

SOCIAL HISTORY IN MUSEUMS

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Social History in Museums

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**Edited by Rebecca Fardell
with guest editor Stuart Davis**

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The Brodsworth Hall Pandal
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The Social History Curators Group

SHCG aims to draw together all members of the museum profession to promote social history in museums and improve the quality of curatorship.

It aims to:

- Work with those who are continually developing standards, to improve the quality of collections care, research, presentation and interpretation.
- Stimulate and act as a forum for debate on issues effecting the museum profession.
- Act as a network for sharing and developing skills.
- Advocate the study and practise of social history in museums.

SHCG is a point of contact for other organisations, as well as its own members. It represents the interests and concerns of members liaising with Regional Agencies, Federations, the Museums Association and MLA.

The Group organises seminars throughout the year on a wide variety of topics which are a useful resource for member's Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The Annual Study Weekend provides a forum for a fuller analysis of major subjects such as interpretation, evaluation and community outreach. A News is issued several times a year and includes reviews of meetings and exhibitions, opinions on current issues and items of news. There is also a SHCG website and the Group is responsible for the first BASE database.

Social History in Museums is produced annually and is issued to all members. Back issues are available via the Editor. Articles, reviews and books for review should be sent to the Editor via the website. SHCG does not accept responsibility for the opinions expressed by the contributors.

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Editorial

In this volume we include six essays which focus on an important birthday – ten years of national lottery funding and, specifically, ten years of Heritage Lottery Fund support for museums and galleries – an unprecedented scale of support. The commissioning of these essays was more opportunistic than part of a research strategy. Research to date has been intermittent and far from satisfactory.

The methodological issues are daunting. It is difficult, for example, to know when to draw a line and say ‘this is the point at which we will evaluate the lottery’. And for whom or for why is research being carried out? Is it to improve the lottery processes? Previous experience shows that by the time the researchers have carefully identified and isolated an issue, the practitioners have long since also identified it as needing attention and it has been addressed. So a carefully researched report will conclude that this should be done and the lottery distributor says that actually it was introduced many months (if not years) before. One thing we can say with certainty is that we are not yet in a position to state with any certainty what the impact of the lottery will finally be on the whole sector.

So what do these essays contribute? They cast a little light on particular aspects of the lottery. Judy Aitken gives us the official Heritage Lottery Fund view. Stuart Davies offers a personal view of the good, the bad and the ugly of the lottery experience – concluding that there has been far more good than anything else. Helen Monger looks at one small programme very much designed with history museums in mind and asks why it did not quite deliver what was expected of it. Cathy Ross examines one project in detail – a representative of the scores of such social history projects that lottery money has supported. Roy Brigden gives a masterful overview of how lottery funding has impacted upon his particular corner of the sector – rural museums. Finally, Sara Selwood and Maurice Davies step outside the usual SHCG remit but tackle issues of relevance to all museums whether they have received lottery funding or not. Using London as an example they seek to show whether or not the benefits of lottery funding are simply achieved by disadvantaging those who have not been blessed with lottery largesse.

The final answer to everything about the lottery and history museums may not be found in these essays but they are peppered with enough questions, hypotheses, suggestions, hints and tantalising glimpses to keep a small army of museum studies researchers going for a very long time.

There then follow four articles based on papers given at the 2004 Annual Study Weekend. Liz Wilson considers the impact of Renaissance in the Regions as it has affected the East Midlands Museums Hub; she looks at how being a Phase Two Hub has been a positive experience whilst also expressing some issues of concern for the future.

The theme of the conference was Hidden Histories: Ruth Dass, John McVerry and Giles Waterfield look at projects that have sought to bring hidden histories to light. Ruth Dass talks about the work of Interculture and focuses on a project to engage new audiences with Brodsworth Hall through its chintz collection. John McVerry shares something of the mammoth task that the National Trust is facing at Tyntesfield as it seeks to collect, document, research and interpret the history of the house and the people associated with it. Giles Waterfield’s article considers the role of black servants in Britain and how attitudes towards them are revealed in portraits.

Kathrin Pieren also discusses issues of identity and how museums can portray what are often hidden histories. She looks at the Jewish Museum Berlin which seeks to be both a memorial and a museum that tells the history of Germany Jewry, enlarging a story that is often limited to the tragedy of the Holocaust.

Working in a context of political changes, and the opportunities and challenges

presented by funding from Renaissance and the Lottery, these articles show something of the array of projects with which many social history curators are seeking to ensure that their communities are both documented and engaged. They also reveal how approaches that have traditionally been the preserve of social history curators are proving useful to other sections of the profession.

Stuart Davies and Rebecca Fardell

Space to Grow - Ten years of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Museums

Judy Aitkin

Introduction

In November 2004 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), one of the National Lottery's "good causes", celebrated its tenth birthday. In those ten years we awarded over £3 billion to more than 15,000 heritage projects throughout the United Kingdom.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is unique in two ways. No other organisation covers such a breadth of heritage. No other organisation funds heritage projects on such a scale, from £500 to £5 million and more.

Our project funding covers everything from works of art to urban parks, from archives to wildlife reserves, from canals to churches. We support projects which improve access of all kinds and provide opportunities for learning, including new skills or formal education, sharing good practice. We also support intangible heritage such as language heritage, oral history and cultural traditions relevant to the huge diversity of communities we have in the United Kingdom.

We also, of course, fund museums. Museums in the UK today cover a vast variety of business responsibilities including education, working with community groups, caring for and adding to collections, making sure the museum space is safe and attractive for visitors, marketing and running businesses such as cafes and shops. This article looks solely at HLF but, to make a rather obvious point, there have been enormous changes taking place such as Renaissance in the Regions, the changing remit of the National museums, developments in Scotland and Wales and MLA Council regionalisation.

On top of all this museums have even more responsibility for fundamental purposes: exploring identity and place, history and community and for reaching people who might not think a museum is something they can identify with. These have been promoted increasingly strongly by funders, especially us.

HLF has existed alongside this intense period of change and has been a major influence within it. HLF's effect on its funding recipients and their environments would possibly take an entire book to relate and is the subject of much current research.

It's safe to say that museum funding has been one of our most successful areas in terms of far reaching and creative projects:

Our total award in this area since 1994 amounts to £1 billion for over 1400 projects.

Funding has been directed at projects which significantly improve buildings for collections and visitors and to projects which open collections up to be appreciated and enjoyed.

We have awarded nearly £700 million to museums for all kinds of construction projects including extensions, new buildings and refurbishment.

We have awarded £130 million to museums to acquire objects, archives and fine art in order to make them accessible to the public.

We have funded 320 Education officer posts and our projects have created more than 100 dedicated museum spaces for learning.

Including spaces, our funding for all kinds of education projects in museums since 1995 comes to over £250 million.

We have given over £350 million to all 18 DCMS-funded museums.

Many of the UK's museums have been transformed, through the hard work, perseverance and visionary zeal of all who have been involved with these projects.

The results have addressed years of serious under-funding of many museum buildings. Our funding has enabled people to do things they had only dreamed of doing, creating new and better experiences for a huge variety of users, carrying out innovative and exciting activities and raising awareness about what museums can achieve. Whether through a small or large grant, projects have made a huge difference to the reputation of many museums, bringing new thinking, new opportunities and new partnerships.

One of our biggest museum awards of £23 million was to the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (now National Museums Liverpool). This project linked three sites, Liverpool Museum, Walker Art Gallery and Museum of Liverpool Life, developing new displays, improving spaces for housing and exhibition and bringing more of the collections into the public eye.

Our smallest award to a museum was £1500 to Buckie District Fishing Heritage Museum to purchase computer equipment to help them make their collections more widely available.

Capital funding 1995-1997

The National Lottery Act 1993 established the National Lottery and its good causes. The Act gave powers to the National Heritage Memorial Fund to administer the Heritage Lottery Fund. HLF's grants were almost exclusively for acquiring, maintaining or preserving heritage assets; that is, capital funding¹. We were under pressure from all sides to get the money out quickly. From the day we opened for business our original complement of only seven staff were deluged with more than 1000 applications for over £670 million for a total first year allocation of "only" £247 million². Our very first big museum grants went to the Natural History Museum for the Earth Galleries, Thackray Medical Museum, the National Gallery, Imperial War Museum Duxford, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the new Museum of Scotland³. These projects had clearly been in development by their organisations for some time, waiting for the right chance. The Lottery presented too good an opportunity to miss, particularly as no one was sure how long that opportunity would last.

One example of those 1995 museum recipients, is the Geffrye Museum. This museum, in Hackney based in East London, is a courtyard of eighteenth century Grade 1 listed almshouses, with gardens front and back. It is a rare piece of green space in this part of London and one of only of a handful of historic survivors of the urban development surrounding it. It opened as a museum in 1914, and in time its displays were developed as a series of historic room interiors within the almshouses, ranging from the seventeenth century to the 1950s. The Geffrye's audience was largely comprised of schools groups, as it was governed by successive London education departments. When it achieved independent status from the Inner London Education Authority in 1990, the museum had to re-think its future survival. It needed to develop its collections and displays beyond the 1950s to include post-War and contemporary rooms, develop a more solid social history focus and attract a wider audience, particularly young adults. This was really important as Hackney was starting to tackle regeneration and the 1990s saw the growth of young, creative professionals moving into the borough, especially designers and craftspeople, which could give new life to the museum, economically as well as culturally. The Geffrye's project proposal was to build a new extension to the existing museum and to develop the grounds at the back into a herb garden and series of period gardens. In keeping with other successful capital projects, it looked at the long-term needs of the museum and how the project would equip it for a future life. For this reason it refurbished the room settings and brought them up to date, adding recent design history and building excellent education spaces and a temporary exhibition gallery. The plans also included a good new restaurant and other new

visitor facilities. These developments were designed to attract new and different people to the museum, not just for the collections but to have somewhere pleasant and relaxing to eat, meet friends and take visitors. It was, and is, a wonderful resource for schools and adult learners alike and the schools audience has increased, along with a vastly increased adult audience.

"It's hard to underestimate what a difference the extension has made. The museum feels more substantial, visitor numbers have doubled and they spend more time here because there is more to see and do. Importantly we have a very attractive theme- home and garden. Everyone can relate to it and it has endless permutations. The extension has given us the space to grow." David Dewing, Director.

Our first museum programme

We continued to fund projects in our general grants streams, however demand was so great that in 1996 we began to introduce specific programmes. The un-snappily titled Major Museum, Library and Archive Projects Assessment Programme (otherwise known as MAP) accompanied the Urban Parks Programme as two of our first dedicated funding streams. Between 1996 and 1997 MAP gave awards to 50 projects totalling £270 million. 45 of the 50 were museums and galleries. MAP enabled the Museum of the History of Science; Kelvingrove Museum; Brighton Museum and Art Gallery; Manchester Museum of Science and Industry; Welsh Slate Museum; National Maritime Museum, Cornwall and others to challenge the way they saw themselves, to provide vastly improved facilities for visitors and collections. For many organisations the projects represented a sea-change, helping to forge new partnerships and create other opportunities for their museums. Projects included constructing new buildings and extensions, refurbishing galleries, providing visitor areas, improving stores and housing and restoring historic buildings for use as museums.

MAP had three main purposes: first, to help us manage the demand from museums; second, to spread museum grants around the country, as some felt that our early awards largely benefited big London national museums; and, last, to start putting serious money into improving physical access in museum buildings. We reviewed the MAP programme in 2003 and during the review Brighton Museum and Art Gallery told us: "The project has transformed the museum with access, modern displays and a visible identity with the new entrance".

Most of the MAP recipients are in the next phase of their new lives, following the first period of reopening, and have a great deal to contribute to other projects on the trials and triumphs involved. These building projects taught everyone a few things: that the real benefits of capital projects only start to become apparent years after completion; that the expertise in museums to manage big projects started out relatively scarce but is now a growing pool of experience available to draw on; that without HLF funding it would have been some time before these projects would have found funding, and many might never have done so. The Oxfordshire County Museum, for example, commented that "the project has ensured the future survival of the County Museum following almost a decade of threatened closure". You can read the review report on our website at www.hlf.org.uk.

The investment in funding for buildings, spaces for users and housing for collections over the past 10 years has been hugely important to a sector which has suffered a great deal from under-funding and whose building stock had been described in the early 1990s as in "severe crisis"⁴.

Buildings are not enough...

The 1993 Act prevented HLF from funding other activities which we knew were also needed in the sector, namely activities which would help people get more out of

heritage such as improving access, skills and understanding and helping people enjoy heritage in all its forms. The National Heritage Act in 1997⁵ finally enabled us to fund non-capital projects. Moreover, Article 26 of the 1997 Act, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport set out policy directions for the NHMF Trustees in 1998, which focussed on access, children and young people, coverage of the whole of the UK, sustainable development and reducing economic and social deprivation. These directions coupled with the National Lottery Act in 1998 meant we could widen the scope of our funding and direct it at specific needs.

Our second museum programme

HLF introduced an experimental programme in 1997, called the Museums and Galleries Access Fund (known as MGAF). It was a small, tightly focussed scheme and gave just over £4 million to 70 projects between 1998 and 2001⁶.

MGAF ran alongside all the other kinds of projects we funded, whether for building, acquisitions, conservation or outreach and education. A special programme was thought to be needed because MGAF was envisaged as a culture-changing programme, aimed at encouraging museums to think differently about getting people involved in projects and to experiment with partnerships which would help to reach different sorts of people. MGAF encouraged projects which created new audiences for museums or developed the relationships with existing ones.

It was accepted that what might be new and innovative for one museum might be common practice for another. The significance lay in the difference the project could make to the individual museum and their audience. This programme reflected the rise of access and learning initiatives generally in the sector but it really helped to demonstrate that museums did not have to do big, complex projects in order to make a difference. This programme also aimed to encourage projects which would be sustained, as, certainly in the 1990s, education and outreach work in particular were still seen by many decision-makers in museums as "fringe" activities, even in spite of opinion changing museum reports such as *A Common Wealth* or *Netful of Jewels*.

For example the Reading Museum Loan Box Scheme is now one of the most well established loan schemes in the UK. An MGAF grant of £32,000 in 1998 helped to create the core of the scheme, thought to be the first of its kind. It was originally aimed at attracting a new audience of young professionals to use and enjoy museum collections as these were seen to be the least likely audience to come into contact with museum collections but one of the fastest growing populations of Reading. This became even more successful when the service got its own purposely designed space within the museum, as part of its extensive refurbishment in 2000 (with a separate HLF grant of over £4 million). The service has since expanded and has been hugely popular with local groups, other museums in the region, corporate clients and schools.

Surrey Museums Consultative Committee, an umbrella organisation supporting volunteer and local authority museums in Surrey, received £88,000 in 2002 for the "Something Else" project. This appointed a youth worker for three years to work with young people aged 16-25 to help them benefit from the collections and information found in Surrey's museums. Participants are encouraged to view museums as something they can always use and enjoy and the Surrey museums' hope is that the young people will become part of the much-needed future volunteer force. This project has been a great example of good partnership working and it has increased and strengthened the relationship between these young people and the museums, helping everyone to feel part of the creative process.

MGAF produced some effective projects which have been able to build on their success but there was a sector perception that a small programme like this did not

really work well for museums. This was fed into the consultation for the next strategic plan, moving towards generic and themed funding programmes rather than sector-specific ones.

HLF Today

Our second strategic plan made changes to the way HLF operated and this has had a huge impact on our current position. We had commissioned a needs assessment exercise in many areas of funding during 2000 and worked with MLA to produce a picture of the museum needs context at that time. Our extensive consultation helped us to make changes in our structure and processes in our Strategic Plan, Broadening the Horizons of Heritage⁷. We made a firm commitment to increasing the number of smaller projects we fund as well as changing all of our application materials and procedures to try to make the process simpler.

For example, The Ryedale Folk Museum in North Yorkshire received £89,500 in 1999 for a project to increase intellectual and physical access to this large rural life museum depicting local life from pre-history to the mid-twentieth century. The project officer was recruited to run activities which looked at fresh ideas for collections access across the museum, reinterpret the social history of the historic buildings at the museum and develop demonstrations, training and events in historic crafts and traditional domestic skills. The museum particularly developed skills, enthusiasm and confidence amongst the volunteers and increased the number of regular volunteers by 200%. The project's success has far exceeded all expectations and the museum has produced an evaluation booklet about their experiences.

In 2002 we set up regionally based offices in England⁸ and introduced development teams to work alongside grants staff to help communities apply for funding, especially those which had never approached a body like HLF before. We also introduced a dedicated Major Grants team to deal with large projects, those over £5 million.

Today, museums can apply to any of our generic programmes. These are Awards for All (£500 to £5000), Your Heritage (awards of £5000 to £50,000) and Heritage Grants (for awards of £50,000 to over £5 million). You can find out more about these from our publications, our website and helplines found at the end of this article.

Heritage Grants

This programme offers grants of £50,000 or more to organisations which aim to look after and enhance heritage, increase involvement in heritage activities and improve access and enjoyment of heritage. It caters for a wide range of projects including the construction of the Wellcome Wing at the Science Museum in London and London's Museum in Docklands; the Museum of Edinburgh; Leeds City Museum and Resource centre; North Lincolnshire Museum Service Social History Store or the acquisition by

Derby Museums and Art Gallery of *Portrait of Richard Arkwright with his wife Mary and daughter Anne* by Joseph Wright of Derby.

Two examples, out of the hundreds available, illustrate some of the diversity of grants awards. In 2001 the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery received £399,500 to transform the gallery housing its designated collection of boots and shoes. It is considered one of the largest and finest such collections in the world. The new display space enabled more of the collection to be shown and in more imaginative and inspiring ways. "This project has completely transformed the museum... in one stroke this project has carried the museum into the twenty-first century" (Peter Field, Museum Manager).

In 2002 we awarded £928,000 to the National Trust for the Edward Chambre Hardman's house in Liverpool, the only known twentieth century photographic practice preserved in situ. The house, studio and all the household contents were

conserved and redisplayed revealing a fascinating world which was previously hidden and inaccessible. The house will be opened as a museum to the public later this year. David Porter, the trust's area manager commented to BBC North West that they had taken into account "the views of local people on access arrangements to the house, the educational value of the collection, transport links and the impact the house will have on the continuing regeneration of the area."

Your Heritage

Your Heritage was launched in 2001. It offers grants of between £5,000 and £50,000 for projects that either care for heritage or increase people's understanding and enjoyment of it. Successful projects must also make it easier for people to gain access to heritage and be of benefit to the community and the wider public.

For example, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London received £48,800 in 2002 for two part-time outreach workers to develop audiences for the museum's rich and inspiring Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology collections. The project officers worked with local Afro-Caribbean supplementary schools and Egyptian community organisations to develop education and interpretation resources based on the collections, making them available online and using the work in future exhibitions and services.

We also fund intangible heritage projects, recording all aspects of the UK's social history, including people's experiences and the UK's enormous range of languages and cultural traditions, including the Sikh Cyber Museum, originating from Birmingham, which is a virtual resource capturing the history and traditions of the UK's Sikh community. Our first ever oral history grant (receiving £53,000 in 1999) was to *Living Linen* in Northern Ireland for a project about the Ulster linen industry. The oral archive includes contributions from workers, everyone from junior managers and travellers, to technicians, weavers and spinners. These resources were then stored and made publicly accessible at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Since then we have awarded over £8 million to oral history projects.

Conclusion

Over our ten-year life the range and type of funding we have offered has been adapted to reflect all kinds of priorities but the demand has never lessened. There is more pressure on funding than ever before, particularly for major grants but there are excellent opportunities for all kinds of projects.

HLF has remained the foremost project funder of heritage in the UK. Our licence review is due in 2009. It is likely that, at the very least, the amount of funding available to heritage will be severely reduced. We need to make the case to retain funding for heritage through a dedicated lottery distributor of course, but we also want to help strengthen the case for heritage support whatever and wherever it is. The job of supporting heritage is far from over. Even HLF's spending covers only part of the picture and there is still so much more to do. There are exciting possibilities ahead for museums, libraries and archives. Let's look forward to another dynamic era for heritage.

Notes

1. National Lottery Act 1993, Part 2 (24) Distribution of the Net Proceeds of the National Lottery.
2. National Lottery Yearbook 1996, Directory of Social Change, p.96.
3. Source: National Lottery Yearbook 1996, Directory of Social Change, p. 102.
4. Museums and Galleries Commission, quoted in Culture, Media and Sport First Report to the House of Commons Select Committee 28 January 1999, section II para. 8.

5. National Heritage Act chapter 14 (1) (2).
6. See Monger (2005) in this Journal.
7. You can read this by going to the MLA website at www.mla.gov.uk/information/policy&strategy
8. Which complemented the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland based teams set up in 1999.

Social History, Museums and the Lottery: An Essay

Stuart Davies

Ten years of lottery funding¹ must have had significant positive consequences for the practice of social history in UK museums and galleries. It may be a little longer before we can accurately assess precisely what all those influences might have been or their degree of importance, but for now we can agree that the lottery has indeed made a difference. At a recent Museums Association conference² Estelle Morris, the Minister for the Arts, applauded the new culture of museum visiting since lottery funding had been introduced, saying the days of elitism had almost gone. She looked forward to a time when museums could play a large role in twenty-first century democracy. Social history museums must surely play a part in this democracy of culture. Often with a remit to collect contemporary culture, oral history and exploring local history social history museums are well placed to take advantage of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) emphasis on access, education and participation. In this essay an attempt is made to outline the consequences of lottery funding for social history in museums and social history museums. Each of the identified areas could become the subjects of more detailed, evidence-based studies. But in the short term the greatest need seems to be to absorb the experience of those involved or engaged with these first lottery years and try to bring observed experiences into a research agenda³.

The capital experience

The first and most obvious result of lottery funding has been the huge investment in capital renewal. A large number of museums – including history museums – have been physically upgraded after years of struggling to introduce new facilities or simply keep up with basic maintenance. In many cases this has transformed the public areas of a museum and given the whole building a new lease of life sufficient for at least a decade into the future. One example is the capital project at Abbey House Museum in Leeds which not only redisplayed the galleries but added a café, shop, alterations to its roof and a lift for full access. It is typical in its use of lottery money, using it to not just improve displays (it developed twelve new shops and houses in its Victorian street scenes) but develop often costly access facilities and visitor facilities – designed to help increase visit numbers. Hopefully one consequence is that the popular belief (held by journalists if few others) that all museums are dull and dusty will be consigned to oblivion for ever.

The capital investment in museums has included brand new museums (to accommodate old collections) exhibiting a range of architectural innovation and imagination, new extensions (new front entrances have been particularly popular), and the thorough (but conservation-sensitive) restoration of historic buildings. The Museum of Docklands, was opened in 2003 allowing visitors access to the Museum of London's collections based around the port and docklands of London. It makes use of a Georgian warehouse and an appropriate location in the newly fashionable docklands area of London. The HLF was a major funder of this new museum, which undoubtedly plays a large role in exploring the social history of the capital, and played the role of honest broker in resolving governance issues before it could be opened to the public.

The cumulative impact on the museums landscape has been impressive. And the public have responded by renewed interest in visiting those museums that have benefited from lottery funding. Discovery at Newcastle is an example of an existing

social history museum which attracted £8.46 million of HLF funding to renew and refurbish its facilities. It was rewarded for its modernisation with 370,000 visits in its first few months of opening. There is no doubt that a large successful lottery funded development brings more visitors. Further examples if needed might be the 170,000 visitors to the Road Transport Museum in six months after opening and 300,000 visitors to Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery after refurbishment. The initial visit numbers are often impressive but sustaining them over a five to ten year period will be even more impressive.

There have of course been 'unseen' benefits too. Many museums have taken the opportunity to not only renew their front-of-house but to also address storage issues and other supporting facilities. The availability of lottery money has stimulated some new thinking – the greater use of open or visible storage for example – and encouraged a few partnerships between museums. The Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust for example gained an HLF grant of £1 million to provide storage for its medium and large objects. However, they also made sure that there was public access to the conservation workshops and therefore to objects that were not always on show. The injection of several millions of lottery pounds into a local authority museums service has inevitably raised the profile of that museum within the local authority (a similar effect occurs in universities). Many city museums, Discovery in Newcastle for example or the Museum of Bristol soon to open, have secured city council funding to match HLF funding, after years of under-investment. HLF funded projects have proved themselves as high value investments to local government since 1995.

Capital investment on an almost unprecedented scale has brought some problems too. The belief that this is a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity has led to some very grandiose schemes which have not been fully implemented. It has also created a new status quo. There is a real sense that this round of lottery investment has created a physical environment in many museums that cannot be or will not be changed until it decays beyond usefulness (at which point – hopefully – the renewal process is repeated). That might have been avoided if greater thought had been given to creating flexible solutions for museum problems, but the sudden appearance of lottery money, the uncertainty surrounding how long it would last, the complete lack of strategic planning (in the early years) by government, the museum agencies and the lottery distributors all worked against considered debate. The application of lottery money to the museums sector has been a rather unseemly scramble to get what we can as soon as possible.

The sector was also under-powered when the lottery money began to flow in 1995. Under-powered in the sense that outside of the Nationals (probably) there were very few museum directors or other museum personnel with the experience of major capital projects and project management that the lottery bonanza demanded. This was made worse by – again in the early years – a lack of attention to the capacity of museums to handle major investment. This led to some cases where too much money was thrown at museums which were too small to handle it efficiently and effectively.

One consequence was personnel changes. The whole lottery process – application and implementation – saw a shift of power within some museums. The curators lost ground to generic project (and then site) managers and development teams (to initially raise matching capital money and then to keep the revenue flow going) as – even in local authorities and universities – lottery capital nudged museums towards becoming more and more like small businesses. There must be very few examples of museums that received major lottery capital grants and then returned to being much the same sort of museum that they had been before.

The lottery process was often fraught and the relationship with the lottery distributor – the Heritage Lottery Fund in the case of most museum projects – was

often very tense, even acrimonious. Of greater long term significance was the failure to secure sufficient funding for the fit out and then hold on to it. One problem with museum capital projects is the tendency for building works to take precedence for resources over the displays. The effect in many museums has been an impression that although the architecture and building services have been completed to a 'Rolls Royce' standard, insufficient resources have remained (or been retained) to be able to say the same about the exhibition galleries.

