Libraries & Archives Council*
 Vivien Read *The Bowes Museum*
 Duncan Robinson *Fitzwilliam Museum*
 Charles Saumarez Smith *The National Gallery*
 Peter Saunders *Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum*
 Andrew Scott *National Railway Museum, York*
 Evelyn Silber *Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow*
 Alistair Smith *Whitworth Art Gallery*
 Kathleen Soriano *National Portrait Gallery, London*
 Edmund Southworth *Lancashire County Museum Service*
 Moira Stevenson *Manchester City Galleries*
 Leigh-Ann Stradeski *Eureka*
 Alexander Sturgis *The National Gallery*
 Terence Suthers *Harewood House*
 Deborah Swallow *Victoria & Albert Museum*
 Martin Thomas *South West Museums, Libraries, & Archives Council*
 Michael Tooby *National Museums and Galleries of Wales*
 Vanessa Trevelyan *Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service*
 Janet Vitmayer *Horniman Museum & Gardens*
 Hilary Wade *Tuille House, Museum & Art Gallery*
 Gordon Watson *Wakefield Metropolitan District: Museum & Arts*
 Iain Watson *Hancock Museum*
 Jeremy Webster *Usher Gallery, Lincoln*
 Helen White *Sunderland Museum & Winter Garden*
 Jane Whittaker *The Bowes Museum*
 Helen Wilkinson *Museums Association*
 Penny Wilkinson *North East Museums, Libraries & Archives Council*
 John Woodward *Tank Museum*
 Godfrey Worsdale *Middlesbrough Art Gallery*

People interviewed

Phil Ball *Sedgefield Borough Council*
 Linda Ballard *National Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland*
 Andrew Bateman *Hampshire County Council*
 Alan Blunt *Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network*
 Michael Bode *Liverpool John Moores University*
 Alan Bower *Tangmere Aviation Museum*
 Anne Buddle *National Galleries of Scotland*
 Rickie Burman *Jewish Museum*
 Gail Cameron *The Women's Library*
 Janet Carding *Science Museum*
 Shelia Cannell *Edinburgh University Library*
 Frances Carey *The British Museum*
 Clodagh Cherry *Catalyst Museum*
 Alec Coles *Tyne & Wear Museums*
 Peter Cowling *National Maritime Museum Cornwall*
 David Crook *The National Archives*
 Hazel Crozier *Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Museum*
 Janet Davies *Victoria & Albert Museum*
 David Dawson *Somerset County Museums Service*
 Amy de Joia *National Museums Liverpool*
 Nick Dodd *Sheffield Art Gallery*
 Laura Down *Tate*
 Susan Foister *The National Gallery*
 Mary Fridlington *The Natural History Museum*
 Angela Gaffney *National Museums & Galleries of Wales*
 Robert Gent *Derbyshire County Libraries, Peakland National Park Authority*
 Moira Gittos *Fleet Air Arm Museum*
 Paul Goodman *National Museum of Photography, Film and Television*
 Martin Graham *The National Library of Scotland*
 Alun Gruffydd *Anglesey Local Authority Museum*
 Rhidian Griffiths *The National Library of Wales*
 Jenny Guest *Science Museum*
 Elizabeth Hallam-Smith *The National Archives*
 Katharine Hann *British Empire & Commonwealth Museum*
 Henry Hall *RAF Museum*
 Samantha Heywood *Imperial War Museum*
 Jonathan Hogan *English Heritage*
 Richard Holdsworth *Historic Dockyard Chatham*
 Janice Homes *University of Ulster*
 Maurice Howard *University of Sussex*
 Michael Hunter *National Trust of Scotland*
 Barry James *Midland Air Museum*
 Adrian Jenkins *The Bowes Museum*
 Nicola Johnson *Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts*
 Debbie Jones *Royal Armouries*
 Jo Kemp *Nottingham Castle Museum*
 Stephannie Kenna *The British Library*
 Naomi Korn *Bridgeman Art Library*
 Caroline Krzesinka *Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust*
 John Lowles *Worcestershire Regimental Museum*
 Carolyn Marsden-Smith *The British Museum*
 Helen Mason *The National Archives*
 Shelia McClure *National Museums of Scotland*
 Bob Mealings *Royal Navy Submarine Museum*
 David Mitchell *Environment & Heritage Service Northern Ireland*
 Andrew Moore *Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery*
 Chris Newbery *The Royal Marines Museum*
 Janet Owen *National Maritime Museum*
 Alan Packwood *Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College Cambridge*
 John Page *The Royal Photographic Society*
 Stephen Price *Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery*
 Phil Reed *Cabinet War Rooms*
 Ken Reddie *Royal Canterbury Museum & Art Gallery*
 Michael Richards *University of Bradford*
 Margaret Richardson *Sir John Soane's Museum*
 Sarah Richardson *Laing Art Gallery*
 Stephen Riley *National Maritime Museum*
 Dafydd Roberts *Welsh Slate Museum*
 Andrew Roberts *Museum of London*
 Trevor Robotham *Royal Naval Museum*
 Andrew Scott *National Railway Museum*
 Geoff Smith *The British Library*
 Matthew Sheldon *Royal Naval Museum*
 Kathleen Soriano *National Portrait Gallery*
 David Smurthwaite *National Army Museum*
 Kate Stoddart *Nottingham Castle Museum*
 Tony Sweeney *National Museum of Photography, Film and Television*
 Catherine Walker *Aberdeen Maritime Museum*
 Jeremy Warren *The Wallace Collection*
 Alan Watkin *Wrexham County Borough Council*
 Chris West *Swansea University*
 Tim Wilcox *Manchester Art Gallery*
 Susan Williamson *Historic Scotland*
 Michael Wilson *The National Gallery*
 Richard Wooldridge *Combined Military Services Museum, Maldon*
 Jenny Wraight *Admiralty Library*

