

JANUARY 2007

EMF Annual Meeting, Alicante, 2-5 May
Registration forms for the meeting in Spain are now available. If a copy is not included with this issue of the *Bulletin* please contact the Administrator. The form and other details will soon be available on the EMF website.

The **2007 Council of Europe Award** is the only one which is publicised in advance of the EMF Annual Meeting in May, and will be presented separately on 17 April during the Parliamentary Assembly's Spring session in Strasbourg. The European Museum of the Year Award and its special commendations, and the Micheletti Award will be announced on Saturday 5 May in Alicante. This year the Council of Europe Award goes to the International Museum of the Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland. Housed on the spot where the people of Geneva voted to adopt Reformation in 1536 the museum features displays on the Bible, the work of Calvin, religious controversy with other Christian traditions, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Protestant resistance to Fascism, missionary work and the role of women in the ministry. The jury praised the museum's international outlook and demonstration of religious tolerance, and described as 'especially daring' its effort to visualise theological discourse, such as an interactive display on predestination. This prize is decided by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on the basis of a shortlist presented by the jury of the European Museum Forum. Our warm congratulations go to Isabelle Graesslé and her staff.

The Dutch National History Museum In 1995 the Council of Europe ascertained that every member state should have its own

National History Museum. By adopting this resolution The Netherlands must therefore realise such a museum. There are many historical museums in Holland: the Museum of Antiquities, the Dutch Open Air Museum and the Amsterdam Historical Museum are the most famous ones. Many more national, provincial, municipal and private museums are already dealing with history. But none of them offers a clearly arranged presentation of the national history of my country. This might be one of the reasons for the great lack of historical awareness and knowledge of the last two generations of the Dutch population. In particular the feeling for chronology has gone: many youngsters have no idea who was first - Napoleon or Hitler. In July 2006 the Parliament almost unanimously accepted a resolution forcing the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to deliver a rough draft of a Dutch National History Museum before the start of the new Parliamentary Year (mid September 2006).

I was asked to sacrifice my summer holiday to write such a draft, being a historian originally, having been a director of two museums in Holland, and being aware of what's going on in the international museum scene thanks to my longstanding membership of the European Museum of the Year Award jury. It has been a challenging pleasure to have the opportunity to describe as an independent expert my vision of a really modern history museum.

The National History Museum offers the Dutch multicultural society a complete and coherent view of the history of the Netherlands in strictly chronological order. The main target groups are pupils from all walks of life - 7 to 16 years of age - and inexperienced museum visitors. That is why

interactivity, multimedia – including mobile phones of course- are key words in developing the presentations. Visitors must experience history without any elitist thresholds. They must be enabled to identify themselves with the contents, the stories shown. So, actuality will be the starting point of all exhibitions, manifestations, performances, debates and other events.

To make people eager to come, the museum should be housed in a new, stunning building, designed by a famous Dutch architect: a landmark surrounded by a thematic museum garden.

The museum will have no collection itself. It will borrow objects, photos, films, documents etc. from those institutions which keep the items: the National Archives, Rijksmuseum, Institute for Image and Sound - just opened in December 2006 - and many others.

250,000 visitors - of which 100,000 will be schoolchildren - should be expected per year. An investment of 60,000,000 Euros will cover the costs of the building and its surroundings. Because the museum has no spaces for storage it can be much cheaper than, for instance, my former museum, Naturalis, housing 11,000,000 objects. The annual budget amounts to 15,000,000 Euros.

At this moment nothing is happening. Last November the national elections took place and negotiations for a new government have just started. It depends on the new government whether or not any plans for a Dutch National History Museum will be realised. I'll keep you updated. Wim van der Weiden, Chairman, European Museum Forum

New EMF National Correspondents We are please to introduce five new members to our team of National Correspondents, and look forward to good co-operation with them:

Mrs Anna Vogli, Milos Mining Museum, Greece

Dr Raluca Bem Neamu, National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest, Romania

Mrs Helen Ericsson, Vin & Sprithistoriska Museum, Stockholm, Sweden

Dr Gordan Nikolov Director, Museum of Macedonia, Skopje, 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'

Mr Javier Pes, Editor, *Museum Practice*, London, UK

We would also like to express our thanks to our outgoing Swedish Correspondent, Stella Westerlund, for her friendship and valuable contributions during her long association with EMF and EMYA, and we wish her every success in her new job.

Education, Edutainment or Event – An Outlook into the Future of Prehistory Museums

In modern society archaeological museums cover a topic that is crucial for all human societies - past and present: They try to explain our origins. Since Charles Darwin published his groundbreaking work 'On the Origin of Species' which radically challenged the way we perceived ourselves, the proofs of our origin are displayed no longer in ancient cathedrals but in modern museum buildings.

The range of our social memory and of human evolution differs dramatically. The task of prehistoric archaeologists is to explore the area beyond the last junction between both and to recall the memories of our origins to the consciousness of modern society. Only archaeologists are able to carry out this task, which is their major designation. The public office they hold affords more than busy archiving and cataloguing but is an obligation to interfere and appear in public. Their essential agent of interference is the museum. Since the beginning of archaeological research in the 19th century the range of our prehistory has been expanded backwards constantly. This inconceivably long human past imposes an obligation to project a successful future for humans. Therefore our prehistoric past grew to a powerful authority. Remembrance is part of our planning of future. Modern society has invented the archaeological museum as a new form of social memory.

The archaeological museum is constructed of four basic elements:

- objects (mute witnesses of the past)
- knowledge (the scientific interpretations that fill the gaps between the objects)
- persons (visitors and staff)
- spaces (the architecture).

