

# A COMMON WEALTH

## Museums in the Learning Age

A Report to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

by David Anderson OBE



Lifelong learners take a break during their visit to the British Museum.  
(Photo: Martin Salter)

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## Foreword by Alan Howarth, Minister for the Arts

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Education is, as the Prime Minister has said, the passion of this Government and at the heart of its ambition. Within my own Department, we are strongly aware of the contribution to learning that museums and galleries can make. Raising standards of cultural education and training is one of the four central themes which underlie all areas of our work. So I am delighted to welcome this second edition of David Anderson's report on the educational role of museums and galleries.

Education surely should be central to the work of museums and galleries. Many take their responsibility very seriously, offering excellent and well-used services to people of all ages. The Government wants to encourage and develop this so that there is a more consistent spread of expertise and benefit throughout the country. My Department has been working closely with the Department for Education and Employment to help this to happen. Both Departments are keen to see museums and galleries play a full part in supporting the National Curriculum for schoolchildren and in providing opportunities for people of all ages and all backgrounds to increase their knowledge and level of understanding.

Since it was first published over two years ago, David Anderson's report has had an immense impact on both the museums and the education communities. It has become a highly regarded work in its field and copies have gone to many other countries in the world as well as throughout the United Kingdom. It has caused many organisations to appreciate the great educational value in Britain's museums and galleries, and it has encouraged them to consider afresh this vital issue. We are fortunate in possessing extraordinary quality and variety in our museums and galleries which, between them, cover a huge spectrum of subjects. The report has emphasised that education is for all museums and galleries: small ones as well as large ones, specialised ones and more general ones. All hold materials which can contribute to learning, and have the expertise necessary to transform objects into resources that people can use for learning and enjoyment.

A great deal has happened in the last two years: not least the election of a new Government committed to realising the benefits of the emerging learning society and to developing our creativity in the knowledge-based global economy of the next century. There have been many other changes too, such as with Lottery funding, and a second edition of the report was felt to be justified. Information Technologies continue to develop apace and now a separate chapter is devoted to this subject.

Many people have contributed to the revised text. They have helped David Anderson to produce an up-to-date and relevant report which will continue to provide the stimulation and encouragement of the first. I commend it to you. I hope that you will find it of great value as we strive together to develop the role that museums and galleries play in their contributions to learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Howarth', written in a cursive style.

Alan Howarth

## Preface

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The first edition of this report was published in January 1997. Since then we have witnessed the introduction of a range of major policy initiatives by the new Government in both the education and cultural sectors. The significance of these developments is such as to necessitate a new edition rather than a further printing of the original report.

The second edition includes additional chapters on the emergence of the digital museum as part of the new cultural network, and on the role of museums in the fostering of creativity in our society. Almost all of the original chapters of the report have been revised and updated to include details of the opportunities for museums that have arisen from provision of new Government and Lottery funding streams, including the New Opportunities Fund; the Department for Education and Employment's new initiatives in the schools, further education and higher education sectors and in support of lifelong learning; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's new targets for the cultural sector; and the decision to establish the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as well as other developments within the museum sector.

The report also incorporates the results of recent research and includes in the bibliography a number of significant publications that have appeared since 1996. Where appropriate, the case studies included in the first edition have been revised and updated. However, the original recommendations, which evolved through extensive consultation within the sector and were approved by the report's Steering Committee, remain unchanged except to acknowledge alterations to the names of the organisations to which these recommendations were first directed.

Museums in the United Kingdom have always been seen as educational institutions. Yet this is the first comprehensive report to examine their educational role in full. Its publication reflects a renewed awareness of the contribution that museums make to lifelong learning, and the even greater contribution that they could make in future if their work was coordinated at local, regional and national levels.

The terms of reference of the report were 'to review the current activities of museums in the United Kingdom as centres for formal and informal learning, and identify how this function can be effectively developed'. The report proposes targets for this development. It also seeks to define the educational role of museums, and the principles of educational provision they require to identify and resolve practical issues.

The report is directed particularly to policy makers and key decision makers in the museum and education sectors and others concerned with the use of museums as a learning resource. These include: the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which commissioned this report, and the other Government departments which are principally responsible for museums and education, the Department for Education and Employment and the Scottish Office, Welsh Office and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland; the Museums & Galleries Commission and its successor body, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; national and local organisations with responsibility, both statutory and professional, for museums and local education authorities and their governing bodies; funding bodies, including educational trusts, foundations and sponsors; and museum managers, museum professionals and educators in other sectors who use museums.

Museums in the United Kingdom range in size from major national institutions employing more than one thousand staff, to small independent museums with no paid staff at all. Given the diversity of these museums, it is expected that organisations will identify which recommendations are achievable by them in the short-term and which, in the longer-term, they can work towards.

For the first edition two questionnaire surveys were conducted to provide information about current education policies and practices in museums. The first on museum policies and provision was sent in August 1994 to a sample of 1600 museums, eliciting 566 valid responses. The second, sent in October 1995 to a sample of 210 museums whose responses to the first questionnaire indicated that they made deliberate provision for education, sought more detailed information on educational provision; this elicited 88 valid responses. The questionnaire surveys were conducted by Dr Stuart Davies of the University of Leeds.

To complement this qualitative and quantitative data, a series of fourteen colloquia was held in association with the ten Area Museum Councils at locations throughout the United Kingdom. They were led by a range of distinguished specialists in their fields and were attended by a total of over 350 museum staff and professionals from other sectors. The colloquia provided the project with insights and options for development which could not have been obtained from published sources. The report is informed throughout by the expertise of those who contributed. Details of the colloquia are given in Appendix 3. The report also draws on a wide range of secondary sources. A list of the principal publications used is given in Appendix 4.

A great debt is owed to the Steering Committee, formed by the then Department of National



Heritage to provide advice and guidance to the project and to Patrick Fallon and Philip Gregory, who managed the Department's contribution to the project. The willingness of the Steering Committee members, all senior professionals in their fields, to debate important issues freely and openly enriched the report and ensured that a broad range of perspectives was represented throughout the process. Any errors of fact or interpretation are, however, mine, and members of the Committee have not been asked individually to endorse every statement in the report. Appendix 1 lists the membership of the Committee; the recommendations of the report are listed in Appendix 2.

Caroline Lang, as Project Coordinator, organised the colloquia, undertook research for the survey of museum education posts and prepared the case studies included in this report. She also managed the administration of the project and frequently drew upon her own extensive experience as a museum educator to take it forward. The project could not have been undertaken without her professionalism and commitment. Esther Boulton and Celia Joicey provided capable administrative assistance. Ann Bonney efficiently typed drafts of the text. Peter Ford created the map on page 47, and Annette Stannett diligently proof-read the final document. I am grateful also to the Director and Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum for enabling me to undertake this project.

While this report defines a vision for the future development of museums, it is securely based on the best of current practice, exemplified by the case studies. The high quality of many individual projects, and the standards of excellence already achieved by museums of all types and sizes in their educational work, provide irrefutable evidence that museums can make a unique and vital contribution to education in the United Kingdom. It should no longer be a matter of debate that every museum can and should achieve these standards.

The 2500 museums in the United Kingdom are a resource for public learning of exceptional educational, social, economic and spiritual value—a common wealth. This wealth is held in trust by museums for the public good, not just for our own time and society but for all times and peoples.

David Anderson  
 Head of Education  
 Victoria and Albert Museum  
 April 1999



# A Common Wealth: Summary of the Report

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This is the first comprehensive report in the United Kingdom on museum and gallery education. It reviews the current activities of museums as centres for learning and makes recommendations for their future development.

## Introduction

Museums and galleries are universal educational institutions of immense expressive power and authority. They hold their resources in trust for all people. They are engaged in what William Morris called ‘the education of desire’ – the stimulation of a wish to enhance the quality of our lives.

Museums in the United Kingdom are fortunate in being surrounded by extraordinary material and non-material cultural wealth. This report endorses a wider definition of a museum as ‘a framed experience rooted in authenticity’, embracing the cultural and natural environment as well as the resources held within the institution itself. Developmental, proactive museums report that for them, education is the golden key, which opens doors to resources of skills, money and facilities in their communities.

Museums have entered a time of change. They are being asked to justify their funding and to define the terms of their contract with society. The cultural sector is one of the fastest growing parts of the economy; it offers opportunities for personal (informal and self-directed) learning that differ from, and complement, the learning provided by the formal education sector. Education provides museums with a renewed purpose and enables them to contribute to cultural development in society.

## Museums in Society

### The Challenge of the Learning Society

There is extensive debate on the kind of learning needed by the United Kingdom in the twenty first century, if we are to address future challenges. Social exclusion deprives many people of the opportunity to participate actively and creatively in their communities, and a diminishing proportion of the population can identify their place in society in terms of stable and knowable communities. Effective organisations now require staff with highly developed, people-orientated learning skills.

Following publication by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) of *The Learning Age* the emphasis in public education policy has increasingly embraced the concept of lifelong learning. As resource-rich learning environments, museums are well placed to act as catalysts for informal and self-directed learning in a family and community context.

### **The Emerging Cultural Network**

The burgeoning media technologies represent a new world of human experience and behaviour. Recent Government initiatives, including the creation of NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), the National Grid for Learning and the Public Library Network, offer an exceptional opportunity for museums to contribute to the development of a new cultural network, including museums, at a community and a national level. The value of museums and galleries will become increasingly evident, as the visual, interactive, social and experiential dimensions of the new media replace provision of textual information as the dominant modes.

### **Museums and Creativity**

Culture is dynamic and people-centred and creativity is at the core of the Government's concept of culture. Museums and galleries make three significant contributions to the creative economy and creative communities. First, the sector is a creative industry in its own right. Second, it is an important source of inspiration for other creative industries, such as designers and craftspeople, broadcasters and professionals in the digital media. Third, and perhaps most important, museums and galleries have a crucial role as public learning centres in fostering the creative skills of children and adults, who are the makers and consumers of the present and future.

### **Responding to the Challenge**

Museums and galleries offer a unique kind of learning, based on first-hand experience of authentic objects, works of art and other resources in a public, social environment. They can support cultural literacy for individuals and cultural development for communities. As participatory public spaces, museums and galleries are places for debate; their values and expectations of behaviour help shape those of society as a whole. They can provide ethical leadership, and help children and adults to acquire skills of learning through cultural resources. They also have a responsibility to invest in the future of their communities – particularly by encouraging young people to participate in their activities – as society has invested in museums.

### **Museum Education Today: Key Findings**

Provision for museum and gallery education is a patchwork. The questionnaire surveys for the first edition showed that approximately 50% of museums (usually but not always the smaller institutions) made no deliberate provision for education. 15% made almost none and in the remaining 35% it ranged from basic to comprehensive. Where it existed, such provision may be available to only a small percentage of audiences in a particular category. Over the last decade, many museums have made strenuous efforts to enhance their educational work and the number of museum education posts has doubled. But only one in five museums have an education specialist on their staff.

Most museum managers say that education is in the second order of their priorities, after collections management and display. Some audiences, such as schools, children in family groups and local adults, are more likely to receive education services than others, such as students, young people, minority communities or tourists. In most museums, provision for lifelong learning remains an aspiration rather than a reality.

The low level of provision for public learning in the United Kingdom's museums is a waste of a vital public resource. Achieving a consistent professional standard for public learning is a critical challenge which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The report, therefore, proposes twelve targets for development of museums: four relate to the institution, four to the public and four to the creation of a national framework.

## **Twelve targets for development of museums learning**

### **The Institution**

#### ***Target 1: The museum's educational mission***

Few museums include education in their mission statements. To become centres for learning, museums themselves need to become learning organisations with education central to their purpose. This requires the leadership of museum management and their governing bodies, who have direct responsibility for educational development.

#### ***Target 2: The museum as a learning resource***

Three main types of provision for learning - exhibits, programmes and facilities for self-directed learning - define a museum. All three must be engaged if museums are to develop their whole public dimension for learning, using new technologies where appropriate.

Increasingly, museums are involving the public as partners as well as targets in development of services.

**Target 3: A skilled workforce**

All staff contribute in some way to a museum's education work, and only one in four of the museum staff who deliver education services is a specialist educator. The report recommends that each museum or group of museums should employ a specialist to lead its educational development, and should foster the educational capabilities of staff, volunteers and all who work in or for them, both those who are trained educators and those who help to deliver services. A much greater investment is required if museums are to be effective as they should be as educational institutions. In addition, the report proposes that the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation, when reviewing its standards of competence and qualifications should include a unit or units on museum education in the mandatory framework of all museum qualifications.

**Target 4: Research and evaluation**

Research and evaluation of public learning needs to become an integral part of museum practice. Few museums evaluate the educational effectiveness of their galleries or other services, conduct learning research, or study the educational work of other museums, yet investment in these activities could significantly enhance the effectiveness of museums. The report recommends that museums should make educational research and evaluation a high priority and should be supported in this by an independent research committee which sets a national research agenda; in addition, one or more higher education institutions should establish centres for museum learning to encourage the development of research and teaching in the field.

**The Public****Target 5: Lifelong learning**

Museums can contribute to every stage of educational development. They should support lifelong learning through both informal learning and formal education, from early childhood, through families, at work and in the third age. The community provides an important framework for lifelong learning, and must now be the focus for audience development. The report recommends that museums should identify their audience priorities and direct educational provision where it can be most effective at reaching target groups.

**Target 6: Open museums**

Museums can open themselves to the widest possible audience by using strategies for access, participation and for progression of learning. At present, half of the population of the United Kingdom rarely or never use museums, but the levels of participation vary greatly from area to area, depending in part upon the efforts made by individual museums to encourage participation. Provision for learning is the most effective strategy for reaching new audiences, and the report proposes that it should be deployed more effectively to overcome barriers to inclusion.

**Target 7: Engaging other educators**

The effective use of museums as a learning resource by educational institutions depends in part on teachers and other educators as well as museums themselves. Development of their skills would significantly enhance student learning, yet very few receive training in learning through museums. Initiatives are needed at both local and national levels. Therefore, the report recommends that the Government should ask public bodies with responsibility for curricula and assessment, teacher and lecturer – training and the inspection of schools and other educational institutions to encourage, enhance and monitor the use of museums as a learning resource.

**Target 8: Partnerships**

Partnerships extend the boundaries of what is possible, and local authorities in particular can play an enabling role in helping museums to collaborate with different agencies and institutions which share museum objectives. The report recommends that museums should seek partnerships with other agencies and institutions, especially libraries, archives and the broadcasting media, as well as formal education institutions.

**National development****Target 9: Adequate provision throughout the United Kingdom**

Participation in museums should be an entitlement of citizenship. If museum learning is to be available in every area of the country, museums will need support from Area Museum Councils (AMCs) and from museums with well-established education services. Each museum or group of museums needs an education specialist to lead development, but in addition there is an urgent requirement for AMCs to provide more expert educational advice, training programmes, grants and other support. To do so effectively, they need to employ their own specialist advisory staff, and should develop their own educational policies and plans.

**Target 10: A national framework**

If education is to be established as a central purpose of museums of all sizes and types, an infrastructure is required to support development at a national level. The Government and the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC) can take a lead in this, with the support of other agencies. For this it is vital that MLAC should employ a full-time educator at a senior level with support to develop and implement a new educational policy and plan. In addition, the Government should establish a Standing Committee on museum and gallery education or on education through the cultural sector.

**Target 11: Investment**

Museums need to commit the resources to education that are required for growth. Such investment will help to attract additional resources of expertise and funding, as well as a complementary investment of time and support from the public, voluntary organisations, trusts and foundations. But this alone will not be sufficient to achieve the scale of change in quality and level of public provision. The report recommends that Lottery funding should be used to establish a national and regional infrastructure of support and to expand services at a local level.

**Target 12: Advocacy**

Museums have the potential to enrich many aspects of national life. They need to articulate their value to society as educational institutions, to local and national Government, to other sectors, and to independent policy and research bodies, if they are to play a more effective part in society. In addition, the report recommends that the Museums Association (MA), the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and the National Association for Gallery Education (ENGAGE) should promote the value of museums as educational institutions inside and outside the museum sector.

**Conclusions**

Museums find their voice through their educational work. They are at the beginning of a process of fundamental change into centres for public learning that could take them, together with other cultural institutions, to the centre of public policy.



## Introduction

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The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as ‘a non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment’. A European Forum organised by the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) in 1998 proposed an alternative definition, ‘a framed experience rooted in authenticity’.

Museums at their finest are universal educational institutions of immense expressive power and authority. They communicate with us across boundaries of language, culture and time, and suggest comparisons which illuminate our experience of the present. The objects and works of art which they display embody the ways of life, ideas, values and spirit of those who created them. Through museums, we have direct contact with peoples of all ages and cultures, experience the unimaginable variety of the natural world and expand our understanding of what it means to be human.

By relating contemporary societies to the forces that have shaped - and are continuing to shape - them, museums demonstrate that all cultures are subject to evolution. They also stimulate in us a critical awareness of our own beliefs and identity, and a respect for those of others.

Museums show that the capacity to make judgements is not only unavoidable but desirable, yet they also reveal that there are shared human values which unite people of different cultures. If we were asked to justify human existence, many of the examples we might choose, from all ages and cultures, are celebrated in museums.

These fragmentary survivors are also evidence of the fragility of human culture and the natural environment. No previous generation has had such power over the natural world, nor exercised such a threat to it. Museums can educate the public about the place of humanity in the environment and the nature of the physical universe; they can speak directly to the public about global development and change, and can develop an awareness of the need for diversity and sustainability.

Museums prompt an appreciation of the ethical and moral dimension of life. Museums are a spiritual resource for many of us, whatever our beliefs, who want contact with something beyond ourselves.

### The educational purpose of museums

The philosopher Michael Oakeshott has defined learning as ‘acquiring the ability to feel and think’, which he believed can only be acquired by listening for and recognising these abilities in the conduct and utterances of others. Learning suffuses almost every moment of our daily lives. However, human cultures have developed only because people also have an innate capacity to teach – or educate – as well as learn. Education is undertaken with varying degrees of skill by many members of society including parents, other relatives, friends, colleagues at work, and fellow members of clubs and societies, as well as by professional educators.