Another issue flagged up by commentators is the quality of these exhibitions even when adequate resources have been applied. One consequence of making a lot of money available for renewal within a short time span is that those spending it may not be able to respond creatively to the challenge and we may end up with only a limited pool of new ideas in, for example, presentation. The result may be many museums which may be sparkling new to look at but in fact repeat a few ways of doing things ad nauseum. What will be the new Victorian parlour? The old one 'tarted up a bit'? This has been articulated by Adrian Babbidge as the 'bog standard' museum⁴, something surely now there have been a decade worth of lottery funded capital projects, social history museums should take care to avoid.

Finally, a major concern must be whether or not museum incomes will increase sufficiently to either maintain or develop services. The capital improvements are providing lots of opportunities – especially educational – to use collections more effectively, ensure museum visits are more creative and rewarding and generally attract people and activities that were rarely seen before. However, if the capacity to deliver has not been strengthened too, then this could end up being a wasted opportunity. We will not have the 'white elephants' predicted by some but one does recall that wonderful comment by David Mellor (when the Lottery began) about the theatre and opera experience where the bars would be magnificent but the stage occupied by 'ragged-arse actors'.

Babbidge has warned that the huge expansion fuelled by lottery money has left the sector with a £29m a year bill for increased costs, and that in a static or declining market. (Babbidge 2000). This may be a little exaggerated but the point is well made that you cannot have capital expansion without at least some revenue implications and despite business plans it is clear that not all museums have understood this – or at least have not cared to worry themselves about it.

It should be said of course that the challenge fund nature of lottery funding (few projects get more than 75% of their funding from HLF and for many it is considerably less) has actually stimulated investment and many millions have been levered into projects which would not have been otherwise blessed.

The revenue projects

Not all lottery money has been expended on capital projects. After the first rush of blood and following the election of New Labour in June 1997, changes began to be made at the Heritage Lottery Fund which meant a softening and moving away from the assumed purpose of the lottery – as far as the heritage was concerned – which was to invest in grand capital projects to secure the future of our great cultural institutions.

This approach had attracted a great deal of criticism in the press and from elsewhere. Accusations of elitism were liberally directed at the Trustees of the Heritage Lottery Fund and by 1997 there was a real concern that this was an organisation not long for the world. In the end it was turned around by pragmatism on the part of Trustees (albeit very reluctantly in the case of some individuals) and the leadership skills of a new Chief Executive – Anthea Case – who was ably supported by new appointments at Head of Operations (Stephen Johnson) and Head of Policy (Rosemary Ewles). These three enabled the Heritage Lottery Fund to first respond to

and then enthusiastically adopt the new attitude to the Lottery coming out of New Labour.

New Labour particularly wanted to see lottery money benefiting more people, smaller organisations (at community level) and certainly not the 'usual suspects' which for many in government meant museums and galleries. They also wanted more educational projects and more projects which had social and economic benefits as well as heritage benefits. The upshot was a gradual movement away from the dominance of capital projects to a lottery landscape sown with thousands of much smaller projects where the capital element was small (perhaps confined to essential equipment) and the major expenditure item was people.

Museums actually continued to do rather well out of this change. They were better organised than many community groups and were able to put in 'good' applications. They were able to both apply for money to do some conventional educational activities (facilitated by the 'Education Officer' post funded by the lottery). The Rural History Centre in Reading, not only relocated and expanded but used their grant to greatly expand and improve the school and education facilities and programmes. It is perhaps typical of the well-rounded application more common these days. It did also open things up for some more adventurous community-based projects, often involving oral or video history. It also gave new – indeed often the first – opportunities for minority groups to explore their own history and its presentation. Hitherto the museums world had gone through a long period of advocating the strangulation of proposed new museums. The Lottery now offered a way forward for those on the end of this piece institutional racism. The award winning Northampton Black History project (a partnership with the Northamptonshire Racial Equalities Council as its lead and involving the Museums and Arts Gallery and the library service) had ambitious aims to "record and promote the histories and stories of Northamptonshire's Black communities and individuals over at least the past 500 years" and reverse some of the historic discrimination in the presentation of local history (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2005). It included archival research, collecting from community groups and oral history and was highly successful in its aims.

Support for recording and interpreting in 'new media' (usually oral and video history) has been one of the great lottery successes. It has materialized as museum, library or archive 'official' projects, as major collecting exercises and as a key component in community histories. All in all there has been a tremendous flowering in oral history on a scale unseen since the manpower creation schemes of the early 1980s. There has been some maverick activity and opportunities may have been missed in some instances, but the general impact has been very good indeed. (Davies, 2000)

But in the midst of this flowering of great little projects there were some problems. Perhaps the most important was the transitory nature of many of them. Their impact was very short and often the results were poorly disseminated or archived. All the posts created by this process were also short-term and time limited. It was very much all project-based.

This would not have been a problem if the institutions sponsoring these projects had behaved more responsibly. The real benefit of these projects in a museum was that they could be engines for change. Over, say, the three year lifetime of a lottery project the host museum could prepare to embed the project (and staff) into the museum and change the direction – modernise it if you like. In this way new approaches, techniques and methodologies might be introduced. New subject areas might be explored. And so on. But more often than not, this did not happen. The lottery project remained a temporary add-on and perhaps made little long-term difference to the museum. And meanwhile the dynamic initiative in local social history was lost to other organisations who were better at adopting and embracing

enthusiastically a 'new local history', much more collegiate, much more contemporary in focus and firmly rooted in today's communities. One might cite the new museum at Great Yarmouth, currently contending for the Gulbenkian Prize, as a museum that has not fallen into that trap. At every stage and for many years of the project's development community consultation was used extensively to inform it. They found their assumptions about visitors challenged, and according to the museum, changed their working practices forever. At the ten year anniversary of the Heritage Lottery Fund it is perhaps time to stand back and reflect on what benefits the Lottery should be facilitating beyond the scramble for investment.

Acquisitions

Acquisitions have been an important part of lottery money spending by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It has been very popular with the national institutions, some university museums and many of the Trustees themselves. The National Maritime Museum, for example, has been able to acquire such varied objects as a famous marine timekeeper by Sully (granted £75,000), a painting by Dominic Serres (granted £63,000) a carved ivory tusk depicting slavery (granted £281,000) and unique manuscripts relating to Harrison's presentations to the Longitude Board, undoubtedly all of great value to their collections. The value to regional and local history museums is less obvious but there have been some examples of Heritage Lottery Fund assistance proving to be a critical intervention. Many acquisitions have been of great local importance and perhaps therefore support the regional independence of local social history museums. Acquisitions bought with Heritage Lottery Fund grants include a painting by Joseph Wright of Derby by Derby Museum and Art Gallery, seventeen pieces of Hull-made furniture for the Hull Museums and Art Gallery and thirty nine pieces of Minton pottery returning to the city where they were created, Stoke on Trent.

Processes

The whole lottery process has attracted a huge amount of comment and discussion – considerably more than the actual impact and consequences on museums, history or - most important of all – the public. In fact many in the museum sector are now reflecting on the lack of information we have on impact and evaluation studies of heritage lottery developments and are casting about for values and words that articulate what these developments have brought. It is becoming clear that currently we do not have a way to talk about these achievements. In the recent research study by Selwood and Davies published in this volume (Selwood and Davies, 2005), there were severe difficulties in 'counting' (i.e. visit numbers) the impact of lottery developed museums in London. There is certainly a need to talk about benefits of lottery money not simply in instrumental terms (such as economic or social advantage) or even in intrinsic benefits of the object and displays themselves, but to go beyond to a more abstract and unique way to articulate why lottery money is valuable to the public. Suggestions included an institutional value and a value to the subjective individual visitor. However, despite this debate there is still little progress in accounting for lottery money spend. This is perhaps a sad reflection on the need for public accountability when using public resources. It is not intended to fall into the same trap here. But there are some positive influences coming out of the lottery process which deserve noting.

Firstly, it has already been observed that new skills have been introduced as a result of the lottery process. Project management skills- by which we usually mean dealing with architects, contractors and similar - are the most obvious but one might add some additional financial skills and generally the skills associated with managing and coordinating major re-displays. These will not always be 'new' skills but the scale

of activity will often be unprecedented and the number of staff involved in different ways also unusually large. Business planning is another area where the Heritage Lottery Fund's insistence on a Business Plan to accompany major capital applications has helped develop skills. In this case the Fund have also published very clear guidelines on how to prepare a Business Plan. Once the grant is secured of course, income generation and fundraising skills are required for match funding. A concern on this issue is the amount of new skills that have to be learnt 'privately' given the lack of investment in training in the museum sector.

Dealing with consultants is a specialised branch of project management. The lottery heralded in a boom period for consultants of all descriptions, including those specialising in museums. Managing those consultants has become a museum person's skill in itself. But the impact and influence of consultants goes well beyond this. There were of course museum consultants before the lottery but they were relatively few in number. Their numbers have multiplied with the lottery, the services that they offer expanded and there are a handful of really substantial companies (although most are sole traders – living off their personal reputations). They have been needed because the museums have not had the capacity to handle the workloads (and sometimes the skills requirements) brought in the wake of a lottery application (successful or otherwise). In strategic terms the lottery has created outsourcing of museum activities as a viable alternative to in-house provision. Consultants can be expensive compared with in-house staff during the course of a project; but when the project is finished you do not employ them (unlike your permanent staff) and you can employ someone else next time.

Marketing is the third area of impact. The Heritage Lottery Fund has done museums and galleries an enormous service in its insistence that major projects be accompanied by evidence of good quality market research. This has considerably improved individual museums' understanding of their audiences. The Heritage Lottery Fund has also helped the process along by publishing detailed but user-friendly guidelines on how to prepare an Audience Development Plan.

Museums have arguably become more strategic as the result of the lottery interventions. They have often had to re-think their priorities and their objectives as part of the process of applying for a lottery grant. And some museums will admit that failing to get a grant has led to a review of what they are doing and a much stronger museum has emerged as a result.

Specialist areas of activity have grown with the encouragement of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Education is the most obvious one. A great deal of effort has gone into promoting and supporting educational or learning projects through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Specialist staff have assisted in that process and programmes – notably Young Roots – have been developed to encourage these projects. Equally important though has been the Heritage Lottery Fund's support of archive projects, oral history and film and video history.

Case Studies

This paper will now conclude with two case studies. Both of them concern projects at application stage. The Museum of Bristol has already received a Stage One pass (for a £10m grant) and is about to apply for its Stage Two pass, while the Museum of London has recently applied for a Stage One grant. Both case studies illustrate the importance of lottery funding in the wider context of developing better services for their audiences. The best lottery projects are those that are part of a strategic planned development programme for a museum, rather than an opportunistic grab. These two case studies illustrate how important the context for capital investment should be.

The Museum of London

For the past thirty years – since urban social history started to find its feet in the museums world – it has been the Holy Grail of its curators to deliver the perfect city history galleries.

Many of our greatest Victorian museums are located in major cities. And they were either created or underwent phenomenal expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries causing exceptional interpretation problems for their museums. They were often founded on a perceived need to bring 'art' to the people – to inspire artisans with beautiful things and images. History was barely more than great men and great events. Not the business of art museums.

It was only slowly, and rather incidentally, that it was realised that the story of their own cities might be of interest to their visitors. Galleries started to appear from the end of the 1960s but only very few new museums dedicated to city history. Among the very first and arguably the most influential over an entire generation of social history curators were the Museum of Oxford and the Museum of London.

The new Museum of London was of course much much the larger of the two and it is still with us today. The original galleries were the ultimate expression of object-rich narrative displays. Curators flocked to the museum to see how it should be done. Or at least to see how it should be done before 1800. The nineteenth century displays were not as stunning as the rest and the only strong representative of the twentieth century was the building itself, an architectural masterpiece in concrete by Powell and Moya.

If the new museum had not entirely got to grips with the twentieth century in its galleries then it was hardly alone in that. Other than the specialist design museums to come, few city museums had then – or were to since – seriously tackled the museological problems posed by the last century. Museum curators had earnestly discussed the problem of 'contemporary collecting' in the 1980s without actually doing much about it and similarly had agonised over what contribution a museum should make to the public understanding of history in the age of mass consumerism. But there was little to show for all this, other than in isolated pockets.

The Museum of London alone seemed to recognise the challenge, understand what would be needed to eventually deliver galleries for the twentieth century which would form a continuum with those that go before (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) while actually delivering interpretations that reflect the difference in scale and complexity of twentieth century society and economies.

Five key factors now enable the Museum of London to deliver post-1660 exemplar galleries explaining the growth and importance of a world city to twenty-first century audiences with the assistance of lottery investment.

The first is the quality of the collections. They are unrivalled in any UK city in terms of their size, range and condition quality. They – quite appropriately – reflect the strengths of London. The reason for this is that unlike most other UK city museums the Museum of London devoted resources from the late 1970s into the 1990s to the large scale collection of domestic, industrial and civic artefacts and archives. Colin Sorenson's pioneering work in this field has meant that the Museum of London has the nearest thing this country has to a representative physical archive of urban life in the late twentieth century. The importance of this is that this is the very area where every other collection is weak (or almost non-existent) and means that the earlier collections are over-represented in galleries and their own interpretation impeded by the lack of historical perspective. It is common for historical galleries to fade away a short distance into the twentieth century.

The second key factor is the quality of the collection documentation. This is unusually high as can be ascertained by close study of the museum's archive. There is an archive folder with meaningful documentation in it for virtually every object or

group of objects in the museum's collections. This excellent documentation has been carefully built up over a number of years and draws upon the museum's serious commitment to scholarship and its good practice in acquisition. There are, for example, over ninety collections from individual industrial workshops held by the museum. Each one was carefully recorded in situ before being added to the museum's collections and documentation gathered together at the time and point of acquisition. This has been supplemented by a fine oral history and photographic recording programme – the museum is now one of the very few that has staff dedicated to sound and vision recording.

The third key factor is the programme of temporary exhibitions. These have enabled the Museum to explore some important themes and assess what collections it already has related to them, identify gaps and conduct rigorous collecting campaigns to create properly provenanced and documented physical resources for the history of London. Most of these exhibitions have been supported by excellent publications – exemplars in how to research and present urban history in their own right – including, for example, *Creative Quarters: the art world in London 1700-2000* (2001) and *Twenties London: A City in the Jazz Age* (2003).

The fourth factor is the diversity of material culture that the Museum is able to draw upon while at the same time achieving an integrated approach to its presentation. The existence of strong archaeological, art and history departments under one roof cannot be over-emphasised. They work together well and the exchange of ideas and objects between them enables a rounded history to be presented rather than a typologically based artefact feast. This is a major element in the breakthroughs that the museum is achieving in the interpretation and communication of urban history in a museum context.

Finally, the fifth key factor is the current accessibility of the collections. It is a considerable advantage to already have had the opportunity to present some at least of these collections to the public in narrative history galleries. In crude terms this means that the curators have been able to see what works and what does not. It has also meant that a very good programme of educational work has already been constructed around well-documented, well-researched and well-presented collections. There has also been considerable opportunity to test audience reaction and develop thinking about exhibit presentation within the museum and indeed at the Museum in Docklands.

To this may be added the excellent accessibility of collections (and the supporting arrangements for conservation) at Mortimer Wheeler House. In planning something as complex as the historical narrative story of a world city for the past 300 years and more it is of inestimable value to be able to see and easily access the collections you want to use. Not only does it make object selection easier and more effective, it means that the process of integrating curatorial choice and designer preference – one of the key creative tensions in making outstanding history galleries – can begin in the stores (or in the existing galleries) rather than at a much later stage in the process.

Together these factors mean that a powerful selection of objects can be made. The balance between the great iconic objects (fully interpreted and displayed as powerful single statements about history) and the mass effect of many objects reflecting the workshop of the world and mass consumerism can be successfully achieved and a great story told using objects to inform and communicate not just illustrate or represent the history of modern and contemporary London.

The Museum of Bristol

The collections that now make up Bristol Museums and Art Gallery began in 1823, with the opening of a museum by the Bristol Institution, itself founded three years earlier. Typical of many such organisations in growing regional cities at that time, its members

wanted to make available for public education material that expanded knowledge and understanding of the world. Although audiences and the methods by which meaning is extracted from the collections, are different now, education is still a primary purpose of the museum service.

Growth in the size of and interest in the museum required larger premises, and in 1874 the Bristol Institution opened a new museum building at the corner of Queen's Road and University Road. Twenty years later, the institution transferred ownership of the building and collections to Bristol City Council. A new Art Gallery (the front portion of the present museum building) funded by W Wills – the cigarette manufacturer - opened in 1905, adjacent to the then museum, and was extended in 1930. When the 1874 building was bombed in 1940 what was left of the collections moved next door into the art gallery, to create today's multi-disciplinary museum.

Branch museums at the Red Lodge and the Georgian House had been opened in 1920 and 1937 respectively, and Blaise Castle House – a folk museum for the sub-region - in 1949. These were added to in 1973 with the creation of a museum on Bristol's early history in St Nicholas's Church, the Bristol Industrial Museum in 1978 and the Maritime Heritage Centre in 1985.

In the 1960s and 70s plans had been drawn up for a new central museum, to be sited on Castle Green, but these never came to fruition, and from the early 1980s onwards restrictions on local government funding resulted in substantial cuts in the museums budget. St Nicholas's closed in 1994 due to budget cuts, and most of the collections were moved to other buildings. Local government re-organisation in the mid 1990's brought further reductions, due to the loss of funding for the education service when Avon County Council was abolished in 1986. In 1996 further cost reductions led to the transfer of the Maritime Heritage Centre to the management of the ss Great Britain service. The introduction of admission charges saw a dramatic reduction in visitors.

However, from the point when Stephen Price was appointed Director (1997) the service began to experience a sustained turnaround. There were a number of key milestones in this process. In 1999 the exhibition *A Respectable Trade: Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery* opened at the City Museum and Art Gallery. For almost the first time there was public acknowledgement of Bristol's role in the eighteenth century slave trade and how the city had benefited enormously from the profits of slavery. It was one of the finest examples of a museum tackling a contentious contemporary issue in a measured and well researched way. It was not only popular and highly acclaimed locally but also substantially helped to re-instate the museum's reputation and standing with the City Council. The exhibition and other museum programmes were seen as directly relating to the Council's strategic aims and its commitment to equalities issues.

This success was followed by the removal of admission charges and a substantial increase in visit numbers. Three of the main collections received Designation status and, very unusually, part of this was for the overall strength of the historical collections in illustrating the importance of Bristol as a maritime city and regional capital since the Middle Ages. Finally, in 2003 Bristol became the lead museum for the South West Hub – a first phase Hub – under the government initiative Renaissance in the Regions.

Bristol Museum's collections are outstanding. By awarding Designation Government recognised the pre-eminence of a large part of what are one of the UK's great regional encyclopaedic collections covering the Arts and Sciences. One consequence was that funding from the Designation Challenge Fund was used to research ten reports which explored various aspects of the Bristol collections and their suitability for including in a Museum of Bristol. Many museums would be envious of such a useful guide to their social history collections being available to guide a major

museum development.

Price had succeeded in strategically re-positioning the Museum and Gallery Service locally and regionally. The missing piece was a flagship museum for the history of Bristol itself which would cement Bristol's historical importance among the public and demonstrate that external investment in the service would produce outstanding results. The successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (a Stage One Pass and the award of £11m was secured at the beginning of 2004) sealed the success of turning around a major regional museum service and lays the foundation for sustained success in the future. The successful lottery bid also ensures that the historic, aesthetic and scientific value of the collections is matched by improvements in the level of care, accessibility and quality of presentation. Upon Stephen Price's retirement later in 2004 the service was expanded to become the Museums, Galleries and Archives Service, the logic for which had been progressively demonstrated by his work in Bristol and especially in the context of the Transatlantic Slavery and Museum of Bristol projects.

Notes

1. The first draw took place in November 1994 and awards were made from 1995.
2. Game Plan: Museums and Lottery Funding (March 17 2005).
3. The unreferenced observations in this paper are largely those of the author based on his experience as Museums Policy Adviser to the Heritage Lottery Fund 1997-2000 and Director of Strategy and Planning at Resource: the Council for Museums Archives and Libraries 2000-2004.
4. Game Plan: Museums and Lottery Funding (2005).

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Lottery Funding Challenges Museums to Innovate - Was An Opportunity Missed?

Helen Monger

This is an abridged version from an MA dissertation at Leicester University, for which I was sponsored by my employers, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Can lottery funding stifle or stimulate innovation?

Resource (The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries) (2002) identifies "promoting innovation and change" as one of its four core roles to deliver its mission. Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) also holds innovation as a central theme stating (September 2000): "The Government is committed to encouraging new and imaginative ideas in the cultural and sporting world whilst ensuring a proper return for the tax and lottery payer". There is a clear political interest at the moment in encouraging innovation within the museum sector: what is less clear is how this is best achieved.

It has traditionally been accepted that financial donors to museums, whether commercial sponsors, private individuals or government organisations, determine the future of museum work. The 'stakeholder' is considered paramount in defining museums' focus. Research also suggests that museums are more heavily influenced by their major funders, usually governments and corporate foundations, than by "middle class individuals and small local businesses" [Alexander V. 1996:46]. However, the identity of the stakeholder and their wants, when it is not an individual benefactor, can be unclear when it comes to giving through governmental or charitable foundations. At the heart of this question is the tension between the public funder's obligations for accountability and risk minimisation and the need for museums to innovate and try new - and usually, by their nature, high risk - ventures.

In the Western European model, museums have traditionally been seen as repositories of culture developed by an intellectual elite to confer status and nobility (Pearce S. 1998). With the professionalization of museum management, the role of museums is changing, increasing emphasis on education and entertainment, identity creation and information for the masses. Museums in the UK are being urged by government to become more accessible: "The DCMS has told Treasury that its priorities are making arts and sports accessible to young people, building communities...increasing the contribution that tourism, leisure and creative industries make to the economy and cutting through bureaucracy. Specific initiatives included continuing free entry to museums and making regional museums more accessible" (Morris J 2002:5). There is therefore a need for museums to develop innovative solutions to this new requirement of accessibility.

To this end the Museums and Galleries Access Fund (MGAF) was launched by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to encourage museums to develop new ways of encouraging access to all. Dr Stuart Davies, formerly Policy Advisor to HLF and now Director of Strategy at Resource confirmed that as early as 1997, when the MGAF scheme was being devised, "DCMS were keen because they wanted to show that their sector was capable of responding to the new government's social inclusion agenda. (They were about to run working parties for libraries and museums/archives (I was a member of both) looking at this topic and would subsequently publish policy guidelines" (2002, personal communication). In July 1998, as an incentive to deliver on this political impetus to make museums accessible and develop innovative solutions, the HLF

launched MGAF.

Using the MGAF programme as a case study, I consider whether museums rose to the challenge, and whether targeted funding was the best method for achieving this type of objective. I also look at what other factors are necessary in order for innovation to be successful and sustainable. Last, I discuss whether innovation, to the extent that it is desirable, is best delivered through lottery-funded projects.

The Museums and Galleries Access Fund (MGAF)

One of HLF's motivations for MGAF was to redress a perceived structural gap in the funding opportunities presented to museums in the early days of the National Lottery. HLF funding had been targeted at capital projects, and the majority of beneficiaries within the museum sector had been National Museums, University Museums and larger independent museums. The aim was to redress this imbalance in a strategic manner, by providing smaller, targeted sums of revenue funding over a three-year period. The advantages of this for museums were "first they could experiment (or reasonably so within the rules); second they could fund projects which met the requirements of their governing bodies...; third they could buy time in which to adjust their core functions, staff and budgets to these new needs" (Davies, S. 2002).

The programme was launched by publishing Guidelines for prospective recipients, instructing them on how to apply for a grant. A provisional allowance of £7 million was allocated to enable this programme to run as a pilot. Grants were available for self-contained and time-limited projects. Projects were encouraged for costs not exceeding £100,000, with awards of up to 90% available.

The priorities for the MGAF scheme were to support:

- Projects which test new, imaginative and innovative proposals either to create new audiences or to develop existing ones.
- Projects which encourage people to participate in the activities of museums and galleries.
- Touring exhibitions involving designated and national collections.

This discussion focuses on the scheme's success in encouraging projects to meet the first of these priorities.

By the end of July 2002 HLF had received 70 applications assessed using MGAF criteria¹. From 30 September 2002 no further applications were accepted by HLF. All data and statistics are correct as at this date when the research started.

For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to look at three financial years covering the period from 1 April 1998 to 31 March 2001. This is when the majority of cases were received. Cases received subsequently are excluded from this analysis as they did not all have decisions, let alone the opportunity to start the project work at the time of undertaking this research, making appropriate comparisons difficult. The breakdown for receipt of cases by financial year, and grant awards, is given in Table 1.

At the time of writing, under the MGAF programme, 55 projects were given approval, with a total award of £4,081,350 - well within the allocated budget of £7 million reflecting a low application rate compared with other schemes.

During the period of the programme under investigation, there were a total of eight rejected applications, and seven projects were withdrawn from assessment prior to a decision. These fifteen cases have been excluded from this research as they can not provide information on the experiences of receiving an award. This is a low rate of failure in comparison to other HLF schemes to date – the average success rate for all HLF applications requesting grants of £5,000 or more is about 62% excluding withdrawn applications, whereas for this programme the success rate was over 78% including withdrawn applications.

Financial Year	No. of Applications	Total Project Costs (£)	Grant Requested (£) and % of total cost	Grant Awarded and total cost
1998-1999	18	4,210,617	2,105,503 (50%)	1,160,490 (27.56%)
1999-2000	38	3,688,209	3,067,154 (83.16%)	2,199,860 (59.64%)
2000-2001	10	790,043	671,638 (85.01%)	455,300 (57.63%)
Subject Area total	66	8,588,869	5,754,295	3,745,650
Total (for programme)	70	9,083,107	6,197,067	4,081 350

Table 1: Breakdown of number of applications received under MGAF and associated costs by financial years.

Analysis

3.1 PROJECT AIMS AND PRIORITIES

Of the 55 projects awarded grants, 45 met the funding priority of seeking to be innovative. These were selected as the sample for this research. Many of these projects also met at least one of the other priorities. 33 projects sought to meet the priority of encouraging people to participate in museum activities and three also sought to meet the priority for supporting touring exhibitions. Therefore, only nine projects focussed exclusively on innovation. These projects were as follows:

Project A: a university museum creating a website for interpretation purposes.

