

BULLETIN of the European Museum Forum
April 2003

A view from Australia

Patrick Greene relinquished the chairmanship of the European Museum Forum in the summer of 2002 and has recently sent us these thoughts from Melbourne.

I took up the post of Chief Executive Officer of Museum Victoria in August 2002. In the months that have followed it has been fascinating to experience the similarities between museums in Australia and Europe and also to discover the differences. Above all, the strong links that bind the two continents are very apparent.

A good test of similarity is this: 'Would this Australian museum be a credible candidate as an entrant in the European Museum of the Year Awards, and would the people involved in it feel at home in the EMF Workshop and other meetings?' Overwhelmingly, the answer would be 'Yes'. So what are the principal differences? The greatest is the result of geography. Whereas Europe has a population of hundreds of millions, only 20 million people live in Australia. Potential visitors to museums are correspondingly fewer in number and outside the major cities the number of people attracted to an individual museum is often small making its viability difficult. In Victoria there are an estimated 600 museums in a State with a population of 5 million, of whom 3.5 million live in Melbourne. Country areas are often sparsely populated but the number of museums is nonetheless high – even the tiniest communities are enthusiastic about their heritage. These community museums can be vulnerable to the factors affecting rural museums that would be recognisable in, say, rural Scandinavia or Scotland. As farming and other rural industries decline and the population ages, the core of volunteers upon which so many museums depend diminishes. Another difference is the gap between museums and galleries – whereas in Europe they will often be found in the same building or at least under the same management, that is relatively unusual in Australia, although there are exceptions. A difference strangers to Australia often expect is that a country settled from Europe just two centuries ago will have little heritage. In fact of course it has a rich indigenous culture which museums are preserving and presenting as part of contemporary Australia. A city such as Melbourne is a remarkable 19th-century creation, built with the wealth of the goldfields and people who flooded into Victoria to seek their fortune. The goldfields themselves are fascinating, with excellent museums such as Sovereign Hill at Ballarat to interpret them.

Museum Victoria comprises the Melbourne Museum, the Immigration Museum and Scienceworks, with about 1 million visitors in total. We also operate the Royal Exhibition Building, built in 1880 and recently nominated as a World Heritage Site. Our website www.museum.vic.gov.au receives about 1.3 million visits each year. We stage incoming exhibitions such as Great Expectations currently, produced by the UK Design Council. In 2004 we will be staging an exhibition of Italian design from Milan and Museum Victoria is a partner in project led by the National Maritime Museum of Australia to bring a Vikings exhibition to Australia in 2005. Our exhibitions also travel overseas, such as the Spirit Country exhibition of

aboriginal art which recently visited China and which will soon travel to Japan. Next year an exhibition entitled Indigenous Australia– 60,000 years in the making will be staged in Athens as part of the Cultural Olympiad. It is being prepared jointly by Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and Museum Victoria with aboriginal staff of both museums working together.

The overwhelming impression from my first eight months in Australia is of a very lively museum scene with strong affinities with museums and galleries in Europe and Asia. It is a very exciting country in which to work!

The 2003 EMF WORKSHOP will be held in Italy on 23–25 October in Prato, where a large new museum of the textile industry opens this Spring. The subject will be 'The European Diaspora' and further details will be circulated within the next few weeks.

See and fly in Amsterdam Airport

To bring not only people to museums but also museums to people was a central issue for the former Dutch Minister of Culture, Rick van der Ploeg. His plea was to bring museum collections to unexpected places. Well, he can be proud of the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) and Amsterdam Airport (Schiphol), who together have spent 2.5 million Euro on a new annexe of the museum in the middle of this crowded airport. The work of 17th-century Dutch painters, including Rembrandt, Pieter de Hoogh and Jan Steen, can now be admired after a visit to the tax free shops, and transfer passengers can now enjoy culture as they wait, with free admission. For Schiphol's director, Gerlach Cherfontaine, this new acquisition is comparable to the recent delivery of a casino. The operational costs have to be covered by the income from an adjacent museum shop. For the museum, of course, the security aspect was a major issue in taking this decision. Because the new museum is situated beyond passport control and all paintings are covered with bullet-proof glass Dr Leeuw of the Rijksmuseum does not worry about the risks, not even after the spectacular theft of diamonds from Museon in The Hague earlier this year.

In the last EMF Workshop in Parma (2002) I had the pleasure of coaching a creative group of museum workers who discussed the future and behaviour of our European visitors and their need to meet other (European) cultures. One of the conclusions reached was that we should benefit creatively from the increasing amount of travelling time and increasing distances covered. And, as every traveller knows, travelling equals waiting, and waiting is always boring, unless a creative and enterprising museum discovers the gap in the market, as the Rijksmuseum has, in co-operation with Schiphol. So contact your national railways and airports! Or are museums of the future only museum buildings and nothing else? Please let us know if you have spotted collections in unexpected places.

Frans Ellenbroek, EMF National Correspondent, Netherlands

Anything the boys can do

The Newsletter of the Trevithick Trust in Cornwall, in the far south-west of England (Issue 21, Winter 2002–03) sheds light on the part played by women in the county's mining industry in the past.

Equality of the sexes a new thing? Don't you believe it! Lynne Mayers has unearthed some fascinating details about the involvement of women and girls in Cornwall's mines from c.1720–1914. At their peak they probably totalled around 6.000 in the early 1800s before falling away due to increased technology. They were chiefly involved in the dressing processes and were employed at the tin, copper and lead mines, as well as china clay, clay stone and soapstone works. In Devon they also dressed manganese ore.

Their tasks included sorting and breaking ore, as well as the more delicate separation techniques involving sedimentation. Many were involved in hand barrowing the ore—stuff from one process to another. In the mid–19th century they were paid 4 old pence to one shilling (equals 5 new pence) per day, depending on the task, and they worked at least a 10-hour day. Most girls began work at about 10 years of age, but some as young as 8. Women were also employed to carry out domestic duties at the cunthouse and were occasionally employed as wagoners. Young girls sometimes drove the whim horses. A few women became mine or clay works managers, usually on inheriting the business from their husbands.