‘Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do to make sense of the world. It may involve an increase in skills, knowledge or understanding, a deepening of values or the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and a desire to learn more.’

*Campaign for Learning, 1998*

Museums are public centres for collections, scholarship, expertise and skills, which are rich and distinctive educational resources. These resources exist because society values museums and is prepared to support them financially. Therefore, museums have a duty to make their resources available to all potential users. The delivery of these resources in ways appropriate to the needs of all learners is the business of museum education and museum educators.

Museums hold their resources in trust for all people, including those people in the past whose skills and creativity produced these objects, specimens and works of art; individuals and groups today who might use museum resources for the public good; and future generations who may need them to nourish and develop their own societies.

Museums are educational institutions in their own right and not because of any services they may provide to other educational institutions. Education is intrinsic to the nature of museums. Their educational mission drives every activity; it is an integral part of the work of all staff and an element in the experience of every museum user. Unless museums make provision for education purposefully and with commitment, they are not truly museums.

Museums are engaged in what William Morris called ‘the education of desire’ – the stimulation of a wish to enhance the quality of our lives. They allow us to learn through our senses,

especially sight, hearing and touch, in ways that give us pleasure. They develop our feelings as well as our powers of perception, analysis, ethical awareness, imagination and creativity.

Museums must be sensitive to the richness and diversity of the society of which they are part, but should also offer us a vision of society as it could be.

In the nineteenth century, it was a growing awareness of the power of objects and works of art to educate people's hearts and minds that persuaded many local communities to found their own public museums. In doing so, towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom developed a new and dynamic relationship between learning and culture in a way that could not be achieved through a school or university.

Following the success of the Great Exhibition in 1851, the museum movement developed from a series of isolated initiatives into a major instrument of public educational policy for the achievement of social and economic improvement. Collaborations quickly developed at a local level between museums, libraries, the new schools of art and science and other educational institutions.

'Systems in evolution need a memory, and societies are evolving systems. Museums are part of the collective memory of human beings: they are not the collective memory, but they may well be the leading element in societies' collective memory.

There are those who claim that museums are mostly for fun, or that preservation of artefacts from the past is an end in itself. We argue that museums are in the service of society and consequently must offer both learning and entertainment, but the single most important objective of memory is to help us learn, as individuals and in society'.

*Swedish Parliamentary Commission on Museums, 1994.*

In due course, however, central Government put its faith instead in the formal education sector to educate the population as workers and citizens. Without a unifying vision of universal public education to bind them, museums and other local institutions gradually went in different directions. As the state education system expanded in the twentieth century, so the concept of public learning in museums diminished. Increasingly, museum education was seen as a limited

specialist service, usually for schools, with little connection to other museum work, rather than the main purpose of all museum activities. This conceptual confusion remains widespread in the museum sector, and dogs discussion of museum education to this day.

### **An expanded concept of museums**

Museums, like many other public institutions, have now entered a time of change in the assumptions and principles which shape their development. With increasing clarity and insistence, those who fund museums are asking them to demonstrate that society as a whole is benefiting from the investment that it makes. Museums can no longer justify their existence, as many have done in the past, principally in terms of the care and display of their collections.

Museums in the United Kingdom are fortunate in being surrounded by extraordinary cultural wealth: natural landscapes and human environments shaped by millennia of use, richly distinctive regional and ethnic identities, youth cultures of enormous vitality, and the capacity to produce manufactured and handmade goods of high quality. The balance and perfection of the best of daily life can itself be a major cultural achievement. All of this depends as much upon non-material culture – the shared values, ideologies, oral traditions, rituals, ethical standards and beliefs that give meaning and symbolic significance to our material world – as it does upon material culture consisting of objects and works of art, specimens and sites. No culture can be adequately represented in museums by material evidence alone. This is particularly true of societies with strong oral traditions, such as Gaelic Scotland and many non-Western societies.

‘This highway of archangels, this theatre of heaven, the lightgarden of the angel king’

*Inscription on a memorial to the Emperor Babur near Kabul, 1640*

This report takes the ICOM definition of a museum as its starting point. However, the report endorses the view of the many people now working in museums, who are unwilling to limit the boundary of a museum to the walls of the institution. They believe that their collections form an integral part of a wider concept of museums, which includes their cultural and natural environment. For example, for some natural historians, the future of the living landscape has an importance equal to the display of specimens in galleries; they regard their educational

work in the two environments as complementary rather than in conflict. Likewise, many social historians value the material and non-material resources of their communities as living parts of their museums' collections.

This expanded concept of museums is in harmony with a philosophy of museum learning that defines it as a collaborative process involving both public and staff. The implication for museums, profound in its consequences, is that museum education is not what museums do with their objects to people, but a process of individual and community development drawing upon the full range of community and institutional resources, to which both the public and museum staff contribute as partners.

Museum collections need education to turn them to good purpose. It is culture in action, the uses of culture for learning, which define the quality of a museum and a society. It is the responsibility of museums and galleries to help each generation to re-engage with the cultural energy embodied in their collections or presented in their exhibitions, and to contribute to what Michael Oakeshott described as 'a public conversation across the ages'.

'We need a kind of integrated transport system for learning, with clear routes and signposts connecting the community to the rich learning opportunities provided by museums.'

*Bill Lucas, Director of the Campaign for Learning, 1999.*

For developmental, proactive museums, public learning is the golden key. It provides them with a rationale and an ethical purpose they now require. As well as enriching visitors' experience of the collections, attracting more diverse audiences and increasing attendances, education also opens the door for museums to the latent resources of skills, money and facilities that exist in their communities. It enables them to engage and influence local agencies and institutions, and to place themselves at the centre of arts, leisure, education, tourism and commercial networks. It offers them a leading role in shaping the cultural development and economic re-generation of their areas which in turn generates wider community support, greater interest from sponsors and the media and increased political influence.

By making education the *raison d'être* of all their activities, museums can both reaffirm the purpose for which they were first created, and meet the challenge of the learning society which the United Kingdom is becoming.

‘Without education there can be no culture’

*Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, 1998*

The last few years have witnessed a remarkable revolution in cultural and educational policy, a transformation led by Government but reflecting deep social and technological changes in our society. For the first time in this century, the cultural sector has a comprehensive strategy for development, supported by a rationale which has public learning and creativity at its centre. At the same time the education sector has embraced the concept of lifelong learning beyond formal education, in the home and the community. Both sectors now value and share as a common objective the development of lifelong learning through cultural resources.

Museums have entered the learning age.



Children as guides for the 'Claustrophobia' exhibition at the Ikon Gallery, June 1998  
(Photo: Ikon Gallery)

## The Challenge of the Learning Society

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There is extensive debate within business and industry, the education and training sectors, community organisations and Government on the kind of learning needed by the United Kingdom in the twenty-first century, if we are to address future social, economic and technological challenges. Society is changing, and museums, if they are to serve society, need to respond to these changes.

‘Most business is about working through and with people and that’s about learning. It’s not about fact. You can tell people a truth until they’re blue in the face, but unless they’re interested in it and believe it, and find it emotionally assimilable, they won’t accept it. You learn through the arts.

To cope with a changing world, we need people of imagination, creativity and vision and with the self-confidence to adapt. That’s why I believe so passionately that it doesn’t matter precisely where the talents of our people are, so long as it’s recognised that everyone has some talent. The job of the educator is to find it’.

*John Harvey-Jones, industrialist, 1995*

### Social Change

In 1944, Beveridge identified five great evils – the giants of want, idleness, ignorance, squalor and disease – that society must overcome. Today, we might add a sixth, cultural exclusion, which existed fifty years ago, and which continues to deprive many people of the opportunity to participate actively and creatively in their communities. Our society, while generally more affluent, has also become more atomised and more sharply divided. The last two decades have seen the emergence of a ‘second nation’, a substantial minority which includes a disproportionate number of young people and adults whose lives are blighted by recurrent unemployment, poor housing, poor health and drug-related crime. One in three children now lives in poverty and in consequence suffers significant educational disadvantage from birth. These divisions are reflected in museum audiences.

A diminishing proportion of the population can identify their place in society in terms of stable and knowable communities. As a consequence of economic change, some localities themselves have altered beyond recognition since the last war. In the United Kingdom, as throughout Europe, federal, regional and minority identities are competing with traditional allegiances to

the nation state. Intercommunal and racial tensions continue in some areas, while minority groups demand recognition and respect for their distinctive values and ways of life. There is a growing acceptance that the United Kingdom is a pluralistic society, but also a recognition of the need to develop greater cultural literacy and tolerance if the balance between pluralism and identity is to be sustained.

Fifty years ago, cultural exclusion may not have been perceived by policy makers as a serious evil. Today it bars the way to many of our cultural and educational institutions. Cultural exclusion has become an increasingly urgent issue for museums, and education one of the most powerful weapons against it.

### **Changes in the workplace**

The emergence of the global market has resulted in a radical reappraisal of the importance of training and development at the workplace. The Japanese academic Fukio Kodama has spoken of a change in the corporation from being a 'place for production' to a 'place for thinking', and leading industrialists in the United Kingdom are emphasising the need for a workforce that is flexible, adaptive, imaginative and capable of working with a range of people from all backgrounds. Civic institutions have found that public support is increasingly uncertain and that they must build relationships of trust, a development which requires additional learning skills on the part of professionals, community groups and voluntary organisations alike.

Effective organisations require staff with highly developed, people-oriented learning skills, of the kind that the arts are particularly well able to develop. For such organisations, as Sir Christopher Ball, Director of Learning at the Royal Society for the Arts, said in 1995, 'Learning pays, and nothing much else does today'.

### **Developments in educational policy and practice**

For many years, public educational policy was based on the assumption that, for the majority of the population, the most important learning took place in the classroom. In recent decades, understanding of the processes of learning and education has changed beyond recognition. Today, learning is seen as a lifelong process, growing out of our everyday experience, to which formal education at school and college and training at work contribute. Informal learning, the kind that begins at birth and develops throughout life through social interaction with other people, provides the foundation for all other learning.



### How adults prefer to learn

A study in 1998 of over 1000 adults conducted for the Campaign for Learning found that most adults are currently engaged in learning, and a significant majority (more than half the adult population) are doing so outside the formal education system. People feel much more positively about learning which they associate with discovering, finding out and enjoyment, than they do about education which they associate principally with school.

93% of adults say they enjoy learning new things, and 90% think that learning is personally important to them. A majority (56%) see the benefits of learning in terms of personal development and improving the quality of their lives rather than improved work performance, salary or prospects. When asked the places where they felt they personally learnt most, 57% mentioned the home and 49% either libraries or museums, but only 29% mentioned college or university and 11% school.

The most popular methods of learning identified by the adults sampled were doing practical things, studying or practising on their own, and exchanging ideas and information with others. Formal teaching with instruction from a tutor or teacher was significantly less popular. As yet relatively few people prefer to use computers as a learning tool (23% mentioned CD-Rom/computer software packages and 11% the Internet).

Also evident is the significance of the differences in the ways that people learn. This may depend upon their cultural background, the varied strengths of their multiple types of intelligence, and their preferred learning styles. Some prefer to perceive through sensing and feeling, others through thinking; some to process these experiences through actively doing, others through observing; some to learn alone, others to learn in a group. These characteristics of human learning have significant implications for public educational policy. One is the importance of support for families and communities, the source of much informal learning. Another is the need for institutions, such as museums, which can cater for such diverse ways of learning.

Industry, the government and many individual members of the public in the United Kingdom now recognise the importance of lifelong learning. We are currently witnessing an explosive

development of learning, particularly among adults, that has no precedent in this century. More than one half of all adults in the United Kingdom are now deliberately engaged in learning. Of these, most are learning independently of formal educational institutions. Especially significant is that a far higher proportion of adults from ethnic minorities are engaged in study than of the rest of the population. People say they learn most in their homes and communities, and their main learning resource is the cultural sector (the media, libraries and museums), not formal education.

The expansion in formal education and training has also been dramatic. The last Government demonstrated its commitment to a learning workforce by setting national targets for lifetime vocational learning, and for participation in higher education. Between 1990 and 1995 the number of students increased by one million to four million, and the proportion of young people now entering higher education increased to one in three.

Education will be the key industry for developed countries in the twenty-first century. Open and distance-learning has developed considerably over the last 10-15 years to meet the need of adults for more flexible forms of learning. The formal education sector has responded well to the demands that are being made on it, but cannot meet the needs of all learners. There is great potential for development of informal and self-directed learning approaches of the kind that museums could offer.

### **The need for a learning society**

The Royal Society for the Arts (RSA), the Open University (OU), the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC), the Training and Enterprise National Council (TEC) and individual TECs and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) are just some of the organisations to have urged that learning, both formal and informal, in education and training, should be recognised as a fundamental connective purpose in the life of every citizen, and that we must become a learning society. A learning society has been defined by the SCEC as one 'whose citizens value, support and engage in learning, as a matter of course, in all areas of activity'.

We need to make a distinction between a learning society, a knowledge society and an information society. Information, like sand, is the low-skill raw material of the future. Aided by technology, an information society simply adds more and more sand to the heap. With knowledge, however, the sand can be turned into a beautiful glass to drink from, enjoy, share or sell. But it requires learning to make an even better glass to meet future, changing circumstances. Clearly, it is a learning society that we need. The previous Government's policy

document *Lifetime Learning*, published in 1996, stressed the importance of partnership and promoted the concept of Learning Cities, Towns and Communities, an idea many are now taking up.

### Museums and how people learn

The work of some influential researchers on human learning is of particular relevance to museum education.

Lev Vygotsky and later Jerome Bruner both ascribed particular importance to culture and culture artefacts, in material and non-material form, across all fields of human activity. Vygotsky believed that language and instruction are essential for the inheritance and transformation of culture. Bruner believed that one of the main purposes of instruction is not to communicate facts but to introduce children or adults to the distinctive skills and methodologies of subject disciplines through observation and apprenticeship with practitioners. The work of Bruner and Vygotsky suggests that museums can be of great value in the learning process, provided that they are used actively to develop understanding and practice of relevant disciplines.

Howard Gardner believes that there are at least seven human intelligences – linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily kinaesthetic, inter-personal and intra-personal – and possibly also a spiritual intelligence. His theory of multiple intelligences helps to explain why people learn, remember, perform and understand in different ways according to the strengths of those intelligences. He points out that the education system (at least in the USA) is biased towards linguistic and logical-mathematical modes. Gardner believes that science centres and museums have a vital and complementary role to play in children's education, and advocates in *The Unschooled Mind* that all children should attend an intensive museum programme rather than, or in addition to, schools. He also believes that the informal, enjoyable, contextualised environment of the museum and the apprenticeship model of learning are more relevant to the needs of today's children than the de-contextualised environment and formal methods of the school.

Self-directed learners represent what Stephen Brookfield has described as a vast 'parallel universe' of people who learn mainly or entirely outside the formal education sector, at home or through a club, society or voluntary organisations.

Instead of working to a fixed curriculum, self-directed learners take the initiative in deciding their own learning programmes according to their own interests.

Brookfield found that the most successful self-directed learners developed their knowledge through learning networks rather than in isolation, were extrinsically-orientated and saw themselves as part of a wider learning community. Casual oral transmission was of greater value to them than lectures, and they in turn, provided specialist advice and mentoring to unskilled newcomers. Self-directed learners are of great significance to museums. They are probably disproportionately represented among existing visitors, and may be the main source of active public support for many institutions, particularly those independent museums which rely upon the skills of unpaid but knowledgeable volunteers. Museums in turn are ideal centres for self-directed learning.

Research into experiential learning by David Kolb, Bernice McCarthy and others suggests that people can be divided into those who prefer to perceive concretely through sensing/feeling, or alternatively through thinking. They may then prefer to process these new experiences actively through doing, or reflectively through watching. These differences can be related to the dominance of either the right brain (to which is attributed concrete, non-rational, intuitive and non-verbal thought) or the left brain (to which is attributed abstract, rational, analytical and verbal thought). Experiential learning theory has become very influential in museum education because museums are flexible enough to be designed to suit many different learning styles.

David Goleman, drawing on recent research on the human brain, argued that our emotions play a far greater role in thought, decision-making and individual success than is commonly acknowledged. His definition of emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and motivation, empathy and social deftness, and he has identified a range of educational approaches which can be used to foster it. Museums and galleries, as experiential spaces, can encourage learning through engagement with feelings.

Building upon the Dearing report on higher education, the Kennedy report on further education and the Fryer report on lifelong learning, the publication in 1998 of the new Government's Green Paper on lifelong learning, *The Learning Age*, was a defining point in public policy on education. It drew together within a framework of lifelong learning the strands of formal education in schools, colleges and adult education institutions, work-based training, and informal and self-directed learning in the family and community.

The Paper proposed a number of significant initiatives, which will shift the balance of public provision for learning decisively away from the rigid, supply-side model of the past, and towards individual choice and responsibility for learning in a diversity of contexts in and beyond the community.

#### **The Learning Age: Key Proposals**

The Green Paper set out the Government's proposals for creating a new 'learning age' to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. These include:

- Learning Direct, a national telephone helpline with advice on learning;
- The University for Industry which will open by early 2000;
- Individual Learning Accounts which will encourage people to save to learn;
- Places for an extra 500,000 people in further education and higher education by 2002;
- Investment in young people, particularly those at risk of dropping out from learning;
- Doubling help for basic literacy and numeracy skills among adults to involve over 500,000 adults a year by 2002;
- Widening participation in and access to learning in all its forms;
- Raising standards across teaching and learning in further, higher and adult education;
- Building a qualification system which is easily understood and gives equal value to academic and vocational learning;
- Increasing take up of the Investors in People initiative in small businesses;
- Setting up of the National Grid for Learning by 2002.

The present Government came into office in 1997 with a strong education remit. It declared that its priorities were ‘education, education, education’. As policies have evolved, these priorities could now be restated as ‘formal education, informal learning and self-directed learning’. Personal learning in all its forms runs through the work of museums and all other cultural institutions. It defines their central purpose and the unique contribution they can make to society in the new century.