Project B: an area museums council seeking to increase access to ethnographic collections in their region through better documentation, creation of education materials and training for non-specialist curators.

Project C: the setting up of a corporate loan scheme for a local authority-run museum.

Project D: the creation of an education officer post on a short-term basis for a local authority museum.

Project E: a university museum experimenting with audience development work, seeking to attract visitors from culturally and socially diverse groups.

Project F: the piloting of an education scheme to encourage families to revisit an independent museum following a school visit.

Project G: a project to provide free transport in a rural area for disadvantaged groups, in particular families with pre-school children and retired people, to visit a local authority run museum.

Project H: a national museum, developing contacts with young people (aged 16-24) through an outreach officer.

Project I: creation of a multi-cultural education and access programme to develop new audiences for an independent museum.

I will focus on these cases again in the next section where I discuss what people thought was innovative about their project.

Research was undertaken by means of telephone interviews (between 1 October and 15 November 2002) with the project contacts responsible. The entire sample was contacted by a letter of introduction which listed the questions they would be asked. There was little deviation during the interviews to allow comparable material to be obtained. Of these, 33 agreed to be interviewed and three further contacts submitted written responses. These were all collated and assessed alongside HLF case papers

and application material. The following section, list the question interviewees were asked and provide my assessment of the results.

3.2 PROJECT INNOVATION

"What do you think was/is innovative about your project"

There is an inevitable bias in the responses to this question for two reasons. First because innovation was one of the criteria on which the project had been funded under MGAF, thus making it important for the applicant to demonstrate that this had been achieved. Second, because there is a natural tendency for people to wish their project to be perceived as having succeeded, which would in this instance need innovation to demonstrate that success. Indeed, only four respondents stated that their project had not been innovative, but had developed new material, ways of working or audiences for their particular museum. More often, people felt that innovation meant what was new to the museum, and the responses given by Projects D and I typify the reluctance, or possible lack of awareness of people to acknowledge that they were undertaking well-known techniques:

Project D: "The scheme in itself was not innovative in that lots of museums have education and access officers but we were very lucky in that the two people who ended up job-sharing for this post meant that we covered a wider number of skills and this helped the museum with new ideas and concepts."

Project I: "What we are doing, employing an education officer, has been tried before but it is entirely new for the museum itself. The products delivered as a result of having this post, such as the school packages, may be innovative and provide a model for other museums to use".

It should be noted that HLF, in assessing these projects, accepted that innovation could just mean new for the organisation involved, though this is not the definition I have chosen to adopt for this discussion. Therefore, what is of interest here is not whether these organisations met the HLF remit, which it would appear they did based on receiving funding, but whether museums felt that they were genuinely providing new products and ideas, albeit possibly through previously tried methods. The remaining projects A-I (i.e. those for which innovation was the sole criterion against which MGAF funding was offered) gave the following answers.

Project A: "there are hundreds of websites but none like this one. Usually museums offer large catalogues of objects with very limited information. This scheme interprets a limited number of objects by allowing the virtual visitor to observe how objects are made in reverse."

Project B: "ethnographic collections had not been given this sort of attention for some time... this project sought to encourage more contemporary uses and engagement with local communities".

Project C: "There are many loans schemes running around the country but for the first time we offered objects rather than just pictures to take to corporate venues such as reception areas and boardrooms".

Project E: "we used the collections in a different way and the university resources in a different way. We made links between the research the University was carrying out and the exhibits held within the museum."

Project F: "After a school visit the children are given 'smartcards' which provide a free return trip with a full paying adult for the rest of the season. The use of 'smartcards' was something that we had not come across before. We are also pleased with some of the new ideas for interpretation around the museum, with the use of Access Points which provide practical objects which allow people to experiment with what they have just observed".

Project G: "Up until recently transport was not seen as important and this was the first time we were able to obtain grant aid to cover these costs. It enabled us to run a

pilot to test our suspicion that transport in a rural area is a major barrier and see if this was the case."

Project H: "Previously the museum had focussed on numbers of visitors. Free entry was offered in 2001 and since then the figures for visitors has rocketed. The emphasis for us therefore has shifted from how many to who comes in. This scheme enabled us for the first time to focus on one particular audience's needs."

I have compared the responses from all the other applications in my sample by grouping types of project around a number of common themes. These groupings have emerged through analysis of the target audiences and the aims of the project. Examples of how people felt their project was innovative are listed in the sample quotations below:

a) Working with young people

A number of projects placed great emphasis on attracting younger audiences through both formal and informal education.

- One respondent said, "we are the only independent museum that has joined up with a Youth Organisation that I know about. We look completely across the spectrum of museum services to provide opportunities..."
- An independent museum believed that "the use of the building made for a dynamic project. We did not just focus on the past but used the building as an artefact to deal with issues about rights and responsibilities, which affect the young. We used drama to contextualize all the information". There are several other examples in this survey where museums have commented on the use of drama and the use of buildings as part of making the museum experience more realistic for younger people.
- A partnership of museums agreed that "the new process is working with young people who are outside formal education ... it is always a challenge working with young people, especially the disaffected."
- Another local authority-run museum stated that "the most innovative elements involved bringing in school-children and other people as interpreters of the material. For example, we brought in musicians to demonstrate what an historical instrument would have sounded like by playing something similar. In addition, the interactive elements on the website were leading edge, in that they focussed on the way things work and objects are created rather than their provenance." It is worth noting here that there are also similarities with Project A for using the website as an interpretative tool.

Several museums explained that the products of their educational work, rather than the work itself, were innovative. A partnership developed special activity backpacks for children as part of an art exhibition. Part of the rationale for this was to encourage children to visit in family groups. This demonstrates a similar goal to Project F although the method of delivery was somewhat different. Project F enabled children to bring back parents following a school visit with the use of 'smartcards' and also worked on its methods of interpretation, by providing alternative means of learning which use different intelligences, as encouraged in constructivist education theory (Davis, J. and Gardner, H. 1999). Whilst these products are new, the concept of encouraging children to bring their parents along is not and museums have for a long time used similar devices such as worksheets, quizzes and activity carts to encourage cross-generation visiting.

One respondent from a national museum, focussing on two types of audiences - the young and the elderly - summarized some of the challenges for both kinds of work as follows: "No other museum I know of employs someone with considerable experience of working with elderly people as a primary function of a post, over and above any museum background. We have tried lots of new things for the elderly that

may well form models of best practice in the future. Our work with young people is less innovative in that everyone else is also trying to work with them but that does not diminish the fact that this is a very challenging area for our work and that it needs to be undertaken." This statement is a fair summary of the work of the museum sector, which appears to focus on young audiences, despite a growing retired population with significant leisure time to invest in museum visiting.

b) Developing new audiences

Whilst some applicants focussed specifically on attracting more young people, others chose to segment their target audience in different ways, based upon ethnicity, religious or other socio-economic factors.

- A museum partnership stated that with their project "we challenged the accepted wisdom of how objects of this value (ancient Egyptian artefacts) could be displayed. For example, we held public debates over whether mummified remains should be displayed and gave the visitor the choice of whether to look under the shroud or not. This is now feeding through to the working party on human remains."
- A local museum seeking to work with those aged 50 plus explained that "this is the first time this target audience has been involved and has an 'official' voice within the museum". This concept of giving people the opportunity to express their own opinions within the museum is a theme that comes through with most of the projects focussing on target audiences, community work and volunteers.
- A local authority museum explained that "the project provides locally-based displays [in local leisure centres and the like] on their chosen themes and using objects from our collections. The museum service covers all the hidden costs, such as maintenance work. This enables the communities to decide what they want to focus on as part of their local identity without the worries of funding the costs of running a museum".
- An independent museum running a touring exhibition on a similar theme to a temporary exhibition on site commented that "this provided the maximum opportunity to access at least one of the exhibitions." This museum also explained that "the consultation process was seen as an important end in itself in order to encourage ethnic minority communities to become involved in museums with collaborative working between faith groups." A common thread with this sort of project was the emphasis on the museum acting as facilitator and being led by the groups as to the topics and displays they wanted to create.

c) Working with volunteers

In addition to developing audiences, a number of respondents pointed to how their project had enabled new ways of working with volunteer staff. For the museum sector as a whole, volunteers represent both a significant element of the workforce and an important audience base in their own right: there are estimated to be between 25,000 and 30,000 volunteers involved in museums (Klemm, M. Watson, N. and Scott, M. 1994).

- An independent museum reliant on volunteers stated "the scheme provided the opportunity to try a number of new things which have now been adopted as permanent features. For example we now have workshops that are a great success built into the ongoing programmes and volunteers now manage the costume collection, although with supervision and training from staff. The hardest thing, however has been for [paid] staff to let go".
- A local authority museum explained that it was "quite a challenge in that volunteers cover a far greater variety of jobs within museums and are of a greater variety than we expected. The age range of volunteers goes from 13 to 70 and the only things volunteers are excluded from relate to Health and Safety issues."

d) Partnerships

MGAF aimed to encourage partnerships, and several museums felt that this had been a source of inspiration and support for trying new ideas out.

- A group of five independent museums when commenting on what was innovative stated “working together was a real bonus. We could not be ignored by the local media in terms of publicity and had to be taken seriously since there were so many of us involved.”

From the quotations above it can be seen that most participants took the opportunity presented by MGAF funding to try things which were at least new to their individual institution – or in some cases, to form a new partnership with other bodies in order to deliver their projects. That most projects could be grouped around a small number of themes, as documented above, is perhaps not surprising given that the ultimate aim of the MGAF scheme was to improve access to museums, thus presenting applicants with a limited range of areas within which to innovate. It can also be seen that a number of different approaches were adopted within each theme, which suggests that there was at least partial success in encouraging innovation.

Quantifying innovation in museums is problematic. Unlike manufacturing, the product in museums is not easily defined, nor is the measure for outputs (McClean, F. 1997). Hence an equation between marketing, product and profit (the measure of output in the private sector) can not be drawn up to establish whether the innovative part of that calculation has had an impact. Therefore, quantification, through the sheer weight of repeated anecdotal evidence, is likely to be the main gauge of whether a project has been innovative, and in the long run effective, as a new model for future development.

As such, this retrospective analysis does not necessarily capture all the pertinent evidence, in that what appears innovative at the outset may have become so much part of the work of a museum that it is difficult for the interviewee to report back what has been innovative. Certainly some of the respondents expressed this in the interviews; for example an independent museum which had focussed on education of disaffected youths stated that over the three years of the project “the material developed for these sessions has become part of our mainstream work and is no longer considered unusual”.

Whilst the above example provides hope, in that the project has through innovation engendered new material which should last, this is not always so. For innovation to have a lasting benefit, museums must learn the lessons, share with each other and evolve new ideas steadily - stop-start ad hoc experimentation will not deliver a sufficient impetus to overcome the perceived barriers of museum attendance. Unfortunately evidence during this research suggests that this may be the current approach. In some cases, the respondents thought that they were the only people doing this sort of work, whereas other applicants were doing broadly similar things, and in many cases similar techniques had been tried before elsewhere. This raises issues about how much knowledge transfer is undertaken within the museum sector to ensure steady progress for the sector.

3.3 THE INFLUENCE OF MGAF FUNDING ON THE PROJECT

Respondents were invited to select statements from a multiple-choice list of options, which had originally been envisaged as being mutually exclusive alternatives. In practice respondents preferred to agree to as many of the list as possible regarding them as part of a spectrum of possibilities. Table 2 gives a synopsis of all the answers.

Unsurprisingly, almost all respondents felt that their project had provided the opportunity to try something new, thus confirming the anecdotal evidence previously discussed. Most respondents also stated that MGAF funding had provided them with

Options	No. agreeing with the statement	Proportion of responses (%)
MGAF provided an opportunity to try something new	33	92
MGAF provided an opportunity to take risks	30	83
MGAF enabled a project to go ahead which had been planned but where resources had previously been lacking	25	69
MGAF enabled a planned project to go ahead on a more significant scale than originally envisaged	20	56
MGAF sparked our imagination to develop an appropriate project	21	58
MGAF led us to run the project in a different way than we would have liked	6	17
Other (please specify) ²	2	13

Table 2: Number and proportion of respondents who agreed with the statements about the influence of MGAF funding on the projects.

an opportunity to take risks – an important factor in assessing the scope for innovation. Through probing on what risks were taken, it emerged that many felt that, in the words of one respondent “we just would not have been able to undertake the work without the funding. It gave us the opportunity to learn what we were good at and what we were not so good at.” In other words, MGAF funding typically enabled applicants to undertake projects that would otherwise not have happened, not because they were particularly risky but because of financial constraints.

This finding is reinforced by significant numbers of respondents also agreeing with the statement that MGAF had enabled them to undertake projects which they had already planned, but not been able to execute due to lack of resources. In some cases, an existing project was expanded as a result of the MGAF funding. To this extent, MGAF acted not so much to stimulate innovation as to provide the means to put existing ideas into practice.

However, many respondents (58%) also stated that MGAF had stimulated their imaginations to develop new projects that responded to the MGAF objectives. This does suggest a direct impact from MGAF stimulating innovative projects.

These results must be interpreted with some caution, as there was a degree of overlap between those respondents who indicated that MGAF had enabled the execution of an existing idea with the group who claimed MGAF had encouraged them to develop new ideas: twenty respondents in all. This suggests that the impact of MGAF was often subtle, perhaps leading to a refinement in scope of a planned project rather than leading to wholly new ideas.

Encouragingly, only one in six respondents felt that the conditions attached to MGAF had led them to run their projects differently from how they would have liked. Overall, the responses to this question do suggest that the MGAF scheme did encourage the introduction of innovative projects, whether by enabling existing ideas to be executed or by stimulating new thinking².

The way forward

This study has focussed on the MGAF programme, a highly focussed scheme

operated by HLF between July 1997 and September 2002. As such, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions on the impact of funding on innovation generally. However, the level of internal information which was available to me, combined with the number of successful applicants responding to my questionnaire do mean that some interesting observations can be made which may have relevance to the sector more widely.

During my analysis, most respondents stated that MGAF funding had enabled them to try new things and take risks, which is consistent with stimulating innovation. However, it is not always straightforward to assess whether MGAF enabled an existing idea to happen or whether it genuinely stimulated new thinking. In terms of evaluating the MGAF programme the following points have emerged:

Innovation was one of three criteria applied to MGAF-funded projects. Of the successful applicants, 82% were assessed by HLF as having innovative aspects to their proposals, and in nine cases (16%) the application was funded based on this criterion alone. This suggests that the museums who participated were undaunted by the prospect of being innovative.

The level of applications assessed under the MGAF scheme was low compared to other HLF programmes, but the success rate among applicants was high (at 78%). Further investigation is required to find out what factors contributed to a high success rate and/or a low application rate.

Few respondents indicated that the conditions attached to MGAF funding had constrained the way in which they ran their project, though the three-year time limit and monitoring system were found to be inhibiting in some cases.

In discussions with Dr Stuart Davies (2002) he stated that, on reflection, "the development of the programme was probably too internalised" and suffered from a desire to respond rapidly to DCMS' ambitions, which resulted in too brief a genesis to enable proper external consultation. This meant that possible external champions for the scheme neither understood nor were willing to promote the full flexibility that MGAF was seeking to offer. This may have been one reason for the low take-up and limited range of projects that came forward.

The main surprise finding of the research was that for about half the respondents, the project manager had changed since the original application had been submitted. This made it difficult to get full responses to some of the interview questions. Furthermore it has significant implications both for successful implementation of innovative projects, and for the development of the museum sector as a whole, if this pattern of staff mobility is reflected elsewhere. The reasons for this high turnover can only be speculated on here. One possible cause may be the three-year time limit of this programme, resulting in short-term contracts which staff are keen to move from prior to project expiry.

High turnover in itself would not be such a concern were it not for another finding of this research, namely poor consistency in documentation combined with a lack of sharing of knowledge between institutions, as evidenced by respondents not showing awareness of the activities of fellow grant recipients. This can lead to unnecessary repetition of past mistakes and also diverse attempts at innovation coming to very similar conclusions. Examples outlined above include a variety of projects looking at overcoming educational barriers, which had they shared their experiences more closely might have developed a more comprehensive solution and best practice guidance which could be transferred universally. Given the fragmented and diverse nature of museums, the strategic bodies within the sector must take some responsibility for improving communication between practitioners to disseminate best practice.

With the constant drive to implement change, it can be difficult to consolidate what has been achieved. Moreover, frequent restructuring of organisations, changes in

working practices, temporary exhibitions to deliver new audiences and new interpretation methods may lose sight of some of the earlier lessons and what is cherished by others in museums. It is therefore important that innovation is not seen as an end in itself, and that in order to make full use of new developments, newly acquired skills should be recorded for future use and trialling.

To return to the original question, it appears that in the specific context of the MGAF programme the funding which was provided did serve to stimulate innovation in a number of cases. In some instances, MGAF provided the means to implement ideas which had already been developed. Although a number of applicants expressed some reservations regarding the conditions attached to MGAF funding, and the systems and processes required to secure it, in general it did not appear that the programme could be said to have stifled innovation. A broader question is why so few museums felt able to respond to the challenge presented by MGAF, and it remains to be seen what long-term impacts the innovations which do emerge from the scheme will have.

Notes

1. Applicants were instructed to label the top left-hand corner of the application form page with 'Museums and Galleries Access Fund'. In practice this was rarely done, and frequently it was left to HLF staff to allocate cases accordingly. In a few instances applicants may have applied to MGAF, but would have been transferred with their agreement to other funding programmes where these were felt to be more suitable.
2. The alternative response: "MGAF enabled a project to be developed building on expertise but where resources were not available".

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Rural Museums and the National Lottery

Roy Bridgen

Ten years on, what has been the impact of the Lottery on rural museums? A fair assessment would be that it has supported a regenerative process which, as the twenty-first century dawned, was vitally needed to inject some new energy and direction into the sector. To explain, it is necessary to go back briefly over the rural museum story. It began a century earlier in Scandinavia, when in 1891 Stockholm's Skansen pioneered a new concept of the open air folk museum which then rapidly spread and established itself in the countries of northern and central Europe. This was a different type of museum, adopted by regions and nations to define themselves geographically and psychologically through an indigenous rural material culture that was by then under increasing pressure from industrial development and urbanisation. Backed up by university departments of ethnology and folklife, this movement produced a methodology of collecting and object-based study which was far-reaching in its influence and became the orthodoxy for the rural museum. In Britain, these developments took rather longer to take hold. An island nation with secure borders, it was unaffected by the wave of European cultural nationalism and preferred to define itself as an imperial and cultural super-power. Peasant rural culture of the European kind was in any case absent from the countryside, in England at least, where the landlord tenant system and the early intrusion of industrial changes had produced a different social landscape.

However, in the inter-War period, when the tractor was beginning to ease the horse out of agriculture and when the motor car was bringing the countryside ever closer to the town, the British did start to collect and record and it was to the European style folk museum that they turned for a model to follow. Gloucester Folk Museum, Shibden Hall in Halifax, York Castle Museum, Cregneash on the Isle of Man and the Highland Folk Museum were all born in this period and sprang from the tenacious collecting of a few far-sighted individuals who were conscious of the consequences that these changes would exact upon rural ways of life. Immediately following the Second War there came the Welsh Folk Museum, an open air museum of the Skansen type, and four years later in 1951, the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading. Here, although the initiative came from the Department of Agriculture and was prompted by the technological changes in farming, nevertheless the framework and procedures were drawn from the only guide there was, the continental folk museum. It was not entirely appropriate in the English context, and set the pattern for a difficulty that became exacerbated over time.

That burst of activity either side of the Second War represents the first phase of rural museum development in this country. The second phase occurred during the 1970s. As the agro-food industry moved into top gear and high-tech farming appeared ruthless in its drive for growth, they induced a popular nostalgic reaction which looked for reassurance and security in an earlier time when the relationship between man and the countryside appeared more harmonious. Meanwhile, social history departments which had begun to appear in the larger museum services during the 1960s, had been accumulating rural and agricultural material at a steadily increasing rate and were beginning to actively think about creating offshoots to house it appropriately. Add to that a round of strategic local government reorganisation in 1973, which saw the creation of some new county-based museum services keen to create a presence in their rural hinterlands, and there in place were all the ingredients for a new wave of museum activity. The Somerset Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury, Cogges Farm Museum at Witney in Oxfordshire and the Norfolk Rural Life Museum at Gressenhall

were amongst the immediate results. There were also other formulae at work. In Sussex, for example, sheer enthusiasm from a small group of people led to the development at Singleton of the most classic of English open air museums, more than eighty years after Skansen had shown the way. Elsewhere, such as at Stowmarket in Suffolk and Acton Scott in Shropshire, public-private partnerships produced variations on the rural museum theme. These were heady days, long before anyone had dreamed of a lottery cash cow. In a decade of what seems now like almost anarchic museum development, probably the only growth industry there was at the time, rural museums were right there in the vanguard. They were inspired just a little by what we might label today as New Ageism, were founded on optimism and audience collaboration, and virtually lived off adrenalin alone. There would hardly have been a business plan amongst any of them.

At that rate of growth, within a matter of a few years the country was criss-crossed by a wide variety of rural museums. Some comprised collections within buildings, some were open air museums, others were working farm museums, others again were a hybrid of all of these. In organisation, they ranged from the national museum at one end of the scale, down through local government and trusts to small private operations at the other. Across all of this divergence, they had many features in common. In most cases, they were under-staffed and under-financed to the point where a hugely disproportionate degree of effort was necessary, on the part not only of employees but also Friends and volunteers, simply to keep the operation going. Over a period of time, this sapped energy and crowded-out longer term thought and planning. Meanwhile, the infrastructural improvements required on what were often the historic but crumbling buildings in which the Museum was housed were not happening, or not happening fast enough, so that real problems were being stored up for the future.

These museums had a similar audience profile and appeal. Back in the 1970s, horse-powered farming and the connection back to an apparently timeless era in the countryside were still a live memory. Parents and grandparents, born between the World Wars, had experienced these things for themselves and an older generation of Victorians, with recall back to the beginning of the century, was still a significant presence. As a result, a general sense of passing and of loss hung heavy in the air. The countryside was not what it was, and now was the time to look back with fondness to how it used to be. Society was suffused with this idea, at the same time spawning the rash of new museums and giving them a ready constituency of visitors and supporters.

Another shared characteristic was a non-alignment between the myth of the countryside as perceived through the eyes of the rural museum and the reality of the countryside itself. The European folk museum legacy induced a tendency to focus on the concept of a pre-industrial rural folk culture and to accordingly adopt similar collecting, research and interpretive practices. There were sound reasons for this on the Continent, where in many areas a peasant culture had doggedly resisted modernisation and where systematic collecting was under way before the end of the nineteenth century at a time when pre-industrial material was still widely available. In Britain, and particularly in England, the picture was rather different. Industrialisation of the countryside was certainly under way by the middle of the nineteenth century, in some areas earlier, and the start of serious collecting was at least a generation, and quite often more than half a century, behind the pioneers in northern Europe. The result was a kind of myopia whereby much of the material collected did not quite fit the story that was being told. A mindset framed by the conventions of folk culture overcame this by concentrating on those things that represented the more distant past. Meanwhile outside, what really drew the customers were the steam engine rallies and tractor demonstrations: products of an industrial culture collected in many cases not by museums but by private individuals.

The third phase of rural museum development arrived at the end of the 1980s. These were years of retrenchment. Ironically, 1989 was Food and Farming Year, a celebration of British agriculture, and there was much talk of a new national museum on the subject. But times were changing and the public was becoming only too aware of the less acceptable side of modern farming, with its implications for dietary health, animal welfare and environmental disfigurement, to be persuaded by a simple exercise in flag waving. People were being seriously turned off by farming, and everyone and everything associated with it, however indirectly. Inevitably, this had a negative knock-on effect for the rural museum which slipped quietly out of fashion. The BSE crisis sullied the name of farming further, and the foot and mouth disaster was still to come.

There was another problem. By the 1990s, those people with a personal nostalgic response to the days of horse power and the pre-War countryside were disappearing from the scene. They were being rapidly replaced by new generations who had no emotional attachment to a farm wagon or wooden plough, and indeed for whom such items were remote to the point of meaninglessness. The rural museum found itself with a diminishing natural constituency of visitors and with its buildings full of things to which a younger audience did not relate. Collecting of post-1950 material had not happened in any systematic way partly through lack of capacity, partly through that lingering folk life concept of what rural museums should be about, and partly through lack of demand. Agricultural equipment of the 1960s and 70s tended to be very large and complicated from a preservation standpoint, was like as not built abroad, and meant very little to the vast proportion of the population who now had no direct link to farming. Rural museums were not going to turn their fortunes around by stocking their displays and demonstrations with anonymous-looking modern machinery. On the other hand, the fact was that as the years passed their collections were becoming ever more dislocated from the present, locked into a time warp all their own.

It was time to take stock and re-think. Rural museums were being drawn into a spiral of decline. They looked outdated and lacking in ideas. Public support was diminishing and as a result the investment needed to kick-start them back into life was going elsewhere. Against the city-chic art galleries, the new rock and roll of the 1990s, they indeed were stuck in a bygone era. This is the point at which the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) arrived on the scene and started to make a difference by offering the opportunity to break that cycle of decline through the injection of new capital for infrastructural works that had been lacking for decades and for the support of new energy and new initiatives. Norfolk's Rural Life Museum at Gressenhall is a case in point. Set up in the mid-1970s, on a wave of enthusiasm and a less than shoe-string budget, it was inhibited by and gradually being ground down by the sheer weight of backlogs in building repair and consequent lack of new development. A £2.3 million programme of works in the period 1999-2001, which included a £1.4 million HLF grant, spurred a transformation. What mattered were not simply the renovations, the new exhibitions and the new public facilities that were completed but the reorientation of the museum to meet the needs of today's audience. This does not imply jettisoning the museum's own past but it does mean presenting a different face, telling a more contemporary story in a contemporary way, developing new types of educational activity, engaging with the present and with the food, environmental and farming issues that people today are interested in and concerned about. In other words, it is about making the museum relevant. Lottery money helped to make this happen and created the confidence for the museum to plan further developments in the near future.

The Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading is going through something similar. Never properly housed, it has suffered for years from the stasis caused by collections crowding out activity. That is now changing and in a

£10.5 million redevelopment, almost half coming from the HLF, the museum is moving to a new site at the University where facilities for accommodating and accessing the material will be transformed. The Lottery has helped in other ways as well, with the HLF supporting audience development and photographic conservation projects, and the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) a substantial programme of archive digitisation. Integral to the whole process is a reassessment of the Museum's role, building on its strengths as a collections-rich university-based resource to interpret rural and agricultural change to the wider community at all levels. This means relating the past to the present, looking at the collection in a contemporary way and taking a flexible activity-led approach to engage with what is now a predominantly urban audience.

Elsewhere, other major projects with Lottery input have contributed to what might be described as a second coming for the rural museum at the start of the twenty-first century. The new Museum of Scottish Country Life at Kitchside, for example, opened in 2001 and combines collections of the more recent as well as the pre-mechanised past with a farm and the unique capacity to interpret 1950s agriculture. In Sussex, the Weald and Downland Museum unveiled the Gridshell in 2002, a building of structural innovation that has wowed the architectural world and is a central part of the museum's strategy to pass the skills and knowledge of the past on to the future. A fresh new presentation of rural material at Denny Abbey in Cambridgeshire in the late 1990s received substantial HLF support and has been followed by associated educational initiatives. The history of foxhunting has been tackled head-on in the re-furbished Melton Mowbray Museum and at the Museum of Kent Life a number of separate projects have been supported benefiting both collections and visitors and sustaining support for the museum itself.

There is renewed confidence amongst rural museums that they have a role to play of relevance in today's society, bridging the gap between town and country and being a positive stimulus within rural communities where deprivation and social exclusion often lurk behind the tranquil scenery. To this end, they have now drawn together, forming a Rural Museums Network, encompassing the whole of the UK and with a current membership of over fifty different museums (see www.ruralmuseumsnetwork.org), to raise the profile, pool experience and present a shared approach to the particular challenges that the sector faces. A corner has been turned and the HLF has been a contributing factor. There is still much to play for in developing schemes for lottery support that will initiate and extend new activity to keep the rural museum firmly in touch with its audience.

Collecting 2000 three years on: was it worth it?

Cathy Ross

The *Collecting 2000* project is one that *Social History in Museums* readers may have heard about before. It was one of several contemporary collecting projects that were funded by the Millennium Festival, via the Heritage Lottery Fund, and intended to mark the new millennium in a suitably upbeat way. *Collecting 2000* was the Museum of London's effort and some readers may have read Rachel Reynolds' article about it in the April 2000 SHCG News¹. Others may have seen the catalogue², or indeed visited the exhibition which was shown at the Museum of London from 20 September 2000 to 29 April 2001. Why, then, does it merit another article three years after the end of the event?

Collecting 2000 was always a project with two sides to it. It had short term and long term aims; it was about the process of community work and the end product of a collection; it was about outreach and collection development. Right from the start we the curators aimed to have our cake and eat it in terms of marrying these two areas of museum work. As the scoping document stated, '*Collecting 2000* is designed to bring together the two different approaches that inform both these activities, the 'process-driven' character of community work and the 'product-driven' character of curatorial collecting. *Collecting 2000* is designed to be a community project where, the end product makes a clear, high quality and lasting contribution to the historical record.

In this article I want to look at the long term results of the project. Now that the excitement of doing of it has faded - and it was a project with a strong feel-good factor for all involved - is it possible to judge whether we have made a 'clear, high quality contribution to the historical record'? In particular I want to tackle something we promised to do on completion of the project: which was to 'draw up a full evaluation of the "intellectual capital" of the objects we have ended up with'. This hostage to fortune remains outstanding, although it should be said that we completed our other three, far more straightforward, evaluations within two months of the project's end. Making a virtue out of an oversight, perhaps three years is just about the right length of time for a decent perspective on the question of 'intellectual capital'. Did it generate any? Was it worth it?

First, a brief reminder of what it was all about. Our core idea was to persuade as many clubs, groups or societies in London as we could to give the Museum one item, object or image that, for them represented their activities at the turn of the twentieth century. The project hoped to create an archive of material which embodied the diversity of the city at the turn of the millennium through the enthusiasms and activities of its citizens, and to do so in a way that involved the citizens themselves. Clubs and societies were defined loosely as any group to which people chose voluntarily to belong and which had some sense of common purpose together with some reasonably formal way of behaving, such as regular meetings or membership mailings. The looseness was essential because we wanted to spread our net wide capturing the small as well as the big fish. Our definition got looser as the project progressed, to the benefit of the project's broad church spirit. No one who wanted to join in was turned away.

In terms of numbers, we had aimed for 1,000 objects from 1,000 groups, an optimistic guess based simply on the 2,000 clubs and societies listed in London's yellow pages in 1998. In the event we got 200 objects from 200 groups, which was in fact the limit we were able to cope with, given the time and energies of the project's lead curator, Rachel Reynolds. This is the place to credit Rachel as the most important factor in the project's success. We had underestimated the amount of face

to face contact that building a relationship with a group would entail. Much of this work fell on Rachel's shoulders and she carried it out with great charm and skill. As the Auvergnats de Grande Bretagne put it, when recording their admiration for her in the evaluation, '(she) always found time to receive her visitor with a smile and a cup of tea'.

There were three defined outputs for the project: the collection itself, an exhibition, and a publication. We threw in a web catalogue for good measure. The groups who made up our final 200 were as diverse as we had hoped: from the alphabetical top the list went - the 1890s Society, the 4th Higham Park Brownie Pack, Acorn Films, Adzido Pan-African Dance Ensemble etc. The objects were equally disparate and included a cow horn, a large model stag beetle, a ceramic brick, a three dimensional cityscape in a box and several web sites. But it was often the 50 word statements that the groups supplied to explain themselves and their choices that made the project qualify as the human comedy at its most fascinating.

So what intellectual capital, if any, did it all generate? For one thing, it has added further proof to the Zen law of contemporary collecting: which is that getting the contemporary stuff can make your historic objects seem more interesting. For me at least, becoming more interested in societies and clubs today has made me look more kindly on items in our existing collection that previously seemed rather dull. Like many museums, our collections have amassed lots of things that people kept as mementoes of their own personal achievements - prizes, tennis club trophies, badges, certificates and membership cards. I had never really looked at them before as expressing anything more than the events of an individual life. But of course they do form part of a bigger picture to which *Collecting 2000* also belongs.

To be truthful, the dialogue between past and present associational life was always part of the concept. The reason why we chose to collect from clubs and societies rather than individuals stemmed in part from the increasing attention paid to clubs by historians of seventeenth and eighteenth century London. The key text here is *British Clubs and Societies 1580 - 1800: the origins of an associational world* by Peter Clark, a book that not only provides an extremely helpful overview of the growth of these disparate bodies, but places the growth of clubs in the wider context of historical change and national identity. Clark is one of several historians who see associational life as a central thread in our particular character as a nation - Britain is a nation of joiners, as one puts it. Or, as a 1940s sociologist noted: 'The habit of forming voluntary associations for every sort of social purpose is widely spread and deeply rooted in this country. Quite naturally in Britain when a man has a new enthusiasm, he buys a twopenny notebook, prints 'Minute Book' carefully on the first page, calls together some of his friends under the name of a Committee - and behold a new voluntary society is launched'³.

The interest in clubs and societies in the past seemed as good a reason as any for looking at clubs and societies in the present. Are they still doing the same sort of things? At the very broad level of course they are, because clubs and societies, whether from the seventeenth or twentieth century are largely an urban phenomenon. Whichever way you look at it the growth of clubs and societies in Britain is tied up with the growth of Britain as an urbanized society, as Clark eloquently argues. Accurate figures for the growth of clubs and societies are hard to dig out but Clark ventured an informed guesstimate which shows a take off point in the mid-seventeenth century rising to about 100 in 1700, 500 in 1750 and then a spurt of growth bringing the total up to 6,500 in 1800. After 1800 the numbers go off the scale. By the 1940s there were 30,000 amateur football clubs alone. Today the charities' register lists hundreds of thousands of charitable groups and this is in addition to the numbers of small informal groups who meet in church halls and front rooms together with non-charitable groups such as fan clubs and collectors clubs. Altogether there must be millions of groups at

large in Britain today, many of them in towns and cities. Clark and other historians argue see no coincidence in the fact that rising levels of associational activity and public sociability go hand in hand with rising levels of urbanization: if Britain is a nation of joiners it is because we are a nation of city-dwellers.

It is always exciting to see new patterns in the past that you hadn't seen before. *Collecting 2000* helped us to see a new big picture of London's past into which a surprising quantity of our older objects fitted comfortably. Many resonances between past and present emerged. Compare and contrast the purple white and green clothes worn by the Women's Social and Political Union as part of the suffragette campaign, with the T shirt given to *Collecting 2000* by the English Collective for Prostitutes (founded 1982, membership varies). 'Deeds Not Words' is the slogan of the former: 'No Bad Women. Only Bad Laws' for the latter. In some cases the resonances over time came through the groups themselves. One of our oldest groups was the Society of Antiquaries (founded 1707, members 1200) who Peter Clark credits with being one of the first of the modern style voluntary groups. Their donation for *Collecting 2000* was a website, and their reason: 'in the eighteenth century, by publishing prints of objects and pictures, we used the best of contemporary technology to communicate with a widening audience. Our website represents the Society's continuing wish to innovate and progress, which has existed throughout our 300-year history.' By contrast the City of London Club (founded 1832, members 1280) gave a reproduction of an 1832 drawing of the club to make the point that 'the City is changing but the club remains the same. It is like stepping back in history'.

If the knock-on benefits to the rest of the collection was part of the intellectual capital gains, another part was the diversity of today that the objects and participants represented. Capturing the diversity of London in 2000 was of course one of the overt aims and we reserved the right to try extra hard to attract specific groups if we felt that the project as a whole was not reflecting the full picture of the capital's rich cultural and social life. In the end we achieved a mix that was 'very London' in its scope: from the old establishment - The Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks (founded 1274, members 88) - to the new establishment - the Groucho Club (founded 1985, members 3862); from Barnet Elderly Aisan Group (founded 1978, 169 members) to the Nka Iban writers group (founded 1987, members five). Ethnic diversity was well represented as were religious groups and welfare groups. There were strong minded campaigning groups: 'It is our hope to overthrow the capitalist system in the new century and replace it with a society that puts human needs before profits' said Haringey Solidarity Group (founded 1991, members 150) as a statement to accompany their gift of their May Day 200 leaflet. By contrast the Deep Space Dykes (founded 1997 members 30) had the less ambitious aim of trying to contact more lesbian Star Trek fans.

Material culture specialists of the future will no doubt have a field day with the choices of objects and the reasons why they were chosen. Most if not all of the groups took their choices seriously and clearly understood that the project offered an opportunity to represent themselves to future generations. Many gave objects that made public statements about their interests and loyalties - there were a lot of customized T shirts. The Feathers Project (founded 1989, members 50-60) made and gave a sculpture which represented their work. 'Its about taking responsibility for the promotion of a positive image of ourselves as people with mental health problems who can realise our potential, have control over our lives and play a role in our community'. Others gave more private things: one of the first objects to come in was a tea pot from the North Kensington Memories group (founded 1989, members twelve) because 'we wouldn't operate without a cup of tea'. The Chingford Calligraphy Circle (founded 1992, members twenty) donated a workbox and calligraphy tools to represent 'the work we have done over the last eight years, the goals we have

achieved and the hope that we can take the art of calligraphy into the twenty-first century in spite of modern technology'.

All in all I feel fairly confident that I can tick the box for the intellectual capital benefits of *Collecting 2000*: and that, yes, it was worth it in terms of long term benefits to our collections development. The collection provides a solid if slightly bizarre slice of London's diversity at one particular point in time and it also fits well into an interesting historical narrative about associational life as a thread in national identity. Are there any down sides? I can think of only one point where the short-term and long-term aspects of the project potentially clash, and it is essentially the old museum dilemma of how much curators have the 'right' to break up the integrity of discrete collections and reinterpret individual objects to suit other purposes. Today no one would accept a collection of, say, antique glasses on condition that it was shown in its entirety with the collector's own views about the object attached. Legally this is also the case for *Collecting 2000* objects which were acquired under our normal acquisition procedure which transfers full title to us with no strings attached. But do different moral rules apply where we have specifically solicited people to choose their items and asked them to interpret them in their own words. There is surely a case for thinking that our items are so locked into their *Collecting 2000* framework that we cannot really cherry pick them for other purposes. Do the short term goals cast a shadow over the long term benefits?

In one case we already have plucked one of the *Collecting 2000* items from its context and are currently displaying it in our temporary exhibition *The London Look* without its *Collecting 2000* caption, and with no reference at all to its donating group. This item is something of a special case in that the group in question was a Museum of London friends group whose aim as a group is to buy items of costume for the Museum. But what if we wanted to use, say, the national flag of Bangladesh donated by the Nirmul Committee (founded 1992, members 100) in a display about, say, flag design without reference to the group themselves and their aim of raising awareness of Bengali's history and culture amongst Bengali youth? This is something that we are going to have to face up to soon. Maybe there is an arbitrary judgment to be made case by case with curators second-guessing how important the object was to the donating group and getting in touch with them, or not, as appropriate. My guess would be that Chelsea Football Club (founded 1905, membership varies) who sent by return of post a poster of the 1999/2000 squad with the caption 'This is our team. Many fans will have this poster on their wall' would probably not care that much how we used the poster in future exhibitions. But the Stepney Children's Fund who sent a rather poignant souvenir of their 1996 summer camp would probably not want to see the souvenir shown without the point being made that 'three of the children from the 1996 camp are now dead. A number are in prison, addicted to drugs or in other difficulties. Our hope for the Millennium is better lives for all children'. The evaluation clearly found that for most of the groups the main benefit of participating was that 'the project brings our group's activities to the attention of the general public'. 81% felt that their object becoming part of the Museum's permanent collection was a benefit, but not the main one. 99% said they would like to work with us again on a similar project.

The evaluations we did at the time gave the projects the thumbs up all round. This rather belated evaluation of the long term benefits gives it a provisional thumbs up but of course time will tell as to whether this is just wishful thinking on my part. At the very least, as Rachel pointed out in her *SHCG News* article, 'what will be of interest about *Collecting 2000* might just be the fact that the Museum of London and others chose to engage in this sort of work'. Maybe the long term value depends on just how interesting posterity will find museums as a whole.

If anyone would like a free copy of the *Collecting 2000* catalogue please email cross@museumoflondon.org.uk with your full postal address.

Notes

1. *SHCG News*, issue 46 , April 2000, pp 6-9.
2. R. Reynolds, *Collecting 2000*, Museum of London, 2000.
3. AFC Bourdillon, Voluntary Social Services, 1945, p 2.

Attributing impact: the effect of lottery-funded capital projects on attendance at London museums

Sara Selwood and Maurice Davies

Introduction

This article reports on a piece of research still underway. We wanted to know what effect lottery-funded capital developments at London museums had, or were having, on museum attendances in the capital generally. We were curious to know if any increases had been sustained; whether there had been some element of redistribution, with audiences now being concentrated at those museums with lottery funding, and absent from those without.

This paper reports on how we set out to answer those questions, the frustrations we encountered, and the conclusions we have reached so far.

Part 1: background

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s museums and galleries in the UK found it hard to raise funding for capital developments and refurbishments. Displays changed slowly and significant new extensions to museums were rare. UK museums and galleries were noticeably tatty and tired compared to those elsewhere in Europe and North America.

This situation changed dramatically after 1994, when the National Lottery started distributing money to 'good causes'. Between 1994 and 2003, over £12 billion was allocated to good causes¹ - including the arts, sport, heritage and charities. By July 2003, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) alone had granted £2.75 billion to heritage projects. Museums and galleries were major beneficiaries: between 1994 and 2001, 877 museums and collections received £660 million - nearly 40 per cent of the Fund's total spend (Forgan, 2001). Museums also benefited from other lottery distributors, in particular the Millennium Commission and the Arts Councils of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Lottery funding has enabled existing museums and galleries throughout the UK to be extended and extensively refurbished, and a small number of new museums and galleries to be opened².

In the first instance, lottery grants were for capital funding only. Indeed by October 2001 as much as 88 per cent of the HLF's awards to museums had supported capital schemes (Forgan, 2001). These covered a significant share of the costs of building, refurbishment and the installation of permanent displays, but did not contribute to revenue costs, which in many cases escalated as a result of the capital developments themselves. Endowments were the exception rather than the rule³.

In general, business plans identified increases in revenue as being generated through visitors, and almost all museums' lottery applications projected increased attendances. Despite the ethos of free admission, several museums proposed charging; others proposed increasing visitors' spend through their shops and catering outlets. Indeed, several lottery-awards provided catering and retail facilities.

As well as being income providers, the centrality of visitors was always considered crucial. Lottery-projects were, after all, for the public benefit. But, the emphasis on visitor numbers also had its down-side. Private sector attractions and established museums not in receipt of lottery funds worried that neighbouring lottery-funded projects would unfairly compete for visitors. But, as news leaked out as to the 'wildly' over-optimistic estimations of visits used to make the case for lottery funding⁴, doubt

was cast on the likelihood of lottery projects to meet their own targets and generate the amount of money needed to sustain themselves (Babbidge, 2000). Indeed, three years on, press reports were suggesting that at least one high profile museum lottery project, the New Art Gallery Walsall, was facing an uncertain future (Heywood, 2004) and several other museum projects are known not to be delivering on their plans.

But, while some millennium projects closed down⁵, others exceeded even the most optimistic planners' projections - most notably, Tate Modern and the Eden Project, St Austell, Cornwall. Comparisons were irresistibly drawn between the new Tate Modern, which DCMS described as 'the flagship' of 'the biggest ever programme of museum and gallery expansion' (DCMS, 2000) and the Millennium Dome, the centrepiece of the Millennium Festival. Those comparisons largely rested on the former exceeding its early visitor projections (attracting over five million visitors in its first year) and the latter's failure to deliver on its, as well as the different quality of the experiences they offered⁶.

The year 2000 was seen as something of a boom year for museums (DCMS, 2000), especially museums in London which were considered to have taken the lion's share of lottery funding (Thorpe and McVeigh, 2000). In 2000 eight lottery-funded projects in 'major' London museums and galleries opened at a total capital investment cost of £379 million, nearly half of which came from the lottery.

But, as so often happens, intentions are rarely checked against reality. While DCMS regards the major developments at its sponsored museums as having '...been instrumental in helping to attract new visitors' (HoC, 2002: Ev 29 para 34), the department has never publicly reported on what difference those projects have made, or are making, or who has benefitted from them. The Select Committee for Culture, Media and Sport (2002) was surprised to find that the national museums had not assessed their own importance to the tourism industry, 'if only to demonstrate to HM Treasury the tangible contribution made by them to the UK economy in terms of the tourism balance of trade' (HoC, 2002:9 para 14)⁷. But, neither DCMS, which is also responsible for tourism, nor the HLF, which funded the majority of museums' lottery projects, have published evaluations of the impact that those capital developments have had on attendances in the capital, despite the contribution it might make to their own funding settlements or to the development of evidence-based policy.

Part 2: approach

Our approach to trying to quantify the impact of lottery-funded capital developments on museum visiting in London was very simple. We sought to examine the data already available from funding and policy agencies and tourism bodies, and to collect, collate and analyse attendance data from museums and galleries in London with over 100,000 visits per year - both with and without lottery-funded capital developments. Although the overall number of visits to museums in London is unknown⁸, these institutions alone account for about 40 per cent of all visits to museums in the UK in 2002⁹.

We initially requested data from 50 museums, galleries and visitor attractions, which had been identified on the basis of their entries in the Museums Yearbook 2002¹⁰ in particular:

- their monthly (or quarterly) attendance data for the period from April 1999 to March 2003. Unlike annual data, monthly data reveals seasonal differences and indications of change;
- details of any factors of events taking place in or outside the institution that may have affected visitor numbers;
- information on visitor profiles collected during the reference period, including details of repeat visiting or visits to other museums, galleries or similar attractions;
- the total value and sources of any funding (including lottery awards and public and

private partnership funding) for any significant capital developments that opened during the period April 1999 to April 2002, together with details (including the date of opening) of the development.

- In the event, we analysed 36 returns: 31 from museums and 5 from visual arts venues showing temporary exhibitions. We treated the visual arts venues separately, and categorised the museums as follows:
- Existing museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001 (British Museum; Dulwich Picture Gallery; Imperial War Museum; National Portrait Gallery; Science Museum; Wallace Collection).
- New museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001 (Gilbert Collection; Tate Modern).
- Existing museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening before April 2000 (National Maritime Museum, Geffrye Museum; Natural History Museum);
- Existing museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2001 and March 2003¹¹ (Horniman Museum; Tate Britain; V&A).
- Existing museums without lottery-funded capital developments (Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood; British Library; Cabinet War Room; Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery; Design Museum; Hampton Court Palace; HMS Belfast; Kensington Palace; Kenwood House-Iveagh Bequest; London's Transport Museum; Museum of London; National Gallery; Royal Air Force Museum; Sir John Soane's Museum; Theatre Museum; Tower of London).
- New museums without lottery-funded capital developments (Hermitage Rooms, Somerset House).

Methodological problems

The research was fraught with difficulties, and any findings need to be prefaced by caveats about the reliability of the raw data, its analysis, and the attribution of causality. It follows that we have had to be extremely cautious in our conclusions.

- The raw data supplied by individual museums is not always accurate, or comparable, and cannot necessarily be aggregated meaningfully. It tends to be collected in different ways, and museums – unlike the performing arts – cannot rely on box office data. The same institutions often return different data to surveys (Selwood and Davies, forthcoming).

Some institutions only presented data on a yearly basis or by exhibition. Despite the problems of doing so, we had to average out their data on a monthly basis despite this flattening out any variability. In some cases, exhibitions data could be disaggregated to monthly attendances.

- The analysis of visitor data across London museums overall is complicated by the relatively large attendance at a small number of museums. A small percentage change at a single institution with high attendance, for instance, can overwhelm much larger percentage changes at several smaller ones. Moreover, the inclusion or exclusion of one large institution can significantly skew overall patterns of change.
- An implicit ambition of our research was to see if we could assess whether the 'golden age' of museum openings had increased the number of visitors to London museums. A particular problem is that museums' data tends to refer to visits rather than visitors. This blurs the distinction between one person visiting five times; and five different people visiting once. Moreover, in policy terms, it is important to know whether lottery developments are contributing to DCMS's general objective of increasing 'access', or whether they are just attracting the same visitors more often.
- Another difficulty, generally acknowledged, is that there are major problems in identifying what precisely might have encouraged or discouraged museum visiting. While a number of factors effect museum attendance, there is little certainty in

attributing causality. The lottery doubtless precipitated increases in attendance, but some element of that must also reflect the impact of the introduction of free admission to those DCMS-sponsored museums which formerly charged, not to mention other factors.

Part 3: findings

Although this research is still ongoing, we are able to address some of the questions we'd hoped to answer here – namely, whether attendances have increased across the capital as a whole; whether any increases have been sustained; and whether audiences have been displaced.

Have attendances increased across the capital as a whole?

Our analysis focused on lottery developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001. We compared the number of attendances from the previous and subsequent years - we clearly needed to look beyond the initial boom experienced in 2000. We also recognised that we would need to allow for depressed figures prior to the opening of developments. Dulwich Picture Gallery, for instance, which was closed throughout 1999/2000 prior to reopening, recorded zero admissions that year.

The museums and galleries in London whose data we examined, show an overall rise in visit numbers of 33 per cent from 1999/00 to 2002/03 - some 6.59 million extra visits across the sample as a whole. These are more than accounted for by the 7.67 million visits to museums and galleries with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001. However, the total visits to museums and galleries without lottery-funded capital developments opening over that period fell by 1.08 million, 12 per cent.

These figures disguise a huge range of experience at individual museums. The extremes are represented by the V&A and Tate Britain: visits to the former increased by 156 per cent; whereas those to the latter fell by 30 per cent.

The groups of museums that fared the worst over the period 1999/00-2002/03 were existing museums without lottery developments at all. Their attendances, which had been in decline since 1999/00, fell 5 per cent by 2002/02 and 12 per cent by 2002/03.

Of the 7.67 million extra visits to lottery-funded museums and galleries between 1999/2000 and 2002/2003, 4.44 million can be attributed to the new museums that opened after April 2000; moreover, 4.36 million of these can be attributed to Tate Modern alone.

If the newly opened museums are discounted, the picture is less impressive, with the increase in attendances at existing museums with lottery funded projects opening between April 2000 and March 2001 reaching 2.5 million by the end of 2002/03 - equivalent to an increase of 29 per cent.

All the existing museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001 reported increased visits, but these vary from just 4 per cent at the British Museum to 97 per cent at the Science Museum. Bearing in mind that very large museums can skew the totals, without the Science Museum figures, the remaining museums in this group experienced an overall increase of 10 per cent between 1999/00 and 2002/03¹².

In terms of sustaining increased levels of attendances, most of the museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening between April 2000 and March 2001 have maintained increased numbers of visits in the sense of their 2002/03 figures being higher than their 1999/00 figures. The exceptions are Dulwich Picture Gallery, whose figures have declined steadily since it reopened in 2000/01 and the Gilbert Collection, which had less than half the number of visits in 2002/03 than when it opened in 2000/01. In general, the largest rises in attendance tend to be at museums with lottery-funded capital developments which went free. The Science Museum's

2002/03 figures, for example, were effectively double what they had been in 1999/00.

The same pattern can be seen at museums with lottery developments that either opened before April 2000 or after March 2001. These have generally sustained increases in their attendances. Although the Geffrye's figures have slipped since 1999/00, and Tate Britain's are nearly 30% down, visits to the formerly charging DCMS-sponsored museums have increased substantially (the Natural History Museum by 60%; the Horniman by 34%; the National Maritime Museum by 40%; and, the V&A by 156%).

The picture is altogether less rosy for museums without lottery-funded capital developments. Visits to this group declined steadily between 1999/00 and 2002/03. Attendance at the Hermitage Rooms, a new museum, halved between 2001/02 and 2002/03.