These four elements are constantly interacting and change the appearance of the museum, a process that is stimulated by actual trends in society. Archaeological museums have changed their presentation dramatically within the last decade because information exchange and learning has changed dramatically in modern society. Meanwhile, the use of new media in exhibitions is an integral element of most newly founded museums. Beyond the art museum, scenography, film, audio text and info-PC are part of everyday museum reality. Generally speaking, the museum and its modes of presentation have adapted to the technological standards of society.

At the same time, and as a result of an expanding leisure industry, the habits of museum visitors have changed. Leisure time culture has transformed into event culture. From the automobile agency to the DIY market - companies and service providers outside the culture industry regularly utilizing modules from the cultural building set. Elements of dance, the visual arts, music, sports or variety are recombined with gastronomic events and sales presentations in order to form full-day leisure events. Complemented by raffles and prize draws an attractive package is created that has a high entertainment value for the entire family and is, most often, made available free of charge. This mixture of commerce and culture is a competitor for the traditional cultural institutions that should not be underestimated. The culture industry itself regularly uses media-based production strategies for its events in order to generate high frequencies of visitors. In order for the cultural institutions to be noticed in this concerto of many voices the dimension of their productions and their respective event character must go beyond a critical level. Beyond this level the public is normally willing to pay high entrance fees. Moreover, the mass media have discovered archaeology as an attractive and lucrative

theme - archaeology is a best seller. Glossy magazines and TV stations popularise archaeological themes with considerable effort. TV productions combining science with theatre of science are scheduled to be screened during prime time. Scenes in feature movies and animations bring to life the inanimate objects of archaeology. History is being arranged as a capturing panorama of images, and a big audience looks into its own past with fascination.

The archaeological museum, therefore, is no longer the only place where research results are presented and archaeological knowledge is transferred into the wider public. New formats of presentation in the mass media reach millions of people. At the same time the popularisation of archaeology in the mass media has changed the museum visitors' mode of perception. The public expects to be treated to a form of science that is opulently produced and captivatingly presented, and thus of high entertainment value. This emotionalisation of archaeological themes is definitely a chance for museums. With the help of the mass media they can, for the first time ever, reach a broad spectrum of the population, including people who would not count among the traditional museumgoers. The museum can in this way fascinate children and young people, the visitors of tomorrow, for the prehistory of man, thereby fulfilling its educational task better than ever.

However, for the archaeologist this popularisation also runs the risk of losing interpretive authority with regard to the archaeological objects and the reconstruction of our past and, in the worst case, we risk popular prejudices taking reign over scientific understanding. Another danger arises when the museum's mode of presentation no longer matches the audience's expectations. This can result in a turning away from the museum altogether. Against the backdrop of this social development museums must, in order to remain competitive, find a way between the worlds of science and of entertainment.

Since the 1990s the deployment of technical image and sound systems has resulted in a noticeably higher attractiveness of presentations in archaeological museums.

However, today the use of such technology is no longer innovative. A further increase in technological support promises little benefit for the museums as they are simply incapable of keeping up with the technological means of the mass media and their possibilities to medialisise content, particularly against the backdrop of ever shorter periods of those technologies' half-life. Hardly any archaeological museum can afford to modernise its regular exhibitions in cycles of 3 to 5 years.

Over the past ten years archaeological museums have, in addition to the technological revitalization of their exhibitions, opened themselves up to a broader public by introducing experimental archaeology and the related concept of 'living archaeology', turning prehistoric techniques and life styles into a true spectacle. From modest beginnings in the scientific discipline itself the interest jumped over into the public domain and created a boom of leisure time archaeologists. Today Stone Age hunters, Celts, Romans or Vikings appear at huge mass events and use exoticism for commercial gain. Museums have initiated this trend, and profited from it. In order to survive in our current-day event culture the archaeological museum must transcend the protected area of the exhibition and venture out and into society itself:

One element in this strategy is to offer school-based as well as extra mural learning modules. School classes have for a long time been a target audience for museums. However, lifelong learning has also become a central task in our society. Adult groups, therefore, will in future constitute another important audience group who can be served by the museum through its knowledge and expertise. Workshops and weekend seminars for 'silver agers' are an important component of the leisure industry. This goes hand in hand with co-operation with the region's private industry whose products or services might have interfaces with the museum - for example, guided tours through a museum in combination with tours through a company can create special synergies. Companies might also use the museum as a venue for a culture tourism event, or even as a sales venue for their customers.

Another element is joint ventures with tourism operators. Archaeological museums have a great potential in terms of regional, national or international tourism. This does not necessarily mean that the organising museum itself must also be the destination. It can also be the point of departure for a journey to other archaeological sites. Existing scientific contacts with colleagues in other museums can be used as a special expertise and differentiating factor vis-à-vis traditional tour operators.

Add to this public spectacles such as Roman or Viking days, which by now are already a standard element in the repertoire of many archaeological museums. In addition to these 'living archaeology' events evening productions around light and sound effects with an archaeological focus are another way to produce public interest and gain audiences. Finally, we should also consider the use of museums as a platform for cultural events such as concerts, public readings, theatre, dance or markets with a special theme.