### **The importance of museums in the twenty-first century**

If the United Kingdom is to harness the learning potential of the whole population, it will need to coordinate the efforts of the formal education sector with the public’s desire to engage in informal and self-directed learning. Museums have a distinctive role to play in the development of a skilled and creative workforce, and in satisfying the public need for learning for leisure and enjoyment. The strengths of museums, particularly the opportunity they provide for learning actively through the senses from primary cultural sources, complement and enhance those of the formal education sector. As resource-rich learning environments, they are well placed to support informal and self-directed learning by individual families and other social groups.

‘As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual sides of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us to fulfil our potential and open doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings.

We have inherited the legacy of the great self-help movements of the Victorian industrial communities. Men and women, often living in desperate poverty, were determined to improve themselves and their families. Learning enriched their lives and they, in turn, enriched the whole of society.

The Learning Age will be built on a renewed commitment to self-improvement and on recognition of the enormous contribution learning makes to our society’.

*David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, 1998*

## The Emerging Cultural Network

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'For the first time we have the opportunity to link all our learning institutions and providers - including schools, colleges, universities, libraries, adult learning institutions, museums and galleries - and more, to link them purposefully to an agenda for developing the learning society. To achieve a learning society, these links must extend in an effective way to homes, the workplace, hospitals, the high street and the street corner in the same way that public utilities like the telephone are now universally available'.

*Department for Education and Employment, Connecting the Learning Society, 1997*

The burgeoning media technologies represent a new world of human experience and behaviour. A key change in technology is the shift from physical 'atoms' to electronic 'bits'. Associated with this change are a host of others. Control of media production and with it, control of the learning process, is moving from the traditional producers to consumers, from transmitters to receivers, from teachers to learners. Computers, already capable of some perception, are becoming multi-sensory, responding subtly to human behaviour, by changing services and environments. As Nicholas Negroponte, Director of the MIT Media Lab in Boston, has suggested, in the post-information age, we often have to deal with an audience the size of one.

New media technologies offer the prospect of a significant expansion of distance-learning provision through cultural resources. Yet the development of these technologies will, without doubt, also reduce control of knowledge by public institutions. Documented images will be 'hot' resources, as students seek authentic learning material in an accessible, flexible form. Once data has left the museum and become available digitally, it may be beyond copyright protection, especially in the huge deregulated zone of informal digital learning.

Digital media packages at present are often imaginatively, aesthetically, symbolically and educationally impoverished, and many websites provide only factual information. This will almost certainly change. The new technologies offer exceptional opportunities for individual and social learning. They already enable people to choose when and where learning will take place, and in time may offer people kinds of learning that are not better or worse, but qualitatively different, from those available from other sources. Within the last few years, some cultural institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Arts have begun to explore

the potential of digital media as an art form, providing a showcase for exciting new work by leading practitioners from a range of creative industries including architecture, design, film and the graphic arts.

The cheapness of the digital resources available on-line contrasts with the cost of the hardware and software needed to gain access to them. It is possible that the expected convergence of broadcasting, telecommunications and other digital services may in time bring interactive learning media within the personal reach of almost every person in Europe and every community in the developing world. There is, equally, a serious risk that a divide will open up in our society between those who have access to the best learning resources and those who do not. This divide will persist through each new wave of technological development. The same divide could emerge between large and small public institutions in the cultural sector, including museums.

These possibilities raise issues of public access to cultural resources. Such dangers can only be avoided if there is a concerted national effort to establish as many free digital learning centres as possible in and through public institutions. It is also vital that the skills of creative use of digital media, which museums and galleries are ideally placed to develop among their users, should be spread as widely as possible throughout society.

### **The Government's strategy for digital learning**

The Government policy statement, *Our Information Age* (1998), defined its vision for development of the use of digital media to transform education, widen access, promote competitiveness, foster quality and modernise government in the United Kingdom. The most important elements of the Government's strategy for digital learning are:

The National Grid for Learning, which will provide a network for schools and other educational institutions to gain access to quality learning resources through the Internet, and establish links with libraries, museums and broadcasters and other partners. As its contribution to the Grid the Government is creating public educational websites, and has established the British Educational Communications Technology Agency (BECTA) to lead its development. The Grid will also provide an architecture of interconnecting networks linked to other providers.



**Community Access to Lifelong Learning.** This initiative has been developed in response to evidence that many adults find it hard to gain access to activity that is too formal or is provided in too conventional an educational setting. It will support the development of a nationwide network of learning centres with ICT access. In particular, it will develop Community Grids for Learning and the Public Library Network and contribute to the development of the University for Industry. The learning centres will be located in libraries, museums and galleries, community centres, supermarkets, schools and colleges and other accessible venues.

**The Public Library Network** is a programme to develop the IT infrastructure required to link the UK's 4,000 public libraries to each other, to the National Grid for Learning and to the University for Industry. It will enable them to provide a wide range of on-line services for members of the public and to develop new digitised material. The initiative is underpinned by a programme of ICT training for all public library staff. The Government is setting the objective that every public library should, where practicable, be connected to the National Grid for Learning by 2002.

**Community Grids for Learning** will enable local authorities and communities to develop on-line community resources linking educational, library, leisure and other services at local, metropolitan and regional level. This content will be created and disseminated by local providers, including museums and galleries.

**The University for Industry** will be an organisation for open and distance-learning which will complement traditional learning mechanisms by using new technology to make learning available to adults at work, at home or at local learning centres. It has two strategic objectives: to stimulate demand for lifelong learning amongst businesses and individuals, in order to equip the country with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to compete in the global economy; and to promote the availability of, and improve access to, relevant, high quality and innovative learning, in particular through the use of information and communications technology.

**IT for All** is a Government-led programme specifically focused on adults not being targeted by other initiatives. It aims to raise awareness, provide access and develop skills in the use of digital technology. Working with public and private sector partners, by the beginning of 1999 the Government had established a nationwide

network of 4000 IT for All access sites, including 2000 learning centres to provide very basic training for those who have no experience of using computers.

**A Framework for Electronic Commerce.** The Government wants the United Kingdom to be a leader in the development of electronic commerce. It will aim to achieve this through the operation of four guiding principles: technology neutrality, so that organisations engaged in electronic commerce are not disadvantaged; security of electronic transactions; protection of intellectual property; and cutting red tape.

**A Framework for Digital Broadcasting.** The launch of digital broadcasting has brought the prospect of more channels, better quality sound and pictures and new kinds of services for viewers and listeners, including interactivity and access to the Internet. The Government is establishing a framework which aims to ensure universal access to a range of high quality information, education and entertainment services whilst safeguarding copyright and encouraging commercial developments.

**Improving Public Services.** The Government will use telephones, interactive television and multimedia kiosks in public places to provide information on public services. Its goal is to have 25% of Government services accessible electronically by 2002.

**The 24 Hour Museum.** Jointly developed by the Campaign for Museums and the MDA, with funding from DCMS, *The 24 Hour Museum* is an internet project for the public to provide a gateway to all UK museums and galleries, with a news page, a gazetteer and search facilities, and innovative educational resources.

Within the cultural sector it is libraries that have responded most rapidly to the new opportunities for public learning offered by the emergence of new digital media. The Library and Information Commission (LIC) report *New Library: The People's Network* (1998) recommended that the Government should create a managed public libraries digital network through public/private sector partnerships. In response, the Government agreed to provide £50 million from the New Opportunities Fund for creation of content to be made available through the network and the National Grid for Learning by libraries, archives, museums and other providers and a further £20 million so that all public library staff can be trained in ICT use.

A subsequent LIC report, *Building the New Library Network* (1998), set out the proposals for development for consideration by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). This recommended that the educational priority should be to support projects aimed at self-directed and informal learning. The report also recommended that priority be given in the content funded by NOF to three social policy objectives: cultural enrichment; the modernisation of Government and the encouragement of active citizenship; and reskilling the nation in verbal, visual and creative literacies. So far, the only comparable museum-led initiative is *The 24 Hour Museum* which is designed to provide an accessible museum gateway to the Internet for the public. In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund supports projects which use ICT to improve public access to our understanding of the heritage, and which promote its preservation.

The emergence of these new public learning networks has raised some important issues for museums and galleries which go to the heart of their role as institutions for public learning. One is the tension between educational purpose and commercial interest: on the one hand, museums have a fundamental responsibility to help and encourage a wider public to gain access to and use museum resources as actively and creatively as possible; on the other, they have a legitimate interest in the protection for commercial and public purposes of copyright on their collections and of intellectual property rights on the creativity of their staff.

A second, equally fundamental, issue concerns the strategic role of museums in development (with the library sector, broadcasters and the performing arts) of a new cultural network. In this, museums can complement the work of the public library sector. Traditionally, libraries have been distributors of information created by others, rather than generators of creative content themselves.

Museums, on the other hand, have had from their beginning a direct and active educational role. Holding copyright on most of their collections, they have expertise in the interpretation of primary cultural resources and in the processes of informal and self-directed learning. The value of museums will become increasingly evident in future, as digital media becomes an art form rather than a technology, and as the visual, interactive, social and experiential dimensions of the media - which are public characteristics they share with galleries and museums - replace provision of textual information as the dominant modes of digital learning.

The development of the Internet has opened new international markets for the UK's creative industries and will create huge opportunities for self-directed and distance-learning from museum resources across the globe. The United Kingdom is fortunate in having highly

developed expertise in adult learning, open and distance-learning and museum learning. It also has a remarkable depth of talent in the use of digital technologies in the arts, museum and gallery collections of great richness and cultural diversity, and an existing reputation in educational broadcasting that is recognised worldwide. With these advantages, and the widespread use of English in international communications, there is potential for rapid development for export of on-line learning resources based on cultural material held by museums.

‘Education is an enormous commercial market. It’s not outside the commercial world, it’s one of the biggest global markets of the next century. One of the strongest focuses of technology will be education.’

*Horace Mitchell, multimedia consultant, 1995*

New media technologies present an increasingly sophisticated challenge to museums. Faced with competition from the simulations developed by their rivals, museums may begin to use these technologies to develop ‘living’ galleries - ones that are more affective, interactive, responsive to individual needs, and capable of becoming temporarily and locally personalised. Some museums may also introduce networked study bases, and portable digital guides.

The Government is encouraging museums and galleries to make more extensive use of new technologies on-site and to create learning resources for dissemination through the National Grid for Learning and other networks to schools, colleges, libraries and other public sites. Museum learning could within a few years become ubiquitous, spreading out to homes, commercial centres, education institutions and independent study groups throughout the UK and beyond. It is probable that technology will not undermine but stimulate the public’s desire to have a gallery experience; the ‘virtuality’ offered by new media may balance and complement, rather than erode, the ‘actuality’ that is to be found in real human relationships and contact with authentic objects in museums.

These developments could transform not just museum services, but the very nature of museums as institutions. The communication channels opened by digital technologies will lead museums out into society but, even more, they will bring into museums all the diverse needs, capabilities, and demands of the communities around them.

## Museums and Creativity

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Heritage can be a static and object-based concept. Culture is dynamic and people-centred. Creativity is at the core of the Government's concept of culture. Soon after the 1997 General Election DCMS established a Creative Industries Task Force, chaired by the Secretary of State, Chris Smith, and bringing together for the first time Ministers from right across Government as well as senior representatives from industry. Its aim was to consider the steps that were needed to support sustainable economic growth in the creative industries. At the same time, the Government commissioned a committee, chaired by Professor Ken Robinson, to report on the development of creativity and cultural education through the schools sector. This report was published in June 1999.

'The creative industries are those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skills and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.'

*Creative Industries Task Force, 1997*

### Museums in the creative economy

The sectors identified by the Creative Industries Task Force as contributing to the creative economy were: advertising, architecture, the arts and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing software, and television and radio. The work of the Task Force fell into two strands. The first was to undertake a mapping exercise to identify current activity in each growth; the second was to identify the key issues which are vital to the economic health of the creative sector as a whole and particular industries within it.

Significantly this was the first time such a mapping exercise had been undertaken for the creative industries. The results were published in 1998 in *Creative Industries Mapping Document 1998*, a landmark publication. The Task Group found that the creative industries generate revenues approaching £60 billion a year, contribute 4% to the domestic economy and employ around 1½ million people. The sector is growing twice as fast as the economy as a whole.

Museums and galleries were not included in the list of creative industries. With a workforce of perhaps 50,000 people, and a turnover of approximately half a billion pounds per annum, the

museum and gallery sector is not one of this country's richest creative industries. Yet museums and galleries are important centres for creativity. Museum exhibitions are themselves works of art. Many of the staff employed in them have been trained in creative industries or are required to achieve high levels of creativity in devising and producing displays, learning programmes and publications for the public.

Museums and galleries have, however, another significance. They are also used as a source of inspiration by designers, craftspeople, the fashion industry, broadcasting media, the performing arts and professionals in the digital media. One in five of all users of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for example, are students, many of whom within a few years will themselves be working in the creative industries.

The creative economy is a complex and dynamic self-generating mechanism, to which museums and galleries contribute significantly. That this is not fully recognised at present is mainly the result of the sector's own perception and presentation of itself, and the low priority it gave until recently to its public role and responsibilities in society. This is a challenge the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will need to address.

A start has already been made by the British Council and the Department of Trade and Industry in consultation with the DCMS, which are exploring the potential for export of UK heritage services. Expertise in learning from cultural resources is one of the strengths of the United Kingdom, and will be a critical requirement in the global development of digital learning media over the next decade.

'Culture and creativity are vital to our national life. We have long seen the value which creative people bring to our lives, through the employment of their skills and the exercise of their imagination. Their activities enrich us all, bringing us pleasure and broadening our horizons.'

*Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, 1998*

### **Fostering public creativity**

The personal and social value of creativity is as important as its economic value. There are many different definitions of creativity, but there is also widespread agreement that it is a dimension of all human activity and something of which we are all capable in our daily lives. It is, in a sense, a 'making' process, even if its products are ideas or feelings rather than artefacts.

Creativity is not limited to the arts or the sciences, but is an essential part of all disciplines.

For the physicist David Bohm, 'just as the health of the body demands that we breathe properly, so, whether we like it or not, the health of the mind demands that we be creative.' The arts educator Leslie Perry stresses the importance of preserving past creativity and bringing it into a continuity with the present by knowledge well learnt.

'It is the ability to see more in the immediate that is, I believe, our deepest source of pleasure in the world. And this is one of the reasons why we need to educate children to be imaginative. For the aim of education is pleasure.

Freedom and organisation go hand in hand; they are together the power which the imagination bestows. Armed with these, [the child] will experience the pleasures of his own competence.'

*Mary Warnock, philosopher, 1983*

### **Museums and galleries as creative spaces**

Creativity depends upon the capabilities of the individual, including attitudes, knowledge, skills, confidence and judgement; the support of others including family and educators; and the provision of an environment which is conducive to creativity.

The psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, when researching the kind of spaces preferred by successful innovators, found that there is no evidence that beautiful settings in themselves stimulate creativity, although novel and complex settings seem to do so. More important are richness of resources, interaction with other creative individuals, the stimulation of very diverse ideas, activities and disciplines, and the freedom to experiment.

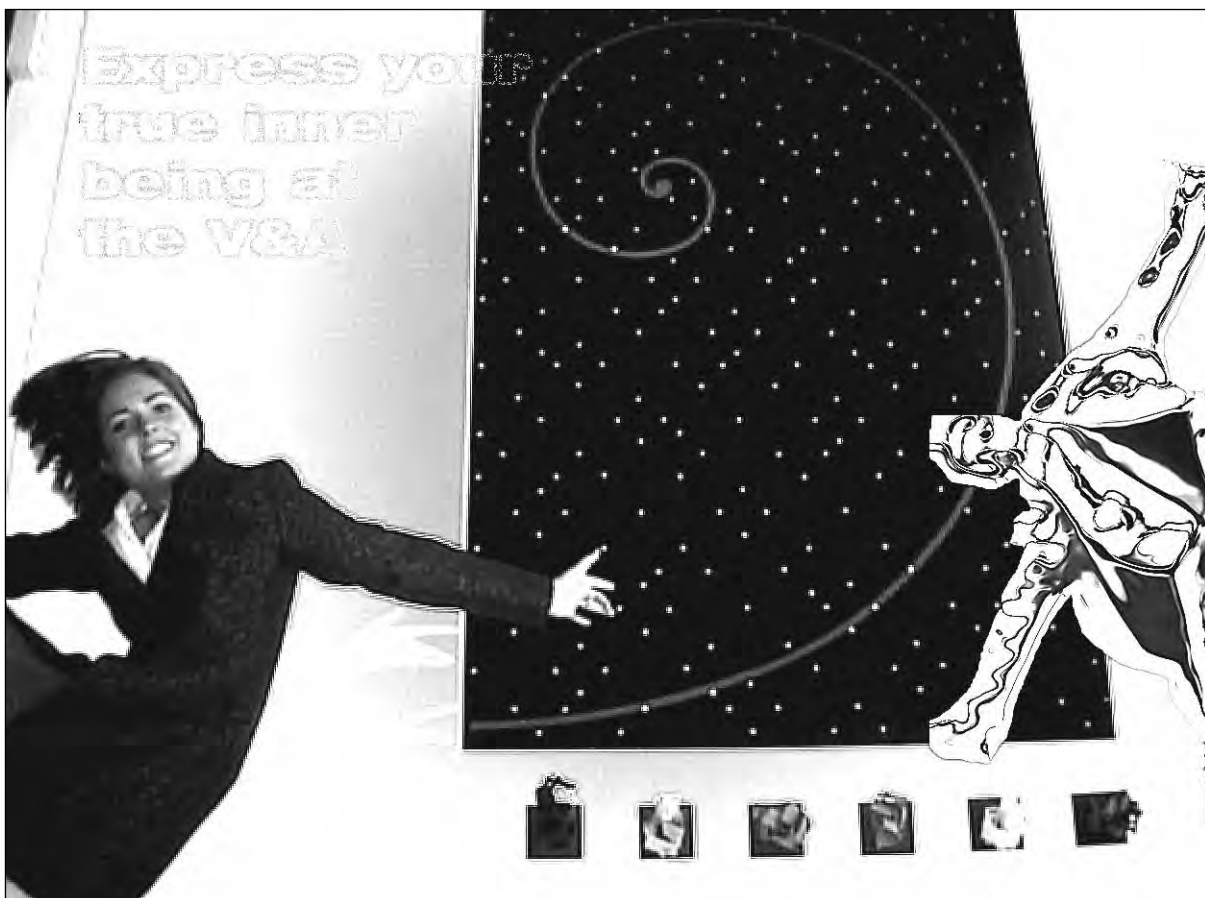
Museums and galleries have exceptional potential to become active, creative, public spaces of this kind. By presenting the products of the past, they give symbolic value to creativity. They act as catalysts for on-site creativity by professionals and the public, and encourage interchange between them. As a meeting place of concepts and disciplines, museums and galleries are an essential element in the wider creative process in society. As educational institutions, they are seedbeds of future creativity for both children and adults.