Guggenheim fooled by young couple

An embarrassing security failure is reported (Info Canarias, 13/02/03) at the prestigious Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, northern Spain. A young couple succeeded in smuggling one of their own paintings into the museum and then stuck it with tape to the wall of one of the exhibition rooms where it hung for two and a half hours without being noticed. By doing this, the so far unknown group 'Mike Nedo' wanted to point out 'the small value of modern art'. The 50 x 40 cm painting on wood shows a red spiral which forms a heart in the middle. 'It took me five minutes to paint,' said one of the intruders. To give more authenticity to the 'Whirlwind of Love' it was supplied with a small plate confirming it as a gift from an alleged collector by the name of Annika Barbango, who had given it to the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The group, describing themselves as 'Anti-Christ of Art' taped the whole procedure and a local television company broadcast the film. 'We wanted to prove that everyone can be a great artist and that anything can pass as art if you use the right package', said the activists. The museum is investigating the matter.

The unsung heroes of the museum world

Most unfortunately we did not receive notification of this event at the National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside in Liverpool, UK until after it had been held so no further information is available, but it could be an inspiration for museums everywhere. 'Performance art: The Gallery Cleaning Service' is described briefly as a one-off performance which is a tribute to the unsung heroes who clean the gallery ready for visitors. And why not?

If stones could talk is a major new exhibition at the Archaeological Museum in Stavanger, Norway, opened by the Norwegian Minister for Culture, Mrs Valgerd

Svarstad Haugland. On the first day the exhibition was visited by 1,100 people out of a city population of about 100,000.

The Museum was an EMYA candidate in 1993 and according to our National Correspondent, Hans Christian Søborg, is one of the most public-friendly museums in Norway. Its stores are open to the public and the archaeological finds from the county are available in special public viewing rooms with computers, catalogues, displays and archives. It has extensive facilities for school visits, a good museum shop and a large café. It is also remarkable not only for having archaeologists on its staff but experts in natural history in addition to a large number of conservators. One drawback seems to be its location on a cramped city street some distance from the harbour, not easy to find for tourists, and it is hoped that this new exhibition will bring the attendance figures the museum deserves.

The museum was built up by Oddmunn Møllerup, who used his network of Rotary and business connections to get finance from private sources. In September 2002 a new director was appointed, Harald Jacobsen, an archaeologist from Eastern Norway, who seems determined to carry on the work started by his predecessor.

Ljubljana Through European Eyes

From 23 October 2003 to 6 March 2004 the City Museum of Ljubljana is staging this exhibition in the museum's Cultural Information Centre (Trg francoske revolucije 7), with the aim of showing visitors how the city is seen through the eyes of foreigners who have been living in Slovenia's capital for some time. 15 EU nationals, who either live permanently or temporarily in Ljubljana or visit it frequently, have been invited to participate. They represent culture, politics, economics, art and journalism and from early talks with them it appears the main reason for living in the city is love. While the exhibition is on, there will also be weekly presentations from individual EU member states, including a Spanish flamenco workshop, French cuisine, Greek music, Slovene translations of Dutch literature, current Swedish discussions on equality of the sexes, and a German presentation of the Goethe Institute. A programme for young people and schoolchildren is being prepared and an Internet connection with city museums in European capitals will be maintained during the exhibition.

The idea for this major project emerged during extensive renovations of the museum's main building, the Auersperg Palace, and the replanning of the permanent exhibition. It also coincides with Slovenia joining the European Union and the museum feels that this exhibition will provide Slovenians with a valuable insight into themselves and the traditions of those countries whose union they are about to join.

Museum car gets a ticket

The recent introduction of congestion charges in London, whereby motorists pay £5 for the privilege of entering a central zone, has had its teething troubles. One of the first cars to be issued with a penalty ticket for evading this charge is a 100-year-old vehicle which has been sitting sedately in Bristol's Industrial Museum for 25 years. According to the 'smart' cameras policing the new system, the 1898 Daimler, known as 'Fiery Liz', with a top speed of 15 miles an hour, braved the

notorious Elephant and Castle roundabout in London on Friday 17 February. In fact the car has not moved under its own power for years!

Museum week in Finnish museums Taking place on 12–18 May this year the themes are 'Museums and Friends' and 'Built Heritage'. More than 50 Finnish museums already have an association of friends and these associations will have their own meeting in Turku in May, when a new book on the subject will be launched.

The Dutch Funerary Museum is to open in 2003 in a former director's residence at the Amsterdamse Nieuwe Oosterbegraafplaats (a cemetery), after 10 years' planning. Curiously, the museum does not seek direct affiliation with existing museums, but rather with actual funeral undertakings, which will also act as sponsors.

Cemeteries have become unexpected open air museums or municipal parks. The Nederlands Uitvaartmuseum owes its collection to the private collector Henk Kok, former representative of a hardware store. He collected mourning clothes, death certificates and memorial sculpture and extended this collection with funeral carriages, hearses and other artefacts, including prints, books and documents. Selecting this location forges a direct link with the interests of the branch. This has proved to be a lucky choice, also in view of the successful fundraising. Funeral insurers have signed contracts as first sponsors. Museumvisie, 2002/4

'When we dead awaken' – all hell breaks out in the fight for relics of the great Norwegian playwright
Hans Christian Sørborg has sent us the text of an article in the Saturday magazine of Dagbladet, 15 March 2003.

The title of Ibsen's last play, 'When we dead awaken' seems an appropriate title for the fight among museums, people and towns possessing relics of the world-famous playwright. 2003 is the 175th anniversary of the birth of Ibsen in Skien. Seven years later his father was declared bankrupt and everything he owned was sold at a public street auction. Having suffered this very public family humiliation Ibsen never returned to the town of his birth. But now Skien has made his childhood home into a museum and has erected one statue and six other public monuments to commemorate their favourite son, as well as naming the local theatre after him.