Museums must aim to create a network between their own themes and society in general. Accordingly, in the Neandertal we try to develop an archaeological landscape of discovery which offers something of interest to different target groups, and for different tastes among our visitors:

The famous discovery site is an important building block of the valley. It was however completely destroyed during limestone extraction along with eight other caves in the valley. Until 2002 it was an industrial wasteland. In 1997, there was the sensational discovery of the sediments being found from the Feldhof Cave that survived undamaged on the floor of the valley for the last 144 years. It was possible to recover stone tools, the remains of fauna and human bones in the 1997 excavations. A second excavation campaign took place in 2000. More than 60 fragments of human fossils were excavated. Three of them fit the original skeleton from 1856. Beyond this, two further Neanderthals could be discovered. The Feldhof Cave itself is lost forever, but it is possible now to have a careful approach to the ancient topography. The same audio system as in the museum provides information on the valley's natural

and cultural history. The site can be reached by following the Time Axis which, with its cultural milestones, escorts visitors through the evolution of the genus Homo over more than two million years. A grid set in the ground documents the discovery site's location within the global coordinate system. Stone benches invite visitors to relax and absorb the surroundings. It was from this very spot that the idea of 'Neanderthal Man' started its voyage around the world.

The 'Human Traces' sculptured path begins opposite the museum where the Mettmann stream flows into the River Düsseldorf. 10 European artists were invited, whose work and materials were compatible with the idea of natural conservation. Their contributions deal with the conflict between humans and the environment. They challenge us to reflect on the nature of humankind. The locations do not allow monumentality, rather they lend themselves to 'cautious artistic interference'. The project's concern is reflecting the finite nature of human creation and on the question of what traces remain. The 'Human Traces' project has created an artistic monument of international proportions in the Neanderthal's landscape of recollection. The same audio system as in the museum and at the discovery place, featuring interviews with the artists, provides interesting insights into the sculptures.

The old museum was turned into a Stone Age workshop - a pedagogical action centre where weekend seminars and workshops for all groups of our society are on offer. From here various guided tours take place: on archaeology, along the sculpture path; on the valley's natural history or to the game reserve and its animals, since a reserve with re-bred aurochs (*bos primigenius*), wild horses and bison is also part of the museum context. This broad spectrum of attractions outside the museum enables visitors to look at the museum and its contents from various, ever changing perspectives.

The Neanderthal Museum's permanent exhibition was changed in 2006 after ten years. We decided against a further increase in technical support. Our aim was to continue with the successful idea of an interdisciplinary theme oriented museum, to

retain the existing exhibition in its basic structure and to modernise only parts of it. In order to achieve this goal the entire graphics of the exhibition including the descriptive panels were re-ordered and reorganised. The panels moved from their peripheral position into the visitors' central level of perception. The texts remained as concise as before. However, they were given a markedly larger visual platform on room high coloured panels which also hold additional information. Each panel has a pictogram in its upper third, functioning as a large format sign that informs visitors about the panel's content from a distance. In addition to the central text, visual information (a photo of the object or a graphical image) is presented, together with secondary text. Alternatively, a display screen with movie clips can be integrated into a panel. At least once per theme room one of the lower thirds of a panel is occupied by a large format photograph with secondary text. These additions to the text add import to it. Information is structured deeper and on more levels, and the transfer of information is enhanced. This results in markedly more attractive reading texts for the visitors.

In the old exhibition scenic elements had a central position. Some of these were exchanged and replaced and new elements were added. One of these is the 'replacement parts human' who integrates all the known elements of medical prosthetics. Another element is the 'discovery workbench' which presents technical innovations from over 100,000 years from various fields of work in the form of an over dimensional work place. This includes the 'Head Cinema' with movies on the Ice Age art that were taken from the Wendel Collection.

The highly successful audio system, which is regularly awarded the highest scores by our visitors, was complemented by audio texts for children. The Neanderthal boy Kwakiuk (fox) who already welcomes them on special children's pages on the museum's website directs our young visitors through the museum along selected audio stations.

As a further new element researchers' boxes were integrated into the exhibition.

They are the central point of access for in-depth information. The boxes have a digital side and an object side. The previously stand-alone Info-PCs were embedded on the digital side; their digital content was continuously expanded during the past ten years. Today, they contain the largest digital repository on human evolution in German language which is only accessible during a museum visit. This digital compendium was complemented on the object side by study units presenting recent research results, important new findings and data. A system of drawers and covers gives access to detailed information. Research findings in the form of print media are continuously updated in order to present the latest state of knowledge.

With its updated conceptual design the museum continues the successful combination of various media. This media mix is in line with the contemporary form of learning and information transfer in our society. It furthermore adheres to standards of scientific work in archaeology and anthropology. The digitalisation of museum contents will progress further, and in future visitors will profit from this during a museum visit, or even at their PC at home. At two points the Neanderthal Museum's new permanent exhibition is interlinked with the Internet. In the thematic section 'Tools and Knowledge' visitors can freely search the digital encyclopedia Wikipedia. In the theme section 'Environment and Nutrition' a world-wide geographical search via PC is possible, based on satellite maps and images accessed via Google Map.

An important task of the exhibition, to be further strengthened in future, is to visualise and make transparent the scientific process. Ten years of experience with the old exhibition have demonstrated that visitors are not just interested in scientific results. They also want to know how data is sampled and how the analytical process resulting in scientific knowledge is organised. Increasingly complex technical processes in modern society have created a growing distance between everyday tools and appliances and their production. Visitors take great interest in finding out how these discrete processes work. This is where the research boxes come into play. Through continuous updates they present

recent research findings and communicate these to visitors almost in real time. Information which the visitor might have learnt from a daily newspaper is mirrored and commented here. This enables us to keep up to date and to buffer the ageing process of museographic presentation which all temporary exhibitions experience, due to low resources of finances and personnel.