Other people consulted

Adrian Babbidge
 Roy Clare *National Maritime Museum*
 Robert Crawford *Chair NMDC*
 Maurice Davies *Museums Association*
 Richard Hartman *DCMS*
 Anne Murch
 Nick Merriman *University College London*
 Sandy Nairne *National Portrait Gallery*
 Andrew Newman *Newcastle University*
 Laura Peers *Pitt Rivers Museum*
 Gaby Porter
 Helen Rees-Leahy *University of Manchester*
 Gordon Rintoul *National Museums Scotland*
 Louise Smith *mda*

Appendix 2: List of Case Studies

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Appendix 3: Timeline

| Britain - Key Historical Events | Decade | National Museums | Other UK Museum Developments |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 17th Century | 1660 1680 | Royal Armouries founded (1660) | Ashmolean Museum founded (1683) |
| 18th Century | 1750 1760 | British Museum established (1753) | Royal Academy of Art founded (1768) |
| | 1780 | National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland founded (1780) | |
| 19th Century | 1810 1820 | National Gallery established (1824) | Dulwich Picture Gallery founded (first purpose-built art gallery) (1811) Royal Manchester Institution founded (later Manchester City Art Gallery) (1823) |
| First passenger railway (1830) | 1830 | Ulster Museum founded (1831) | Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge founded (1834) |
| The Great Reform Act (1832) | | Act of Parliament comes into force to settle and preserve the house and collection of Sir John Soane (1837) | |
| Municipal Corporations Act (1835) | 1840 | Public Record Office Act (1838) | Museum Act (1845) Leicester Museum founded (1849) |
| Railway Act (1844) | | | |
| Great Exhibition (1851) | 1850 | National Gallery Scotland established (1850) | Museums & Libraries Act (1850) (together with the Act of 1845, this allowed local boroughs to charge a proportion of the rates for the establishment of museums and libraries) |
| Crimean War (1854-6) | | Liverpool Museum founded (1851) | |
| | | Museum of Ornamental Art founded (forerunner of the South Kensington Museum) (1852) | |
| | | National Gallery of Ireland established (1854) | |
| | | Industrial Museum of Scotland founded (later Royal Scottish Museum) (1854) | |
| | | First Circulating Museum sent out by Museum of Ornamental Art until 1859. Shown in 26 towns and seen by 307,000 people (1855) | |
| | | National Portrait Gallery established (1856) | |
| | National Gallery Act (1856) Science Museum founded (1857) | | |
| | Museum of Ornamental Art becomes the South Kensington Museum (1857) | | |
| Second Reform Act (1867) | 1860 | Second Circulating Museum sent out by the South Kensington Museum (1860-1863). Shown in 15 towns and seen by 429,000 people. | Bowes Museum founded (1869) |
| Forster's Education Act (1870) | 1870 | | Glasgow Art Gallery & Museum founded (1870) Nottingham Museum opens (1872) Sheffield Museum opens (1875) Harris Museum & Art Gallery founded (1877) |
| Third Reform Act (1884) | 1880 | South Kensington Museum begins to operate the Purchase Grant Fund (1881) | |