The director of the local Telemark Museum in Skien, Mrs Vibeke Mohr, has never been afraid of controversy and has angered local people by saying that she would like to give several Ibsen items from her collection to the Ibsen Museum in Oslo. These items came from Ibsen's apartment in Oslo where he lived from 1891 to 1906 and Mrs Mohr says they should be in Oslo. For the time being the Ibsen items from Oslo were put into storage and Mrs Mohr was quoted as saying she was more concerned about their preservation than their presentation.

In a third town, Grimstad, there is a museum in the former pharmacy where Ibsen worked. This museum also has some items from the Oslo apartment, and the

Ibsen Museum in Oslo could like to see the Skien and Grimstad items returned to the capital.

What the playwright would have thought about this squabble over his possessions is not certain, according to Ibsen researcher Helge Rønning, who reminds us that Ibsen lived abroad for 27 years and wrote his major plays in Italy. He hated the prevailing Norwegian narrow-minded way of thinking and despised many features of small-town provincial Norway. At the same time he was also very concerned with being awarded medals, getting appointments to royal orders and having public honours bestowed on him.

Museum 2000 – Confirmation or Challenge was a major conference and seminar series arranged as a collaboration between , ICOM Sweden, Riksställningar and the Swedish Museum Association and at the time was one of the most extensive projects ever undertaken in Sweden. For this reason it was considered important to document and comment on the results of all the seminars and the final conference, which was held in Stockholm in June 2001 and the result is a book which is now on sale. This book is meant to function as a handbook to be referred to again and again – to be used at seminars, on courses and in museology studies or developmental planning.

The first part of the book contains printed versions of the lectures delivered by keynote speakers invited to lead each of the regional seminars. These include 'Creating a Culture of Change in Museums' by Patrick Greene, former EMF Chairman, and 'National Museum of Natural History or Naturalis – what makes the difference?' by EMF's current Chairman, Wim van der Weiden. In the second part of the book the reader, under the expert guidance of the editor, Per-Uno Ågren, is afforded a unique overview of ideas and reflections concerning renewal, which have emerged from Museum 2000. The book will be distributed to museums and educational institutions in Sweden and other countries and it is hoped it will become essential reading for anyone who is interested in museums, from museum professionals and students seeking knowledge and inspiration for development work within museums to users of museums who are looking for new perspectives on the world in which we live.

The book can be ordered from ru@riksutställningar.se for 20 Euros plus postage.

A sweet treat comes in the form of the long-awaited opening of the Museum of Sugar at Tienen (Tirlemont) in Belgium, where a sugar refinery has been in operation for many years. The museum traces the history of sugar in a light-hearted but informed manner, describing production methods from earliest times to the present day, the uses of sugar and objects associated with it. Permanent displays are supplemented by temporary exhibitions, and visitors can sample the finished product in a cup of coffee. Suikermuseum/Musée du Sucre, Grote Markt, Tienen (Tirlemont).

The National Football Museum announces free entry One of the current EMYA candidates is based in Preston in the north-west of England, housing what it describes as the world's greatest collections of football memorabilia, and it has just announced that thanks to funding from the Northwest Development Agency

and the Football Foundation it is now able to open its doors to the public without charge. The NWDA's funding support totals £2 million and will enable the museum to acquire its lease from Preston North End Football Club.

60th Parallel – cultural encounters in the conifer belt is the title of a new travelling exhibition from Riksställningar/Swedish Travelling Exhibitions. The idea came from the Swedish sculptor Bo Jonzon, who himself lives on the 60th parallel in the province of Värmland, in west Sweden. He presents his particular view of the forest and shows his own work based on wood, together with works by Kari Stiansen from Norway, Hans Villiers from the Baltic island of Åland, Markku Kosonen and Arto Liukko from Finland, and Vladimir Zorin from Russia. At the centre of the exhibition is a huge globe made of wood. Here the 60th parallel is shown as well as facts about the importance of forests to humanity. Visitors can sit down inside the globe, listen to the sounds of the woods and reflect upon their own relationship to the forest.

After the first opening in early 2003 at the Norwegian Forestry Museum at Elverum, the exhibition will tour the participating artists' own countries. Debates and workshops will be organised and experience gained from the meeting of different cultures. Some venues are museums which have been EMYA candidates, including the Norwegian Forestry Museum, which got a Special Mention in 1980 and was named Norwegian Museum of the Year in 2003. Ålands Museum, Mariehamn, received the Council of Europe Award in 1982, and Lusto, the Finnish Forestry Museum at Punkaharju was a candidate in 1996. The exhibition will also be shown at the Cultural Centre of Petrozavodsk, Russia and at venues in Sweden.

For details and the tour schedule, see www.riksutstallningar.se

New extension, new life

After more than 20 years the renovation of two architecturally important buildings belonging to the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels is nearing completion and the Art Déco Hôtel Argenteau and the Art Nouveau Hôtel Gresham will be operational on 25 September this year. Visitors and researchers alike will be well catered for, and facilities will include an educational workshop for children, accessible restoration workshops, an art shop, a terrace restaurant and public meeting places. A new entrance will add to the feeling of modernity in the prestigious surroundings of the Place Royale, which is the centre of a number of cultural institutions, including the Museum of Musical Instruments, the Palace of Fine Arts, the Charles de Lorraine Museum and the Museum of the Dynasty and King Baudouin Memorial. In the same area guided visits take place to an underground archaeological site.

Danièle van den Abeelen, EMF National Correspondent

Collect & Share holds its first meeting

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark was the venue for the first meeting of the partners working on this 3-year programme, which is supported by the EU Socrates Gruntvig 4 (Networks) Action and Arts Council England and is operating under engage, the UK-based organisation promoting gallery education nationally and internationally. Collect & Share is a new consortium of European museum,

gallery and adult learning networks, agencies and institutions which has been assembled to promote good practice in learning and education for adults (aged 16 or over) in or with museums and galleries. Also of concern will be broadening access (particularly to include more disadvantaged adults) and the project will concentrate on art museums or museums involving artists in their work

As its name suggests, the programme will collect case studies of good practice in adult education and learning, particularly for those disadvantaged by virtue of social or economic factors, discrimination or disability, highlighting the professional development needs essential to such work to training providers and 'apprenticeship' schemes, and share this information and expertise through museum/gallery networks and through reports, training and advocacy seminars, conferences and an interactive website, with the aim always of promoting access for lifelong learners from all sections of society. Collect & Share will also aim to influence relevant policy makers.