The opening of the museum towards society can only be successful if the museum becomes visible as a place of active research. Cultural and scientific credibility can only be attained through high quality research. On this basis the museum can popularize without losing its credibility. Also, through research and the direct transfer of its results into the public domain the museum achieves continuous updating. In the fast-paced society of today this is the best protection against the collecting of museal dust. **Prof. Dr. Gerd-Christian Weniger, Director of the Neanderthal Museum, Mettmann, Germany** A paper presented to a conference on 'Innovation in archaeological museums: an overview on recent European developments', held at MARQ, Museo Arqueológico de Alicante, 15-16 December 2006

Better late than never A thief who stole a rare egg from a museum has returned it – 43 years later. The little bustard's egg, last seen in 1963, was posted anonymously, in a tin lined with bubblewrap, to the National Trust's Overbecks Museum in Salcombe, Devon. 'I do apologise profusely', read the accompanying note. 'We do things as kids we would never dream of doing as adults. I would have returned this very much earlier, only it has just resurfaced following the death of a parent.'

The Virtual Museum of the Death Mask in Kiev has already been mentioned in the July 2006 issue (page 7) as a pioneering venture by the One Street Museum, linked to items in its collection. The website can now be accessed at www.deathmask.kiev.ua

Six Finnish art foundations join forces Six Finnish art foundations have set up a Finnish Art Foundations' Association. The main purpose of the collaboration is to make the art collections owned by foundations and corporations available to the public. The

exhibitions in the Amos Anderson Art Museum in Helsinki will be one of the most important parts of the future plans. The conservation services and other services connected with the care of the collections will also be significant, especially to collections which are not connected with a museum. It is a question of combining economic resources as well as making the art available to a larger public.

The initiative for setting up such an association came from Vesa Vainio, chairman of the board of the Merita Art Foundation, as well as Gustaf Serlachius, chairman of the Gösta Serlachius Art Foundation for the past 30 years. Gustaf Serlachius has also served on the boards of the Merita Art Foundation and the UPM-Kymmene Cultural Foundation. In addition to the Gösta Serlachius Art Foundation and the Merita Art Foundation other foundations involved in the establishment of the association include the UPM-Kymmene Cultural Foundation and Fortum Art Foundation, the Enso Art Collections Foundation and Suomi Mutual.

The collections of six art foundations form an exceptionally significant body of 5,000 works of Finnish and foreign art from the 16th century to the present day. The Gösta Serlachius Art Foundation was set up in 1933. It is one of the most important private collections, located in its own museum in Mänttä and has its origins in the patronage of G.A. Serlachius. The UPM-Kymmene Cultural Foundation was set up last spring, when UPM decided to donate the works of art owned by the company to a cultural foundation, independent of the forest company. The same idea had led to the establishment of the Merita Art Foundation four years earlier. Vesa Vainio, at that time the Chairman of the Board of Nordea Bank, had the idea of setting up a separate foundation, which would get the most treasured national works of art owned by a bank which was becoming more and more international in its operations, and to make sure that the works of art remain in Finland. Its most valuable works were also part of the history of Finnish banking.

The new association will be based in the Amos Anderson Art Museum. The first exhibition will be next autumn, to mark the

90th year of Finnish independence. **Marja-Liisa Pohjanvirta, Finnish Museums Association and EMF Finnish National Correspondent**

Devon and Cornwall World Heritage Site

The mining landscape of Cornwall and West Devon has become a World Heritage Site, following a decision by the World Heritage Committee. For a time during the 18th and 19th centuries the area was the world's greatest producer of tin and copper and it contributed substantially to Britain's Industrial Revolution and mining technology. It is this influence on the global culture and economy which has been acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee.

This addition to the World Heritage List means the UK now has 27 such sites out of a global total of 812.

A new Council of Museums has been set up in Greece, and one of its 15-strong members appointed by the Minister of Culture, Mr George Voulgaris, is Mrs Ioanna Papantoniou, President of the Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation and one of EMF's Greek National Correspondents. In the press conference launching the new initiative, Mr Voulgaris announced a 30% tax reduction from sponsorship by industrial companies.

Among the ambitious plans put forward on this occasion were the establishment of a museum or house of culture in the renovated Acropol Palace Hotel opposite the Archaeological Museum, which will also house the Cultural Council, the Sponsors Council, the National Archaeological Museum, the National Book Centre, and the National Dance and Theatre Centre Councils; rehousing of the Museum of Greek Folk Art in a complex of old buildings in Plaka; the establishment of a Museum of Attican Art in the area known as Platos Academy; transformation of the Tsaousoglou factory into a 34-acre Cultural Mall on the Athens-Thessaloniki highway; and a number of renovations of archaeological museums all over Greece, as well as the completion of the Acropolis Museum. And where is the money for this programme coming from? The Minister is apparently relying on European Union funds.

What Do We Learn Nowadays in the Museum? This seminar was an initiative of the National Network of Romanian Museums, the National Museum of Art of Romania and the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs. It took place on 27-28 October 2006 in Bucharest and was aimed at education museum specialists and teachers from all parts of Romania. The goal was to increase the dialogue and the collaboration between museums and schools in order to establish long term partnerships which do not exist at present.

The seminar consisted of two parts: presentations of examples of good practice in museum education in UK and Romania, and a workshop. The keynote speaker was Sue Wilkinson, Director of the Policy and Advocacy Team in the UK's Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). She spoke about 'The Result of Education in Museums' and pleaded for a constant partnership between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education in order to sustain the process of learning in the museum, this being the main purpose of any museum. The presentations continued with examples of collaboration between schools and museums in the National Museum of Art of Romania, 'Antipa' National Museum of Natural Science, the Romanian Peasant Museum, and the National Museum of Romanian Literature. Some NGOs and other institutions - The Centre for Professional Education in Culture, British Council Romania, GIL Corona Association, Inforom Cultural Foundation - presented their experiences in the museum education field.