NESTA, the Lottery-funded National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, owes its genesis to the recognition that creativity, like learning, will be an important

determinant of future national success. NESTA will work with other bodies to help talented individuals to achieve their full potential, turn creativity and ideas into products and services, and advance public awareness of appreciation of the contribution of the creative industries.

The development of creative industries and communities within a learning society will require a population with enhanced visual and other literacies. Development of digital applications which foster creative public participation will require new skills across a wide range of disciplines.

Museums and galleries have, therefore, two kinds of training responsibility. The first is to train and support the public to enable both to make creative use of cultural resources in their communities. The second is to train staff in the skills of enabling public participation and learning. Neither of these forms of training has traditionally had high priority in the museum sector, but they are essential if museums and galleries are to play an active part in the work of NESTA and other Government initiatives in the cultural sector.



'The V & A, A Place for People'. Poster created by visitors using digital technologies during the educational event 'Going Graphic' at the Victoria & Albert Museum. (Photo: V & A Museum)



## Responding to the Challenge

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By defining their educational role, museums identify the most important part of their contract with society, and establish the standards against which they can be judged as public educational institutions.

### **A unique kind of learning**

Museums have a responsibility to enable visitors to learn in ways that are different from and complementary to those offered by other educational providers such as schools and colleges. The unique characteristic of museum learning is that it is based on first-hand, concrete experience of real objects, specimens, works of art and other authentic resources in a social environment in galleries or at sites. Museum learning is more concentrated and deliberately structured than everyday life, and more diverse, informal and culturally rich than formal education.

Most everyday events are inconsequential and quickly forgotten. A remarkable characteristic of museums is that so many people, of all ages and walks of life, have had exceptional and life-enhancing experiences, through encounters with beautiful, old, rare, spectacular, ingenious, well-realised or evocative objects in museum settings, which they can remember vividly many years later. It is one of the purposes of museums to achieve this.

Museum experiences, however powerful, do not happen in isolation. They are part of, and give impetus to, a wider personal learning process. As individuals, we all learn something different even from a shared experience, and attribute our own meanings to it. The learning of each of us, says the adult educator Peter Jarvis, is 'like a patchwork quilt with each little element altering at a different rate to every other'. Museums are most effective when they help the public to build upon their museum learning experiences by relating them to ongoing learning processes at home or at educational institutions, training centres, libraries and community centres.

‘I can remember attending drawing sessions during my days as a student at the Royal College of Art and really got hooked at that time. I also remember one term when I left my research into cutlery so late that there was only one afternoon left to do the whole thesis and all the drawings! That afternoon was such a revelation, that I can still feel the incredulity that was my reaction when I first looked at such pieces’.

*Gerald Benney, goldsmith and silversmith, 1986*

### **Cultural literacy for individuals**

Cultural literacy is the capacity to understand, respect and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds; it develops in us a sense of our own identity. This capacity is essential for participation as citizens in pluralistic societies, such as those of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. Cultural literacy is also essential for our personal development.

Museums are the richest source we have of original objects and works of art from other times and societies. They are places for contact and exchange between living cultures. Museums have a responsibility to educate the public about their own cultures, but also a responsibility to encourage the development of the attitudes and values which foster cultural literacy.

‘Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a group’.

*Edward Tylor, anthropologist, 1871*

‘Culture is a classification of the world that allows us to get our bearings more easily; it is the memory of the past that belongs to a community, which implies a code of behaviour in the present, and also a set of strategies for the future’.

*Izvetan Todorov, cultural theorist, 1993*

### **Cultural development of communities**

The need for museums to take an active role in promoting the cultural development of their area, through participation in creative, social, environmental and economic initiatives, has never been greater than it is today.

‘We do not believe that things are going to change overnight, but it is just possible that what we are doing may have one small impact on the troubled society in which we live’.

*Teacher on a residential course for children from different religious backgrounds at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 1992*

As repositories for local resources, many museums can help to ensure that decisions and contemporary developments affecting the future of their communities are informed by an awareness of what is distinctive and valuable from the past and in the present. As museums in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom have already proved, museums can also work as agents of change in their communities, helping conflicting groups to define belonging and identity more inclusively. With skill and imagination, museums can use the energy which is latent in objects and works of art as a catalyst for the creativity of architects, planners, community groups, leisure organisations, local societies and businesses. To everything that is concerned with the quality of life of a community, museums can make a valuable contribution.

‘Keeping and understanding the past makes for tolerance; it also makes for creativity in devising ways of altering and adding to towns, for nothing comes out of a vacuum. It is hard to believe that those who made the running in English towns in the 1950s and 1960s would have done what they did had they known more about them’.

*Mark Girouard, architectural historian, 1990*

### **Museums as public space**

Every local community needs public space that is welcoming and secure, and encourages participation. Museums can provide such a space. Their values, codes of morality and expectations of behaviour help to shape those of the public. Their willingness to embrace diversity, and to remove barriers to access of whatever kind, establishes norms of inclusion which can influence private behaviour. Museums can also have an important role in defining public notions of quality, including aesthetic quality, in their communities, and can serve as places of debate, informed discussion, and expression of public feeling. For those members of the public whose private domain may be impoverished and insecure, the existence of a clean,

comfortable and beautiful place which is theirs to enter and share with others as of right, brings particular benefits. Museums are metaphors for the kind of society we have, and the society we wish to create.

The relationship which museums establish between professional staff and the public sets the terms for their educational work. Museums that adopt the traditional Scottish concept, as defined by the philosopher George Davie, of ‘common-sense’ – the notion that the expertise of the professional is accountable to and works in partnership with the educated understanding and generalist judgement of the whole community – open themselves to educational approaches that are far more fruitful and democratic than those defined solely in terms of professional knowledge.

### **Ethical leadership**

All organisations need standards of ethics if they are to conduct their operations fairly and effectively. The authority invested in museums places upon them an additional responsibility to provide ethical leadership and to show by example the importance of ethics in public service. Members of the public – and particularly children – often learn and remember more from how they were treated by the museum than from the formal content of the displays. Education is about how things are done as well as what is done.

Museums can demonstrate ethical leadership in their educational work by representing ideas, personalities, events and societies with sensitivity and respect; taking active steps to redress bias in collections or interpretations which might otherwise influence or mislead the public; raising ethical or moral issues in displays, publications or programmes; and ensuring that the commercial objectives of the institution and the interests and enthusiasms of individual members of staff enhance rather than conflict with the institution’s educational purpose. Museums can also ensure that the principles of equal opportunities guide all educational activities for the public. Both the Museums Association (MA) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) have developed codes of ethics for museum staff which address many of these issues.

### **Disseminating the skills of museum learning**

Most of us are never taught to live and learn through all our senses, using the full spectrum of our intelligence. Particular emphasis is placed in formal education upon logical and verbal reasoning. The best museum education complements rather than imitates the formal education sector; museums are places for the (non-rational, intuitive) right brain as well as the (logical, analytical) left. They have a responsibility to help people to acquire skills which are distinctive to museums and heritage sites, skills of perception, feeling and imagination, as well as analysis,

critical evaluation and communication, in response to high quality, original, natural and cultural resources. Most people also need help in learning how to think scientifically, historically and aesthetically when using such material. We need these skills to get the most from a museum visit, and we need them in everyday life.

‘The Museum and the things it enshrines are saying, “Come in and observe, see what history has to say, and then go away and become a creative designer”. One goes there to breathe (‘inspirare’ is to breathe), to be inspired by the great ‘animateur’, to see what the finest standards were assumed to be in the past, and to emulate them - not to copy the objects to all - in one’s own sphere of action’.

*David Peace, glass engraver, 1986*

It is far more important that museums should enable the public to develop these skills, than that they should simply give them information about their collections. We are born with a capacity for these kinds of learning, but they will only develop if museums, as the experts in this field, actively help us as children and adults to acquire them.

Museums have long traditions of scholarship in the study of their collections. These traditions are comparable with those of universities, but different in important respects. Museums foster a different way of knowing, and serve a broader public. They have a responsibility to encourage excellence, not just in the study of their collections, but in the study of public learning in museums. And they must disseminate these skills of museum learning as widely as possible through society.

‘There is no question that the life of every member of society would be impoverished if the skills for encoding human experience in works of beauty, and the skills for decoding it, were lost. We would then be sentenced to live within the limits of our actual existences’.

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, research psychologist, 1990*

### **Investing in the future**

Museums, as permanent institutions, have a particular responsibility to invest in the future. Museums themselves can no longer take that future for granted. Their survival as a sector, and their effectiveness as educational institutions, depends as crucially upon their investment in their public as museum users as it does upon the preservation and development of their collections.

Of particular importance to museums is a commitment to the participation of children from all backgrounds in their activities. Children's attitudes and patterns of behaviour are not fixed, but develop rapidly. Research by the educational psychologist Howard Gardner indicates that the fundamental skills of a lifetime's engagement in the arts – as creator, performer, audience member, and critic – are often established in early childhood. To wait until children are old enough to appreciate and use museums as independent adults, or to confine these opportunities to those who already have the skills to use museums, would be in many cases to do too little too late. Once missed, the chance to develop these capabilities may be lost forever. Future support for museums largely depends upon their success in building positive relationships with children of this generation, in the context of full provision for lifelong learning.

'In order to talk about the spiritual significance of works of art like Benin bronzes, I think it is important to appreciate three things. First of all, they are not entirely art for art's sake. Secondly, they had ritual significance and thirdly, they came from the land's dreaming. They were a collective manifestation through the artist of the way in which people of that land think and dream and remember and project. A single work of art contains in it a micro and a macro history of the consciousness of a whole people. It's a sculptural library in a couple of forms.

When that's lost, removed from the land, the works of art are in permanent exile, which is to say, one half of them dies. The second thing that happens is that the people themselves are in a sort of exile. They are in exile from the repository of their dreams. They are in exile from the highest significance that years of ritual evolution and social evolution and artistic evolution have given rise to. One of the most effective and tragic ways of destroying a people's spirit is to, as it were, destroy the validity of their works of art. When that validity is destroyed, you have a kind of cultural schizophrenia. You have a sense in which people no longer know what they are, what they were and, therefore, what they can become'.

*Ben Okri, writer, 1995*

## Museum Education Today: Key Findings

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Research conducted for this report identified the existence of 755 specialised education posts in 375 museums services in United Kingdom museums in March 1996 – about double the number that were estimated in the early 1980s. Whether the nature of museum education provision has also changed, from being a separate, add-on activity to becoming a core function integral to all museum activities, is difficult to assess. No national statistical data on educational policy and provision exists from earlier decades. Nor are there any national standards against which provision can be measured. Thus, in many crucial respects, the educational function of museums remains uncharted territory.

### **The first questionnaire survey**

The questionnaire surveys which were undertaken for this report are the most comprehensive yet on museum education. The sample of 566 institutions that responded to the first questionnaire was representative of museums in the United Kingdom both in type of museum and type of collections, but included more large institutions and fewer small ones than in the sector as a whole.

While most questions elicited a high response rate, some were regarded by many respondents as difficult or irrelevant to their institution. These questions had lower response rates. In order to represent these responses as consistently as possible, results are shown throughout this report as percentages of the full sample, except where stated otherwise.

### ***Levels of provision***

The most startling result of the first questionnaire is that only one-third (210 institutions, or 37%) of museums that responded made some limited provision for education (defined here as offering three or more activities from the long list of options in Figure 1) and just 51% offered any educational services whatsoever. Only 23% had an education policy. It should be noted that education usually provides the justification for museums gaining charitable status. Museums in the sample which indicated that they make no provision for education almost certainly include some institutions which have charitable status on these grounds.

In 1997 the Museums & Galleries Commission used its database of museums to conduct a survey of public services, which included a question on educational provision based partly on the categories in Figure 1. This indicated that a higher proportion of museums now made provision for education than in 1994, but the sample was limited to Registered museums, which may be more likely than non-Registered museums to provide education services.

**Figure 1:** *Current educational provision, and the importance of different educational activities in future, by percentage*

Educational Activity	No Response	Current Provision		Future Provision		
		Provided	Not Provided	Essential	Desirable	Not Important
Reception and lunch facilities for schools and/or other educational groups	20	30	50	19	42	19
Direct teaching services for schools	21	28	51	18	41	20
In-service training programmes for teachers	22	27	51	23	38	17
Provision of printed/audio-visual information and guidance for schools	17	45	38	31	46	6
Provision of activities and/or materials for pre-school children	22	18	60	11	44	23
Services for children (5-12)	17	50	33	41	36	6
Services for teenagers (13-18)	18	39	43	33	44	5
Events for families	20	32	48	21	42	16
Trails and other resources for families	21	26	53	13	46	20
Direct teaching services or courses for FE and HE students	26	20	55	10	41	24
Publications and other resources for FE and HE students	26	18	57	10	46	19
Work experience opportunities for school pupils, college students or museum studies students	19	45	36	13	54	14
Lectures and courses for adults	19	46	35	22	49	10
Publications and other resources for adults	20	43	37	24	49	7
Events/teaching services for special needs groups	22	26	52	18	48	12
Publications and resources for special needs groups	26	9	65	9	49	16
Events/teaching services for minority communities	27	7	66	9	35	29
Publications and resources for minority communities	29	5	65	6	33	32
Organised research facilities for students, teachers/tutors and academics	21	31	48	24	43	13
Academic conferences, study days and other events	24	22	54	11	40	25
Academic publications and other resources	24	22	54	12	43	22
Loan Services	23	29	49	14	39	25
Exhibitions/events with structured educational input at planning stage	21	33	46	33	37	9



Museums offered widely differing levels of service to different audiences. The most common forms of provision were information for schools, services for children aged 5–12 years, and lectures and publications for adults. Services for pre-school children, students in further and higher education and academic specialists were in the second order of priority. Minority communities, groups with disabilities or special educational needs and unemployed people received little separate provision, and were the lowest priority. Only 15% of museums had a disability policy and 7% a multi-cultural policy. It should also be noted that provision of some services to a particular category of user (such as direct teaching for schools) may, in practice, be available to only a small percentage of museum users in that category.

### ***The importance of education in service delivery***

Respondents to the first questionnaire (who were predominantly senior managers) were asked to rank museum functions in order of priority. Most of them placed education in the second rank, after collections management and exhibition and display. However, it is notable that most museums identified educational objectives as the most significant factor in exhibition and display, and of some significance in all other museum functions. Two-thirds (64%) said that their governing body believed education to be an essential part of service delivery, compared with 28% who regarded it as advantageous but not essential, and 2% as of little or no value. One-third (35%) of museums believed that core educational activities and services should be funded directly by the institution if no generated income or sponsorship was available, others saying they should be provided through self-funding alone (11%), or through a mixture of self-funding and institutional funding (37%).

Altruistic, long-term objectives, such as ‘providing a public service’ and ‘benefiting society’ predominated as reasons for making educational provision over instrumental objectives such as ‘building public support’, ‘increasing visitor numbers’, ‘income generation’ and ‘local economic regeneration’. Museums which provided no direct education services cited ‘lack of funds’ as the main reason, followed by ‘lack of in-house skills’. Other reasons, such as ‘low demand’, ‘low priority’ and ‘provided by others’, were less significant.

### ***Staff***

A majority of museums taking part in the survey had no member of staff with specific responsibility for education. On average, 3% of all the paid and voluntary staff in museums in the sample were education specialists. They were easily outnumbered by the curators and others (11% of all museum staff) who contributed to the organisation and delivery of museum

education programmes as non-specialists. In 1993-94, one-third of museums (37%) received help from education authority advisors; one in six (15%) used consultants, and the same percentage used freelance museum educators.

Museums generally placed limited value on staff development or training programmes; only 25% provided these for their staff, and only 13% had programmes with an educational element. Nor did museums place a high value on qualifications or experience when recruiting specialist education staff; only 25% thought a university degree essential, and only 15% and 4% would require a postgraduate qualification in education and a museum studies qualification respectively. In more than 40% of those museums which employed education specialists, these individuals did not earn a salary equal to that of curators with equivalent responsibilities, and in about 30% of these institutions, they did not have equivalent conditions of service.

### ***Expenditure on education***

Forty-five institutions – predominantly national and local authority museums – provided details of their actual net revenue budgets in the financial years 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94. Their budgets showed an average fall of 5% in spending on education as a percentage of overall museum budgets, from 4.8% to 4.6%, over this period. The financial pressures of recent years appear, then, to have affected education funding more than other museum functions.

### ***Galleries and facilities***

The survey showed that only a minority of museums (33%) had a structured education input at the planning stage of exhibitions or public events. It also showed that facilities for education were limited: only 36% had a general teaching room of any kind for public use, and less than 10% had a practical art or photography studio, or a children's gallery. Fewer than half of museums conducted any evaluation of their galleries, teaching programmes, publications or other education provision.

### ***Differences between types of museums***

Not surprisingly, there were significant differences in policy and provision between types of museums in the survey. National museums were the most likely to see education as an essential part of service delivery, but were also likely to give it a low priority as a function. Local authority museums had a larger percentage of education specialists (4.5% average) on their staff than other museums, and were most likely to regard direct teaching services for schools, loan services and services for minority communities as essential; they were also more likely to have special facilities for education than most other types of museum. Independent museums,

the largest group represented in the sample, tended to the average in most areas of provision; they were, however, more likely to give priority to adults and families than other museums and were less likely to evaluate their educational provision. National museums and university museums were most likely to require degrees as a qualification for staff; these and local authority museums were most likely to say that core educational activities should be funded directly by the institution. University museums were, however, conspicuous in giving 'low priority' rather than 'lack of funds' as the main reason for not providing education services.