At this initial fact-finding meeting it was recognised that different training approaches are appropriate in different countries, and the interpretation of what constitutes learning is broadly based. It was felt crucial to get the terminology right for each country in order to ensure all the partners are dealing with the same issues. Case studies and good practice guidelines will also be disseminated through training, reports and conferences, targeting practitioners developing programmes in museums, galleries and adult education. Pro formas for case studies will be completed in the mother tongue and then translated into the three agreed languages, in order to maintain the consistency of approach, rather than impose foreign terminology which might be misinterpreted. Partners include:

- * Association of Museums of the Saarland, Germany
- * Association of Enterprises with Museums, Portugal
- * Engage
- * European Museum Forum
- * Institute for Artistic, Cultural, Natural Heritage of the Emilia Romagna

Region, Italy

- * Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, Finland
- * Kulturråd/Swedish Council for Cultural Affairs, Sweden
- * Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark
- * The Louvre, France
- * Museum of Modern Art, Slovenia
- * National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales), UK

Further information is available from info@engage.org

Progress report on EUROEDULT

Since 2001 the European Museum Forum, together with the Louvre, the University of Pécs, the Istituto Beni Culturali of the Region Emilia Romagna and the Swiss Association for Adult Education has been a partner in the Euroedult project, funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Socrates Grundtvig Programme.

The project aims at establishing a EU-based qualification curriculum with an EU certification for the 'Cultural Mediator', a professional figure who establishes, supports and develops links between museums and the field of lifelong learning, specifically with the institutions and individuals active within it. The work of the mediator focuses on educational programmes and learning activities of museums, in order to ensure that they develop in response to the needs of lifelong learners. A cultural mediator establishes new programmes for adult learners, building on innovative practices in adult learning on the one hand, and bringing into the field of adult learning the practical experience developed in the museum field on the other.

The identification of the skills and knowledge required to operate as a cultural mediator builds on the results of a questionnaire circulated in some European countries with the aim of assessing the competencies which would be required in European museums in the next five years. This research was conducted during the first year of the project and was fundamental to develop the Euroedult curriculum as a set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria classified in five domains that enable training providers to design and deliver courses to assist museum people to engage with the public.

The five domains are: Project management, Communication Skills, Mediation, Language, European Culture and Education. The domains are made up of units, defined as "coherent and assessable sets of learning outcomes".

In the second and third year, the project has concentrated on the piloting of some of these units, in particular within the domains Language, Communication, European Culture and Education. In order to do this, a pilot group of 25 museum or education specialists from the partner countries (Hungary, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France) have attended three modules in Pécs, Munich and Ravenna and will attend the conference which will officially close the project, to be held in Paris at the end of June (for full details of the programme of this meeting contact Claude Fourteau forteau@louvre.fr). At the end of this Europilot course, called 'Museums as learning centres' participants will receive a European certificate assessing the competencies acquired.

Margherita Sani, IBC, Bologna

Moderna Museet is the 2003 Swedish Museum of the Year. Stella Westerlund tells us that the Swedish Museums Association's award was presented by the Minister of Culture, Marita Ulvskog, during the celebrations for Museums Week on 17 March in Helsingborg. The Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm, headed by Lars Nittve, is making the most of its temporary move, while its new museum building is being renovated, work which is due to be completed early in 2004.

The jury felt that the museum has seen the possibilities in an apparently impossible situation. Having regained its desire to experiment, and by means of bold strategems, during its period in exile in temporary premises the museum has managed to make people leap for joy in their daily round – in churches, at the Central Station, in art galleries and on television. With its brilliant concept of being c/o other organisations and institutions, and through its incessant search

for new ways of communicating with the public, the museum has shown how seriously it takes its duty as a national museum with responsibility for art.
www.modernamuseet.se

Saved from the Blitz

A new book on the fate of Britain's art treasures during the Second World War is reviewed by Julian Champkin. How did the Magna Carta end up in Jail in Shepton Mallet, Somerset? And what was the Wright Brothers' first-ever aeroplane doing 300 ft down a disused stone quarry in Wiltshire, along with Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks? On 3 September 1939 Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared war on Germany. Shortly before midnight the following day the last of six special freight trains slipped out of Camden goods yard in north London. It was marked as a Royal Train, though no royalty were on board and armed guards were on the footplate. It sped through the night to the sleepy North Wales town of Bangor, where the cargo was transferred to a convoy of lorries. Their cargo consisted of 218 paintings from the National Gallery, whose combined value has been estimated at £4 billion in today's money, the most valuable single cargo ever carried on a British train. Their destination was the Victorian folly, Penrhyn Castle in Wales.

The obvious place to store valuable, fragile objects was underground, but digging holes cost money and the Treasury would not fund this. Just before the war, to save time in the event of a surprise attack, pictures were re-hung in quick-release frames. When the National Gallery did evacuate its pictures, 3,000 empty frames were left hanging on its walls. At the Tate Gallery it was decided that Stanley Spencer's 'Resurrection' was so large it could not be moved. A brick wall was built in front of it and it spent the war incarcerated where it was hung – and although the Tate was hit by an incendiary bomb, the painting survived intact. The Public Records Office went further afield. It took over the cells in Shepton Mallet prison and moved 300 tons of documents there, including the Domesday Books and the logbook of HMS Victory.

Most of the nation's art treasures went to country houses and stately homes. While London burned they stayed there, protected more by luck than judgement. By 1941 however, a better solution was needed and the Treasury accepted they had to go underground. A Welsh slate quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog was pressed into use. However, the main underground resource was to be elsewhere. There were sites available – huge limestone quarries under the Wiltshire Downs, but the Air Ministry had requisitioned these and would not give them up. Only towards the end of 1941 did the museums finally manage to acquire 25,000 sq. ft. As at the Blaenau Ffestiniog quarry, it was waterlogged and the floor was sludgy clay underfoot. The fact that it also sloped, to let the water drain out, did not affect the paintings, but fine 18th-century furniture has to stand level, otherwise it will warp. An air-drying plant was installed and the floor levelled in great steps for the furniture. Some areas were made smooth where 17th-century carpets could be unrolled and checked for damage and moths – for a short while at least it was the most exquisitely carpeted quarry in the world.