What other factors may have impinged on these attendance figures?

However persuasive the case for attributing these changes to lottery investment, a number of other factors impinged on museum attendance over the period considered here, particularly April 2001 to March 2002. The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2002), for instance, proposed that in the two years' prior to its reporting 'specific exhibitions and new facilities; Foot and Mouth Disease; the events of September 11th and the associated 'war against terrorism', even the poor performance of the US stock market' had all impacted on museums' attendances (HoC, 2002: 21 para 52). Other variables, cited by witnesses to its enquiry, included the nature of museums' own programme, facilities and services; local factors, such as the quality of transport into and around central London; other factors affecting tourism and economic developments' (Hoc, 2002: Ev Ev 72). The weather, of course, tends to be cited both as a positive and negative factor (ETC, 2002: Table 3:11 and 3.12).

The Dome

While attendances at the Millennium Dome were substantially short of the once predicted 12 million, it was nevertheless the highest attended charging visitor attraction in the UK, attracting some 6.5m visits during the year it was open. On the basis of the number of visits to London museums before, during and after 2000, it is unlikely that the Dome had any significant effect on these. There may, nevertheless, have been some displacement from museums closest in content and audience appeal to the Dome – arguably, the Science and the Design museums. The former was the only museum with a lottery project opening in 2000/01, whose figures dipped that year; and visits to the latter declined steadily from 1999/00 to 2001/02.

Tourism

Tourist numbers were affected twice in 2001. In the first half of the year, by Foot and Mouth Disease; and in the second half of the year, by 9/11.

Overseas visits to the UK fell by 2.8 per cent in the first quarter of 2001, compared to the same period in 2000; and by 6.1 per cent in the second quarter. However, the monthly variations don't comply with any particular logic: for instance, international arrivals in March and June 2001 showed little change from 2000; whereas figures for May 2003, when the government considered the crisis to have passed (Rawnsley, 2001: 476), were 12 per cent down on the previous year (International Passenger Survey 2002).

The effect of Foot and Mouth on London museums' attendances may have been relatively slight. The English Tourist Council's data suggests that of all categories of visitor attractions, museums fared best; and that of all regions, London was the least

affected. Despite the British Museum claiming that Foot and Mouth had precipitated the loss of around 600,000 international visits to the museum, it noted that this was 'disguised by the growth in domestic visitors and repeat visits' (HoC, 2002: Ev 3, para vi). It is more than likely that these visits were, in some part, prompted by the countryside being 'closed'.

The impact of the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11 2001 is far clearer. Overseas arrivals in the UK fell by 16.8 per cent between October and December 2001, compared to the same period in 2000 (International Passenger Survey, 2002). There were 9 per cent fewer overseas visitors to the UK in 2001 than in the previous year (ETC 2002). The impact of this on London museums was stark. Museums' monthly figures show that while their visits were at their highest for three years in June and September 2001, they fell to their lowest between October and November 2001. While attendance at some of the smaller museums in our sample remained stable after September 11, this was not the case at many large central London museums. The British Museum, for example, reported an immediate 10 per cent fall in visit numbers and a 20 per cent fall in 'on-site income' (HoC, 2002: Ev 3, para vii).

Free admission

As already mentioned, free admission was introduced at the previously charging nationals for children in April 1999 and for the over-60s in April 2000. Under a separate government initiative, funding was also dedicated to ensuring that Tate Modern opened free to all in May 2000. Free admission for all was rolled out at all DCMS-sponsored museums at the beginning of December 2001.

DCMS regards the impacts of capital developments and free admission on visitor growth as complementary (HoC, 2002: Ev 32 para 66). It has suggested that the advent of free access to the previously charging museums did not impact significantly on those that had remained free (HoC, 2002: Ev 32 para 66). But, free admission to the nationals was certainly regarded as an issue further afield. For one of the former regional area museum council directors, describing his impressions of the impact of free admission to the Museums Association in January 2001, it signalled the fact that it might be cheaper for a family of four to travel to a London national by train than to visit a local, regional museum which charged.

Were visits displaced from one institution to another?

The fact that visits to the museums in our sample increased by some 33% between 1999/00 and 2002/03, suggests that displacement was not of major importance. However, our data suggests that there was some movement away from museums without lottery funding to those with lottery funding, and from those that were already free to those that had formerly charged, but became free between April 1999 and December 2001. The most striking example is the loss of visits at Tate Britain to Tate Modern.

Part 4: conclusions and observations

On the basis of our sample, we have been able to make certain observations about the effects of lottery funding in London:

- there was a gain of almost 6.6 million visits to London museums between 1999/00 and 2002/03. These were more than accounted for by those opening lottery-funded developments in 2000/01, which accounted for 7.7 million visits;
- excluding the Science Museum, London museums with lottery-funded capital developments opening in 2000/01 have seen their overall visit numbers increase by 28 per cent between 1999/2000 and 2002/2003;
- London museums that did not open lottery-funded developments in 2000/01 have experienced extremely varied changes in their attendances, ranging from

- 156 per cent at the V&A to -29 per cent at Tate Britain;
- displacement appears not to be a major factor. However, museums that did least well as a result of the changes in the market were those that had not had lottery developments;
- lottery-funding per se is no guarantee of sustained visits.

Perhaps, more importantly, our research revealed the limitations of what it's possible to find out. It has highlighted a number of difficulties associated with identifying impact, and exposed how little we know, or understand, about the effects of a half a billion pound investment.

The greatest, and most sustainable, increases have been boosted with recurrent, additional funding needed to support free admission to the previously charging nationals. Between 1999/00 and 2003/04 this is estimated to have been in the region of £72 million, in addition to the initial £5 million plus the recurrent £6 million for sustaining free admission at Tate Modern (DCMS, 2000);

At best, DCMS and the lottery distributors can only account for the difference that lottery-funded capital developments have made to the sector in the most general terms. Moreover, the experience of funding lottery developments in museums can have contributed little to the development of evidence-based policy.

Notes

1. <http://www.lotterygoodcauses.co.uk/about.htm> (accessed 15.12.03).
2. This was constrained by HLF's policy decision to prioritise the refurbishment of existing museums and galleries over the creation of new ones (HLF, 2002: 4).
3. The Gilbert Collection's three HLF grants included a £10 million endowment. The Baltic, a new contemporary visual arts venue in Gateshead, was similarly awarded revenue funding - £1.5 million per year - plus guaranteed partnership funding for its first five years' of operation by the Arts Council of England.
4. See, for example, Smith (2000); Carrell (2000); Vasagar (2000); The Guardian (2000). It was revealed by an ex-employee of the HLF that inadequate effort had been made by the Fund to question some of the inflated visit projections in the business plans of projects that it had agreed to support (Morris, 2000).
5. See, the Times editorial, 'Lottery Largess. The curse of over-optimism' (1 October 2003: 23). Closures were in the minority and included the National Faith Centre funded by the Millennium Commission (closed February 2001); the National Centre for Popular Music funded by the Arts Council of England (closed Autumn 2000) and Centre for Visual Arts, Cardiff funded by the Arts Council of Wales (closed November 2000).
6. See, for instance, Buncombe, 2000; Reynolds, 2000; Allen and Sykes, 2000. McGuigan and Gilmore, 2001:81 consider visit numbers. Accounts that compare the experience of visiting the two attractions include Herbert, 2000; Moyes, 2000; Observer, 2000.
7. This, undoubtedly, prompted the National Museum Directors' Conference to subsequently commission general research into the economic importance of national museums (Travers and Glaister, 2004).
8. No regularly published research covers museums and galleries in London per se. Neither the London Museums Agency nor the London Tourist Board were able to provide us with data on trends in museum visiting in the capital, and the Moffatt Centre, which holds the database for Sightseeing in the UK and Visits to Visitor Attractions, was unwilling to do so.
9. This calculation is based on the aggregated total for all visits to UK museums and galleries (self-defined) in 2002 being 74.7 million (ETC, 2003a: Table 5.6).
10. For details see Selwood and Davies (forthcoming)
11. This means that the new Museum of Docklands, which opened in

May 2003, is excluded.

12. Since Dulwich Picture Gallery was closed in 1999/00 its figures have been left out of this equation

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The Life and Times of a Phase Two Hub

Liz Wilson

The East Midlands Museums Hub has been in operation for around eighteen months, beginning to deliver Renaissance in the Regions in the East Midlands. This paper provides an introduction to the above, looking at the work undertaken since April 2003, and our vision for Renaissance and provides an insight into specific projects and case studies. It will also look at some positive and negative aspects of working for the Renaissance vision, highlighting some thoughts for the future.

This paper has been written in October 2004 (although given at the Social History Curators Group Annual Study Weekend in July 2004), and as such provides a snapshot of East Midlands Renaissance to date. Time moves very quickly in a hub, and it is likely that a lot of things will have changed by the time you read this. Projects will have moved forward, audiences engaged, staff appointed and started work, and we might even know the outcome of Spending Round 2004 (SR2004) for Renaissance and regional museums.

Background to Renaissance

In 2001 the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA formally called Resource) published *Renaissance in the Regions: A vision for England's museums*. This publication, the result of a year's work by a taskforce of senior museum professionals outlined a vision for regional museums, in which every English region would have a 'Hub' museum supported by a satellite of partners. The Hub would receive funding from central Government to deliver excellent services for visitors by building capacity to lead each region. This was divided into eight specific priority areas for delivery. The taskforce recommended £279 million of funding to implement this vision. In October 2002 the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) announced £70 million of funding for Renaissance over four years, (not a patch on the original amount recommended, but important to note that this represents the first ever funding from central Government to regional museums). Therefore MLA has been leading a phase rollout of Renaissance, with three hubs (North East, West Midlands and South West) chosen to lead phase one with 70% share of the funding and the phase two hubs, including the East Midlands sharing 30%. In practical terms the East Midlands have received £1.8 million to deliver Renaissance between 2003 – 2006. This funding is divided into £0.46 million for the Education Programme Delivery Plan (EPDP), priority area one (this funding comes from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) hence the importance placed in its delivery within Renaissance), £1.08 million for the other seven priority areas, and £0.32 million for the Specialism Fund. The Specialism Fund is a unique strand to phase two hubs, to be spent on one of the hub's priority areas (other than education) in which the hub has specialist skills or expertise. In the East Midlands our expertise is in 'Reaching a Wider Audience' priority area two, improving access to our collections for the diverse communities of the East Midlands, and as such we have chosen to dedicate the Specialism Fund to this priority area.

The East Midlands Museums Hub

Renaissance East Midlands is being delivered by a partnership of Leicester City Museum Service (lead partner), Derby Museums and Art Gallery, Leicestershire Heritage Service, Lincolnshire Heritage Service, Nottingham Museums and Galleries and the East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC). We also are joined by two first partners, the National Tramway Museum, Crich (an independent museum) and Northampton Museums. Both museums have

designated collections of national importance and provide the East Midlands Hub with strategic regional coverage, not provided by our other partners.

The working relationships between our partners and first partners are vital to the operation of the hub. We have a very close relationship with EMMLAC, with the core hub staff (myself included) being based at their offices in Leicester. This is strengthened through strategic practices, for example EMMLAC and the Hub jointly manage the Curatorial Advisors network and operational practices, for example I as the EPDP Manager sit on the EMMLAC learning and access team.

The East Midlands Museums Hub is made up of 47 sites, including 32 registered museums, four closed museums or sites, five windmills, two archives/ record offices, a conservation centre, a castle, a visitor centre, an open museum site and an environmental resource centre. We have museums from Northampton in the south to Gainsborough in the north, Skegness in the east to Crich in the west. We employ around 500 members of staff and have 500 volunteers. In 2002/03 around 275,000 school children visited hub museums and we received around £362,000 visits from C2, D, E's and ethnic minorities. In total 75% of the regions total spend on museums of £21 million is the East Midlands Museum Hub.

Background to the Region

The East Midlands is made up of the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland. It is the third largest English region, at 12% of land data, with the smallest population of 4.2 million, which results in the smallest funding settlement for Renaissance. 37% of the population live in rural areas (the national average is 20%), with 5% of the population belonging to an ethnic group described as other than white. The ethnic minority populations are concentrated in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, with 28.5% living in Leicester, the highest proportion living outside of London. The average gross weekly earnings are 90% of national average. Nottingham is twelfth of the twenty most deprived wards in England, with Leicester next at 28th. The apparent affluence of the region masks pockets of disadvantage in rural areas.

Education in the region provides a similar patchwork of results. Pupils' performance at Key Stage 2 was below the national average and at Key Stage 3 was below the national average for English and maths, but above for science, in 2003. At GCSE's young people achieve less than the national average and have a higher proportion of pupils leaving school with no passes. This data masks the reality on the ground with county schools in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland generally performing above the national average. The Cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham bring our average down, with Nottingham having particularly poor educational attainment, for example 10.6% of pupils not gaining any GCSE's.

Business planning for the region

Over the last eighteen months, the East Midlands Museums Hub has grown from its foundation within the 2003/04 Operational Plan, setting in place the details from which to develop and write our business plan. The Hub has created a management board and governance structure, employed five key members of staff (Hub Manager, EPDP Manager, Administrative Assistant, Creative Projects Manager and Administration Officer), three from September 2004 and two more have recently joined us. Uniquely, although Leicester City Council employs us, we have a hub wide remit, and as such undertake no additional work specifically for the lead partner. During the winter and early spring of 2003/04 we wrote our Business Plan and EPDP, which sets out our vision for how the East Midlands Hub will deliver the Renaissance programme. It is important to note here that the business plan that was initially submitted to MLA was

not accepted, and with extra support from MLA in the guise of two museum consultants, we were given time in which to revise our ideas and rewrite the business plan. I believe that going through this difficult process reflects the East Midlands' need to undergo extra capacity building and workforce development time afforded to us by being a phase two hub. The East Midlands could not have hit the ground running and delivered immediately as the phase one hubs have. It has taken time to understand the implications and practicalities of region wide working. Our Business Plan was approved by MLA at the end of April 2004.

Let me now move onto the East Midlands Hub vision for Renaissance, and some of the projects and initiatives that make up the focus for our work in the next eighteen months or so. We have split this into the Business Plan and EPDP.

East Midlands Hub Business Plan 2004-2006

The vision for the East Midlands Hub is to:

'The East Midlands Museums Hub will realise the vision of Renaissance in the Regions in the East Midlands by working together to become beacons of excellence. We will achieve this by providing leadership, capacity building and modernisation opportunities for Hub museums and the wider community.'

This includes the creating 25 jobs directly related to project delivery, which were advertised in the June edition of the Museums Journal. Most of these posts have been filled and many of our new staff have recently started work, a pleasing sight after a marathon interview period. These 25 posts include five education posts, two museum traineeships that form part of the diversify scheme, eleven documentation assistants and five outreach workers.

We have begun to improve outreach services across the hub through region wide projects. This includes the sustainable development of the 'Open Museum.' Leicestershire has been developing their Open Museum for around seven years, taking three strands, object loans to schools (Resource Box), artwork loans to schools (Artworks) and the development of community exhibitions and displays called Moving Objects and we wish to extend this provision in Leicestershire and develop similar models in Lincolnshire and at the National Tramway Museum in Crich. Another is our region wide fashion and photography project (which has been through numerous working titles, but we always return to the same definition) in which we will target young people to engage in museum collections through fashion, fashion shows, design and collection and photography, images in their many forms. Our vision to engage with diverse teenagers across the region (for example ethnic minorities count for over 50% of the under sixteen's in Leicester), culminating in a series of fashion shows and celebrations from Gainsborough Old Hall in Lincolnshire to Pickford's House in Derby.

We aim to increase tolerance and promote understanding by working with different communities across the region. For example Moving Here a project working with the National Archive plans to target the Ugandan Asians in Leicester and the Portuguese migrant workers in Boston, Lincolnshire.

By employing eleven documentation assistants we have begun to document our target of over 60,000 artefacts across the region, the digital images of which will feed into a virtual collection, that users can access and purchase copies of via a partnership with the photographic giant Fuji. Seed funding has been earmarked for two permanent galleries, Wollaton Hall in Nottingham and Harborough Museum in Leicestershire are both working towards Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bids to redisplay their collection.

The Hub is facilitating region wide focus/ task groups. These networks of museum professionals support the delivery of each section of the business plan, supply opportunities for professional development and networking, and provide fora in which

the Hub can develop, debate and disseminate ideas. There are groups dedicated to education, collections management, social inclusion, workforce development, physical access and income generation and include staff, where appropriate from non hub museums. In addition to these networks, we are also developing a website and series of e-publications to facilitate communication and dissemination across the hub and wider museums community.

The workforce development focus group is leading on a range of projects which includes increased access to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) qualifications for museum professionals through the Lincolnshire NVQ Centre, skill share and training. We have also had success with bursaries to attend the Museum Association (MA) conference, which was held in Edinburgh in September this year. We were particularly successful with the Young Person's bursary sending four people (under 30) to conference, in addition to two professionals from independent museums. We are awaiting evaluation reports from all the successful bursaries applicants, however a good time was had by all!

The new Registration standard will be implemented in our 32 museums later this year, after the publication of the new standard, taking the lead for the region, we will also be supporting the wider region, particularly independent museums, with lessons learnt from the implementation disseminated through the region's Curatorial Advisors network. In addition the East Midlands Hub has adopted Inspiring Learning for All which is being piloted in every hub service

The Education Programme Delivery Plan (EPDP)

The EPDP has such a high profile in all hub's business plans (not just because it is my job) because this area of Renaissance in the Regions has been funded directly by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). In addition, prior to writing the EPDP each hub underwent extensive consultation with teachers. In the East Midlands this involved a three phase consultation comprising questionnaires sent to every schools in the region, from which we had a 47% response rate, ten teacher focus groups across the region (two in each county, except Rutland) and a telephone interview of a sample of schools that did not respond to the original questionnaire. In a nutshell this told us that schools really value the taught workshops or active learning sessions that museums provide, but they find other aspects of our service (poor exhibitions, poor website, unhelpful staff, lack of marketing etc.) barrier to use. They also recommended that we provide a range of resources (you know the things, loans boxes, teachers packs, solo visit resources, websites, e-learning) in addition to workshops to support teaching and learning in the museum and classroom. Another peculiarity of the EPDP is that it concentrates on school aged children between five and sixteen years. This reflects the DfES's commitment to this age group, but after 2006, EPDP's will focus on life long learning.

In the East Midlands the EPDP was developed and written by a team of Education/Learning and Access Officers and Managers, representing each Hub Service and First Partner service. This team, the EPDP team, has experienced unexpected outcomes, not only do we network and share ideas across the region more effectively than before, and it has provided us with a great group of drinking buddies, but it has empowered junior members of staff to effectively lead the region on learning issues.

The vision of the EPDP is to;

'create a comprehensive service for school aged children that places museums at the heart of the learning community. To achieve this we will work in partnership with a wide range of learning providers, including LEA's, schools, early years learning providers, LSC's (Learning and Skills Council) and local learning partnerships. This comprehensive museum education service supporting both formal and informal learning will provide innovative and varied learning opportunities for every school aged

child in the region. In so doing we will enhance learning for individual children and provide a rich base for learning throughout life.'

The EPDP is comprised of 25 projects or deliverables, however we have grouped these into five key areas, through which we will deliver our vision. These are, 'developing museum services through partnerships' a range of projects with partnerships with schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and other learning providers at its core, 'developing inclusive museum services' for children and teachers by providing access to objects in museums and their own learning environments, 'raise the profile of museum learning through effective marketing and communication' which I think speak for itself, 'ICT and e-learning' through which we are embracing the e-government and e-learning agendas and 'embedding the principles of museum learning within the wider workforce'. This final key area is about increasing the number and quality of museum staff delivering learning, but also through the roll out of Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) through the East Midlands Hub, we intend to support all staff to understand their role in a learning organisation and therefore improve the quality of service we provide to learners.

The most important aspect of the EPDP is that we aim to increase our 'contacts' between museums and school aged children from our baseline of 275,000 per annum to 335,000 per annum. This will be achieved mainly by employing six new education officers (six of the 25 mentioned above), who will develop our sustainable partnerships with schools and develop innovative and creative resources based upon the needs of teachers and pupils, working across the five key areas. In addition we have devised and are delivering a training course for museums staff delivering education, piloting a scheme to train, mentor and evaluate freelance educators from across the region, and are supporting the roll out of ILFA through the EMMILAC's Learning Advocates Network.

Positives and Negatives of Renaissance

This section is very much a personal view, of someone working at the heart of the region, delivering the Renaissance vision, and I am sure that this view would be different if I were based in one of our museum services, or if I worked in a non-hub museum.

Renaissance has been an overwhelmingly positive process within the East Midlands, and there have been many unexpected outcomes. Renaissance has been of huge benefit to junior members of staff from hub museums, who have been instrumental in bringing together the hub vision. Particularly as these staff now lead on region wide initiatives and have found a region voice, by which to deliver these initiatives. It has been great to see Heritage Assistants consulted over the way we collect baseline data, Education Officers developing a common region wide vision, Outreach staff leading region wide projects and curators talking about region wide collection procedures. As a result of numerous meetings to develop and now deliver our vision, hub museums' staff from all levels now have greater opportunities to network, work jointly and dream up projects that have nothing to do with Renaissance.

Over the last eighteen months the hub museums have worked hard to achieve the support of the wider museums community, and although we still have a long way to go, we have begun to convince our colleagues of the benefits of Renaissance. The core hub staff - Hub Manager, EPDP Manager and Creative Projects Manager - have worked hard travelling around the region, attending county heritage fora meetings, meeting colleagues from non hub museums, sharing work ongoing in the hub, and this has provided us with an idea of the wider regional museum agenda, but also I believe raised our profile. In addition we have a close working relationship the East Midlands Museums Service, formally the Area Museums Council and now a membership organisation championing the region's museums.

Another benefit of Renaissance has been our close relationship with our First Partner. We are funding our first partners directly, because of their strategic importance in delivering our vision, but they have provided unexpected benefits. For example when setting up our Management Board and governance structure, the National Tramway Museum, Crich, an independent museum governed by a board of trustees provided invaluable advice and Northampton Museums are leading on a Video Conferencing project, which we aim to challenge the way we deliver services to rural schools through the region.

Finally the close working relationship with EMMALC, as mentioned above, has ensured that our work is strategically woven together, with the needs of our users in mind.

So what have the negatives been? Well the process of devising and writing the Business plan and EPDP was difficult, taking time to balance the needs of individual services with the needs of the region, a balancing act that we still strive to maintain. Moreover it took two attempts to write and submit the plan, before MLA approved it, and this process required the support of MLA in the form of two museum consultants, to ensure that we produced plans in line with the Renaissance vision. I believe that this was in part due to the time it took us as a hub to get to grips with thinking and working regionally, a process that still continues. We have found the collection of baseline data, backdated in many cases very difficult, partly because we have been submitting data for 32 museum sites (a reflection of our large museum services, the London Hub for example collects data for just four museums). This has been a mammoth and long process, one that we are only just getting to grip with. Finally on a practical note, even in the e-mail era, we have difficulty communicating across the hub, requiring lots of persistent e-mails and telephone calls to make sure everyone is up to date with hub matters.

Thoughts for the future

Finally I turn toward the future, where there are lots of general questions that although at this stage are unanswerable will affect our work in the future.

In the East Midlands Hub capacity building has meant in practical terms, new jobs. Although we have had a successful recruitment process, one or two jobs were unable to be filled and we have had to rethink their scope. Moreover we had a poor response for some posts and I just wonder if there is a lack of suitable applicants because of the huge numbers of posts created nationally because of Renaissance and the affect this may have on recruitment generally. However this contrasts with the letters in the museums journal from people desperate to break into museums.

Dissemination to non hub museums is a core part of the Renaissance vision, and is one of the central aspects of our business, yet I have personal concerns about the most affective way to go about this. Particularly advocating examples of best practice, funded by Renaissance, when the wider museum community does not have access to such funding. I am also concerned about securing and continued support from the wider region. How can we best sustain relationships with, and hopefully develop partnerships with small museums, in what is seen as an unequal relationship? In the East Midlands we also have to prove the value of funding our first partners, who have less capacity to deliver and additional concerns at their status.

Renaissance has been a varied, interesting and mainly positive process, but we do have concerns about the future, not least the outcome of SR2004, which we hope will see the full settlement for all phase two hubs.

Strength in Diversity

Ruth Dass

InterCulture formed in 2000 based in Huddersfield West Yorkshire at The Media Centre as a unique agency of associates that represented the cultural and creative sectors. Its mission was to provide a cutting edge approach to issues of race, community cohesion and regeneration. Our aim was to develop new partnerships and support innovative and enterprising solutions to break down cultural barriers. The product design was built around diversity and community cohesion and our aim to ensure that those benefits went out to a much wider audience to touch every aspect of their social and cultural lives. It has to be said that if there is an invisibility of exclusion then there is a real need to continue to find innovative ways through a shared history to engage with as many people as possible. Therefore the focus had to be aimed across the Government and its agencies, the wider public service, the private sector, voluntary and community based organisations to make the changes that are essential to a shared society.

When I took the role as Director of InterCulture in 2001 the skills I brought with me were through different life circumstances and experiences brought about from a parentage whose roots were firmly entrenched in the Asian subcontinent, but at that time in Britain it was a very different story. Quite early on in my career I realised that those connections with society and communities as a whole was not about a single homogenous culture but to have a deep respect and understanding of others, and that was a two way process. One also had to understand and equally respect that migrants to this country had brought new talents and skills, different perspectives and new ways of doing things and through those achievements and contributions it was this that was carried forward to future generations. So a sense of belonging and a sense of space and knowledge that people with different backgrounds could work together to articulate a shared vision were the necessary tools. This personal theory provided me with the stepping-stones for many things including my love of heritage, history, archaeology and museums.