The conclusion was that after 2000 several museums initiated educational programmes for pupils of all ages and levels, attracting a large number of participants. Collaboration between the two types of institution (museum and school) already has a tradition that is based on identifying the basics of education and training for pupils and organising programmes that supplement the school curricula, with interpretation of the works included in the museums' heritage. Recently the educational sector in the museums has begun to develop the ideas proposed by specialists in museum education representing, from the point of view of

trainers and teachers, extracurricular activities that have proved to be more and more interesting, competitive and adequate to the pupils' needs.

As a consequence, following the initiative of the National Museum of Art of Romania, participants to the seminar issued a statement addressed to the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs and to the Ministry of Education and Research, which requested the establishment of a strategic framework and of a long term partnership between schools and museums which would also involve the two ministries, having as result an agreement between the two authorities. The main points are:

1. The constitution of **an inter-ministerial working group** that would strengthen the collaboration between schools and museums.
2. The initiation of **national programmes** (structured on regions/types of museums/curriculum) managed by the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research, also legislated by specific methodology norms that would support **projects and activities involving extracurricular education undertaken in museums.**
3. Strengthening the collaboration between schools and museums and their development through specific actions.
<http://www.muzee.org/en/stiri.php>

During the workshop the participants, working in small groups, identified needs and solutions for better collaboration between museums and schools. The final form of the statement was completed with their conclusions and was signed by almost all the participants. The main benefits were exchanges of experience, communication between the representatives of museums and schools, identifying areas of specific collaboration, and especially the statement addressed to the two ministries. Raluca Bem Neamu, EMF Romanian National Correspondent

UK News - Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has been expelled from the UK Museums Association for selling A Riverbank by L.S. Lowry to raise funds to plug a budget deficit rather than invest in its museum service, an act condemned as an

'arbitrary act of cultural vandalism,' by Charles Saumarez Smith, director of the National Gallery and outgoing president of the M.A. The Museums Libraries and Archives Council has also removed its museum's registration, so making the Council ineligible for many grants. The leader of the Council is unrepentant, claiming it was the lesser of two evils, the alternative being reduced opening hours and staff cuts.

The Theatre Museum in Covent Garden in London Barring a miracle, the 20-year-old performing arts branch of the Victoria and Albert Museum will have closed on 7 January despite protests. Plans to run the museum with the Royal Opera House fell through, so the collection looks set to return to South Kensington. Blackpool City Council has expressed an interest in re-opening the museum at the seaside resort in the north of England.

Glasgow Museums, which recently reopened the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery to widespread acclaim, looks set to go to management trust status within a larger cultural and leisure organisation. Several other large as well as smaller local authority services seem to be heading the same way, including those in Hull. While the local authority retains ownership of the collections and buildings, the trust manages them, and as an independent body it is eligible for a wider range of grants

Remembering slavery In March, Wilberforce House, in Hull, home of the anti-slave trade campaigner, will reopen while in Liverpool, the busiest British port linked to the slave trade, a new International Museum of Slavery opens in August. Other events to mark the abolition of the slave trade, although not slavery in the British Empire, include exhibitions across Britain, in the Houses of Parliament, the Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol, and the Museum in Docklands in London.

Major openings throughout 2007 include London's Transport Museum; Air Space, a huge hanger full of aircraft at the Imperial War Museum's branch at Duxford, Cambridgeshire; Cold War, another aviation museum, this time at RAF Cosford; and in London the Wellcome Institute opens its new exhibition centre. The latter are working closely with the Deutsches Hygiene Museum, Dresden, to look at medicine in its wider cultural context.

Subject Specialist Networks Taking up a recommendation in the UK Museums Association's Collections for the Future report, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has announced further funding to encourage museums to collaborate with each other by setting up subject specialist networks. The aim is to share knowledge of collections on specific subjects across museums. It is now in its second phase. The last round of grants saw a total of £300,000 invested in the establishment or development of 36 networks. Projects that have been funded include a collaboration led by the Petrie Museum and the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum to collate information about ancient Egyptian collections from 200 museums across the country, and a project led by the River and Rowing Museum Foundation at Henley-on-Thames to build up collections of hidden sporting artefacts and bring sporting heritage to a wider audience. Other subject networks range from ethnography and Japanese art to plastics and contemporary art. Javier Pes, EMF UK National Correspondent

The Ibsen Museum reopens On 24 May 2006 the Ibsen Museum, down the hill from the Royal Palace in the centre of Oslo, reopened in time to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Norway's famous playwright. The museum is run as a division of the Norwegian Folk Museum and is located in the apartment lived in by Ibsen from 1895 to 1906. Objects which belonged to the apartment have been collected since 1990 - Ibsen's mahogany-embellished bathtub was found by a farmer who used it as a water trough for his cows, and his beautiful tiled stove was found in a town outside Oslo where it had been for 87 years. As a visiting American expert on Ibsen was heard to say to his student group: 'This is really fascinating. In this museum you can really see the authentic Ibsen'.

In addition to the restored apartment there is an exhibition section. The architect responsible, the Iclander Gudmundur Jonsson, has carried out some of the most prestigious modern museum projects in Norway. The new version of the museum has been a success with the public. Even though visits to the apartment are restricted to those on guided tours, with one guided

tour per hour with a maximum of 15 people, the museum had 5,000 visitors in the first month. Before the refurbishment and new exhibition work started the museum had a maximum of 10.000 visitors per year. For 2006 the estimated number was 20,000 but even this may have been exceeded.