The mix was so extraordinary that at the entrance to the Westwood Quarry in Wiltshire, one of the British Museum curators carved an inscription: 'Everything

precious, the works of all the craftsmen, that they might not be lost by fire or attack by an evil enemy, into this cave under the earth we brought them down'. Only, being the Museum's keeper of Assyrian statuary, he carved it in Assyrian hieroglyphics. It is still there today.

N. J. McCamley, *Saving Britain's Art Treasures*, published by Leo Cooper, £19.95.

The Mummy [and the Historical Museum in Oslo] is alive – Eternal Life in Egypt
On 4 April the University Museum of Cultural Heritage – the Historical Museum in Oslo opened its doors after being closed for three months for renewal. To celebrate the event a small exhibition was made about the concept of eternal life in Egypt. There are only a few Egyptian mummies in Norway due to its non-colonial past. The exhibition is beautifully designed by Torill Mugaas, produced by museum lecturer Kathy Elliot, and with the Egyptologist Anders Bettum as scientific consultant.

For the first time the museum offers its visitors an attractive souvenir shop with a good range of items. A new cloakroom has been made, the vestibule renewed and a new classroom for schools provided. For many years the museum was a prime example of an Ivory Tower type of museum, with extensive collections from all over the world, but with little interest in making itself attractive to visitors, being primarily concerned with scientific research. During the last decade this has changed, with exciting new exhibitions and an ambitious programme of lectures, workshops and activities for children and adults.

When I tried to visit the museum on 30 March I was met by closed doors, along with a group of would-be visitors who, like me, had failed to notice the correct re-opening date. When returning a week later a sight never before seen on this museum's steps met my eyes: 50 people were queuing 15 minutes before opening time, and when I left an hour later a further 50 people were standing in line to buy tickets. A total of 3,000 people visited the museum the first three days after the re-opening.

This museum also has responsibility for the Viking Ship Museum by the fjord on the outskirts of Oslo, which by virtue of its three Viking ships sold itself without any marketing. In sharp contrast to the main museum in the city centre it is the best visited museum in Norway with about 500,000 visitors annually. Now the Viking Ship Museum is also offering a new temporary exhibition, 'Absolute Viking', photographs of the use and misuse of Viking culture by photographer Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty, opening 3 May 2003. It seems not only the two mummies in the Historical Museum but the whole institution has been given a new life! Hans-Christian Søborg, EMF National Correspondent

EMF's Annual Meeting will be held in Copenhagen from 14–17 May, and registration forms are now available. Our host in Denmark will be the National Museum, winner of the 1994 European Museum of the Year Award, announced at a memorable ceremony in Belfast. The programme is still being finalised, but those attending will visit the Danish Defence Museum and will also take part in an excursion outside the capital, to Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. The meeting provides a unique chance to find out what is happening amongst new museums

throughout the length and breadth of Europe, and also highlights the efforts of older-established museums to attract visitors in the 21st century.

The only winner of the 2003 Awards to be announced in advance is the Council of Europe Award, which will be presented at a separate ceremony in Strasbourg on 1 April. It has been awarded to Laténium: Parc et Musée d'archéologie at Hauterive in Switzerland, the first time in 26 years that the Council's Award has gone to a Swiss museum. Laténium features exhibits on a late Iron Age culture from central and north-western Europe named La Tène after the nearby site on the banks of Lake Neuchâtel where its Celtic artefacts were first identified. The permanent exhibition, 'Yesterday – between the Mediterranean and the North Sea', tells a story stretching over 50,000 years, using remains and artefacts from the local lake dwellings. Laténium was commended by the jury as a good example of a modern archaeological museum involving co-operation with experts, local authorities and the public, and with a European dimension in its subject-matter and approach. Our warmest congratulations go to Michel Egloff and his staff. www.latenium.ch

News from St Petersburg

This year will see major changes at the Anna Akhmatova Museum, housed in the magnificent 18th-century Fountain Mansion (Fontanny Dom) in the centre of St Petersburg. It was here, in the flat of the prominent art historian and avant-garde art theoretician, Nikolai Punin, that Anna Akhmatova lived for almost 30 years from the mid-1920s. Opened in 1989 to mark the centenary of the poet's birth, it was the first museum which described the Soviet period in Russian history – the period when poets and artists had to find a way to preserve their identity under totalitarian rule.

Using new technologies and theatrical staging devices, the displays aim to introduce the visitor to Akhmatova's world. A memorial section reconstructs the flat as it was during the 1920–50 period, described as a 'theatre of objects', and is combined with light and sound effects. By bringing together in one space the former aristocratic estate of the Sheremetevs and the communal flat where Akhmatova and Punin lived, the four memorial rooms tell four different stories – how the Fountain Mansion appeared in Akhmatova's life; what the life of the intelligentsia in the Soviet era was like; how the poet worked on her major piece, 'The Poem without a Hero'; and how Akhmatova met Isaiah Berlin, an English expert in cultural studies. The museum aims to show how the poet retained the ability to live in classical St Petersburg culture while locked into the routine space of a Soviet communal flat.

By contrast, the adjoining literary section allows the visitor into the reality of Akhmatova's poetic world. Original objects and documents behind glass are accompanied by a series of visions, which represent the places visited by Akhmatova. These include Odessa, Pavlovsk, Tsarkoye Selo to St Petersburg in 1913, Leningrad at the beginning of the war to Paris, Oxford and Sicily and, finally, Norinsk village where J. Brodsky received her letters in 1964.