My early days began in field archaeology in the 1980s in York against the backdrop of the then world famous Jorvik Viking Centre. It attracted millions of visitors from around the world which went on to provide the opportunity to develop another ground-breaking centre, The Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC), a unique educational resource centre with 'real' archaeological hands on material. When it opened its doors to visitors in 1990 it was the first of its kind in Britain to educate the public in archaeology. I was very fortunate to spend seven years developing the Museum with an extremely creative and innovative team of ARC professionals that went on to provide the foundations for all future work I embarked. After the ARC in 1997 came opportunities to travel extensively, create conferences, events, international programmes and build collaborative networks and consultancy with museums both national and international. In the late 1990s to enhance the voluntary work and board membership I had undertaken on race related issues for various organisations, I was appointed to The Employment Tribunals for England and Wales as a specialist member in Race that went on to encompass the Human Rights legislation from Europe in 1997 and closely followed by my appointment by the Lord Chancellor in the criminal justice sector as a Magistrate for the York Bench.

These were the roots that were set in place to create InterCulture, an agency that was eager to support enterprising solutions, was innovative, creative but above all was designed to break down cultural barriers through a diverse range of activities. The small team of associates all freelance went on to create strategic partnerships between previously unrelated bodies often for the first time, and we worked

strategically with national organisations who had failed to address race and diversity in their mainstream output by researching and producing conferences that clearly tackled politically sensitive material. We liaised with schools young people and educational establishments, developed residencies and international commissions and developed academic research with leading bodies.

Our involvement with historical sites began with a series of three English Heritage sites including Whitby Abbey: @the abbey, was a programme that was designed in partnership with The Culture Company in 1998 as part of The Year of the Artist, a national scheme. When I joined as the Co-Director it was to interface with public arts programmes and photography commissions. It was at this time InterCulture was conceived to form collaborative innovative partnerships with the arts sectors, creative industries museums and heritage sectors. InterCulture went on to lead with Brodsworth Hall Doncaster in 2003, and Clifford's Tower in York that is still in research phase. Our funding streams were non-existent we had no revenue funding and depended on project management costs that made it essential that we built good partnerships with funding organisations so as to develop programmes to create a match funding mechanism.

Vision 2002 was launched at the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television in Bradford in October 2001. This programme was historically timed with the aftermath of the Race Riots in Northern towns and in collaboration with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Yorkshire Forward, and Metier. This was a national conference providing a review of approaches to equal opportunities and social inclusion in the arts, cultural and heritage sectors that reviewed the implementation of PAT 10¹ and the impact that this legislation would have on Government agencies both from a regional and national perspective.

We had also begun in 2001 a pioneering literature programme with the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) as part of the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and building on their community cohesion programme InterCulture sought to examine regeneration projects from communities throughout Yorkshire through writing, and developed this with commissioned writers who worked directly with the community. (The first volume was produced in February 2004.) In 2003 it was on to our next Vision Conference, New Freedoms at Harewood, Leeds and in collaboration with Leeds Museums, Barbados Museum and Historical Society and many other strategic national and international partnerships. This programme was created to enable academic discussion around the broader richer story of Harewood House and their historic and economic legacy in the Caribbean.

Finally in 2003 with the culmination of a two-year programme of research in collaboration with English Heritage this was to launch *Chintz Yatra* at Brodsworth Hall in Doncaster. It is this case study that I would like to present as the creative and innovative diversity programme that explored the architectural, historical, archaeological and cultural aspects of one of the three of English Heritage's Yorkshire sites that was brought alive by using its collections via education and the arts.

InterCulture/Brodsworth Hall Doncaster 2003 - A Case Study

The Project

Doncaster in South Yorkshire is the 38th most deprived local authority area in England (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000) The communities who live in and around Doncaster experience social and economic exclusion in many ways that limits their participation in the arts and access to cultural experiences. *Chintz Yatra: Chintz Journey* sought to broaden and develop access to Brodsworth Hall through creative partnerships that would engage participation from the different communities in the Yorkshire region. English Heritage commissioned InterCulture to devise a programme of activities and events to coincide with the launch of a new exhibition and publication

of a book – that would engage new groups at Brodsworth Hall and Gardens in Doncaster. The focus was to be on groups close by, including South Yorkshire's South Asian community and local educational establishments. The project aimed to draw people in by focussing on the Hall's collection of chintz, research having shown that chintz originated in India.

In addition to English Heritage's traditional visitors, the Brodsworth programme engaged different groups. Fashion students at Doncaster College designed and made garments out of chintz, as did the local All-Pakistani Women's Association. Primary school children designed and printed their own fabric banners. And a spectacular music and dance event gave local performers the chance to work with internationally renowned musicians and brought over a 1,000 people to Brodsworth over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Aims and Objectives

Going back in time the part of the story that is specific to chintz began when English Heritage curator and textiles expert Crosby Stevens discovered large amounts of chintz stuffed into some of the cupboards at Brodsworth Hall. She realised immediately how rare it was to find such a large collection of chintz so well preserved and she began to research the collection, with the overall aim of tracing how each piece of fabric related to each room. Her research took her on a fascinating journey into Victorian social history, revealing how differing grades of chintz had a part to play in the way that status was built into each room of the hall, where it was used to cover richer materials like velvet and silk. It also revealed that chintz originated in India, as did the fashion for printed fabrics that came to the UK in the seventeenth century.

Extending Brodsworth's appeal

There is a large South Asian community near Brodsworth Hall but its members rarely visit the Hall. This situation is not limited to Brodsworth – 90% of visitors to English Heritage sites are white middle-class people aged between 30 and 55. The curators at Brodsworth Hall realised that their chintz collection might provide them with a gateway into nearby communities. Added relevance came from the fact that when many Asian people first came to Yorkshire in the 1960s many of them worked in the textiles industry.

The devising of a 'Chintz Trail'

The chintz at Brodsworth Hall is an important collection, comprising as it does over 500 pieces in more than 100 designs dating from the 1840s to the 1980s. It is one of the largest collections in the country. The curators at Brodsworth planned an exhibition that would run from April to November 2003, taking the visitor on a 'chintz trail' that told the story of chintz in the UK. Chintz is a glazed cotton furnishing fabric that reached its peak in Victorian England when according to Lucinda Lambton, it 'smothered country houses throughout the land.' Wealthy Victorians often used it as a protective cover for their more sumptuous fabrics, like silk, in their reception rooms, and as the main upholstery fabric in their bedrooms. Lower quality and cheap chintz was used for the servants' bedrooms. At Brodsworth hundreds of yards of very expensive hand-printed chintz fabric were bought when the family built and furnished their house in the 1860s.

Where

Brodsworth Hall is one of English Heritage's smaller Northern properties with a rural setting just outside Doncaster, South Yorkshire. A country house with extensive grounds, it was built and furnished between 1861 and 1863. It was given to English Heritage and its contents purchased by the National Heritage Memorial Fund for

£3.36 million in 1990. It was opened to the public for the first time in 1995. Much of its décor, fixtures, fittings and bric-a-brac like toys and photographs have been preserved to illustrate a generation of 'upstairs, downstairs' Victorian family life.

How did we do it

InterCulture took a two-pronged approach to the challenge – working with local communities in both education and the arts.

Education – primary schools

InterCulture recruited three local primary schools to work with Brodsworth Hall. These were: The Hill School, Rotherham; All Saints School, Hooton Pagnell and Gillington First School, Bradford. One class from All Saints participated and two each from Gillington and the Hill School. Year 3 at the Hill School was studying textiles that year, so the project was particularly relevant to them. InterCulture commissioned textiles artist Pavan Samra to design and run three workshops.

There was a day at the Hall where children explored the house and its grounds, found about chintz's origins and saw it used in soft furnishings. Next they visited two museums in Bradford: the Industrial Museum where they looked at looms and were taken through carding spinning and weaving processes to help them understand how fabric is made and the Colour Museum where they learnt about colour and saw how fabric is dyed and block printing carried out. Then back to school to come up with their own design! At the final workshop the designs were finalised and printed onto calico banners one for each class. Five banners were produced in all, showcasing the individual work of each child. Some 135 children were involved. The finished pieces were displayed in the Education room at Brodsworth Hall.

Education – Further Education

InterCulture also approached further education establishment Doncaster College. The discussions there resulted in the College's fashion students being recruited to explore the design potential of chintz. They used the fabric to devise and make up modern tailored clothing, the showcasing of which formed the grand finale in their end-of-year fashion show at the Doncaster Moat House hotel. The event was filmed and the outfits went onto be displayed on mannequins at the Hall, forming part of the Hall's chintz trail.

Education – Adult

The education process had an adult angle too as InterCulture also worked with the All Pakistani Women's Association of Rotherham, helping them design and make up sets of 'his' and 'hers' traditional South Asian outfits out of chintz. These were also displayed at the Hall and formed a good counterpart to the more traditionally English outfits designed by the fashion students.

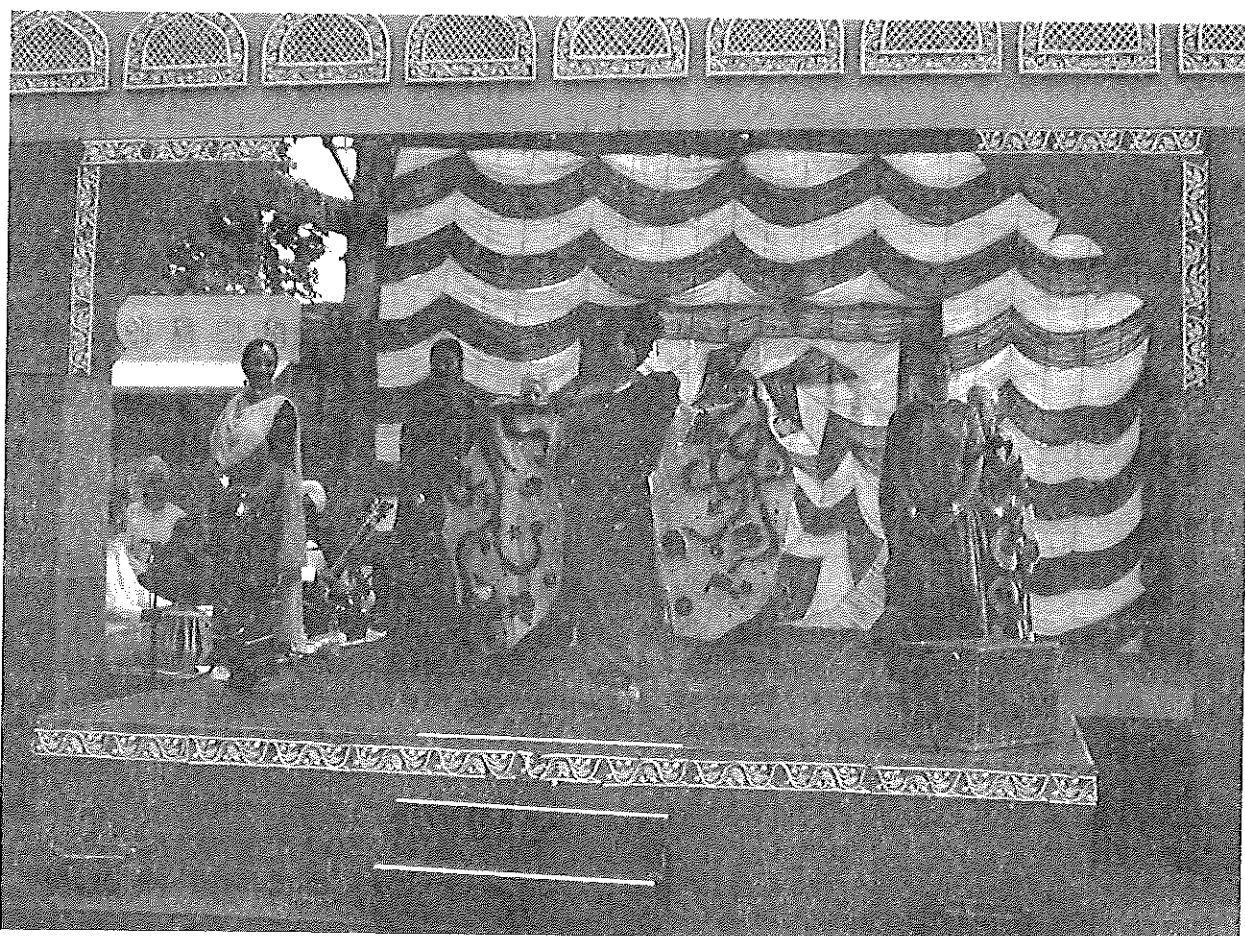
Arts, Music and Dance

South Asian Arts organisation Kala Sangam were commissioned to produce a special performance incorporating dance, music, and storytelling, to be performed at Brodsworth Hall over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Also commissioned was a scriptwriter and theatre director who wrote the piece that told the story of chintz's discovery at Brodsworth. The narrative flashes back several hundred years detailing chintz's original journey from India to Europe. A play was built then fleshed out by introducing music, dance and Indian tradition. Kala Sangam brought in well renowned sitarist Tandit Narendra Mishra from India and percussionist Sanhju Sahai from London to work with local dancers and musicians.

Kala Sangam ran craft workshops at Brodsworth Hall in the days leading up to the

performance, to which children and community groups in the region were invited. The workshops, via lectures and activities, explored the origins and use of chintz and talked about its conservation and display.

Photograph: Interculture, Ruth Dass



Picture 1: The Brodsworth Hall Pandal.

The Pandal

To house the performance, a Pandal – tent like structure made of wood, canvas and pith (a material derived from the stems of marsh plants) and traditionally used for religious festivals in Calcutta was designed and put up in the grounds of the House.

The inspiration came from the pre-Bollywood film *Pakeezah* and it was thought that a mini version of the set would form an excellent theatrical venue, as the visual imagery of the film-set in India was very similar to Brodsworth Hall and its Gardens.

The design and building of the Pandal, which was designed between the UK and Calcutta, made up in Calcutta, then shipped back to the UK and erected, was probably the most challenging aspect of the whole project. It was the first Pandal ever to be put up in the UK, so there were no obvious experts to draw upon, and the design had to encompass English Heritage's display criteria and the traditional requirements of its country of origin.

What did the project achieve

The project has not been formally evaluated but the programme drew several completely new groups in the Hall. The performance during the Bank Holiday Weekend attracted around 1,000 extra visitors and numerous people attended workshops in the preceding days.

Education

The project successfully broadened the range of activities that children normally do

when they visit the Hall. New material was added and additional information included in the Education Room, building up something that's repeatable and available both to visiting schools and the general public.

The Hill School secured funding from Creative Partnerships for six years and plans were afoot for more involvement at Brodsworth Hall. There were also plans for the screening of Bollywood films in the grounds and local involvement in the Hall's up and coming project Women in Country Homes.

Arts as a Common Language

Kala Sangam's response was that the project successfully brought together different people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds, using art as the common language. *Chintz Yatra* was highly challenging not just for local dance students but also for the international maestros who had to work in a different way. The variety in the performers was reflected in the make-up of the audience. Audiences feel closer to a performance when local people are involved – it is no longer something remote that has nothing to do with them.

Budding Artists

In the primary schools the project opened doors for future creative work. One of the teachers at Hill School said it's difficult to teach craft techniques in a school when you have large numbers but with this programme there was enough equipment and materials for every child to participate and that was tremendously exciting for them. The quality of art work produced was outstanding with closely observed drawings and striking print-work, and the visit to Brodsworth Hall was another big plus.

Raised Grades at Doncaster College

Chintz Yatra was programmed into the fashion students' academic year, which meant that tutors had time to organise a warm-up project called Pad, Wrap and Tuck. During this module, students studied the techniques of soft furnishing, with a view to cross-referencing these to garment making. The warm up module raised their skills base and enabled them to take a more refined sophisticated approach to *Chintz Yatra*.

One of the students working on the project raised her confidence in pattern-cutting so much that she entered the Skills City Challenge pattern-cutting competition held in Salford and won an award, and was later approached by two pattern cutters who were interested in offering her freelance work. Finally, Doncaster College reported that the crossover of disciplines that *Chintz Yatra* required strengthened staff teamwork. This did not go unrecognised, as Edexcel, national awarding body for Art and Design and the College's external verifying body, has used the College's involvement in *Chintz Yatra* as an example of good practice.

Who was involved

English Heritage provided the main site, the inspiration with their collections and the impetus. The programme idea was conceived by Ruth Dass, Director with Kirstin Miller, Project Manager and the team at InterCulture. Martin Allfrey, Head of Collections at English Heritage. Julie Ward, their regional Head of Education York Regional Office. The project could not have happened without Dr David Miles Chief Archaeologist and Carole Souter both from English Heritage London. Arts Council England were the creative funding body, as were GOYH with regards to the community participation. Asda contributed generously and Colefax and Fowler, a London based interior design Company who specialise in chintz donated free fabric to the fashion students of Doncaster College. Scriptwriter Catriona McGowan, theatre director Andi Cooper co-produced the performance event and Kala Sangam's artistic director Geetha Upadhyaya wrote the piece; dance company Kala Sangam worked

with the performers and ran the craft workshops. Chris Bowling was the independent production manager and made a substantial contribution to the success of The Pandal. The students and staff at Doncaster College supported the textiles programme. The Hill School, All Saints School and Gillington First School contributed and devised with the team at InterCulture and English Heritage the education programme. Mandy Sutter submitted the case study *Chintz Yatra: Chintz Journey* and finally the team at Brodsworth Hall supported the whole event.

Challenging People's Perceptions

In conclusion the partnership fulfilled all our main aims. Our mission is to inspire people from different backgrounds and cultures to work together. We also try to create new dimensions of work by bringing together the historic, the archaeological and the creative. It successfully engaged audiences who previously felt that a traditional English Historic House and its collections would contain nothing they could relate to as a part of their own cultural past. InterCulture tries to bring together exciting new and sustainable partnerships that must have a cultural and diverse impact that leaves a legacy and above all makes a difference. At Brodsworth these were formed on a local, regional and international levels. We were very proud to have been instrumental in a project that has spiralled above and beyond what we envisaged and that could not have been achieved without the dedication and hard work of all the parties involved.

Notes

1. PAT 10 is one of seventeen Policy Action Teams that were established by the Government in 1998 to carry out an integrated examination of the problems of poor neighbourhoods. PAT 10's focus is on the potential contribution that sport and the arts can make towards the renewal of neighbourhoods.

All the world's a stage – and all the men and women merely players...

John McVerry

In November 2001 a delegation from the National Trust was invited to look at Tyntesfield, the home of the late second Baron Wraxall to see if the Trust, and by extension the heritage movement, would be interested in purchasing the property for the nation. What we walked into was the most incredible mass of stuff, ranging from major pictures to tat; massed in rooms, corridors and sheds, some on a massive and soaring scale, others only just big enough to turn around in.

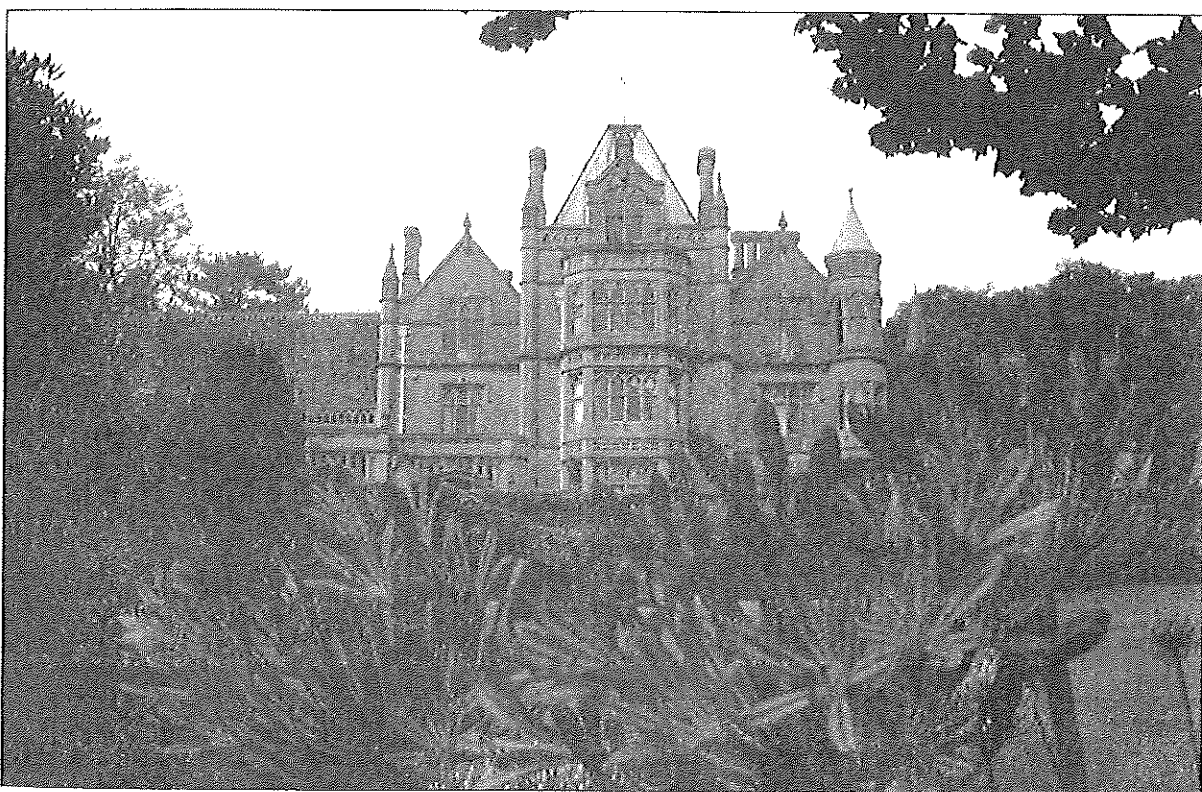
When it was finally decided that the Trust would have a stab at acquiring this place, the decisions had to be made as to how much of the estate would be tried for and what would be selected to furnish the buildings.

The overall estate purchase was quickly decided. We only had hope of raising enough funds to buy the historic core of the 1800 acre estate – 500 acres of gardens, park, walled gardens, woods and some arable, giving curtilage for the house, the stables, the walled garden.

What was harder to decide was what to buy in the way of contents. It was made perfectly clear that there was to be no element of gift. The will had stipulated that the estate was to be sold and the proceeds divided among nineteen beneficiaries. Some of these people were minors and so the only route for the executors was to realise everything into cash for distribution.

The dilemma was one of social history and looking at the property as a document for the study of life for 140 years. We were very mindful that our decisions were totally irreversible as, once dissipated, the contents could never return to Tyntesfield. The options discussed were:

Photograph: National Trust, Bernard Wildsmith



Picture 1: Tyntesfield, South Front.

Photograph: National Trust, Paul Dieppe.



Picture 2: Worth Ball Gown, c1900.

- Buy the lot - *we could not afford to do this*
- Purchase the contents of the main rooms known to have been in the house at the time of William and/or Antony – *This was the line taken in the 1950s at Dyrham and elsewhere. We have learned that this approach limits the place forever to the depth of scholarship available at the time of acquisition*
- Furnish the main rooms to give an impression of how the house might have been lived in by the family in its hey-day – *the fear here was the lack of knowledge, and that this approach would totally lose the contributions made by Richard and most of that of his mother. It would also result in an inevitable overlay of informed invention.*
- Keep a selection of contents for some of the main rooms and a range of the lesser rooms and service elements of the house – *this would allow a wider experience for the visitor and was a runner for quite a while*
- Establish a cut-off date and purchase everything prior to that – *difficult to establish in the time allowed to us*

● Let a few of the most expensive items go and keep the rest – *the chosen path*
 So, having secured the theatre, the sets, as many of the props as possible, our task now is to try and re-discover the actors and the plays.

We know quite a lot about the major players, William, Mathilda Blanch, Antony, George, Via, Ursula and Richard. Even here though we only know what is too big to

Photograph: Collection of Lord Wraxall.



Picture 3: Staff group at Tyntesfield, 1890s.

remain unknown – William's patronage of churches and mercantile acumen, Blanche's religious leanings and friendship with Hannah Moore, Antony's patronage of the arts, his skills and his love of technology, Via's tragic history of child-bearing, George's taking his place as MP and his duties in the Royal Household, Ursula's strength and Richard's fierce protection of his property and his privacy.

However, this is the barest bones and only this comes from inherited knowledge of the family, a few written sources and what we have discovered from people who have had a chance to study the archive.

The Gibbs archive was not offered to the Trust as part of the 2002 transaction. At the time of the sale it was in store at a record office and was universally assumed to be due to go into the public domain following the due process of transfer from private to public ownership. As a general rule the Trust accepts that it is not the best organisation to hold muniments as we don't have the resources to conserve and arrange records, or have the facilities for wide access. When we do own records they are almost invariably lodged in the county record office.

Without warning or discussion, the archive was sold by the executors to a consortium of family members. It is now being conserved and is both secure and safe, but not generally accessible.

Without access to the archive, our search for the people had to take a radically different path.

In parenthesis, but key to our working methods at Tyntesfield is our intention to work with people at all times so that every part of our conservation and operation of the estate can bring benefit and inclusion.

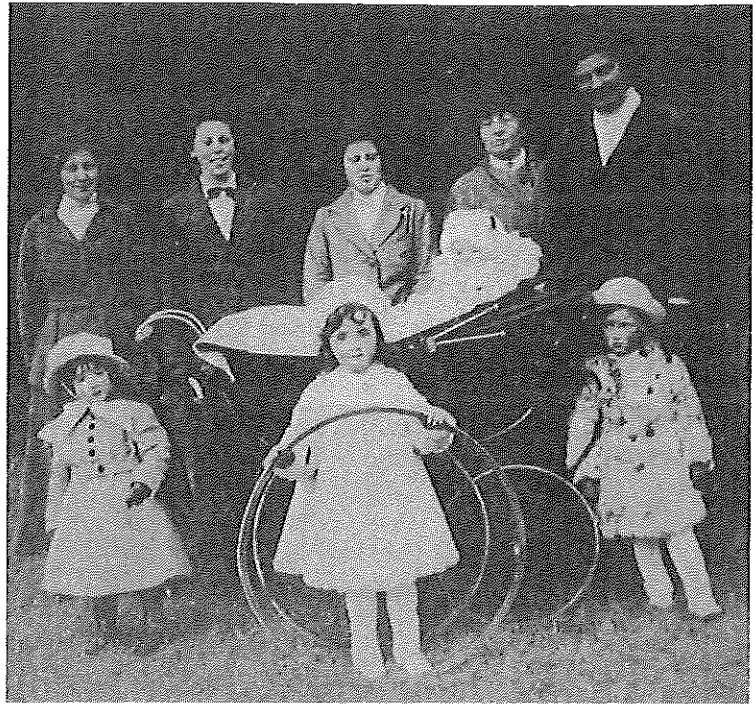
Methods of investigation

Sound archive

A very early contract (within three weeks of acquisition) was to scope the level and range of people who would be suitable for a sound archive. Given the fame of the place we were aware that there were many people who might state a connection with the place, only for us to find that the link was tenuous at best and spurious at worst. A contractor was employed to scope the possible numbers of people, and to produce a 'blue lights archive list'.