It has been suggested that the Ibsen Museum should be organised as part of the Theatre Museum in Oslo instead of as part of the Norwegian Folk Museum. Norwegian museums have been totally reformed and reorganized during the past five years. The Theatre Museum is now part of the Capital Museum (Hovedstadsmuseet) along with the Oslo City Museum and the IKM (International Culture Centre and Museum). Part of the reform consists of finding good partners, and Ibsen would seem to be a natural bedfellow for a theatre museum.
Hans Christian Søborg, EMF Norwegian National Correspondent

Museum and Societies International Colloquium The Museum of the Romanian Peasant, EMYA winner in 1996, organised an international colloquium called 'Museums & Societies' last October. The colloquium proposed an analysis of identity discourses in societal museums and a retrospective and reflexive look at the relationship between Museum and Society. Looking towards the future, the question can be raised - what kind of museums do we need and for what types of societies?

Building upon its experience as an ethnographical museum, MRP invited researchers interested in the intertwined discourses of Museum and Society - anthropologists, sociologists, historians, art critics and others. Many international and national researchers responded and the colloquium found answers to some tough questions.

Marriane Mesnil, Professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, a friend of the guest museum, presented an interpretative history of the Romanian Peasant Museum, as a case study for the ethnological-anthropological museum in a globalised Europe. Other researchers analysed the concept of this original museum: Vintila Mihailescu, Director of the RPM, Ioana Popescu, Director of Research at the MRP,

and Anca Manolescu, anthropologist of religions (Bucharest, Romania). Another theme of the colloquium was the *Transylvanian Ethnographical Museum*, where the multi-culture feature generated a special cultural territory. The *Staging identities* section was represented by presentations about models of interpreting and representing identities in different countries: Annette B. Fromm, manager of The Deering Estate at Cutler (Miami, Florida), talked about *Museums in African American, Native American Jewish and Immigrant Communities in the United States*, Camille Maze from the Centre of European Sociology (Paris), examined *The Reconversion of the National Ethnology Museums and Creation of the 'European Museum'*; and Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, researcher at Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland), presented *The Warsaw Rising Museum: Polish Identity and Memory of World War II*. In the same section there were offered examples of other 'national' examples of interpreting identity: Bulgaria (Krassimira Krastanova); Turkey (Valeria Ferraro); and Italy (Cristina Papa). The last section of the colloquium was *The Making of the Peasant* and was presented by Serban Angheliescu, Otilia Hedesan, Vintila Mihailescu and Calin Cotoi, who analysed models imagining the peasant in different cultures and times.

The colloquium approached different very themes in the international anthropology field and raised a lot of questions about the new tendencies of a vivid social and cultural environment. One of the main results of this meeting is a complete review containing all the presentations in English or French, an important instrument for researchers in the field.

This year, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant (MRP) celebrates its centenary. In 1906 it became the first ethnographical museum in Romania. Since then, it has functioned as a Museum of National Art, of Popular Art, of the Communist Party, and, after 1990, as the Museum of the Romanian Peasant.

Throughout this time, the peasant was constantly represented in the museum, but bearing different faces. In one way or another, the peasant's symbolic centrality

for the building of the Romanian national-state and its identity remained at the core of the museum's exhibits. The museum's aesthetics and ideology followed society's transformations and changed from a classical ethnography to the contemporary vision, considered by many as postmodern.
Raluca Bem Neamu, EMF Romanian National Correspondent

The National Media Museum is the new title of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, UK. The museum holds the nation's collections of photography, film and TV, including the world's most important collection of photography up to the First World War, a larger collection of TV technology than the Smithsonian, and a world class cinematography collection. Not wishing to rest on its laurels, however, the museum changed its name in November 2006 to reflect a change in approach to its subject matter to include the cultural and social significance of its core areas as well as their technical and artistic aspects. Visit www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk

The Permafrost Museum at Igarka in the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia was a candidate for EMYA in 2002, receiving a Special Commendation. It originally belonged to Igarka's scientific station for the research and study of the problems of permafrost, and within the building is a unique underground section dug to a depth of 7-10 metres into the permafrost itself. Even allowing for human activity and global warming, no artificial cooling mechanisms are necessary to maintain it. In 1977 the underground section became a Museum of Regional Studies, and developments since then have continued.

The future of Igarka has been the subject of discussions by a planning group for the town's revival, led by the historian, Alexander Toshev. Built in the 1830s as the main Russian seaport in the north-east of Russia, its founders saw it as a city of the future - a Sun City. However, its function as a transport hub has declined dramatically. Nowadays the river port no longer exists and the sea port is practically unused, the remaining activity being supported only because it is structurally connected with

sawing-terminal centre and the remaining workers cannot be dismissed. The whole area is facing unemployment. The once-unified airline structure is now divided up, its activities being regulated by three different company-owners. The hydrographic base of the Ministry of the Navy of the Russian Federation based here has been reduced in volume, with staff and funding cut to a minimum and is on the verge of closing.