These new displays represent a major effort to overcome the stereotype of traditional literary displays, with all their deadly stiffness that castrates poetry.
Vassily Pankratov, National Correspondent

Museums aren't for the masses

Susannah Herbert, writing in The Sunday Telegraph, London, has a novel suggestion for encouraging a wider audience into museums. 'Since the abolition of entrance charges last year, visitor numbers at the Natural History Museum have soared. But the Government still isn't happy, as closer inspection reveals that this isn't the victory for 'diversity' and 'accessibility' it was hoping for. The proportion of less well-off visitors has actually fallen, from a quarter to less than a sixth. The rise in numbers is down to the fact that middle-class visitors, who have always come to the museum, do it more often now, taking advantage of the free entrance to 'dip in and out'. The same appears to be true of all the big museums, to the fury of New Labour's 'social engineers', who refuse to accept that 'museum-going is, for better or worse, a middle-class pursuit'. It seems that the real reason the working classes stay away is not lack of cash, but a conscious decision to spend their free time in other ways. There's nothing left for it but straightforward coercion: 'no housing benefit, say, without at least two proofs of cultural activity a month. If the masses are to be patronised, let it be done openly or not at all.'

Reprinted in The Week, 2 November 2002

Flood damage must not be forgotten

In the October 2002 issue of the Bulletin there was a report on how the floods in August affected museums in the Czech Republic, and an update has now been received from the Deutscher Museumsbund in Berlin on the situation in Germany.

The floods which hit the Czech Republic and Germany to an unprecedented extent in the summer of 2002 were the worst to occur in that region for over 100 years. Apart from the loss of lives, personal belongings and general infrastructure, cultural life was also badly affected, with museums, libraries, archives, theatres and other cultural institutions suffering damage.

Thanks to almost superhuman efforts, most museums were able to save their objects and collections, but severe damage to the museum infrastructure could not be prevented: buildings as well as storage places were severely damaged and technical equipment was ruined. Apart from this, objects have since been suffering due to hurried evacuation and current storage under problematic climatic conditions.

The State Art Collections in Dresden (Saxony), for example, were able to rescue all their objects but suffered great losses on the technical side. Together with the recently modernised restoring workshop, the whole technical infrastructure of the Old Masters' Gallery – such as the heating system, air-conditioning and safety systems, transport containers and display cabinets – drowned. Castle Pillnitz, the former summer residence of August the Strong, was severely damaged by the high water level; the UNESCO world cultural heritage site of Dessau-Woerlitz and the Castle and Park Luisium (Saxony-Anhalt) were submerged; while the museum of Grimma and its library with approximately 10,000 volumes became victims of the flood.

Immediate and unbureaucratic help for archives and libraries was provided, amongst others by the Service Centre for Stock Preservation for Libraries, Archives and Museums in Leipzig. Books and archive materials that had been exposed to water were quick-frozen and are currently under freeze-dry treatment.

At very short notice the Saxonian Museums Association organised the programme 'Partners after the Flood' ('Partner nach der Flut'), establishing partnerships between smaller and middle-sized flooded Saxonian museums and museums all over Germany which were not affected. The museum of Grimma, for instance, was supported by the Schlossbergmuseum Chemnitz, and colleagues at Zwickau helped the Stadtmuseum Meissen (<http://www.schlossbergmuseum.de/smb/flut.html>). The State Art Collections in Dresden were offered assistance from various national and international institutions. The architectural and technical damage will affect everyday work for a long time. The museums' most important task is to repair buildings and technical equipment, and to establish new, flood-proof places to store collections and equipment. Flood damage amounts to more than 6 million Euros, taking into account only the non-state museums in Saxony. All this will involve a substantial financial undertaking, and it is evident that state, district and municipal administrations alone cannot cope. Various cultural institutions have therefore appealed for donations. In spite of all this, however, the affected museums are trying hard to get back to business and nearly all of them have now reopened.

Museums are now discussing flood problems and their consequences: In October the Saxonian Museums Association held a conference on the topic, dealing with the experiences of various museums affected by the catastrophe and its consequences, and discussing changes to prevent such effects in the future. In November the State Art Collections in Dresden organised a conference on Disaster Management for Cultural Institutions, focused on museums, in which the effects of natural disasters and war on cultural heritage and cultural institutions have been taken into account. Other meetings are already being planned.

Last summer's floods proved how vulnerable our cultural heritage is when it comes to natural catastrophes. Although we were able to keep it safe over the centuries and during times of war, the floods in the Czech Republic and in Germany lead us to appeal to those in authority. We need common feasible concepts to secure the existence of our heritage.

Ulrike Balmer and Mechtild Kronenberg

Fray Bentos: a town with the flavour of a meat pie

TICCIH, the Bulletin of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage, continues to be a rich source of information, and Issue 18, 2002 is no exception. Its National Representative in Uruguay, René Boretto Ovalle, lives in Fray Bentos, 300 km from Montevideo, and is the author of this fascinating report.

The name Fray Bentos has a long tradition among Europeans, above all because it is related to a time of particular anguish and insecurity in Europe, during a long

period of wars and instability. During these years, the soil of South America produced the vital food that arrived there by ship, pursued by Nazi submarines.

During the middle of the 19th century there was a massive movement to the area of the Rio de la Plata from the capitals of Europe, filled with restless and visionary young people. Here, the cattle ranching was very successful, providing an opportunity to process the meat into a product invented by a German chemist called Justus von Liebig. Working with another German, Georg Giebert, he set up an establishment on the frontier between Uruguay and Argentina which, over more than 130 years, converted millions of tons of beef, poultry, lamb and other animals into meat extract, corned beef, and more than 200 sub-products which were exported to Europe. The most famous product was the meat extract, which at the beginning of the 20th century gave birth in England to the cubes with the trademark OXO.

The Liebig Company achieved a wide fame through the advertising and promotion of their products with 'Liebig's Cards', known as figurinas in Italy and sammelkarten in Germany. Produced in series of six, there were nearly 2,000 different series between 1873 and 1975, and more than 7,000 taking into account the variations of each one for the languages in which they were published. They constituted practically a full colour encyclopaedia, in a period of black and white and difficult communication.