Armed services museums were in an undistinguished category of their own in their neglect of their educational responsibilities. They were least likely to provide any education services and least likely to evaluate those they do provide. They had the lowest expectations of qualifications for any education staff they employ, and were most likely to give them unequal employment status compared with curatorial staff. Only 3% of armed services museums include an education element in staff training and development.

### **The second questionnaire survey**

The second survey sought more detailed information from the 210 institutions whose responses to the first survey showed that they provided three or more types of educational service or activity. The 88 museums which responded did not include any university or armed services museums.

### ***Services in the community***

The questionnaire provided, for the first time, a profile of educational provision by museums in their communities. The survey showed that most museums which provided on-site services also provided services in their communities, and that the majority of off-site services consisted of services to schools. Some museums provided services to elderly groups, but very few had developed services for minority communities or other groups that are under-represented among museum visitors.

### ***Research and evaluation***

Educational research and study of good practice abroad were not common, even among this sample of museums which had made provision for education; only one in ten had published a research project in a recognised academic publication or professional journal since 1990, and only one in four had education staff who had undertaken a professional visit to Europe. Evaluation studies were more common but were still undertaken by fewer than half of museums with education services.

The second questionnaire also elicited professional employment histories from 163 museum education specialists. Only 28% had previous museum education experience, less than the 31% who had previously worked as curators or in another non-education function in museums. Nearly two-thirds (61%) had five years experience or less as museum educators.

### **Museum education in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England**

There are important differences in provision for museum education in the four countries of the United Kingdom, attributable in part to their separate educational, administrative and legal systems, as well as to cultural and other factors. Colloquia were held in Belfast, Aberystwyth and Edinburgh to identify these distinctive features in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. The eight colloquia held in England helped to define the characteristics of provision in that country.

#### ***Museum education in Northern Ireland***

The small size of Northern Ireland promotes networking. Museum educators regularly work in close partnership with a wide range of other providers including the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examination and Assessment (NICCEA), the Education and Library Boards, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Trust, colleges, universities and the broadcasting media. A notable feature of the educational work of museums in Northern Ireland has been the development of programmes and resources to support cross-community understanding and reconciliation. The Department of Education in Northern Ireland has played a crucial role in this, providing the policy framework, the resources and the encouragement which have translated the commitment of professionals from different sectors and the resources of museums into real projects in communities. The result has been a concerted initiative through museums of cultural development which warrants more detailed evaluation. In 1998 ENGAGE (the National Association for Gallery Education) was funded to extend Gallery Week into Northern Ireland, and recruited its first area representative for the province.

#### ***Museum education in Wales***

Wales has a strong tradition, enriched by its cultural diversity and particularly the Welsh language, of commitment to education. Despite this, provision for museum education in Wales, beyond the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW), Welsh Historic Monuments (Cadw) and a few local authority museums, is patchy. This problem is exacerbated by the physical isolation of many museums. At one time the NMGW's national loan service provided

one solution to this problem, but its future is now uncertain. Some museums have responded to these challenges by identifying the pooling of resources as the key to educational development. In recent years, the emerging dialogue between the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACAC), the educational media and arts organisations in Wales has also been a particularly positive step. Wales was chosen by ENGAGE to pilot a new project, Opt for Art, linking schools and galleries to benefit over 5000 pupils annually. The Group for Education in Museums (GEM) has also made efforts to encourage links and has an active training and networking programme for museum educators.

### ***Museum education in Scotland***

Museums in Scotland, as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, have an important role as repositories of local cultural identity. In addition, the country's long tradition of adult education provides fertile ground for community initiatives by museums. Uniquely in the United Kingdom, local authorities in Scotland have a statutory duty to ensure that there is adequate provision for cultural activities, including museums, for the inhabitants of their areas. GEM also provides both training and support for museum education in Scotland. The reality, however, is that – as in some other parts of the United Kingdom – many areas in Scotland have few museums and fewer specialist education staff.

The development of the Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network (SCRAN), a computerised information resource based in museum collections throughout Scotland, provides a positive example of collaboration. Yet, although there are links and points of contact on specific aspects of the curriculum, as a sector, museums in Scotland have not yet established partnerships with curriculum authorities and the education media comparable with those now emerging in Northern Ireland and Wales. It is notable in this context that museums in Scotland which responded to the first questionnaire were less likely to make educational provision a priority than museums in any other part of the United Kingdom.

Significant advances have resulted in the appointment of an Education and Interpretation Adviser by the Scottish Museums Council (SMC) in June 1997 with funding from the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, an initiative that was a direct response to the first edition of *A Common Wealth*. The Adviser's remit is to advance museum education and, to achieve this, priority is being given to forming meaningful partnerships with the curriculum authorities and educational media.

In March 1998 the SMC commissioned a Survey of Current Practice in Museum Education in

Scotland which revealed that three-quarters of SMC members are providing an educational service. Numbers of specialist staff remain low but SMC is addressing the need to improve this through its grant-aid programme and two new posts were created in 1998. In future, funding will be directed to create posts covering more than one museum, for example across local authority areas, to encourage joint working to improve standards.

### ***Museum education in England***

The greater size and number of museums in England in comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom has meant that museum education in England has a strong regional identity. Both GEM and ENGAGE have regional coordinators and regional programmes. The seven Area Museum Councils (AMCs) in England also have different policies towards museum education, each reflecting the distinctive needs of their members. At its best this fragmentation has encouraged local initiative; at its worst it has inhibited a coordinated response in England to national developments. As in other parts of the United Kingdom, then, provision for museum education in England varies greatly in scale and quality in different areas, depending upon local circumstances.

A unique feature of museum education in England is the strength of the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester as an international leader in research, teaching and publishing on museum education. Another positive feature is the active interest of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in building links with the museum sector. This has resulted in a series of publications on the use of museums by schools which have greatly benefited both the schools and museums sectors.

### ***A patchwork of provision***

Within many individual institutions, provision for museum education is characterised by the absence of any underlying rationale. For no apparent reason, two museums with similar types of collections and potential audiences may offer significantly different education services – or none at all. Too often, these decisions depend upon arbitrary factors, such as the nature of a museum's governing body, or even the personal preferences of individual staff.

The reasons for this incoherence are fundamentally structural and historical. Museums, unlike libraries, lie outside the statutory framework of local authority responsibilities and until recently received only limited encouragement, funding or research support to develop their educational role. The United Kingdom also has a large (and often educationally innovative) independent museum sector.

The low level of educational provision in museums revealed by the surveys for this report is a waste of a valuable public learning resource and should be a matter of deep concern for museums, their governing bodies and policy makers. In many other sectors it would be unthinkable for a vital function to be so neglected. The need to bring educational provision up to a consistent professional standard in all United Kingdom museums presents the sector with a critical challenge which should now be addressed as a matter of urgency.



Printed felt blanket, 1995. Made with artist Rochelle Rubenstein during her residency on the Artist's Work programme, for the exhibition 'Once is Too Much' at the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

'Once is Too Much' was a collaborative project created by women from the Family Resources Centre, St Michael's Estate, Inchicore, Dublin with artists exploring the issues of violence against women.  
(Photo: Denis Mortell)

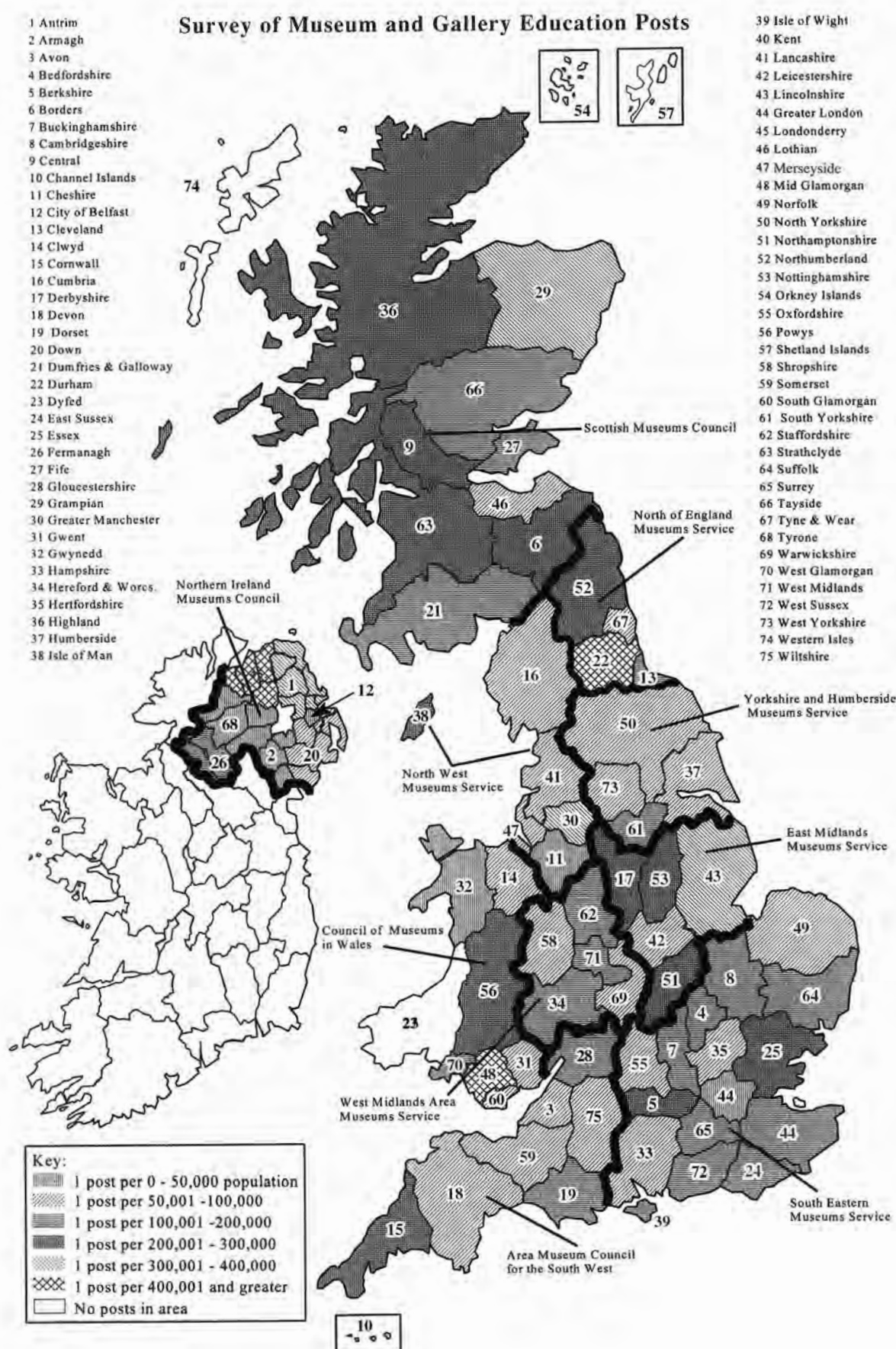
**Survey of museum and gallery education posts in the United Kingdom**

Data for this survey was compiled using the Museums Association Yearbook, and information from the Area Museum Councils and the Group for Education in Museums. It is intended to be correct as at March 1996, before local government reorganisation took place in many areas; the survey identified 755 established education posts, 535 full-time and 220 part-time, in existence at that time.

Population figures for the English counties and metropolitan districts, Northern Ireland counties, Scottish regions and Welsh counties, were obtained from the Municipal Yearbook 1995/96. The number of posts was correlated with these population figures to show the ratio of museum education posts to the population size.

It should be remembered that in some areas, there are few museums or comparable institutions and hence few museum education posts. There are also many different ways to provide education services, as a number of the case studies in the report show. For example, although there were no museum education staff in Dyfed, the education authority had taken an active part in co-ordinating museum services to schools. In Nottinghamshire, museums had developed a pool of freelance educators to deliver services. It should also be noted that large rural areas with small populations may seem to be reasonably well provided for, when in reality distances may make access to provision very difficult.





## The Museum's Educational Mission

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**Target 1:** To develop museums as learning organisations, with education central to their purpose

Museums should make education an integral part of their forward plans and publish strategies for their implementation. As such, strategic development of museum education must be the responsibility of the director and the governing body of every museum. This cannot be delegated to individual members of staff.

‘Our mission statement commits us to work particularly with those individuals and groups who wish to increase their educational abilities and activities or to become more effective in their local, national or international organisations for the betterment of the societies in which they live’.

*Ruskin College, Oxford, 1992*

The museums that responded to the first questionnaire survey were asked to provide a copy of their mission statements. Only 26% of the statements received included the word ‘education’ or something similar. Many museum missions describe what their staff do to objects – acquire, conserve, research, display and interpret. Words that describe how visitors can actively participate in and learn through museums – such as ‘enjoy’ or ‘create’ – are less common.

Most private companies define their mission in terms of the benefit for their shareholders and stakeholders. The equivalent for museums is the benefit for their communities and the society of which they are part. It is the purpose of the museum’s mission to illuminate and direct decisions on priorities, and to provide a rationale for them. Articulating the museum’s educational role in its mission statement enables the institution to have the greatest educational impact and influence.

The Museums Association (MA) recently assisted this process by replacing its former, collections-focused definition of a museum with one which reflects the more inclusive and participatory concept of a museum that the Association is now encouraging its members to adopt. It states that, “A museum enables people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. It is an institution that collects, safeguards and makes accessible artefacts and specimens, which it holds in trust for society”.

In 1996, the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) developed guidelines on museum education for museum managers. These recognise education as a core function of museums, and recommend that all museums should have a written policy on education that is endorsed by the governing body and supported by an action plan based on research into the learning needs of their communities. The guidelines also recommend that staff should receive training, advice and support to enable them to fulfil their educational responsibilities, and that a senior member of staff should be given responsibility for educational development.

Despite being rich in the cultural and intellectual resources of their staff, collections and communities, many museums are now struggling to survive. By making a strong commitment to both individual and corporate learning, museums can capitalise on their resources. The challenge faced by museums today is comparable to that which the industrial sector has faced in recent decades. But museums have the advantage that learning is the end as well as the means of their business.

Museums cannot become centres of learning unless they themselves also become learning organisations. For many museums this requires a change of organisational culture. Museum directors can lead this process in three ways: by publicly demonstrating their own commitment to education; by establishing structures for consultation and decision-making which open their institutions to debate and constructive criticism; and by encouraging and rewarding imagination, creativity, risk-taking and reflection.

## The Museum as a Learning Resource

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**Target 2:** To utilise the whole public dimension of museums for learning

Three main types of provision for learning define a museum: exhibits, programmes, and services for self-directed learning. All three are integral and inter-dependent parts of the educational function of every museum. Deficiencies in any one will significantly diminish the value and effectiveness of the others.

### Exhibits

Galleries are a museum's principal instruments of education. They are a medium of exceptional power and versatility. Some are calm, restrained and designed to encourage contemplation; others are theatrical spaces in which visitors can vicariously relive events from the past. The strength of galleries as places of learning lies in their ability to change attitudes, evoke feelings, demonstrate processes, convey significant ideas directly and simply, and engage visitors personally and actively in ways that ensure that the experience is remembered long afterwards. Galleries are not effective at communicating detailed information or complex concepts.

Universities believe it is an essential part of their educational mission to represent the pluralism of society and the rigour of intellectual debate. In the past, museums have usually achieved neutrality in their galleries by excluding controversy. This is now changing. Some museums allow other voices besides those of their staff to be heard - local people, specialists from other walks of life, children, members of minority groups as well as documented individuals from the past. Other museums have acknowledged that there are ways of knowing other than objective logic, and are committed to engaging visitors as partners in the process of enquiry. In doing so, they have transformed the learning potential of galleries and changed irrevocably the relationship between the public and the institutions.

One of the most exciting developments of the last decade has been the willingness of innovative museums to experiment with alternative approaches to gallery design. Museums have long been aware of the importance of enhancing the quality of visual expression. Through the use of conversation, poetry, personal testimony and oral tradition, some museums are now extending the aural dimension of their spaces. Artists, craftspeople, writers and others who have expertise as practitioners, can also enrich the design of galleries and

should now be regarded as an essential element in any good gallery programme. The presence in the galleries of some museums of staff who are trained to enhance visitor learning also enhances greatly public enjoyment, social engagement and interest in the displays.

Adults as much as children need a gallery environment that allows open and exploratory learning and encourages them to question and challenge. The use of open-access practical activities and participatory exhibits in galleries is, at last, spreading from industrial museums and science institutions into art and history museums. Museums are also discovering that well designed, low technology can be just as effective in educational terms as high technology.

Museums committed to providing attractive, stimulating and educationally rich galleries, have begun to devote significant resources to the process of gallery development. Research into visitor learning and evaluation of exhibits have become essential elements in these institutions. The people concerned, who in these institutions usually include a museum learning specialist, work as a team and regard the task as a shared learning process which will inform subsequent projects.

Best practice as described here has been adopted by only a minority of museums. Most museums do not conduct research and evaluation of visitor learning. The second questionnaire revealed that even in those museums that employ education specialists, only 22% invited those staff to contribute actively to the gallery design process. The omission of education specialists from development of a museum's most important educational resource is a cause for serious concern. It undoubtedly limits the effectiveness of both the museums and the individual museum educators.

#### **CASE STUDY: AN EXPERIMENTAL GALLERY:**

##### **The National Portrait Gallery**

At the National Portrait Gallery exhibitions have been an established part of the education department's work since 1983. The Studio Gallery is available half of the time for exhibitions planned by education staff and this enables the department to experiment with different approaches.

'Put Yourself in the Picture' was an exhibition from July to October 1995, designed for family groups. Using five seventeenth-century portraits, it looked at the elements of portraiture - pose, expression, background, costume, accessories and composition. The organisation of the exhibition was an attempt to achieve the same kind of learning

situation as in a gallery teaching session where open questions seek opinions and feelings as well as developing cognitive responses. This approach involves more of visitors' senses and takes account of research that suggests that some visitors like to 'do' and some to watch others 'doing'.