| Britain - Key Historical Events | Decade | National Museums | Other UK Museum Developments |
|--|--------|--|--|
| Local Government Act (1888) | | British Museum (Natural History) founded (1881) National Gallery Loan Act (1883) Completion of move of the Natural History Collection from Bloomsbury to South Kensington (1883) | Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery founded (1885) Museums Association established (1889) |
| National Trust founded (1895) Start of the Boer War (1899) | 1890 | Tate Gallery opens (1897) Wallace Collection founded (1897) South Kensington Museum renamed Victoria & Albert Museum (1899) | Museum & Gymnasium Act: enables urban authorities to provide and maintain museums in England, Wales and Ireland (1891) |
| 20th Century | | | |
| Death of Queen Victoria (1901) End of Boer War (1902) Balfour's Education Act (state system of secondary education) (1902) 20,000 motor cars in Britain (1904) | 1900 | National Library of Wales established (1907) National Museum of Wales founded (1907) Science Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum formally separate (1909) | Laing Art Gallery founded (1901) |
| First World War (1914-18) Representation of the People Act (Women over 30 granted the vote) (1918) | 1910 | Lady Lever Art Gallery founded (1913) Separate Board of Trustees set up for the Tate Gallery (1917) | |
| Representation of the People Act (Women over 21 vote) (1928) | 1920 | Act of Parliament establishes the Imperial War Museum (1920 - founded 1917) New building to house the Science Museum opens (1928) NMDC founded (1929) | Royal Commission on National Museums & Galleries appointed, highlighting a 'need for far closer collaboration between national and provincial museums...' (1929) |
| Great Depression starts BBC regular television service starts (1936) Abdication crisis (1936) Start of Second World War (1939) | 1930 | Act of Parliament formally establishes the National Maritime Museum (1934 - opens to the public in 1937) | Standing Commission on Museums & Galleries established as an advisory body to Government on national museums, required amongst others to '...promote co-operation between the national institutions....and between national and provincial institutions...' (1931) |
| Education Act (free education) (1944) End of Second World War (1945) Introduction of the Welfare State (1946) First Labour Government (1945) CEMA founded (Council for the Encouragement of Music & Arts, later Arts Council) (1946) | 1940 | Tate Gallery receives its first regular purchase grant from the government (1946) Welsh Folk Museum opens (now Museum of Welsh Life/ Amgueddfa Werin Cymru) (1948) | |