40 people who had contacted us with memories were interviewed and the scale and scope of their likely contribution noted and assessed. Also, they were asked if they knew of further leads that would help to enrich our knowledge. This led to an initial base of 70 people to be contacted and interviewed.

Part of the assessment was the risk of losing people whilst the project was set up. A blue light short list of people was established of people with key memories,



Photograph: National Trust, James O'Reardon.

Picture 4: Miss Doreen Gibbs and Company, c1918.

but either very elderly or in poor health. With one exception, these people have been interviewed.

We have now recruited a team of volunteer sound archivists. They have started their training and we are in the process of purchasing equipment. Our volunteers and guides working with visitors are very keen to capture contact details of those who open up about an earlier connection with the estate.

Video archive

Young people are particularly keen to work with video. To this end we are working up a partnership with North Somerset youth service for a defined and funded project for young people, to be trained to act as camera and lighting technicians and work with

our volunteer archivists to capture as many key people as possible on digital video.

One subject, Mrs Norman, half sister of Lord Wraxall was interviewed by a professional historian and recorded by a professional film crew. This was because her memories were key to capture and, at 90, she preferred us not to hang around!

Statement of Significance

The process of holding workshops for the building up of the Statement of Significance for the property has brought forward a wealth of memories of the place. People who had not considered their contribution to be worthy of archiving have been coming forward as part of this project. Also, several interesting documents and photographs have come to us during our appeals for information in relation to the Statement.

Diary Room

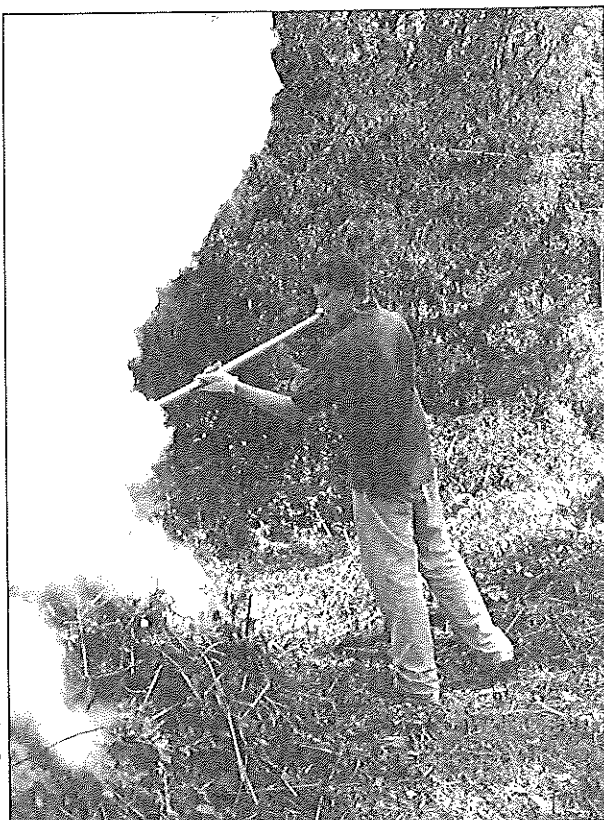
When the property is more accessible and people are able to linger, we intend

to install a video-box (or Diary-room) to encourage people to share their responses to the place. Included in the interpretation around this facility will be a request for people to tell us of any memory of Tyntesfield prior to acquisition and an invitation to leave contact details.

Encouraging others to meet and produce archives

During the scoping project, many women came forward who had been billeted at Tyntesfield from Clifton High School during World War II. Most of their experiences here had been very similar to each others, but we quickly found (several of the old girls are volunteers with us) that they became freer with their memories when in discourse. 2003 saw a re-union which many thought would be the last time that many of the further flung ex-pupils might make the journey to Bristol from around the world. As part of the programme for their event, the former pupils worked with the current pupils at the school, in close liaison with us, to produce an excellent record of people's memories of their time at Tyntesfield.

Photograph: National Trust, Heater Worth.



Generic research

Lacking the archives, we are able to steer people towards examining the more generic and contextual history of the place and the people. We have people working on living conditions for farm labourers and gardeners in the late nineteenth century as well as examining various schools of thought surrounding accommodation for domestic staff and household management. One study is looking at magazines and books surrounding child-rearing and decoration of nurseries. An International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) intern is spending this summer examining the Tractarians and their theories of the architectural expression of their beliefs. This study will do much to enrich the specific study of Gibbs, Norton and Tractarianism when we do finally gain access to William's diaries.

Secondary research

Although notoriously poorly written up as a document, Tyntesfield is directly relevant to much that was written about many, many subjects that will have affected its form and its development. There are the obvious religious connections, but also trends in decoration, trade, manners, reading, employment law and custom. Indeed the breadth of scope is so enormous that we are only really hampered by our own imaginations. To this end, we are encouraging research into areas that will directly inform our Conservation Plan, our interpretation of the estate or our understanding of the place.

Exploiting opportunities as they arise

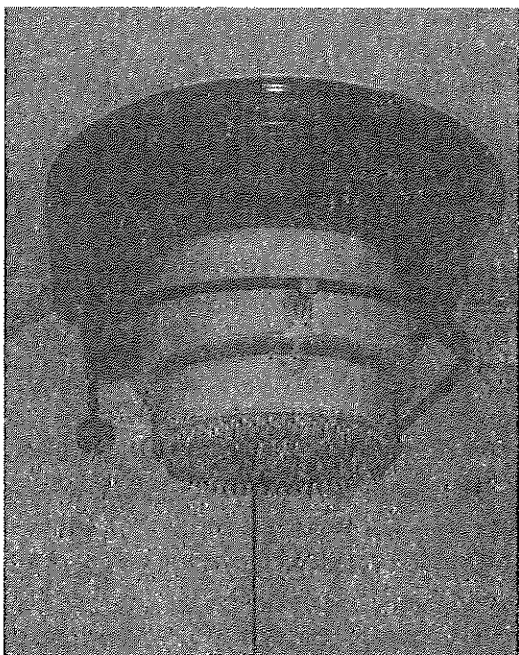
Comment cards from visitors, invitations to write in or phone to register details for archive, invitations to lend us old photographs to copy... we have become alert and greedy for information that might lead us to building up a picture of the life of this place and its multitude of contexts. Our minds are totally open to methods and means of adding to our knowledge of all aspects of life here. Soon we will have the office space to allow volunteer archivists to build up information in an accessible way.

The lack of specific knowledge at this stage is, in some ways, proving remarkably liberating. It has enabled us to lift our heads out of the drive to do. Lack of information means all our activities are by design reversible and all our assumptions can be confidently explained as being assumptions that might well be proved wrong. It means

too that we can be very clear that our immediate job is to preserve the place and its contents so that future generations can have as free a rein in investigating the social significances as we can now.

It also allows us to focus our efforts on capturing that ever decreasing resource – the memories of the place prior to acquisition. We look at Stourhead or Dyrham and wonder how they worked as houses, homes and theatres. The witnesses are gone and we only have the documents and our generic knowledge to work on. How wonderful it would be if we had the reminiscences of Alda Hoare's staff and cousins to refer to – we don't. Our endeavour at Tyntesfield is that, in 3004 it will be seen as being a key resource in the study of social history thanks not only to the variety and quantity of the trappings of living, but the raft of captured memories and reminiscences to lodge them in their context.

Photograph: National Trust, John McVerry.



Picture 6: 1889 Showerhead at Tyntesfield.

Black Servants

Giles Waterfield

Black servants or black slaves? 'Black slaves' is a more accurate description of the thousands of Africans working in British households during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their history has often been forgotten, in spite of eloquent narratives written at the time and since the 1970s. The facts are that the first African slaves were brought to Britain in 1555 by a trader; that in 1563 the slave trade gathered force with John Hawkin's sale of Africans into slavery in the West Indies; that numerous slaves were brought into Britain throughout the eighteenth century by traders and plantation owners, and were brought and sold in London and elsewhere (Wapping was a good spot to buy a man)(; that in spite of extended arguments about the legality of slavery, and an energetic campaign against the slave trade and slavery in Britain, slavery was not formally abolished in the colonies until 1834 even though slavery was not permitted in Britain after 1772; that as late as 1849 the eminent Thomas Carlyle could publish his *Discourse on the Nigger Question*, attacking black people in Britain with virulent prejudice. Though there were free black people in Britain throughout the period, the expression 'black slaves' is all too often the right one.

Historically, being black in white Europe carries a particular status. It meant one was exotic, and in demand. Black people, especially men, were employed in the courts of medieval Europe, particularly as musicians: the German Emperor Frederick II had five black trumpeters, as well as black pages, at his Palermo court in the thirteenth century. In Britain the earliest recorded black slaves served King James IV of Scotland at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and at the English court black musicians were working for the king from the reign of Henry VII. Royal patronage of 'exotic' foreigners was to be a vigorous tradition up to the end of the nineteenth century. For the nobility it also became fashionable to have an African attendant, a mark of wealth and sophistication: already under Elizabeth I black slaves were owned by people such as the Earl of Derby (as early as 1569) and Lady Raleigh, wife of Sir Walter. Although Elizabeth at the end of her reign issued various proclamations against black people, whose numbers in London were increasing, and ordered them to be deported from the country, she herself appears to have employed black trumpeters and dancers. The tradition of 'exotic' slaves or servants survived at court well into the eighteenth century. George I's Turkish body servant Mehemet, given to the king as a slave (with another slave, Mustafa) but freed, ennobled and promoted to Groom of the King's Chamber and Keeper of the Closet, was magnificently painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller in 1715, the year of his ennoblement. In the portrait, which remains in the Royal Collection, he wears a sumptuous costume, a vigorous statement of his status at court, which included the privilege of dressing the king and which was much resented by other courtiers. Mehemet reappears in William Kent's painting of the court on the Grand Staircase at Kensington Palace, of around 1725. Kneller executed a number of other remarkable depictions of black people, often clothed in exotic dress and in such roles as musicians, but there is no condescension in these images. While depictions of black people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show sitters in extravagant dress and make no effort to portray them in the context of their own society, Kneller's portraits generally respect their personal individuality and show them as physically impressive.

Servants or slaves?

By the eighteenth century the number of black people in England had risen: it was estimated that in the later eighteenth century the black population, primarily living in

London and other seaports, was around 15,000¹. While some of these people were employed by the nobility, many of them worked for people of lesser wealth (Samuel Pepys had a black 'cookmaid' in 1659). One of their great advantages was that once bought, they did not have to be paid.

The majority of black people worked as domestic servants. Slaves carried to an extreme the peculiarities of the servant's position, particularly the decorative male. Black men were much more in demand than women, as pages. Footmen and butlers: it has been estimated that 80 per cent of black people in England during the eighteenth century were male². Boy pages, some as young as five or six, were in favour as personal attendants on great ladies (as illustrated by Hogarth in *Marriage à la Mode* and elsewhere). The future of the black page was unpredictable: when he approached manhood, or insubordination, he might be shipped off to the West Indies where he would revert to servitude. Such pages were treated as exotic beings, expected to be in constant attendance on their mistresses, dressed in vaguely oriental clothes and given ironically imposing classical names (their own names being ignored) such as Socrates or Pompey, which was the most popular choice. But their servitude was affirmed by the metal collars that slaves were often compelled to wear: these were inscribed with the owner's name and were made by the craftsmen who produced dog collars.

Given the nature of the employment of black people, it is not surprising that at least until the late eighteenth century very few were portrayed in the way some of their white equivalents were. They feature primarily as attendants in fashionable portraits. Introducing a black attendant into a portrait of an important person was an extension of the sixteenth-century Italian convention of including a servant, a page, a secretary, a dwarf, or a dog or horse in a portrait as a foil to the principal subject. The idea of the black page as decorative accessory derives from Titian's *Laura Dianti* as well as Veronese's depictions of young black (male) servants in his large scale biblical paintings: it reflects the employment in Genoa, Florence and other Italian cities of African house servants in the sixteenth century and later³. The tradition was developed by Rubens, who sometimes introduced a black page into his large compositions (and carried further by Antoine Watteau in the early eighteenth century). In a British context, the use of the black attendant was taken up by Van Dyck as in *Princess Henrietta of Lorraine* (1634); and became increasingly popular, notably in the work of William Dobson and Sir Peter Lely. At times the genre also include Indian servants. The custom became a staple of eighteenth-century portraiture in the work of Godfrey Kneller, Andrea Soldi, William Hogarth and Johann Zoffany among many others. Late in the century the custom was still being energetically applied by Joshua Reynolds.

Early in the eighteenth century the black attendant also takes on a new, more domestic role. Like many white servants, he or she is often shown in attendance on a family group or a social gathering, as in Robert West's portrait of *Thomas Smith and His Family* (1733). In West's painting the anonymous black servant stands, in characteristically fanciful dress, on the periphery of the family group. Both British styles of depicting black attendants remained standard conventions until the end of the eighteenth century.

The black person in these portraits is seldom individually identifiable and is often presented as a form of staffage rather than as an actual person. Sometimes a reference to Africa or elsewhere arose from the experiences of the sitter, as in Van Dyck's *William Fielding, 1st Earl of Denbigh with an Indian page*, but the connections were not always so specific. One purpose of including a black retainer was to indicate the wealth and status of the principal sitter, since such attendants were relatively expensive, but this tended to be a British convention. Hugh Honour has demonstrated how, in North America, at the end of the eighteenth century, where black slaves were extremely common, they were almost never used in this way in portraiture. Thus

when John Trumbull was painting George Washington, he introduced a black attendant in the version of the portrait painted in England but not in the versions of the canvas painted across the Atlantic⁴.

Little better than lion, tigers, leopards

It is difficult to determine exactly what was meant by the inclusion of these black attendants, who might also be girls (particularly if they are shown with young girl mistresses) though not grown women. In some instances Indians are shown, as in Lely's *Lady Charlotte Fitzroy*, though the number of Indians, whether slaves or free, in eighteenth-century Britain was relatively small. Whatever their identity, they tend to gaze, as though adoringly, at their master or mistress, who may well be touching them or accepting flowers or fruit from them. Is this a reflection of the view, still current well into the nineteenth century, that black people were inferior to white, so that tribute is being paid to the embodiment of natural superiority? Since in the eyes of even intelligent and literate people in the eighteenth century, Africans were 'the most ignorant and unpolished people in the world, little better than lions, tigers, leopards, and other wild beasts...' as Lord Chesterfield put it⁵, such paintings can be interpreted as statements of the sitter's ability to dominate the world around them⁶. This is a process which, in the view of David Dabydeen writing of Van Dyck's *Princess Henrietta of Lorraine Attended by a Page*, involved the audience: 'the black is the external spectator internalized, for we too, the spectators are meant too, adopt his sensite perspective: beholding her image'⁷. For 'what emerges from such paintings is a sense of the loneliness and humiliation of blacks in white aristocratic society'. While the subservience of the attendant is clear, it may be felt that this is, rather, a pictorial convention, with the black person playing a role comparable to the sitter's child or grandchild or trusted adviser. As Linda Colley has pointed out in *Captives*⁸, her study of the numerous British men and women taken prisoner by the various foreign peoples they were attempting to colonise or suppress, the attitudes towards these peoples held by the small and relatively weak British nation were complex and by no means always triumphalist.

Black servants in art had other roles. David Dabydeen, who in *Hogarth's Blacks* wrote one of the first analyses of depictions of black people in British art, proposed William Hogarth, 'the first English artist to represent on canvas the lives of the common people in a serious and sympathetic way',⁹ as an innovator in his compassionate interest in black people. In the *Levée* scene of *Marriage à la Mode*, Dabydeen proposes, the black servant's calm dignity exposes the pretentious and licentious absurdity of the other figures, 'symbolising the "natural" as opposed to the "artificial", the "real" as opposed to the "ostentatious"'.¹⁰ However exotic black people have appeared to the aristocracy, a comparable attitude seems not to have been current at other social levels. Black people were readily assimilated by working people into whose ranks many of them fled from slavery, as well as in large domestic households.

Not all eighteenth-century black people living in England were condemned to obscurity. This was recognised when in the 1970s Black Studies emerged as a powerful discipline in Britain, partly as a result of contemporary political developments. Accounts of the black presence in Britain were written by such scholars as James Walvin, Folarin Shyllon (sponsored by the Institute for Race Relations) and Peter Fryer. They found in this unhappy story as number heroes, men whose names were known in Britain in the late eighteenth century, when attitudes to slavery and slave trade were changing. Among the most significant of these people were three men who spent at least some of their careers as servants. These were Ignatius Sancho, whose letters were published posthumously in 1782; Ottobah Cuguano, whose *Thoughts and Sentiments* (1787) contrasted English with African society; and Olaudah Equiano,

whose autobiography (published in 1787) ran into eight editions in five years. These men were 'lionised by polite society to whom they represented a certain ideal type of African'.¹¹ They demonstrated to a possibly sceptical public that if properly educated and brought up in the Christian tradition, Africans could become models of behaviour, on the lines determined in western Europe. All these men were depicted in straightforward portraits as individuals, with none of the overtones of subservience apparent in the other images we have considered – Gainsborough's portrait of *Ignatius Sancho* is an important example.

Ignatius Sancho was, like Robert Dodsley, a servant educated and succoured by a noble family. He worked for the family of the Dukes of Montagu from 1749 until 1773, when, with their support, he set up as a grocer in Mayfair. Already as a servant he had become a literary figure, notably as a correspondent of Laurence Sterne, and was perhaps regarded to an extent as an interesting curiosity. His portrait by Gainsborough, dating from 1768 at a time when his mistress was also being painted by that artist, may have been commissioned by his mistress as a gift to her favourite retainer. It shows her servant in the clothes of a gentleman, not at all an usual approach. As the portrait suggests, Sancho is remarkable in having crossed not just one but two powerful cultural barriers.

Indians in British portraiture

It was not only the Africans who came to Europe from another continent from the late Middle Ages onwards. Some Asians also found their way to Europe and to Britain, as did a few native Americans. Though some Indians were brought to Britain by their British employers in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their numbers were small compared to Africans. The Indian tradition of servant portraiture is quite different from the black African one. There was an active British presence in India from the seventeenth century onwards, and Indian servants are primarily shown not in Britain but in India. They form part of the enormous households which clustered around prominent Europeans, many of them performing for their British employers a range of functions for which there was no parallel at home: as water-coolers, bearers 'to pull the pankhas (ceiling fans)', grass-cutters, the 'gwala, or cowherd'.¹² These images were painted by Indians, by amateur British artists, and by the painters (Zoffany was the most famous) who travelled to India in search of patronage. Such a painting as Arthur William Devis's portrait of *A Gentleman, Possibly William Hickey, and an Indian Servant* (c1785), is characteristic, with the Englishman shown seated at leisure with his servants in dutiful attendance.

In such portraits another difference emerges from the conventional depiction of the African retainer. Africans are never seen in the context of their own continent, which the British had not occupied and about which they knew almost nothing. India was a different matter. British people had been going there since Elizabeth I set up the East India Company in 1600 and had found a society which they could admire and sympathise with. Relations between British employers and their household staffs in India seem often to have been cordial: some of the most touching memorials of the personal relationships which could develop in these circumstances are the sets of figures made of Indian households when their employers left India for their homeland, a version of the serial portraits we have already seen. Produced from the late eighteenth century onwards, these figures, made of clay and individually clothed and provided with utensils, were intended to recall old friends, when they were thousands of miles away.

In the nineteenth century the situation of black people living in Britain changed drastically. With the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 very few black people entered Britain, and the black people who remained tended to intermarry with the white population. By 1900 black people were even more of a rarity in Britain than they had

been in the eighteenth century. To employ a black servant was not unheard of in the late Victorian period, as is indicated by a photograph of the (admittedly somewhat exceptional) Livingstone family with Dr Livingstone's two 'faithful servants from Zanzibar' at Newstead Abbey near Nottingham around 1874,¹³ but it was certainly unusual.

By contrast, the number and the visibility of Indian servants rose. Some of these were the employees of prominent Indians, such as Duleep Singh, setting up large households in England. The most prominent, and potentially subversive, examples, however, were the Indian servants of Queen Victoria.

The Queen's Munshi

Victoria was declared Empress of India in 1877, and became fascinated by the country. Though she could not go there, she surrounded herself with a miniature Indian court at home. One of the first Indians to be engaged as a royal servant, in the Golden Jubilee year of 1887, was the twenty-four-year-old Abdul Karim, who was soon followed by other Indian retainers.¹⁴ Abdul Karim, whom the Queen thought intelligent and well-mannered, and no doubt found good-looking as well, was originally expected to wait at table but was soon promoted to be her *Munshi* (teacher) in Hindustani. Not at all an estimable character in the eyes of the royal household, who found him aggressive and repellent, he became a royal favourite. The Queen granted him the use of cottages in the grounds of Osborne House, Balmoral and Windsor, in which he installed a number of ladies variously known as his wife and his aunts. In 1894 he was again promoted, to be the Queen's Indian Secretary. Until Victoria's death he was a prominent figure at court, with influence (or so some of her advisers thought) over the sovereign. The Queen was also served by a substantial group of other Indian servants, who were in regular attendance.

The Munshi's role at Court raises interesting issues in terms of class and race. From the beginning he asserted that he was not from the servant caste, and that his father was a doctor (though actually he was a minor hospital administrator). He aspired to an elevated position at court, and a furious row broke out when he insisted on taking his meals with the royal household. Although, on the evidence of recent biographies, the household was hardly made up of inhumane people, they refused to accept him as their equal. It enraged them that he enjoyed privileged access to the monarch and saw himself, and was seen by the Queen, as a gentleman. In their view, he had no right to either privilege. He followed in a long tradition of royal favourites regarded as upstarts by other courtiers, and his non-European origins made it particularly difficult to consign him to any recognised social rank. In addition, India, enjoyed a particular status in Britain and it was possible for Indians to reach a high position in society in a way that was inconceivable for Africans – as the example of Indian MPs elected in the 1890s illustrates.

It was these origins that aroused such tensions between the Queen and her court. Members of the court found the idea of a non-European holding an important position close to the Queen disconcerting, if not worse. Victoria was more liberal. As Elizabeth Longford suggested, the Queen was both passionately hostile to both class and race discrimination (courtiers were forbidden to call Indians by what was regarded as the denigratory term 'black men'), and was more enlightened in terms of racial inclusiveness than most of her contemporaries. Over the Munshi affair, which lasted for some years, 'it is hard', in Longford's words, 'not to marvel at the old lady who, partly as a protest against prejudice, challenged two Viceroy's, two Prime Ministers, two Secretaries of State, many other officials and most of the court.'¹⁵

Naturally the Queen wanted her favourite to be painted. The Munshi was depicted in two oils, of 1888 and 1889 respectively, by the Viennese artist Rudolph Swoboda, who in India had already executed for the Queen a remarkable series of portraits of

Indians in native dress or uniform.¹⁶ In the 1888 portrait the Munshi is shown in rich Indian costume, like a nobleman's, wearing a white and gold turban. He carries a book, a reference to his role as a man of learning and tutor to the Queen, and an air of profundity. However unjustified this depiction of the Munshi as noble scholar may have been, the portrait pays respectful and indeed romantic tribute to the Indian origins of the sitter. The portrait now hangs, as it was intended to, within the set of portraits of royal servants and other Indians in the New Wing corridor at Osborne House, on the way to the Durbar Room created in the 1890s. It contributes to the statement of the Imperial inclusiveness sought by the Queen at the end of her reign and gives a powerful indication of the cultural changes that had taken place over the past hundred years. Whether it was the foreignness of the sitter, his very Otherness, that made possible this leap of sympathy in the Queen's mind, is another issue.

Notes

1. Population figures.
2. Ref. Proportion of black servants.
3. See Paul Kaplan, 'Titian's *Laura Dianti* and the Origins of the Motif of the Black Page in Portraiture', *Antichita Viva* No. 1 (1982), pp.11-8 and No. 4 (1982) pp.10-8; and Anthony Van Dyck (National Gallery of Art, Washington 1990-1) p.176.
4. Hugh Honour, *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, Vol.IV, part 1, *Slaves and Liberators* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1989) p.46.
5. Quoted in David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks* (Manchester University Press, Manchester 1987) p.30.
6. The history of philosophical attitudes to the 'problem' of blackness has recently been examined by David Bindman in *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century* (Reaktion Books, London 2002)
7. Dabydeen, 1987, p.32.
8. Linda Colley, *Captives* (Yale university Press, New Haven 2002).
9. Dabydeen, 1987, p.11.
10. Dabydeen, 1987, p.81.
11. James Walvin, *The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555-1860* (Orbach & Chambers, London 1971) p.16.
12. Stuart Cary Welch, *Room for Wonder* (The American Federation for Arts, New York 1978) pp.70-1.
13. Rosalys Coope, *The Webb Family and its Ownership of Newstead Abbey, Notts., 1860-1925*, p.138.
14. Information from Oliver Millar, *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge university Press, Cambridge 1992) pp.241ff, and from manuscript notes by Edward Sibbick on Osborne collection (held in the archives at Osborne House).
15. Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria R.I.* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London 1964) p.535.
16. See Saloni Mathur, *An Indian Encounter: Portraits for Queen Victoria* (National Gallery Company, London 2002).

This article appeared in *Below Stairs: 400 years of servant's portraits* by Giles Waterfield and Anne French with Matthew Craske (National Portrait Gallery, London 2003). It is reproduced here by kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery.