The exhibition was different from the usual kind of traditional 'curatorial' exhibition in a number of ways. It focused primarily on the audience rather than on the subject matter. It was based on a model of learning: play activity, leading to more structured activity, which in turn led to looking at the picture. The main aim was to create empathy with the portraits and to link this explicitly with looking at portraits elsewhere in the gallery. Text was in the form of questions, with suggested activities using props, backgrounds, masks and mirrors, leading visitors to see more in the paintings. Proximity of the painting to the interactive exhibit and text was a very important part of the design.

### **Programmes**

Education programmes represent the museum at its most proactive in its relationship with the public. Education programmes are the most flexible and effective way to extend access.

Museums invest in them because they make a difference. They are instruments of change.

The programmes offered by the larger regional and national museums today for both the formal education sector and wider public are extraordinary in their diversity. They range from accredited MA degree courses run jointly with universities to drop-in gallery activities that may last for only a few minutes. Increasingly, museums are using drama and other performance arts to enliven their galleries, producing publications in various media to help groups to prepare and extend museum visits, or training teachers and parents to guide and develop children's learning. As in the design of galleries, museums can enrich their programmes by drawing on outside experts with a wide range of skills, from sculptors to scientists, to help the public to respond creatively to exhibits and collections and to bring their subject disciplines to life. Some institutions have also established open and distance-learning programmes; others have trained volunteers or freelances to work on their behalf in their communities.

**CASE STUDY: CROSS-COMMUNITY WORK:****The educational residential centre at Ulster Folk and Transport Museum,  
National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland**

From its establishment the museum, representing a common heritage of material culture and oral tradition, was seen as a neutral venue for cross-community work. The opportunity to extend this work was created when the Northern Ireland Government decided to allocate resources for cross-community projects in the late 1980s. The Common Curriculum in Northern Ireland also designated Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage as cross-curricular themes.

Residential accommodation for two classes was built in reconstructed 19th century terraced houses in the heart of the 160 acre estate. The majority of schools now visit in cross-community groups. It is a chance for city children to learn about life in rural Ulster in the past, and also to learn about one another.

Programmes, usually a combination of practical crafts, farming, playing traditional games and studying transport, are planned by the EMU Officer (a post funded by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland). Teachers are expected to help to ensure that genuine interaction takes place between the children of the two schools. In the evenings there are cultural activities such as storytelling and traditional music, singing and dancing.

Evaluation shows that the experience is enjoyable; the question of longer-term effects is more difficult to answer. Teachers feel that getting away from sectarian labels, learning to accept other children as friends and sharing traditions has an impact, which is a step, however small, towards better understanding.

In a few museums, the boundary between the gallery and education programmes is blurring, as spaces within galleries are dedicated to activities and performances. Programmes can also make creative connections between collections that are different to those in the existing displays.

The difficulty for museums is that few can provide programmes for more than a fraction of the visitors and others who might use them. Museums must choose options which are developmental, and represent the best interests of the public as a whole as well as those of the institution. These decisions are made more difficult by the fact that there is very little research on the effectiveness of different types of programmes.

### Self-directed learning

Through galleries and education programmes, museums operate in their role as educators. In providing support for self-directed learning, museums have a different role, as facilities for autonomous study directed by individuals themselves. This is a vital but neglected part of museum education work, and is likely to grow rapidly over the next decade.

Institutions that make provision for self-directed learning offer the public access to original artefacts, as well as supporting visual and textual sources and spaces in the museum within which to work. The advice and guidance of museum staff who are skilled at assessing the learning capability and needs of a wide range of self-directed learners, and at matching these to museum resources, are also essential if the public are to make effective use of these resources.

#### Learning Maps

Museums display their collections according to their concepts of knowledge, and the physical layout of their galleries shows how these are connected. If visitors were asked to draw a map of their own knowledge it would look rather different. For an adult with a special interest in clothes, certain shops might be at the centre of this part of their knowledge map, as well as an evening class and possibly related displays in museums. Another, a keen football supporter, will only go to the museum when it has an exhibition on the history of sport in the area. A child with an interest in dinosaurs joins the local junior natural history group and visits the museum out of school hours when working on a science project. Another, a teenager immersed in contemporary youth culture, expects to find little of relevance in any library or museum, and does not visit. For each person these interests are only a small part of much more extensive personal knowledge maps that cross social and working relations, maps that are in a process of constant change through learning.

About 30% of museums have libraries and study collections that are open to the public, but for the most part these are intended for students and academic adults, and many can be used only by appointment. The concept of study facilities which are open to the whole public, including children and general adult visitors, is not widely recognised in museums (unlike libraries). Yet in the formal education sector, a growing emphasis on self-directed learning is sending ever larger numbers of students and school-children to museums, along with parents who are also increasingly involved in their children's research projects. Studying in a museum should be



almost as natural and as easy for students and members of the public as studying in a library. Museums should make every effort to improve their study and research facilities.

A fully integrated service of provision for self-directed learning in cultural institutions, both on-site and on-line, could transform the quality of learning for millions of children, students and adults. Such an integrated network between museums, libraries and other institutions urgently awaits coordination and development at both a local and national level.

### **Facilities for educational activities**

So far as possible, museum education programmes should be provided in galleries or sites, among original works of art, specimens or artefacts. In practice this is not achievable. Few institutions have designed their galleries to accommodate the wide variety of participatory activities needed by visitors. Some activities, such as drama programmes or crafts workshops, which can be extremely effective in educational terms, may put objects at risk or interfere with the enjoyment of other visitors. Some groups need a separate teaching room to prepare for or follow up activities in galleries; others lack confidence and need a secure, private space in which to meet.

Every public museum needs, as a minimum, one if not more separate spaces for educational activities. The lack of teaching and study spaces and facilities for practical activities revealed in the first questionnaire survey would be unthinkable in other educational institutions and is a major obstacle to the development of educational provision for the public. It suggests that many museums are not yet aware of the importance of such spaces in extending public learning in the museum.

### **The development of the digital museum**

There is great potential for even small museums to contribute to local networks and community digital projects which are not commercially viable. At an international level, there is also an exceptional opportunity, for larger museums in particular, possibly in partnership with broadcasters, commercial publishers and open and distance-learning institutions, to disseminate high quality learning material at different educational levels and for different cultural contexts.

The past neglect by many museums and museum agencies of their core educational role leaves many of them in a relatively weak position to meet the challenges and opportunities which now face them as learning comes to the fore. In order to make effective use of digital media for learning, museums need to adopt a 'learning' model rather than an 'information provision'

model in creating digital content. Research suggests that an unmediated database, containing large numbers of digitised images supported by basic textual information, is of educational value to only a small percentage of people. Few have the skills, interest or need to use such data independently (although it is a valuable research resource for those that do).

If museums wish to ensure that their collections and other resources are used imaginatively, they must themselves apply digital technologies actively and productively. Most learners need more developed, accessible, experiential, social and relevant digital learning resources. To provide these, museums need to recruit and develop staff with the necessary learning and other expertise. There is an urgent need for a national training programme for museum staff, comparable to that already provided for public librarians with NOF funding, but embracing content creation as well as dissemination. Staff and public users of museums also need access to networked equipment and software that are capable of supporting creative use of digital museum resources. This, too, requires a national investment.

‘Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?’

*T S Eliot, Chorus I from The Rock, 1933*

MDA, formerly known as the Museum Documentation Association, has placed an increased emphasis in recent years on the potential use of digital content of museum collections for public educational purposes. Since its relaunch in 1998 MDA has focused the attention of the cultural sector on addressing issues relating to information dissemination. Many museums are now embarking on the development of digital media applications for their records, but are doing so with limited understanding of, or in training in, public learning from digital media. The initiatives of the Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) and the MDA to identify the training needs of museum staff in relation to the new technologies are, therefore, particularly welcome.

The museum sector presently lacks a strategy for digital learning. The decision of the Conference of National Museum Directors to publish a report on digital learning through museums is timely and necessary if the museum sector is to play a leading role in development of the National Grid for Learning. The sector will also need a substantial new investment from public funds if it is to establish the infrastructure of skilled staff, digital learning resources, on-line gallery media centres and other on-site facilities that are needed if the huge educational and commercial potential of media technologies is to be realised.

### The museum as a centre for digital learning

Digital media will become ubiquitous. They will transform museum services and change the nature of museums themselves as public institutions with:

- trained staff to help visitors to develop their creative skills
- experiential exhibits that respond to individual preferences
- content created by the public as well as staff
- digital cameras and other equipment for use on site
- facilities for the public to reach and interpret the collections
- interactive web sites with participatory exhibits and resources
- seamless connections between the physical and virtual museum, and with cultural and educational institutions worldwide

Many museums also need guidelines on good practice in the production of digital learning media as well as some examples of well-documented and successful flagship projects from which they can learn. The active engagement of museum agencies in the field and new funding from the Lottery, may enable both of these needs to be met over the next few years. These would enable museums to move beyond the provision of large quantities of images and information, to the development of learning resources which have real educational value - projects driven by the learning needs of the public, not by collections management systems and the data they contain.

‘I am worried about replacing artefacts with information about objects. There is a dimension of objects which resists interpretation. I’ve found some of the most exciting and enduring things when ‘lost’ in the V&A. It is very important that the technology should bring people back to the objects. What I’d like to do whenever I’m going around the V&A is to plug into a point in the wall and be able to interrogate the artefact, have my questions answered, and to accumulate my own observations in a two-way process’.

*Tim Benton, art historian, 1995*

## A Skilled Workforce

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**Target 3:** To develop the educational capabilities of staff, volunteers and others who work for the museum

The future for museum development lies not in isolated specialisms but in core teams of highly trained and experienced staff, able to work flexibly on a variety of multi-disciplinary museum projects. Such staff require interpersonal and management skills that will enable them to work in partnership with the public and with professionals from other organisations.

### The roles of different specialists

Excellence in museum education depends on excellence in other specialisms. The expertise of staff such as conservators, marketing and administrative staff, attendants and curators is essential for individual education projects as well as the long-term development of education provision.

Institutions provide resources and develop policies, but it is individuals who through their actions, attitudes and values decide the success or failure of all educational developments. Whatever the formal policies of their own institution, every member of staff has responsibility to serve the learning needs of society as a part of their regular duties. Acceptance by curators and other staff who are not education specialists of an educational role carries with it the responsibility to achieve professional standards in their educational work. In order to fulfil this, they must make a personal commitment to professional development and training in museum education.

Excellence in museum education also requires high calibre specialist museum educators. Museum education is a complex and challenging field. It demands of its practitioners expertise in the relevant collections and subject disciplines, understanding of the theory and practice of education in society, and skills in the use of museum resources for lifelong formal and informal learning across a wide spectrum of audiences.

Museum education specialists, like others who manage a museum-wide function, have four main responsibilities: the development of an institutional policy and plan for the specialism; leading by example the practice of the specialism, drawing on the latest research; training and guiding others who will deliver the service; and monitoring and evaluating the range and quality of provision. Museums need museum educators working within their institutions who can provide models of teaching, learning and thinking in the field. Such expertise is developed

only through training and extensive experience inside and outside museums over a number of years. There is no substitute for this.

The responsibilities described above are core museum functions and can only be carried out by someone who is a full member of staff at a senior level, and whose contribution is integral to the process of strategic development and development of the institution. Without the guiding hand of an experienced museum educator, the educational efforts of museums are liable to be ad hoc, reactive and at worst inappropriate and misdirected.

#### **CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF CURATORS:**

##### **South Eastern Museums Education Unit**

The South Eastern Museums Education Unit (SEMEU) was established by the South Eastern Museums Service with external funding to support education work in this region. SEMEU seeks to raise the profile of museum education by promoting greater access to under-used collections and by assisting curators in developing the education potential and use of museum objects.

'Light Fantastic' involved SEMEU working with curators in six museums to develop science sessions for schools. The Cuming Museum, one of those which took part in the project, is located in a deprived inner city area where most schools struggle with limited resources. The curator felt that education is one of their most positive and important roles. The 'Light Fantastic' project was an opportunity to develop an interactive, workshop-based session for schools at the museum. Studying science and technology, rather than reinforcing stereotypes that museums are for history, was also an advantage.

By running six programmes on the same theme there were economies of scale. It was possible to produce generic support material for schools, as well as material specific to each museum and also to jointly produce a high quality promotional leaflet. Curators were trained to run sessions themselves, using museum objects; the sessions could then be offered to schools on an ongoing basis.

The project stimulated an interest in working with schools and in at least two of the museums led to other new programmes being developed. The Cuming Museum now has 3 popular science sessions for schools; 'Switched On' was developed in conjunction with SEMEU and COPUS (Committee on the Public Understanding of Science), and 'Material Madness' with the help of a freelance education consultant.

Just under half of museum educators, while often bringing a wealth of experience of formal education from earlier employment, have five years or less experience in a new specialism which requires significant additional knowledge and skills. (This professional profile is consistent with the recent rapid expansion in the number of museum education posts). In addition, most museum educators are limited in the kind of work they are expected to undertake, which is almost entirely the delivery of education programmes. Most are allowed, or allow themselves, little time for reflection and research.

Museums may have the education specialists they want, but not yet the ones they will require. The profession needs people who are prepared, over the next five to ten years, to transform themselves beyond the restrictions of their own jobs into changers and influencers throughout their institutions. If this is to happen, the initiative must come from museum educators themselves as well as their institutions.

**Previous experience of museum education specialists**

163 museum staff whose role or main responsibility is the provision of education services provided details of their experience previous to their current post, in response to the second questionnaire.

Teaching in schools	80%
Teaching in further education/higher education	23%
Adult education	33%
Other educational work	25%
Previous museum education	28%
Other museum (curatorial or other) work	31%
Other relevant experience	35%

61% of respondents had been in their present posts for five years or less.

Newly-appointed museum educators, and especially those who are the only education specialists in their institution, would benefit from regular contact (in effect, informal apprenticeships) with more experienced museum educators in their area. Coaching and learning by doing are essential for their development.

Museum educators at all stages of their careers would also benefit from continued contact with the work of others, and from constructive peer reviews. There is also a particular need in a new field such as museum education for senior professionals to contribute actively, through visiting fellowships and other means, to the development of the sector.

### **Institutions with limited resources**

A variety of strategies have been adopted by small museums to enable them to employ an education specialist. One approach is to form consortia to share the cost; in some parts of the United Kingdom, AMCs have seed-funded such appointments in partnership with local authorities. Some local authorities have employed museum educators to support the museums in their area, even when they themselves do not manage a museum service. Elsewhere, museum education specialists have trained curatorial, volunteer and freelance staff to deliver education programmes. While these initiatives do not provide museums with the dedicated education specialists they need, they all represent a significant step forward for museums which previously made little provision for education.

### **Freelance staff**

Many museums depend upon the skills of freelance museum educators and artists to enhance their service to the public. These freelance staff often lack the infrastructure of support for professional development that is available to staff who are directly employed. Some museums, recognising this, have provided training programmes for those freelance staff who work in museums in their area.

### **Diversity amongst staff**

If museums are to meet the educational needs of a pluralistic society, they require staff and members of governing bodies who reflect the diversity of their communities. They must also make a special effort to attract people from under-represented groups. There is a particular need for the ethnic mix of museum staff to be monitored.

### **Volunteer programmes**

Volunteer programmes and membership schemes can also be effective ways to engage communities actively in the work of museums. The results of the first questionnaire survey indicate that perhaps one in three museums employs volunteers in its educational work. Yet it seems that volunteer programmes are rarely seen as developmental initiatives. Instead, volunteers are often not properly contracted and trained, and may be used as a cheap alternative to professionally qualified education specialists.

### **Training and development**

As the MGC's *Guidelines* on museum education emphasise, the training of museum staff is the key to the improvement of standards. The learning needs of the public should be a high priority in every aspect of staff policy, from recruitment criteria and the content of job

descriptions to training. Yet the first questionnaire revealed that, where education is concerned, management expectations of the staff they employed, and the investment they made in their subsequent development, are low. It is no more appropriate to expose the public to educational provision planned and delivered by untrained and inexperienced staff than it would be to use unqualified staff to conserve a work of art.

CHNTO's occupational standards of competence and related national vocational qualifications have contributed significantly to improvements in services for museum visitors. They provide staff with a training framework that reflects their need for networked rather than isolated knowledge and skills. There is, however, a need for more thinking and research on the different training needs of education specialists and other staff who deliver education, and also on the characteristics of the effective educational practitioner. This research would enable CHNTO to ensure that the needs of all staff are addressed, and that an appropriate level of competence in museum education is included in the mandatory standards of performance for all museum staff.

The MA's arrangements for Continual Professional Development are equally important. They recommend the kind of learning – self-directed learning and development of the intelligence which is embedded in skilful practice – which this report advises should also be offered by museums to the public. It is also significant that whereas few museum education specialists registered for the MA's old diploma, about one quarter of the 400 people currently registered to study for the new AMA (Associate of the Museums Association) are educators.

Many new entrants to the museum profession come to their first appointment after gaining a qualification from one of the many museum studies courses that have developed in recent years. The coverage of the theory and practice of museum education of some museum studies courses is good, but at other institutions it is superficial and inadequate. It is essential that museum education should be a core element in all undergraduate and post-graduate museum studies courses.



## Research and Evaluation

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**Target 4:** To make research and evaluation of public learning an integral part of museum practice

Research and evaluation of public learning should be the life blood of museum practice. They can save museums from wasting money on ineffective galleries and services, and enable them to prove to funders that the institution is fully committed to improving the quality of the public's experience of the museum. They release a museum from a cycle of repeated mistakes; an institution which does not engage in some way with visitors' learning cannot enhance their experience.

For most museum staff, such engagement is as informed consumers of the research and evaluation done by others, but a limited number are also active evaluators and researchers. Museums need both kinds of engagement if they are to thrive. At present, there is far too little of either.

*'There is nothing as practical as a good theory.'*

*Eric Sotto, teacher and writer, 1994*

### Learning research

In terms of formal research activities, museums in the United Kingdom are heavily dependent on work done in the United States; the number of museums here which publish research on museum learning is very small. In fact, museum staff conduct more learning research than this implies. Research studies by consultants and postgraduate students, and research undertaken by staff as part of their daily work, mostly remain unpublished.