In the opinion of Sue Millar of the Ironbridge Museum [and now of the University of Greenwich, England] Fray Bentos is a complete British industrial archaeology complex. Machinery, buildings, furniture, tools, documents, photos and even a complete chemical laboratory form part of the current Museum of the Industrial Revolution which is being developed in Fray Bentos by the local administration, in the former cold store.

In fact, Fray Bentos is where this type of industrial revolution in the Rio de la Plata was born, with examples of advanced technologies, working arrangements, architecture, transferred from Europe over more than 100 years. Moreover, Fray Bentos was the first place in Uruguay to use electricity, in August 1873, almost three years before the first electric light was lit in Montevideo.

May 2003 is the bicentenary of the birth of Justus von Liebig, and activities to record the personality of this scientist are being prepared in Fray Bentos. Among the contributions made by the laboratories at his factory were the first studies of condensed milk, instant coffee, and of yerba mate, an infusion characteristic of the villages of Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. For more information, visit www.anglo8m.com

The Museum of Greek Children's Art in Athens was founded in 1994 by an Association of Friends, and displays drawings and 3-dimensional artwork by children between the ages of 5 and 14. Its latest batch of material landed in Bristol with a riot of colour which could not be ignored. The Museum's energetic director, Helen Fay Stamati, tells us that she has been working exceptionally hard to ensure that the Museum can stand firmly on its own feet. In her letter she acknowledges the help given to her by Kenneth Hudson, EMF's founder, whose

‘advice and suggestions have been and are still a constant help, extremely valuable in many cases’.

A large part of the Museum’s work is the organisation of an annual nation-wide Children’s Art Contest, and the 14th Contest, attracted 3,789 children from 40 areas of Athens, 61 areas from the rest of Greece and, mysteriously, pupils from two schools in London. The theme this time, ‘A journey in the depths of the earth’, was chosen because of two specific recent events – the earthquakes in the Athens area, and changes caused by the introduction of the Metropolitan Underground. The judges were impressed by the children’s relationship with nature. In contrast to what might be expected, the artwork mainly presented a world full of strange images of animals, which live harmlessly under the earth’s surface. There were few horrible monsters or caves where advanced technology has taken possession. Knowledge of the nature and structure of mineral wealth was also evident, with methods and materials employed, particularly in the three-dimensional artwork, being unconventional, ranging from plexiglas and electric light to unexpected discoveries and fossils. Museum of Greek Children’s Art, 9 Kodrou Street, extension Voulis str., Plaka, GR-105 58 Athens. tel 0030 210 3312 621; tel/fax 0030 210 3313 734.

International Museum Day in Germany

In a nation-wide campaign, museums in Germany will be celebrating International Museum Day on 18 May 2003. The aim of the initiative is to draw attention to the variety of museums in Germany, now numbering more than 6,000. With ‘Museums and Friends’ as the theme, it will concentrate on the question of what Friends contribute to museums and to society as a whole. The German Museums Association, ICOM-Germany and the Museum Associations of the Federal States in Germany are encouraging museums to take part in the 2003 activities. This year’s partner is again the German Association of Savings and Giro Banks and their cultural foundations. Under www.museumstag.de a central data base will contain information on all activities taking place in German museums on 18 May – a date which has been celebrated by museums everywhere since its designation as International Museum Day by the general assembly of ICOM in 1977.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum at Telford in Shropshire, winner of the very first European Museum of the Year Award in 1977, continues to expand. After seven years of planning and construction it has launched its National Design and Technology Centre – Enginuity, housed in a 19th-century engineering works adjacent to Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. In the words of Ironbridge’s Marketing Manager, Paul Gossage, ‘the centre unravels the seemingly mysterious processes at work in the design and manufacture of all sorts of different objects. Many of the interactives test the visitor’s basic knowledge of technology. The Trust have scoured the world for some of the most exciting exhibits to draw in an expected 100,000 visitors a year to twist, pump, clank, tighten, fix, tweak, click and even levitate their way around the centre.’ A new educational facility will benefit the many school groups visiting Ironbridge, and workshops offer opportunities for these groups to design, evaluate and bring engineering to life in focussed practical tasks. It sounds as though visitors of all ages will need to go into training to benefit from this major new attraction.

Summit Meeting 14–16 June 2001 in Gothenburg and

Since the meeting of heads of state in Gothenburg there has been much discussion about freedom of speech, the right to demonstrate in public, independence of the judiciary, democracy and power. The makten.nu network [Riksutställningar/Swedish Travelling Exhibitions and about 15 museums from all over Sweden, set up with the aim of focussing the debate within museums on today's society] has hosted a discussion on how museums and galleries can play an active part in public debate. Riksutställningar's three new exhibition towers, to be placed at busy outdoor venues, show symbolically potent objects connected with the events, together with moving pictures and placards. They also allow the public to comment on the future as well as on political power and democracy. The exhibition provides no answers but leaves it up to visitors to decide for themselves. At each new venue there will be a different programme of events: seminars, debates, films, school programmes, joint ventures with voluntary educational organisations and the local council, on-site documentation and parallel exhibitions. The exhibition itself will tour Sweden until May 2003.

Riksutställningar, No. 4, December 2002

Pass: Parc d'aventures scientifiques This former coal mine site 50 km from Brussels and 60 km from Lille is now an essential destination for anyone of any age wanting to understand more about history, science and technology. 8,000 m² of exhibitions and interactive displays encourage visitors to play their part in discovering how and why the world is moving on. Natural history enthusiasts must pay a visit to the former slag heap, where the local flora and fauna are swiftly reclaiming their territory. Pass, 3 rue de Mons, B-7080 Frameries, info 0032 70 22 22 52. www.pass.be

Should museums be more like libraries? ‘

We want not only to experience something but also to be seen and acknowledged, and be able to take part in creating and contributing to the development of museums’, says author Sven Nilsson. He visits museums and ponders over why they cannot be more like libraries. In his experience museums and art galleries are often deserted, whereas libraries are full of visitors. He wonders whether one might not, quite simply, turn museums inside out. ‘Why don't museums have their staff out among the visitors as they do in libraries?’