Throughout Russia there are settlements which are becoming deserted and dilapidated, populated only by the elderly, and there is very little experience in turning former industrial cities into cultural centres. According to the planners, the regional authorities see culture in terms of Houses of Culture and the planners feel that it is very difficult to persuade them to give a chance to people who do not wish to leave their town to make a new cultural life for themselves. Igarka has recently been incorporated into the Turukhansk region, with the intention of evacuating the town, leaving only a small camp for flight maintenance to the Vankor oilfield. The regional authorities have also sold the only comfortable motor ship 'Anton Chekhov' to Samara. Formerly owned by a Swiss company until 1998, the northern cruises attracted many foreign tourists, but as soon as the river authorities and different tourist companies started using the ship, demand has fallen.

Against this gloomy background, plans are being proposed to transform the town into a cultural centre. Ideas being put forward include linking part of the town to the museum, while improving the recreational and tourist infrastructure, thus bringing new jobs into the area. There is also a proposal to hold an architectural competition in memory of the architect, Ivan Leonidov, who worked on the project to build Igarka as a Sun City. Communications within the region and with the international community will hopefully also be improved.

Igarka Museum is hoping to gain status as a UNESCO Heritage Site. It is also planning to transport the building of Victor Astafiev children's home to its site. The home and other buildings collectively known as the Polyarny settlement for dispossessed settlers was designed in 1931, presumably

by Leonidov. In 2005 the museum started to receive tourists for ecological tourism, and also started a process of protecting the remaining building in the river port. A small comfortable hotel is now available for tourists.

The hope is that those who wish to stay in the town can do so, and that step by step the infrastructure for attracting cultural tourists can be put in place. Within this plan the museum will undoubtedly play an important part. **Extracts from an article prepared for the Russian-International Journal for the Northern Cities '60 parallel'. Alexander Toshev, historian, and Anah Glinska, Directorate for National Collections of the Russian Federation, and EMF Russian National Correspondent**

An archaeological Antiquarium within the prison of Rebibbia Nuovo Complesso in Rome The Antiquarium Romanae Antiquitates has been realised as a natural consequence of the training course for 'Assistants in archaeological excavation' addressed to offenders who are in the biggest prison in Rome, Rebibbia Nuovo Complesso. During the course, offenders are involved in a very practical activity which consists of the cleaning and marking of archaeological artefacts discovered during an excavation campaign in 2001-2003 within the area of the prison: a natural evolution of these practical activities has been identified by the participants themselves, who suggested developing a permanent exhibition of archaeological artefacts within the prison in order to share their knowledge with other offenders and all the people who - for one reason or another - are sent to the prison.

The Antiquarium has been financed by the Administrative Direction of the prison. The project, which started in October 2005 and was completed in December 2006, was co-ordinated by the social co-operative Cecilia and realised by the Archaeological Superintendency of Rome and Ecom (European Centre for Cultural Organisation and Management) for the scientific aspects.

The idea underpinning the project is that of exhibiting objects and explaining historical phases as part of a storytelling process, in which the storytellers are the offenders themselves - supported by specialists, such

as archaeologists, restorers, architects - and the subject told is the history of a living part of Rome. The exhibition is not open to the general public for security reasons, but only to those who - for different reasons - enter the prison, such as lawyers, judges, teachers, social service workers, educators, volunteers, guardians, offenders and their relatives.

The goal of the project was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed to provide visitors with a chronological knowledge of the area of Rebibbia through the centuries: along the long aisle which hosts the exhibition have been placed five showcases containing Roman objects and five panels telling the story of the territory from prehistory to the present day. On the other hand, it aimed to teach the offenders technical skills and abilities related to archaeological and museological work, as well as to make them active subjects in the storytelling process, allowing them to communicate to other people what they have learnt and discovered.

The meaning of these activities goes obviously beyond their cultural value: although it is undoubtedly true that one of the goals is that of communicating knowledge, the main one is that of using culture as a tool to improve self-esteem, self-awareness and a sense of citizenship through the study of history and of its relationship with contemporary society. Cristina Da Milano, Ecom, Via Emilia 81, I-00187 Rome. Tel/fax +39 06 42013043, www.eccom.it; damilano@eccom.it

Gallery-goers have lost their respect for art 'I found myself giggling like a child in Tate Modern this week', says Philip Hensher, in *The Independent*, 'as I hurtled down a 55-metre-long tube from the fourth floor of the art gallery. The slide is one of five sinuous chutes installed in the Turbine Hall by the artist Carsten Höller. It reflects the trend in contemporary art towards interactive experiences, but it also reflects the accompanying - and not altogether welcome - rise of gallery-goers' sense of entitlement. Museums have complained lately of a 'growing lack of decorum and respect' in visitors. The problem is particularly bad in the Egyptian Galleries of the British Museum, where people are

clambering on ancient statuary and running greasy hands over precious artefacts. In 'an age that thinks fame or artistic achievement are matters of chance selection, things to be won on a TV talent show', it seems that many visitors feel they have a right to treat works of art in any way they see fit. Pieces such as Höller's, 'which invite gallery-goers to join in with yelps of pleasure, are still unusual, but really he is issuing an invitation to a gatecrasher who is already in the room.'

Another article on the same subject by Nigel Reynolds in *The Daily Telegraph*, contains an interesting quote by Jessica Morgan, the curator of the installation, concerning the point of the installation. 'It gives a fear that is very pleasant. Carsten's idea is that if we did it every day we'd be happier. If Tony Blair took a slide on the way to Parliament it would have all sorts of beneficial effects.' Both articles were reprinted in *The Week*, 14/10/06

A new Settlement Exhibition in Reykjavik
The exhibition, called *Reykjavik plus or minus 2*, a new addition to the Reykjavik City Museum, is the result of collaboration between scholars and specialists in many fields, and has recently won the 2006 Icelandic Museum Award. It focuses on archaeological finds from the earliest period of habitation at Reykjavik, and scholarly research on them. A well-preserved Viking Age hall was unearthed here, along with fragments of wall structures which are some of the oldest signs of human habitation in Iceland. These archaeological relics are important in themselves, but what made the find so remarkable, and led to the conservation and display of the site, is that the structures were found at the very place where, according to written sources, the first settler in Iceland made his home.