Museum educators in the United Kingdom are first and foremost practitioners. The profession of museum education is based on what the educational researcher Israel Scheffler has called 'practical theory', because it is not a single field of enquiry but the common focus of many different disciplines, is enacted in everyday life, and is governed by ethics and values. Most museum education specialists (and many other staff) conduct action research as part of their daily work, but it is so closely integrated with other activities such as teaching and the preparation of learning resources that they would not even identify it as research, despite the fact that over a professional career it amounts to a substantial body of new thinking.

Like the tacit knowledge many curators acquire through constant contact with objects, this tacit knowledge of visitor learning is often insufficiently valued, because it does not conform to the conventions of published research. Instead, it is handed on to other professionals through demonstrations of good practice and the informal apprenticeship of less-experienced colleagues.

Both the status and nature of learning research in museums are now changing. At one time it was usual to regard research in museums as a hierarchical, sequential process. Knowledge flowed as factual information from experts, who made their discoveries available to the public. Today, an increasing number of museums are replacing this model with one that acknowledges that both staff and public can have expertise, and are engaged in the same process of learning from the collections.

Until recently, learning research was largely practitioner-led and attracted little academic attention. Now, anthropologists, philosophers, sociologists, economists, psychologists, cultural historians and scientists, as well as education academics, are becoming interested in the field. Museums offer one of the best locations for research on informal public learning. The involvement of academic researchers might enormously enrich museum learning, provided the research agenda does not move out of the gallery and the community centre into the university office. The most positive outcome would be for the centre of gravity of museum learning research to remain in museum practice (its present strength), but for those who participate to include university researchers, action researchers from the adult education sector, youth and community education sectors and other researchers, as well as new generations of urban planners, librarians and others concerned with public learning in cultural institutions.

The museum sector is becoming increasingly aware that it can only retain its intellectual credibility if it keeps abreast of these developments. This will require a change of philosophy, funding and research practice throughout the sector and, within individual institutions, the contribution of a range of different museum specialisms. Institutions will no longer be able to regard collections research as essential, but learning research as optional. The greatest challenge, however, will be to museum education specialists, who may need a generation to develop into a self-sustaining research community.

### A possible agenda for museum learning research

The following are some examples of long-term or generic research needed by the museum sector identified at colloquia for this report:

- identifying trends in society relevant to museums;
- the contribution of museums and museum education to cultural development of urban and rural communities;
- methods of identifying the value of learning in museums;
- the long-term impact of childhood participation in museums on later engagement in the sciences, humanities and arts;
- the effectiveness of inter-cultural education programmes in museums;
- how the skills of visitors in learning from objects and works of art can be developed;
- the nature of visitors' learning experience in galleries, and how this is integrated into people's lives;
- how teachers, tutors and other educators use museums with their groups, and how they could be helped to use them better;
- how children, families, adults and other informal learners use museums;
- how the role of parents in children's learning can be supported;
- how to increase access and participation for under-represented groups;
- the social impact of admission charges on schools and other groups;
- the specific learning needs of key museum audiences;
- the contribution of museums to learning in the formal education sector;
- the potential for collaboration between museums and libraries;
- the benefits of informal learning;
- how attendants and other staff working in the galleries can most effectively promote learning;
- the development of new evaluation methodologies;
- quantitative, in-depth, national studies on the audience currently attending museums;
- the value of comparative studies and how their effectiveness might be improved;
- how museums teach values through their galleries and other educational provision;
- how museums teach visitors about the nature of subject disciplines through their galleries; and
- the development of improved access for people with intellectual, sensory and emotional needs and disabilities.

Research into museum learning faces a structural problem, which is that no one is responsible for the long-term studies that are needed in order to identify the impact of museum learning through childhood and adulthood. Yet research such as this is vital to inform policy-making, and would benefit the whole sector. A national agenda for learning research is required, and a national research strategy which the museum sector itself should lead, supported by a research fund.

The sector also needs to ensure that there are published guidelines, supported by training courses, on using and conducting research on learning in museums, to help staff make this part of their regular work. In addition, more opportunities are needed for publication of learning research studies in academic journals, and more regular colloquia where these studies can be discussed.

A research community needs one or more academic centres specialising in its field to provide leadership in research, teaching, and advice to the profession, and to ensure that quality in practice is matched by rigorous academic standards. Such a centre or centres should also, as a service to the profession, create a database of current research projects on museum learning in the United Kingdom.

A recent survey of members of ENGAGE found that the most urgent need for practising gallery educators was a national resource centre holding books, reports and other materials on gallery education. An academic centre on museum learning should, therefore, have a comprehensive holding of existing literature in the field, and should be accessible to the whole profession as a service. It could also provide both academic and vocational courses on museum learning. The decision of the Museums & Galleries Commission to fund the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester to open a Centre for Museum Education will provide the sector with an invaluable professional resource.

### **Evaluation of learning**

Museums conduct evaluation of their education provision more often than they conduct learning research, but a majority of museums still undertake no evaluation. The most common forms of evaluation are questionnaires and interviews with users. Peer reviews and focus group discussions are less common.

Many evaluation studies conducted by museums have assumed that visitors wish to learn the facts and concepts thought by the museum to be important. This is an approach which takes no

account of visitors' own interests or purposes. There is an urgent need for more museums to adopt alternative methodologies of evaluation that reflect current thinking on museum learning. One particularly fruitful approach now well established outside the museum sector is the social audit, which involves users and non-users in developing the criteria for evaluation. The publication by East Midlands Museums Service in 1996 of *Improving Museum Learning*, the result of research led by the University of Leicester on models for evaluation, has also helped to fill this gap.

Museum staff need printed guidelines and training courses on evaluation, as they do on learning research.

### **Comparative studies**

Comparative studies enable museums to learn from best practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom and abroad. The full significance of new methodologies used in gallery design or education programmes can only be understood by seeing and experiencing them in practice and at first-hand. This can best be achieved through study visits, exchanges, or attendance at international professional meetings. Some museums in the United States also offer visiting fellowships, which enable overseas experts to work alongside their staff on a new project. Museums can choose from many options the approach which best suits their needs.

Two-thirds of museums with education services responding to the second questionnaire had undertaken no comparative studies in the previous five years. This cannot be explained entirely by cost, because grants for overseas professional travel often remain under-subscribed. It is likely that some museum managers regard international contacts as an expensive luxury. If so, this is to ignore the costs of not knowing what is happening, for example, in terms of lost opportunities for development of professional expertise and European Community grants.

There are both educational and commercial reasons for taking comparative studies very seriously. The history and cultural diversity of the United Kingdom and the spread of the English language have created a potential for cultural exchange that is greater than for most other countries. The cultural sector of the economy now competes in a European and global market; about 20 million people come to the United Kingdom each year, and many of them visit museums.

For individual museums, there are a number of direct benefits from comparative studies. Exposure to the work of overseas museums provides staff with fresh insights and new ideas,

and encourages them to question their own methodologies and consider a wide range of approaches before embarking on new initiatives. An understanding of the dominant educational methodologies in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world also enables museums to develop more appropriate provision for minority communities from these regions in the United Kingdom.

The problem with comparative studies is not their value in principle, but variable standards of implementation. Comparative studies are research activities and should be conducted in a professional manner. They should have clear objectives, and the benefits should be passed on to other museum professionals and audiences. Too often, they do not meet these standards. There is a need for guidelines on good practice, based on research on the effectiveness of current activities.



The power of real objects: handling of Roman artefacts.  
(Photo: Reading Museum Service)

## Lifelong Learning

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**Target 5:** To support visitor learning at every stage of life through informal learning, formal education and training

If museums are to be effective as educational institutions, they must provide opportunities for all who might use them to learn at every stage of their educational development from early childhood to old age.

An essential first step for museums is to identify the learning needs and current participation of existing and potential audiences. Every museum has a unique audience, defined by the nature of the institution and the characteristics of the communities of which it is part. No museum can target provision to priority groups and develop this successfully if it has not researched and understood the distinctive requirements of its public.

‘As an educational resource in the widest possible sense, museum collections constitute a national asset which has been persistently undervalued. Their contribution to the informal learning process can never be quantified in absolute terms but it constitutes an irreplaceable element in the quality of life offered to society.’

*Museums Association, 1991*

### Working with communities

Communities provide an important context for lifelong learning. Most people are members of not one but many communities – defined by geography, religion, ethnicity, age, occupation, disability, or personal or leisure interest, for example. Many people now look beyond their locality for their community affiliations. But significant numbers also retain a strong sense of identity with the place in which they live, and the poorest sectors of society in particular remain tied, by necessity rather than choice, to their immediate environment.

Museums rightly emphasise the importance of the gallery experience which the public can enjoy only by visiting the museum itself. Some museum staff are concerned that museum community programmes may take museums beyond their natural physical and philosophical boundaries. There is clearly a balance to be struck here, but it is evident that it is difficult for museums to meet community needs effectively if they remain within the walls of their buildings, which are often located in civic and commercial centres. People’s lack of self-

confidence or interest is not removed by a press release alone. Museums must go out into their communities if they are to break down barriers to access for many non-visitors, including those from ethnic minorities or those living in areas with multiple characteristics of disadvantage. Yet the second questionnaire survey found that schools are the main beneficiaries of museums' work in their communities. Few museums, it seems, use community work in a developmental way.

#### **CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES:**

##### **'Going Wild at Queensferry', Scottish Museums Council/South Queensferry Museum**

The Scottish Museums Council's Environmental Initiative is a fixed-term 3 year programme focusing its efforts on supporting a series of demonstration projects based at member museums. 'Going Wild at Queensferry' was one of three projects in 1995/96, the second year of the initiative.

South Queensferry Museum is run by Edinburgh District Council Museum Service. The museum service had already worked with the district council's ranger service and was keen to repeat this co-operation for developing displays on the environment. It was also felt that an environmental project would provide a good focus for encouraging greater community involvement with the museum.

The museum and ranger service linked up with local primary schools, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Scottish Wildlife Trust to research and develop guided walks, trail leaflets and new displays which were not only about the local environment but also about how local groups explored it for themselves. It was very important to the voluntary groups that the museum was able to celebrate the work that they had done.

This project is an interesting example of partnerships between museums and community and environmental groups. The links may not seem ground-breaking yet it is often as difficult for a museum to build a relationship with another, quite different, local authority service as with an outside body. In this case both services shared the same motivation to work with the local community. The displays are popular and still much used at the museum, as well as being cited as an example of good practice by the Scottish Museums Council.



Museums can only be successful if they also accept that communities are a resource as well as a target for education, and if communities become rooted in museums as well as museums in their communities. Empowering members of their community to work on behalf of the institution has been a decisive factor in the success of many of the best museum community education projects.

If museums are to gain the confidence and trust of groups who in the past have felt excluded, they must also make a long-term commitment to sustained educational provision. Initiatives which are started and not then followed through can be more destructive than none at all.

One of the most exciting developments in recent years has been the emergence of local electronic networks, which link cafés, libraries and other community sites. They offer exceptional opportunities for the development of community education projects, and are a useful means for community groups to get access to museum resources.

The challenges of working with their communities are some of the most taxing that museums can face. There can be legitimate differences of values and objectives between different community groups, and between communities and museums. These may prove difficult to resolve. Rather than seek to avoid these conflicts museums should provide leadership on behalf of their whole public when such issues arise. A sensitive and exemplary project by Down County Museum in Northern Ireland used the bi-centenary of the 1798 Rising of the United Irishmen to provide common ground for the community in its area to explore the continuing significance of the event.

‘Unspoken Truths’ was a sustained and developmental collaborative art project coordinated by the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin which began in 1991, involving 32 women from the inner city. The project produced a high quality exhibition, book and video, which validated the work of the women and demonstrated that excellence in museum work is about excellence of learning process and of experience as well as excellence of product.

**CASE STUDY: THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE:****Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery**

Community-wide education programmes which increasingly involve adults, children, families and schools working together, often to produce work which is of long-term value to the museum, are the core of the education service at Sunderland. Unlike most specialist art galleries, many visitors here have little background knowledge of art, and much of the educational work supporting exhibitions is designed to persuade people that art has something to offer them and to find ways into understanding. Projects often operate as partnerships rather than as formal learning programmes.

The People's Choice exhibitions evolved within this context. Local people are encouraged to look more closely at works of art and to become involved in the planning and presentation of exhibitions. The format is very flexible and varies considerably depending on the people involved.

The first exhibition was organised by a varied group of adults taking part in a course. They selected pictures from the stores, wrote the labels and planned the layout of the exhibition. An official opening was very important to the group as an indication of the seriousness with which their exhibition was treated. The second exhibition was chosen by hearing-impaired children. The third was selected by a group of men living in bail hostels. Other groups came forward to suggest choosing an exhibition of their own. In 1998 the exhibition 'The History of the Jewish Community in Sunderland' was researched and curated by a local group, with advice from one of the curators.

The support of the curatorial staff in opening up the collections and galleries and talking about paintings, exhibition practice and conservation to non-traditional users, has been crucial to the success of the exhibitions. The exhibitions help to attract new audiences and build up community support for the museum; they also encourage a dialogue about how collections are displayed. Everyone involved, including curatorial staff, seems to have gained something positive from the experience. The museum is now planning to set up a new gallery especially for exhibitions of this kind.

### Off-site education by museums

Over half (51%) of the 88 museums with education services who responded to the second questionnaire indicated that they provided off-site, direct teaching services to schools. 28% provided such services to reminiscence and other elderly groups, and less than 5% provided any programmes off-site to South Asian, Chinese and African-Caribbean communities combined. 40% provided loan services, mainly to schools, and one in five (19%) provided travelling exhibitions, although only two institutions have mobile museums. Local authority museums were more likely than other types of museum to offer services in their communities.

### Children and families

Learning in early childhood is of the greatest importance because it establishes patterns of acquisition of culture that remain with us throughout our lives. It is a process which begins in everyday experience. The designer Charles Eames once advised art educators not to start inside the museum or gallery. ‘Take them instead on a picnic and make them enjoy the ephemeral’, he said. ‘Let them learn to express an everyday thing in a beautiful way.’

One-third of all museum visitors in the United Kingdom are children. Museums can make an important contribution to the cultural development of children in ways that are not available from any other institution. Museums provide children with environments which are secure, well-structured and varied, engaging all their senses. Talking is vital for learning, and galleries provide a stimulating environment for children to discuss and explore. Museums can greatly enrich children’s symbolic vocabulary, particularly if they give children the opportunity to represent their experiences through language, art and movement. Museums also provide children with many human stories and contexts through which they can explore the ideas and feelings of other people.

The educational, social and, ultimately, economic benefits of early learning are now widely recognised by industry and government as well as the education sector. Yet young children are a low priority in most institutions, and there is still a view that museums are not suitable for this audience. The work of museums that cater for young children shows the opposite.

Children can begin the process of museum learning at a very early age and benefit enormously from high quality education of the kind museums can offer. Museums are only unsuitable for young children if designed to be so.

### **The importance of early engagement in the arts**

The educational psychologist Howard Gardner believes that all the major developmental acquisitions that children need to equip them for fully-fledged participation in the arts – as creator and performer as well as audience member and critic – will have been made by the age of seven. Full participation in the arts depends on developing all of these capabilities, which interact and grow together (as, for example, practice of the arts by a child informs the understanding needed to respond to the work of others) until they become inseparable. A 1994 report, *Start Right: The Importance of Early Learning*, published by the RSA, indicates that high quality, early years' education is especially effective for children from disadvantaged backgrounds in developing positive attitudes and aspirations towards learning, as well as self-esteem and socialisation. These are essential foundations for successful schooling and adult learning.

While only a minority of museums provide services for the under-5s, their number seems to be growing (particularly among local authority and independent museums) and in time such provision will almost certainly be the norm. The 5 to 12 years age group is much better served by museums, especially those run by local authorities. In the last decade, many science museums have also established interactive galleries and have earned a well-deserved reputation for being child-friendly – a lead some arts and humanities museums are now following.

In the past, it was common to separate children's provision from that for adults. Today, most museums are aware that the interests and capabilities of adults and children may be shared, or at least complement each other. Many museums aim to integrate children's provision throughout the institution, both through the design of galleries and by introducing, for example, storytellers and other performers who appeal to a wide range of audiences. A survey in 1997 by Harris Qualitative for the Arts Council and the Museums & Galleries Commission found that children were more prepared to visit museums than galleries, but for many children a lack of a sense of thrill and adventure, cost, and previous negative and boring experiences can all be significant barriers.

The initiatives required to make museums attractive to children need not be complex or expensive. For example, 'Arts About Manchester', a consortium of galleries and museums in the city, discovered through family focus groups that basic materials and low technology

activities were as popular and successful as high technology exhibits, and that there was a need for a service throughout the year, not just during school holidays.

#### **CASE STUDY: PROVISION FOR THE UNDER-5's:**

##### **Norfolk Museums**

Norfolk Museums Service has made special provision for pre-school age children since 1980. Monthly mornings of object-handling and practical activities for under-5s and their carers are held at Norwich Castle Museum. Overtly, the aim is to provide structured learning opportunities for young children in the stimulating environment of the museum. Equally important, however, is the 'fun factor'. The museum hopes that its youngest visitors will feel at home in the museum and come to associate their visits with pleasure. They want their carers, too, to find the museum a welcoming and friendly environment in which they share some sense of ownership. These regular sessions are on a drop-in basis and carers are expected to stay and participate alongside their children. Special activity sessions are also available throughout the Norfolk museums for pre-booked groups from playgroups or nursery schools. The focus of these sessions, too, is very much on learning through handling original artefacts, supported with stories and making activities.

At the Norfolk Rural Life Museum – a large open site with atmospheric displays and a working farm – a different approach has been adopted. Here a special room has been set aside for groups of pre-school children. The room is equipped with simple books, learning resources and activities on themes related to the museum's displays as well as many original objects for the children to handle and explore. This provides a base from which a playgroup can move out to discover the wider museum site. It also serves as a quiet area for a story as well as a safe, warm place to sit down for a packed lunch.

There are no extra charges for any of these educational services and children under 5 are admitted free to all Norfolk museums.

Parents and carers have a vital role in children's learning in museums. Children benefit from the one-to-one relationships they have with adults in family groups, and most parents welcome ideas for activities or discussion with their children. In the formal education sector, research has shown that family-based programmes can also encourage adults who missed out on

education or lack confidence to return to education themselves. A greater investment by museums in parents as educators of their children would probably bring significant benefits to adults as well as children.