Svenska museer, No. 5, 2002

Beyond our Eastern limits – at present

Vassily Pankratov tells us of a major seminar organised for museum directors in Kirgistan, the first real museum contact with the country since its independence in 1991. The aim of the meeting was to teach museum people how to survive in a new economic situation, and although it took place outside our geographical European limits, we feel it is of interest to our readers.

Background: after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation in the museum field was similar in all post-Soviet countries. Museums started to operate in fairly new market conditions. Crucial lack of funding and decreasing public interest towards culture problems of survival and attraction of new audiences. The question of getting new management and marketing skills was also raised. Radical rethinking on museum training was urgently needed.

History: In St Petersburg the training programme started in 1996. It was initiated by the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum (Great Britain) and was later supported by the Know How Fund and The Open Society Institute. The external British experts conducted a series of seminars for museum directors and mid-level managers. The programme had a certain impact on museum life in St Petersburg. As another result of the programme, a group of Russian trainers was formed and thoroughly briefed. In June 1999 this Russian group organised a similar seminar for East European and Central Asian representatives. In December 1999 a big training seminar for museums of the Leningrad region took place, while in 2000 the Russian team moved on to Uzbekistan in Central Asia, in order to work with the representatives of the Uzbek museums. The Kirgistan project was considered as a further development of the same programme.

Organisations and experts: The programme was organised by the Museum Development Centre in St Petersburg, under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture and Education of Kirgistan and was funded by the Open Society Institute, Budapest. The group of trainers included professionals from the St Petersburg museums (City Museum, the Political History Museum, Ethnographical Museum) and one expert from Great Britain. The team involved working museum top managers rather than professional trainers, thus helping to find a common language between those who train and those who are trained.

After a planning period, the seminar took place on 11–15 November 2002 in Cholpon-Ata in northern Kirgistan. 30 representatives, mostly directors and top managers, from 18 Kirgiz museums participated in lectures, round tables, master-classes, training exercises and competitions. Topics covered included museums as generators of cities' revival; visitor care; forward planning in museums; museum marketing and fundraising; PR in museums; and museums in tourism.

The Bois du Casier, a former colliery complex at Marcinelle-Charleroi in Belgium has become a Museum of Industry. Coal mining activities ceased here many years ago and the site was abandoned, but after 18 months of intensive conversion work the museum is now open. One part is devoted to a memorial to 262 miners, including 136 Italians, who died here on 8 August 1956, the greatest mining disaster in Belgium. Exhibits tell the story of the tragedy, and the daily life of the miners, with former mine workers answering questions from the public. The museum also shows how the Charleroi region was influenced by the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, with sections on iron and steel, glassmaking, metal processing plants, the electricity industry, chemistry and printing. Many projects are planned, and further information can be obtained at www.leboisducasier.be

The 2002 Irish Museum of the Year Awards

Now in their 10th year, this was the final year in which the Gulbenkian Foundation supported the awards. With its departure the opportunity has been taken to review both the funding base and the structure of the Awards. The Heritage Council will increase its financial support and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure will provide additional funding through the Northern Ireland Museums Council. It was agreed to change the categories, bringing them more in line with the objectives of the Heritage Council and NIMC, and reflecting the work and

priorities of the museums. This has resulted in a 40% increase in entries compared with the previous year. Five awards were announced in November 2002:

Best Collections Care: National Museum of Ireland

Best Publication for Visitors: Dungarvan Museum Society, for the innovative approach and excellent design of its web site.

Best Exhibition: Kerry County Museum, for its exhibition 'Antarctica', focussing on the exploits of Tom Crean, who took part in three expeditions to the South Pole, and linking this with exploits of 20th-century heroes.

Best Access and Outreach Initiative: Educational Programme of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, 'an extraordinarily ambitious and wide programme which has been created and carried out with exemplary success'.

Museum of the Year Award: The National Gallery of Ireland, for completion of its Millennium Wing and the subsequent programme of exhibitions and associated publications.

Free admission no problem

The national museums in Sweden will introduce free admission from 2004 onwards. In a debate between museum directors Lars Nittve (Moderna Museet), Kristian Berg (National Museum of Antiquities) and a representative of one of the independent museums, the advantages of free admission were considered. A number of fears, apprehensions and misgivings also came out, though, including increased risk of being manoeuvred, rowdiness in museum buildings, 'Stockholm reform' (centralisation), lack of compensation and distorted competition. Svenska museer, No. 5, 2002

Or is it such a good thing?

The Times reports that in London Natural History Museum director Sir Neil Chalmers says the museum may reintroduce entry charges just 10 months after it abandoned them. Although visitors have increased, the move was costing the museum £500,000 a year more than the compensation it received. Shop spending has dropped and visitors from less well-off backgrounds have fallen – free entry had apparently simply encouraged the same people to visit rather than new audiences. Sir Neil gave the information to the Commons Culture Select Committee, which is examining the impact of free admission on national museums.

Damage has been reported from the Andrei Sakharov Museum in Moscow (EMYA candidate 1999). Six vandals destroyed art works with paint, wrote slogans on walls and demolished installations of an exhibition entitled 'Be careful: Religion', which draws attention to religious fanaticism and the relation between church and State. The culprits have been detained.

The museum's director thinks that those responsible believed that the exhibition attacked Russian Orthodox beliefs.

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- * Museum für Arbeit und Technik, Mannheim, Germany
- * Museum der Stadt Waiblingen, Waiblingen, Germany
- * Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland
- * Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, Greece
- * Noorder Dierenpark, Emmen, Netherlands
- * Frisia Museum, Spanbroek, Netherlands
- * Natuurmuseum Brabant, Tilburg, Netherlands
- * Alta Museum, Alta, Norway
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EMF websites can be found at

<http://www.serlachiusartmuseum.fi> and then LINKS and EMF logo
<http://www.hdg.de> and then 'International Co-operation'
<http://www.naturalis.nl> and then 'over naturalis' then 'links'
http://assembly.coe.int/Museum/e_index.htm

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