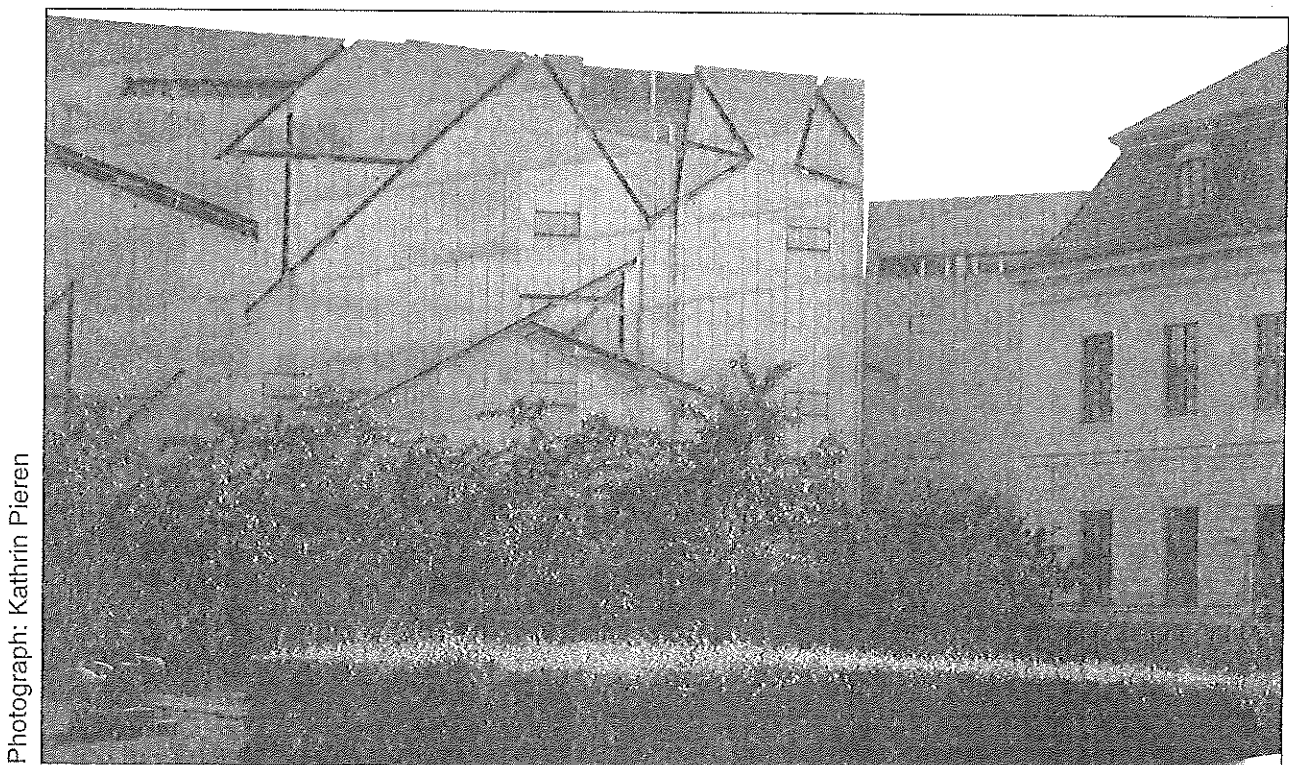
“Being Jewish is more than the Holocaust experience”: What visitors see at the Jewish Museum Berlin

Kathrin Pieren

When thinking about Jewish people in Germany, it is difficult to evoke any other mental pictures than those related to Holocaust and persecution. The overwhelming inhumanity of the Nazi crimes dominates the related imagery and has overshadowed the 2,000 year old history of the Jewish presence in the area of today's Germany. It is the aim of the Jewish Museum Berlin to change this perception. According to Director W. Michael Blumenthal 'the largest and most important Jewish museum in Europe is not a Holocaust museum' (cited in Edelmann, 2001). Quite the contrary: '[w]ith this museum, I want Germans, when they think of the word "Jew", to think of something other than Auschwitz and guilt. I want them to think of the Jews as people – and here are their faces – who were loyal citizens and helped build the country' (Blumenthal cited in Erlanger, 2001). The aim of a study I carried out in July 2004 was to investigate what strategies the museum applies to achieve this and what sense visitors make of what they see on display.

Theoretical framework

Based on a non-essentialist notion of identities (Woodward, 1997, 47; Hall, 2000, 24), the study regards them as social constructs that are continuously shaped, renewed and transformed in a continuous 'cultural circuit' (Hall, 1997, 15). It builds upon research which has acknowledged the role of museums in building up identities (Duncan, 1991; Karp et al., 1992; Newman and McLean, 2002) and has been studying the phenomenon mainly in the context of national museums (Gonen, 1992; Kaplan, 1994; McLean, 1998; Cooke and McLean, 2002; Davison, 2002). The project



Photograph: Kathrin Pieren

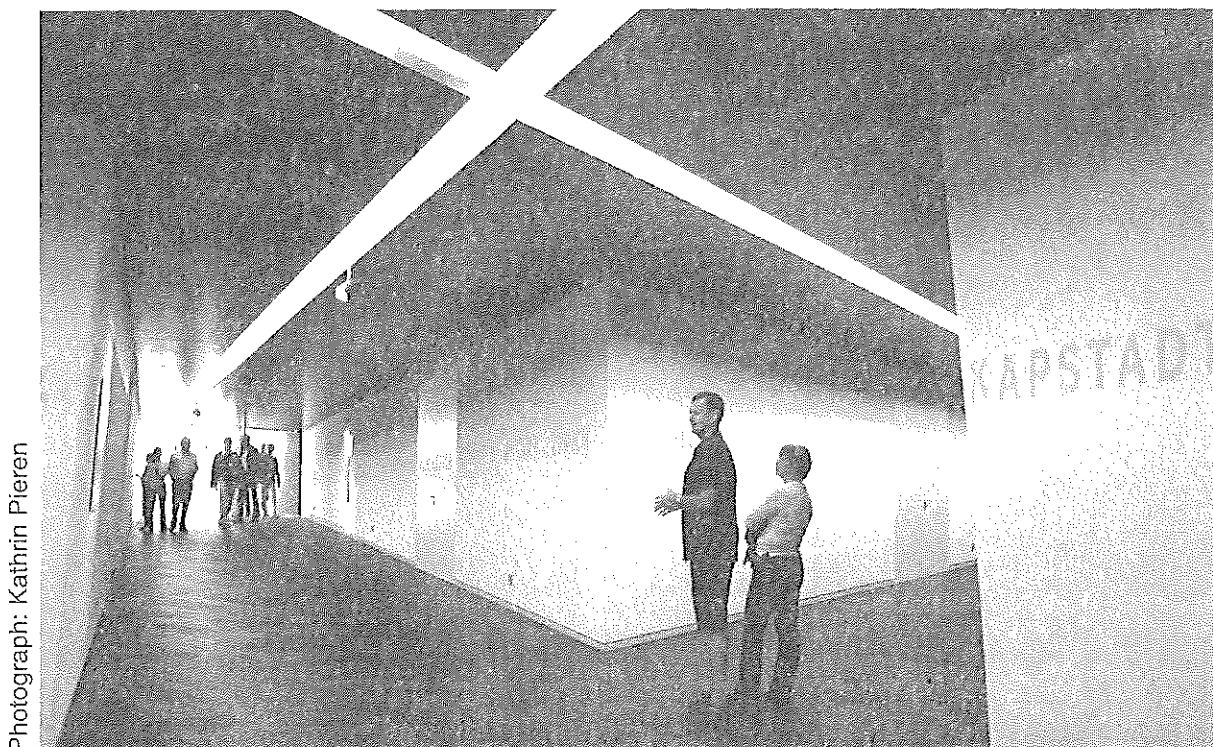
Above: The museum building. Baroque building with Libeskind's extension.

is based on the understanding however, that traditional communication theory which ‘puts control of the communication process firmly with the sender and envisages the recipient as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with information or knowledge’ (Mason, 2005, 201) is not appropriate anymore to study the complexity of the meaning making process in museums.

My study is informed by recent research which has increasingly focused on visitor contribution to the construction of meaning (Dicks, 2000; McLean and Cooke, 2000; Cooke and McLean, 2002; Palmer, 2001). Unlike these qualitative studies however, I combined quantitative and qualitative research methods and tried to give equal weight to the production and the consumption side of the meaning making process (McLean, 1998, 248-249). To analyse the process of cultural production, I applied a combination of two interpretation models (Kavanagh and Corsane, 2003; Whitehead, 2002) to the permanent exhibition of the museum, taking into account the aims and objectives of the museum as well as its historic and cultural context. The process of cultural consumption was analysed in a visitor survey; I chose a quantitative approach in order to increase the number of participants and identify potential ‘interpretative communities’ (Mason, 2005, 206-207). With the main questions being open-ended, the survey contained however a strong qualitative element.

Two spaces, two atmospheres

The zinc-cladded extension of the Jewish Museum Berlin, designed by deconstructivist architect Daniel Libeskind, is highly symbolically charged. So much so that there was discussion whether it should not better be left empty and used as a Holocaust memorial instead of a museum. The interior of the museum is characterised by two distinct spaces with very different atmospheres, artefacts and interpretative approaches: the basement of Libeskind’s building which treats the Holocaust period on one side, and the first and second floor which houses the exhibition about ‘Two Millennia of German Jewish History’ on the other. In order to access the historical gallery, visitors coming from the museum entrance in the adjoining Baroque building have to pass the basement first which is also the only exit.

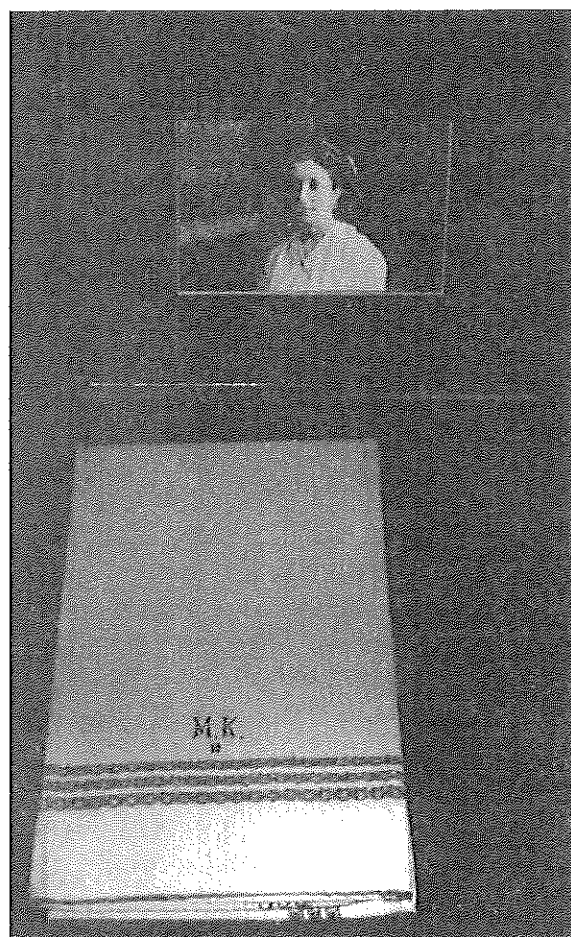


Photograph: Kathrin Pieren

Picture 2: Axis of Holocaust/Axis of Exile. Intersection between the Axis of Holocaust and the Axis of Exile

The basement consists of three intersected corridors: the Axis of Holocaust leads to the Holocaust tower, an oppressive narrow and almost completely dark tower of concrete; the Axis of Exile leads to the bright, but labyrinthic Garden of Exile; finally the Axis of Continuity leads to the start of the historical gallery. Few, dramatically-lit cases, some of which are framed by blackened glass, display personal belongings and photographs of the victims of the Holocaust. The gallery contains very little factual information and the object labels tell exclusively personal stories about their owners. Together with the sober atmosphere, the complete lack of interactives and other visual or audible distractions, this emotional interpretation turns this area into a Holocaust memorial rather than the part of a museum. Nigel Cox, Head of Exhibitions and Visitor Communication points out that here, 'the architecture does the job' (16 July 2004, pers. comm.), communicating effectively Libeskind's idea of '[h]istory [which] is not the statistic of the 6 million Jews but that of a unique Jewish individual multiplied 6 million times' (2001).

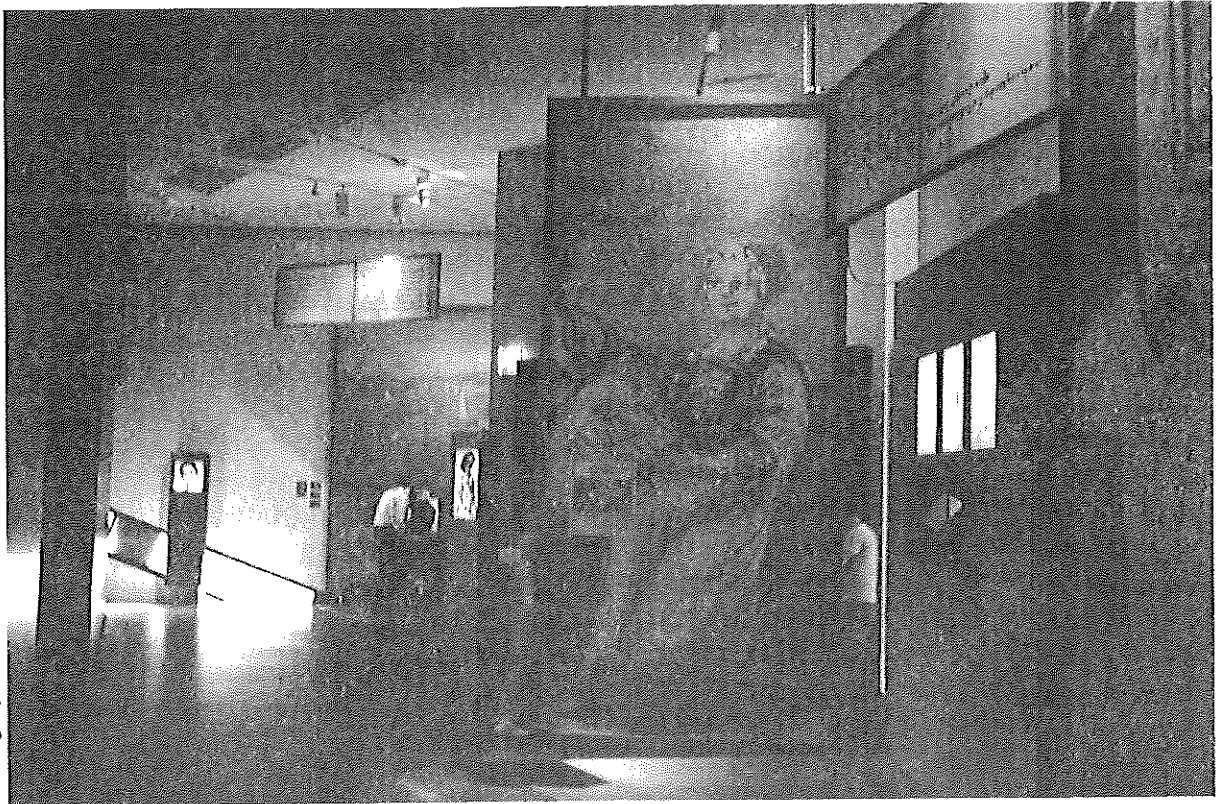
While the basement is dominated by concrete, fluorescent light, grey and black, a well-lit stairway takes the visitors to the start of the gallery on 2,000 years of German-Jewish history. The many decorative elements, the reproductions, the use of colour, the carpet or wood flooring, but also big photographs, and interactives create a completely different atmosphere. There is no doubt as to the museum character of this gallery. The set route is chronological and leaves almost no opportunity for evasion; the chronology stops in the mid-1980s and the tour ended at the time of my visit with an art installation on emigration and resettlement. Although the idea of loss and destruction is certainly present in this part of the building, communicated by architectural features, it is less dominant than in the Holocaust gallery. The 'poetics of the personal' (Clark, 2001), coming across through the display of historical personalities and their objects, is not commemorative here, but works as a statement against the denial of individuality recurring in anti-Semitic stereotypes and makes it also easier to empathise with the historical other. The interpretation in this gallery follows a traditional historiographical approach presenting history as a product of the past, not an interpretation of the past in the present. 'New history', differing viewpoints, reference to historical evidence, oral history or open questions, does not seem to have influenced the interpretative process very strongly. Attempts to invite visitors to make their minds up about contentious issues in the last part of the gallery are rather weak and do not really alter this picture.



Photograph: Kathrin Pieren

Picture 3: Holocaust display. Personal memories in the Axis of Holocaust: when sixteen year-old Paul Kutter left Berlin in 1939 on a 'Kindertransport' to England, his mother Margaret packed this hand towel in his suitcase. 'Paul never saw his mother again. He has never used the towel. It is still folded the way she placed it in his suitcase [...]' (label text).

Photograph: Kathrin Pieren



Picture 4: Display in the historical gallery. Display in the historical gallery about Glikl bas Judah Leib, a widowed merchant woman of the seventeenth century.

The narrative of the continuous struggle

Despite the differences, historical narrative and commemorative approach are part of the same master narrative of the continuous struggle of German Jewry towards emancipation which culminated in the great defeat of the Holocaust. Perfectly in line with the museum's aim, this narrative diversifies the image of Jews as victims, giving them an active role in history. On the other hand it leaves out any diversities within the Jewish population and does not provide notions of group identities. The identity depicted is therefore the identity of the individual Jew in his/her fight for equal rights, the 'loyal citizen' who 'helped build the country' to whom the director referred (Blumenthal cited in Erlanger, 2001). Although the museum makes attempts to show class and gender differences, they are not strong enough to contrast a predominant narrative of the assimilated, emancipated, intellectual, male individual in search of social and political acceptance. Not surprisingly, religion is taken as the marker of difference as it is an easy one to identify (Kugelman cited in DeRighi, 2001). Doing this while not showing the plurality of beliefs/non-beliefs within the Jewish community however, means turning this individual to a 'German of Jewish belief'.

The representation of German Jews as individual producers of history, rather than its eternal victims, and the focus on the continuity of German-Jewish relationships rather than on breaks and fractures are certainly something new for the German context. The non-conflicting approach creates an atmosphere that makes the troubled German-Jewish history easier to consume especially for the German target audience. It seems that in order to 'normalise' Jewish-German relationships Jews have to be represented in a German context as 'same' first, before diversity and otherness are accepted as values in their own rights. This is quite different from Jewish museums elsewhere which try to reflect the plurality of Jewish identities and memories (Clark, 2003; Burman, 2000; Watzmann, 2000). This strategy could be interpreted as a retrospective symbolic act of integration of the Jews into German

society that is still not truly pluralistic and conscious of its cultural complexity (Kugelman and Loewy, 2002, 19-20; Freudenheim, 2001).

Survey design and demographical data

What sense do visitors make of all this? In order to test audience response to the permanent exhibition, I asked visitors to fill in a questionnaire as they entered the museum. In the first part of the questionnaire, to be filled in before the visit, closed questions enquired if visitors perceived Jewish people as a distinct group and what elements (traditions, history, religious beliefs) they considered as characteristic. The purpose was to find out whether variances in the interpretation of the exhibits were related to variances in the perception of Jewish people. Three open questions, to be answered after the visit, aimed to find out how visitors interpreted what they had seen in the museum:

- 'If you wanted to describe to a friend what the Jewish Museum Berlin is about, how would you describe the museum?'

- 'Is there an object, a space or a person in the museum that represents being Jewish best to you? Please explain your answer.'

- 'Some people might argue that German Jewish history could be integrated in a German history museum and that it does not need a specific museum. What do you think of this idea? Please explain your answer.'

A crucial part of the analysis consisted in post-coding the answers to these open questions and meaningfully group the large number of diverse answers for further analysis.

88 of the 90 questionnaires were taken into account in the final analysis. 45.5% of participants were female, 44.3% male (10.2% missing). 21.6% of participants were 55 or older, the groups of the middle-aged (35-44) and the young (18-34) amounted to 38.6% participants each (1.1% missing). This age structure resembles the findings of the museum's own research (Birkert, 2003, 15). Participants came from 17 countries, 47.7% from Germany. The second biggest group came from other European countries (26.1%), the third from USA and Canada (18.2%). 11.36% of participants were Jewish. The museum which does not ask visitors about their religious affiliations, estimates that Jewish people count for between 2 and 5% of visitors; the probable overrepresentation in this study is most likely due to the holiday period as many of the Jewish visitors are tourists.

Age and provenance related to variances in perception

Asked to describe the museum, visitors mentioned the focus on



Photograph: Kathrin Pieren

Picture 5: Interactive. Three movies on financier Joseph Suess Oppenheimer illustrate the use of film for political propaganda and the diffusion of stereotypes.

Jewish history, culture and identity most often. It seems as if the aim of the museum makers to be mainly a history museum was perceived in the intended way by many visitors and that the Holocaust discourse conveyed particularly by the architecture does not dominate. However, a closer look shows that individual perceptions differed quite considerably, ranging from 'it is an art museum' to 'it is a Holocaust memorial'. While most people perceived it as a museum of German Jewry, some described it as a museum of European Jewish culture, while others again thought it was a museum on world Jewry. Not only do individual interpretations differ, certain groups of visitors have also distinct ways of perceiving the exhibit. Older people described the museum as a memorial and as representing 'continuity of oppression and fight for acceptance' more often (30.8%) than the young (15.8%) and the middle-aged (22.8%). Younger visitors pointed out museological and architectural features more often in their descriptions (39%) than older ones (age 35-54: 22.8%; age 55+: 20%). The factors age and perception of the museum are therefore clearly related. A plausible explanation for the interpretation of the museum by the oldest group seems to be the vicinity of this age group to the events of World War II and the Holocaust. The interpretation of the younger visitors might be related to changing attitudes towards museums and museum visiting (museum as leisure activity vs. museum as an educational institution).

Since the overwhelming majority (76.1%) of respondents say to perceive Jewish people as not at all or only relatively different from non Jewish people, it comes as no surprise that the majority of them (63.6%) declined to name an object which could represent Jewish identity or answered 'don't know'. The participants who thought no object was distinctive of Jewry, argued that an entire culture cannot be reduced to one object or that being Jewish can only be represented by the ensemble of the entire museum. Whether this perception is an effect of the museum visit can only be assumed. Interestingly, US and Canadian citizens thought twice as often as the Germans and three times as often as other Europeans that the plurality of Jewish people cannot be represented by one object or that Jews are not different from non Jews. Maybe in a more pluralist society like the American (Singer, 1994, 286-289) individual differences are more strongly perceived (or perceived as being stronger) than group-related differences.

Only a 31.8% of participants identified an object that represents Jewish identity to them. Non Jewish visitors most often named objects that represent hardship, struggle or fear. This does not necessarily mean that these people regard Jews exclusively as victims, but that they perceive the history of persecution as the distinctive element of Jewish identity – a very strong aspect in the museum's interpretation. Although the numbers are too small to provide any statistical evidence, it should be mentioned that in contrast, Jewish people chose objects which are positively associated. This variance might partially be due to general differences between construction of the self and construction of the other, but it also illustrates the 'raison d'être' of the museum: the need for the diversification of Jewish identities in the minds of the museum visitors, like the elderly American lady said 'being Jewish is more than the Holocaust experience'. The second biggest group of objects visitors chose was something related to religion (kipah, synagogues etc.). Interestingly, not all of these visitors think that religion is particularly important for Jewish people. It is therefore plausible that they consider religion to be just a distinctive characteristic of Jewry – another strong aspect in the museum's interpretation.

Asked whether the Jewish museum should be integrated into a German museum, 78.4% visitors answered negatively. While the statistics show a significant relationship between the answer to this question and the country of residence (North-Americans and Israelis rejected the idea of an integration of the museum into a museum of German history more often than Germans and other Europeans), the low number of

people in the data set reduces the value of the finding. When asked to give a reason for their negative answer, participants most frequently argued with intercultural diversity. Given that the majority of interviewees perceive being Jewish as not very different from non Jewish culture, this answer seems to be surprising. However, they did not refer so much to the cultural as being inherently different, but the culture and history. Only 5.9% of the participants in favour of separate museums actually regard Jewish people as a distinct culture. Although visitors do not regard the function of Holocaust memorial as the most important characteristic of the Jewish Museum Berlin, they do consider this function to be the most important argument for an independent museum. This is particularly the case for the oldest group; they perceive the guilt of the Germans towards the Jews and the memorial function of the museum more often as barriers against its integration into a museum of German history (50%) than the youngest participants (10.8%).

Conclusion and outlook

The study at the Jewish Museum Berlin empirically confirmed what has already been discussed theoretically and analysed in qualitative research: that museum communication is a two-way process to which visitors contribute as much as curators. Furthermore, it showed that visitor response is not random, but that certain groups of visitors interpret exhibits in a similar way. In this case age, and to a lesser extent, country of residence explained variances in readings best. While it could be demonstrated how visitor interpretations relate to the preferred readings of the museum makers, the question of how museums actually contribute to the production of these interpretative communities and how pertinent the identities constructed in museums are, must be left to others to answer instead. More qualitative and long-term analysis is required to take the next step in a multi-strategy research process towards a better understanding of making meaning and identities in museums.

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Notes for Contributors

The Editor will be pleased to consider articles for inclusion in *Social History in Museums*. The article should be supplied on disk along with a printed copy. Articles should be in the region of 2,000 - 3,000 words, but longer articles will always be considered.

References (Footnotes)

Contributors may use either of the standard conventions:

(a) In text citation of sources

Give author's surname, date of publication and page references (if any) in parentheses in the body of the text, e.g. (Dyer, 1994, 179). Where a second or subsequent work by a particular author in the same year is cited, references should be distinguished by letters (a, b, c, etc) placed after the date. A complete list of references cited, arranged alphabetically by the author's surname, should be typed at the end of the article in the form:

Dyer, C. 1994, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London)

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(b) Citation in footnotes

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Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and its aftermath in late-medieval England* (London), p. 18.

T H Ashton and R H Hilton (eds), *The English Rising of 1381*, pp. 9 - 24.

SAC Penn, 'Female wage-earners in late fourteenth-century England', *Agricultural History Review*, 35 (1987), pp. 1 - 14.

Short forms:

Platt, *King Death*, p. 102.

Ashton and Hilton (eds) *English Rising*, p. 25.

Penn, 'Female wage-earners', p. 12.

Quotations

Quotations should be in single inverted commas, with double used only for quotations within quotations. Quotations of more than five lines should be set off from the text and indented.

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