Continued overleaf

| Britain - Key Historical Events | Decade | National Museums | Other UK Museum Developments |
|--|--------|---|--|
| Festival of Britain (1951) | 1950 | The National Gallery and Tate Gallery Act, legally separates the two institutions (1954) Ulster Folk & Transport Museum founded (1958) | |
| Royal Charter establishes the Open University (1969) | 1960 | National Army Museum founded (1960) Ulster Museum becomes a national museum (1961) Royal Air Force Museum founded (1963) Act of Parliament establishes the Natural History Museum (1963) British Museum Act (1963) Museum of London Act (1965) | Charities Act (1960) Survey of Provincial Museums & Galleries (Standing Commission): providing matching government funding for non-national museums (1963) Area Museum Councils established (1963) Public Libraries & Museums Act (1964) The Arts Council empowered to give capital grants to local authorities for the creation of arts facilities (1965) |
| School leaving age raised to 16 (1970) National Theatre opens (1976) | 1970 | British Library Act (1972) National Portrait Gallery loans to Montacute House, a National Trust property (1972) Northern Ireland Act (1974) National Railway Museum York opens (1975) Museum of London opens (1975) IWM Duxford opens (1976) | Wright Report on Provincial Museums (1973) Reorganisation of local government in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (1974) Reorganisation of local government in Scotland (1975) Museum Documentation Association founded (1977) Association of Independent Museums founded (1977) Standing Commission Report 'A Framework for a System of Museums' (known as the Drew Report) (1979) |
| Falklands War (1982) English Heritage created (1984) National Curriculum introduced (1989) | 1980 | The Museums (Northern Ireland) Order (1981) National Museum of Photography, Film & Television opens in Bradford (1983) National Heritage Act: Science Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Royal Armouries transferred from a government department to a board of trustees (1983) National Heritage (Scotland) Act. National Museums of Scotland amalgamated (1985) National Museums & Galleries Merseyside established as a national museum (1986) Former Geological Museum incorporates into Natural History Museum (1986) Museum of London Act (1986) Tate Liverpool opens (1988) National Maritime Museum Act (1989) | National Heritage Act establishes the National Heritage Fund (1980) Standing Commission on Museums & Galleries reconstituted as the Museums & Galleries Commission (1981) Local Government & Planning Act (Scotland) (1982) Burrell Collection in Glasgow opens to the public (1983) Companies Act (1985) Local Government Act (England & Wales) (1985) Museums & Galleries Commission establishes Travelling Exhibition Unit (1988) |

| Britain - Key Historical Events | Decade | National Museums | Other UK Museum Developments |
|---|--------|---|--|
| Gulf War (1991) National Lottery Act (1993) Devolved government introduced in Scotland and Wales (1999) | 1990 | Museums & Galleries Act (1992) Tate St. Ives opens (1993) Royal Armouries opens in Leeds (1996) British Library opens at St. Pancras (1998) | Museums & Galleries Commission 'Local Authorities & Museums: Report by a Working Party' (1991) 'Treasures in Trust: a review of museum policy' Department of National Heritage (1996) |
| | | Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland established under Museums & Galleries Order (1998) National Museum of Photography, Film and Television reopens after complete refurbishment (1999) | National Heritage Act - extends the powers of the trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (1997) New Opportunities Fund established (1998) |
| 21st Century | | | |
| Iraq War (2003) | 2000 | Tate Modern opens (2000) Tate at Millbank relaunches as Tate Britain (2000) IWM North opens (2002) | Resource established (2000) 'Renaissance in the Regions' published (2002) |

NMDC Regional Affairs Committee

Charles Saumarez Smith, *Director, National Gallery (Chair)*
Frances Carey, *British Museum*
Xa Sturgis, *National Gallery*
Sean Bullick, *National Museum Directors' Conference*
David Fleming, *National Museums Liverpool*
Kathleen Soriano, *National Portrait Gallery*
Graham Mottram, *Fleet Air Arm Museum*
Laura Down, *Tate*
Stephen Deuchar, *Tate*
Deborah Swallow, *Victoria & Albert Museum*
Janet Davies, *Victoria & Albert Museum*
Andrew Scott, *National Railway Museum*

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