These sources, the *Book of Icelanders* and the *Book of Settlements*, were written in the 12th century, some time after the events they describe: there is a consensus among scholars that the *Book of Icelanders* is more reliable as a source on the settlement. Many of the Sagas of Icelanders, written in the 13th-14th centuries, also recount events from the Settlement Age, but these are today deemed to be largely fictional,

although their value is recognised as evidence of the society and circumstances of their writers, and their conceptions of the Settlement Age.

Why has the title, *Reykjavik plus or minus 2* been chosen? A layer of tephra was deposited around 871 AD from an eruption in the Torfajökull area, about 400 km to the east. The layer, which was deposited all over Iceland, had been dated to 871, with a possible range of error of two years either way. The layer can be dated with this degree of accuracy by reference to ice layers drilled from the Greenland Glacier, as the tephra was also deposited there. The tephra layer has proved a boon to archaeologists, and it plays a crucial role in dating finds from the early years of Reykjavik history. The title of the exhibition is intended to underline the scientific approach which has been applied.

The exhibition was circumscribed by a number of factors from the start. A hotel was to be constructed on the site and the relics were to be preserved and exhibited in a basement under the new building. Clearly there was a risk that an exhibition space in a basement would not be ideal, and so it was important to make it interesting enough to draw the visitors' attention away from anything reminiscent of an ordinary basement. A dark-blue oval exhibition wall was constructed around the hall, sloping slightly inwards or outwards. A photograph was set into the wall, showing the view in all directions from Reykjavik as it is believed to have been at the time of the settlement. A lighted strip was also set into the wall at the level of the surface when the tephra layer fell. As the hall was built on a gravel ridge between the sea and the lake, conditions meant that it was necessary to excavate the floor of the exhibition space down below the surface of the gravel ridge on which the hall stood. The idea of the gravel ridge is preserved by the floor being partly sea-washed shingle, and gently undulating.

The focus of the exhibition is, of course, the hall itself and various interpretation methods have been used to explain its function. The most interesting objects found in the excavations are exhibited in glass cabinets which are recessed into the oval window below the landscape photograph. The hall

itself is as it was when the archaeologists had finished their work. The route then leads through a doorway in the oval wall and from here the visitor can look back through a window at the exhibition space. In front of the window are controls for calling up a 3-D image of how the hall may have looked. Building techniques are also explained. A touch screen focuses on cultural affinities between different North Atlantic nations – their building traditions, the common roots of their languages and how they have evolved, kinship between domestic animals in the Nordic region, comparison of place names in the region, and research on genetic affinity between the North Atlantic peoples. Another screen focuses on the Vikings' expansion to the south, west and east, how they settled in new countries, and how the settlement of the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland may be seen in a broader context of Viking expansion. A multimedia table and a computer centre provide more detailed information which can be accessed by visitors. **Based on material supplied by Rakel Halldórsdóttir, EMF Icelandic National Correspondent**

Kids & Culture DK *The use of mobile phones in museum education, a tour given by so called Junior Guides to other kids, and a Renaissance Summer School are some of the latest initiatives in the educational field in Denmark.*

There has always been a special focus on children in the Nordic countries and in Denmark, and in the last decade museums have increasingly developed special educational activities for kids, such as Kids' Museums and creativity workshops. The 140 or so state and state supported museums must also meet the requirements in the Museum Act by giving free entrance to schoolchildren. Museums can also get more support for new educational activities by using the newest technologies. So on the Internet kids and youngsters can now even more than before explore art on specific museum sites like ArtXplorer <http://artxplorer.aros.dk/>, they can also learn more about their own neighbourhood in an interactive cultural treasure hunt <http://www.kulturjagt.dk/> or look for special activities on portals for all the museums in Copenhagen, such as <http://www.mik.dk>.

History Day is one of the latest initiatives taken by the National Cultural Heritage Agency. It is one Sunday in the year where events, arrangements, hunts, stand-up history and other child-friendly activities are organised nationally by museums, libraries and archives to make sure that cultural heritage plays an important part in kids' lives. **Marieke Burgers, EMF Danish National Correspondent**

This and that from the UK *The Science Museum in London has acquired a logic defying material which gets fatter when stretched and thinner when squeezed. Materials with these characteristics are called auxetic. Auxetic substances or compounds respond in unexpected ways when stretched. They can be seen to expand when pulled. Discovered by Dr Kim Anderson and Virginia Simkins from the University of Bolton, the auxetic fibre sample is on display at the Museum's Challenge of Materials Gallery.*

Figures from the museums and galleries world have been recognised for their dedication in the UK New Year Honours list. Robert Crawford, Director-General of the Imperial War Museum, was knighted for services to museums. Sir Robert joined the museum as a research assistant in 1968 and became its Director-General in 1995 and is also a trustee of several other museums.

Matthew Tanner, Director of the ss Great Britain Trust [a current EMYA candidate] was awarded an MBE for services to maritime conservation, overseeing the steamship's multi-million pound museum redevelopment.

Sue Grayson Ford, Director of the Campaign for Drawing, which organises the hugely successful Big Draw events each October, was also awarded an MBE. Big Draw events were held in more than 1,000 venues across the UK in 2006.

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