Not all children visit museums in family groups. There are many whose parents cannot or do not wish to become involved in their education. Some children may live in care, and others prefer to spend time with their peers rather than with adults. Many children also come to museums through holiday schemes, children's organisations and social projects. Provision directed exclusively to families disadvantages these children.

#### **City children and museums**

A survey by Manchester Education Department in 1994 of the leisure activities of nearly 2000 children in the city aged 8-14 years, showed that only about 1% went to museums in their free time. A significant number said that many public services and facilities were not available to them because of cost or geographical distance. Museums have a large number of child visitors, but this study suggests that very few of these children are from poorer homes.

Social class and economic disadvantage can operate as powerful obstacles to participation in museums for many children. Yet research has shown that it is children from disadvantaged backgrounds who benefit most from high quality education in their early years. It is of fundamental importance, then, that museums should make a concerted effort to reach children from such backgrounds.

One particular need that museums can help society to address is the provision of activities and project study facilities for the growing numbers of children who are without supervision in the late afternoon. Education Extra, a charity whose aim is to put out-of-school activities within the reach of every child, is one of the organisations that can provide advice to museums on how to develop such services. The introduction from 1999 of funding from the New Opportunities Fund for out-of-school hours learning will enable many more museums to apply for grants for out-of-school provision.

#### **Parents and children's learning**

Throughout history and across cultures, the extended family and the local community have educated successive generations. There are enormous benefits to children from growing up in closely linked networks of people of all ages instead of being educated only in peer groups of other children of identical age. Taking the

full spectrum of children's learning into account, it is parents, not schools, who are the senior partners.

A study by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 1995 on young people's participation in the arts, *The Arts in their View*, found that young people were most likely to be 'turned on' to the arts by a member of their family, except for social classes IV and V, where teachers were the strongest positive influence. Either way, adult recreational choices are largely determined by learning experiences and habits formed in childhood, and emotional support is an essential part of this process.

A number of studies on children's learning, including *Children Under Five: Research and evidence* by Margaret M Clark, have shown that families can often be highly motivated and effective as learning units. With minimal guidance but provision of suitable learning resources, parents from all social backgrounds, including those with multiple characteristics of deprivation, will often willingly take responsibility for their children's learning outside school. Families which already come to museums usually do so prepared for parents as well as children to play an active and equal part in the learning process. Those families that do not would probably include those parents whose lack of confidence, skills or commitment means they would require more community-based support from museums before they would visit – if they would at all.

### Schools

All local education authorities have Early Years Development Plans, which show how 4-year-olds will be provided with nursery places. From April 1999 these were extended to cover childcare as part of the National Childcare Strategy, with a £450 million Sure Start programme to cater for the most vulnerable young children and their families, as well as a growing number of Early Excellence Centres that offer integrated early years education, day care and family services. These initiatives extend opportunities for collaboration between museums and early education providers.

A recent survey for the Arts Council of England of 300 secondary school pupils found that between September 1995 and February 1996, 15% had visited a museum and 8% an art gallery on a school trip. Altogether, school visits probably represent about 10% of total museum attendances.

The introduction of the National Curriculum in England, the 5-14 National Guidelines in Scotland, and the separate National Curricula in Wales and Northern Ireland, has provided clarity and focus for schools' use of museums. Schools also take pupils studying A-Levels and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), among other qualifications, to visit museums. Access to museums through school is especially important for those children for whom this is the only opportunity to experience the pleasure and stimulation that museums offer.

Since 1997 the Government has introduced a number of important national initiatives which have implications for museums' work with primary and secondary schools. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced to encourage primary and special schools to raise standards in these areas. As a result, new arrangements from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) for the teaching of the six non-core subjects (history, geography, art, music, design and technology, and physical education) allow greater flexibility to enable schools to create space for literacy and numeracy.

Provision for citizenship education and personal, social and health education has become more explicit and will become increasingly important following the current review of the National Curriculum; so, too, have the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of the curriculum. In support of its commitment to lifelong learning, the Government has developed a more coherent framework for qualifications. The links between literacy, numeracy, information technology, key skills and the school curriculum have also been strengthened.

Parents are being encouraged to play a more active role in children's education. The Government has also established the new Education Action Zones (EAZs), led by Action Forums. In these, parents, as well as training and enterprise councils, health and social services, business, churches, voluntary bodies (and, potentially, museums and libraries), can develop alternative approaches to the curriculum and other aspects of the education system in accordance with the needs of the local community.

In the first questionnaire survey museums ranked schools as the highest priority for museum education services. Imaginative projects include those that bring practising artists and writers into the galleries to work with children, the use of theatre-in-education at historic sites, inspirational gallery teaching by museum staff, handling sessions with historic artefacts, and creative and imaginative in-service courses for teachers. Museums are able to offer cross-curricular programmes that link history and science, or language and art, and they have a particular strength in areas of the curriculum, such as gender studies, which are otherwise



marginalised. All of these dimensions of museums help pupils to experience the past and present in a way no textbook can achieve, and enrich the quality of teaching and learning back in the classroom. In turn, museums are enriched by the ideas and practical experience of the teachers with whom they work.

#### **CASE STUDY: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN AN EDUCATION AUTHORITY AND MUSEUMS:**

##### **Dyfed Education Authority**

The Humanities Advisor in Dyfed was convinced that museum education, where it is properly used and applied, enhances standards, learning experiences and the enjoyment of pupils. Also that the unique platform and access afforded to authorities can be used to ensure educational rigour in the use of museums by schools.

An HMI survey of education authorities' liaison with museum services in 1990 emphasised the need for education authorities and museums to agree on a policy which enhanced the value and purpose of learning from museum resources and which developed strategies for monitoring and evaluating the use of museum services. Not only would this enable schools to understand the services available from museums, but also to enhance the quality of work linked to the curriculum that it is possible to base on them.

In Dyfed, the Education Department worked in partnership with museums, the National Trust, and the National Parks and has developed benefits over a number of years. In 1993 an education authority policy for developing the educational potential of sites and museums was published. In order to implement the aims and objectives of the policy, INSET courses were offered to schools and publications were produced by groups of teachers (released by the education authority), advisers and museum staff. The publications are bilingual and closely aligned with the requirements of the National Curriculum. They are teaching/learning resources as well as staff development packs. Although recent local government reorganisation changed the responsibilities of authorities, these partnerships continue to develop between the different organisations and successor authorities.

The potential of museums to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom is highly prized by many teachers. At a time when creative arts in schools have diminished in both staffing and curriculum time, museums continue to offer a high quality resource for the study of the arts, which pupils can use at weekends and in holidays as well as during the school week. The value of museums for schools is much greater than that derived from school trips alone. Museums are an essential part of the broad cultural context within which school learning develops.

Until 1993, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) published valuable surveys on the educational use of museums. One survey, published in 1991, identified three factors among others which were essential for a successful school visit. These were: careful planning by teachers, the quality of displays in museums, and the educational expertise of museum staff. Occasional visits, even to major national museums, are of limited value on their own. It is a pattern of regular visits to local museums that is required to establish in children the basic skills of learning in museums. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) holds data on schools' use of museums and galleries, gathered as part of the inspection process. It would assist the museums sector in planning and monitoring the development of provision for schools if OFSTED were to publish these data at regular intervals.

New media technologies have the potential to transform the relationship between schools and museums, providing access for children through the National Grid for Learning to a vast range of museum learning resources. The Government is supplying more than £700 million to connect all UK schools to the Grid by the year 2002. £230 million is being provided through the New Opportunities Fund to train teachers in the use of digital media in the curriculum.

The number of pupils using museums and museum resources for individual projects, already sizeable, can only increase. However, museums will need to commit considerable expertise, funding and equipment, if they are to open these rich resources to schools.

There is a risk that the investment in infrastructure for the National Grid will not be matched by an equally necessary investment in content creation. Neither commercial publishers, nor individual schools with their limited purchasing power, will in themselves be able to supply the money or the mechanisms necessary for local, regional and even national museums to create a diversity of high quality, digital learning resources. Nor will they fund the development of local study resources which have no wider market but which can be so valuable to schools. Additional public funding for museums, comparable to that already provided to the public

library sector to train librarians and develop content for information and learning will be essential if the museum sector is to contribute effectively to the Grid.

#### **Effective school visits to museums**

A survey conducted in 1991 by HMI on schools' use of museum resources found that the quality of pupils' learning depended in large measure on teachers' careful planning, the quality of displays in museums and the expertise of museum staff. The survey highlighted the importance of closer liaison between schools and museums, and the important contribution advisory teachers made to this relationship. It also stressed the need for schools to develop the role of parents who accompany school children on museum visits, and to build the use of museums more systematically into overall curriculum planning and evaluation in order to ensure that there was progression from one visit to another. The overall impact of the use of museum resources was shown to be very positive, and had encouraged the teachers surveyed to make greater use of museum resources in future. The conclusions of this HMI report are endorsed by many professional museum educators and remain valid.

The challenge for both the museum and school sectors is to ensure that every child visits a museum regularly, and has an enjoyable, successful educational experience at every museum they visit. The responsibilities of museums in achieving this are addressed in many parts of this report. But schools must also fulfil their responsibilities. Many school children do not get the chance to use museums regularly; most teachers have had little training in educating pupils through museums and there is, at present, very little information available on the use of museums made by schools or on the quality of learning that results. A concerted initiative is needed by the school sector, supported by the public bodies with responsibility for curricula and assessment, teacher training and school inspection, to address these problems. The recent initiative of the QCA to develop guidance on the learning potential of museums, galleries and sites, including use by schools but also embracing lifelong learning, is a welcome development.

It is unfortunate that when the need for them is so great, museum services for schools face a period of uncertainty over funding. This uncertainty arises from local government reorganisation, which has transferred responsibility for many museums to new authorities, and from local management of schools, which may oblige many education authorities to delegate to schools the funding for museum services which they formerly held centrally. Education is a core function of museums and a dimension of every aspect of museum work;

museum provision for schools is just one element in an integrated service of formal and informal learning for the wider public. To attempt to separate provision for schools would weaken this integrated approach to lifelong learning, and would threaten the viability of the whole educational function of museums.

These changes have meant that museums have faced challenges in securing the funding necessary to maintain their education services. Some museums have responded by introducing subscription services, but even the most successful services have found that they cannot sustain the services schools expect from generated income alone. The reduction in the number of advisers has also weakened the infrastructure for dissemination of good practice.

Two welcome and highly significant Government initiatives have provided evidence of a sea-change in public policy. The first was the funding by DfEE in the autumn of 1998 of 17 pilot projects for study support in museums and galleries. The second was the launch by DfEE in January 1999 of a £2.5 million Museums and Galleries Education Programme. Both museums and schools benefit from these initiatives. Schools are enriched by the impact of the museum experience upon pupils' learning in and beyond the classroom - an impact which has been evaluated as part of these projects. Museums and galleries benefit from the rigour and clarity of analysis of learning processes and outcomes that are required by the school sector.



Children from two Belfast primary schools taking part in an art workshop during a cross-community visit to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.  
(Photo: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum)

### **School - Museum Partnership Projects**

The Department for Education and Employment, with the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, launched two innovative projects to encourage collaboration between museums and schools in 1998 and 1999.

**Study support through museums and galleries** There is an increasing need for provision of out-of-school activities and study facilities for children - including the growing numbers who are left without parental supervision in the afternoon. In October 1998 the DfEE launched a programme of study support pilot projects involving 17 museums and over 60 schools. The purpose of these projects was to test and innovate partnerships and learning ideas that had the potential for more general application once Lottery funding for study support became available through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) in 1999.

**Museums and Gallery Education Programme** This initiative grew out of a recognition by Government of the inspirational effect that experiences in museums and galleries can have on children's learning, and also of the patchy nature of current museum provision. In January 1999 DfEE launched a new three-year programme of demonstration projects. Areas of museum and gallery education funded by the programme include: literacy and numeracy programmes; helping parents to support children in learning; developing museum loan services; creating digital learning resources; the education of children with special needs, or who are disaffected or demotivated; preparing young people for adult life and developing their employability; and professional development of museum and gallery staff and teachers to help them develop more effective links between museums and galleries and schools.

### **Young people**

The Government has recently developed a new strategy to try to restore the opportunity for sustained employment for a generation of young people who may have lost this and to prevent some young people's drift into crime following failure at school. Elements in this strategy include the Investing in Young People programme aimed at encouraging young people who have not achieved while at school to continue studying; the New Start programme to re-motivate young people from the age of 14 who are disenchanted with learning; legislation to give all 16 and 17 year olds a statutory right to undertake education and training; the introduction of National Traineeships; and support for new initiatives by the Youth Service, in

partnership with the voluntary sectors, to help young people who have failed in, or have been failed by, formal education. The museum sector could contribute to many of these initiatives.

Young people aged 15 to 24 years are, along with older adults, the section of the public least likely to visit museums. Museums may be discouraged from taking initiatives for this age group by the difficulties of contacting them, and an awareness of the gap between youth cultures on the street and the cultures represented by museum collections. Until recently little research has been done by museums on the needs of this audience. That is now changing. The Museums Association's report *Museums and Young People*, and new initiatives by a few local and national museums supported by developmental trusts and foundations such as the Lloyds TSB Charitable Trust, have resulted in some innovative action research projects.

### **Young people and the arts**

More than half (57%) of young people aged 14–24 in the survey *The Arts in their View* by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) participated as members of an audience in media-arts activities. 7% stated that they had visited art galleries or exhibitions in their leisure time in the preceding year. Those in their early twenties were much more likely to visit museums and art galleries than those in their teens. 2% of males and 3% of females ascribed being 'turned on' to the arts by a visit to a museum or gallery, as opposed to parental or teacher influence or another source.

The NFER report shows that less than a quarter of young people (23%) participated actively and creatively in any area of the arts, although those that did so attached high value to these activities in their lives. However, two-thirds (66%) indicated that they wanted to take some arts activity further in the future, although visiting galleries (at 1%) featured much lower than the most popular future activity, drawing or painting (14%). The young people interviewed identified the main obstacles to future participation as lack of time (16%), lack of money and equipment (12%), and lack of local opportunities (10%).

Of those who approved of 'alternative arts', 84% felt that 'traditional' arts were important or very important to them, and of those that felt that traditional arts were very important, less than 1% disapproved of alternative arts. The cultural gap between museums and that section of young people who are interested in the arts may not be as wide as it seems.

Recent studies have established that many young people have negative attitudes towards art galleries, regarding them as boring and as part of the Establishment. The very large number of young people who visit certain exhibitions, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum's 'Streetstyle' exhibition in 1994, shows that there is a potential demand from young people that is not currently being met. While a majority of young people want to participate in arts activities, there is a far greater desire to be involved in creative arts such as drawing or painting than in 'passive' visiting. Young people indicate that many of the obstacles to their participation in the arts are practical – a lack of time, money and equipment. For youth groups, the fact that museums rarely open in the evening also prevents access.

Responsibility for youth arts education in the United Kingdom does not lie clearly with any one sector of public service. Regional Arts Boards in England fund arts workers and artists in the community, whilst the youth service is concerned with programmes of social and personal education. Youth workers are key intermediaries. According to a study in 1994 by the London Arts Board, youth workers are keen to encourage active participation in the arts. Two-thirds of those surveyed would like to work with art galleries, and many want in-service training in arts education. Museums could contribute significantly to the quality of informal education for young people; much of this is presently provided by staff with relatively little training in education through the arts or other disciplines.

### **Further education**

Museums and further education colleges share a common ancestor in the Mechanics Institutes of the nineteenth century, which offered evening classes where workers could improve basic skills, acquire new scientific and technological knowledge and broaden their minds. Today, the further education sector provides a wide range of academic, vocational and non-vocational courses, from General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) to traditional evening classes, for over 3 million students from post-16 school age to the third age.

*Learning Works*, the report of the Kennedy Committee on widening participation in 1997, set out a clear vision for development of further education. The Kennedy Committee found that 62% of the adult population of working age do not have a Level 3 qualification (NVQ Level 3 or A Level) and 40% do not have a Level 2 qualification. Colleges are the key to reaching out to people who have not achieved their full potential – a step which would be vital if the United Kingdom is to break out of the vicious circle of poor economic performance and an inadequate standard of living. The report also recommended that many people's life experience and knowledge should be recognised and accredited.

In its Green Paper, *The Learning Age*, the Government responded with a range of measures to improve standards of teaching and management of colleges, and as a first step, provided extra funding to provide places for students, mostly from educationally disadvantaged groups. A new National Training Organisation is being established to provide a framework for initial training and continuing professional development of teachers in further education.

Museums currently give further education a low priority in their educational provision. Few have followed the example of Wakefield Museums and Galleries in developing services for students with learning difficulties, or collaborated with colleges to deliver GNVQs in Leisure and Tourism as Norfolk Museums Service has done.

Further education colleges can benefit from the unique learning resources that museums can offer to their students across a range of courses. In return, further education colleges can provide training programmes for museum staff. They have a strong commitment to access to learning, serve a wide range of students, and have close links with local communities. They have access to alternative funding sources, and can bring this to joint projects. Colleges can also provide a bridge between museums and local communities that museums might otherwise lack either the expertise or the resources to build alone.

Colleges are, then, potentially attractive partners for museums. The main obstacles to developing this relationship are a lack of awareness of what each could offer to the other, and a lack of experience and training in the skills required to work effectively across the boundaries between the two sectors. There is also a need for closer and more regular contacts between the sectors at a national level.

#### **Further education colleges in their communities**

Further education colleges can help museums to link cultural and educational resources at a local level. Starting with one study centre in a 1960s maisonette on the Beechwood Estate in Wallasey, Wirral Metropolitan College used City Challenge funding to establish three more centres in areas of urban deprivation. These centres are staffed by neighbourhood workers who have experience of working with adults lacking confidence in their own educational capabilities and with a negative view of school education, but who return to education provided they can see its value. Some adult learners were spurred on by the wish to help their own children at primary school. Yet it was not until they had successfully



completed a course at the local study centre that some of them were willing to go with their tutors to the main college building three miles away.

One of the keys to success for educational institutions such as Wirral College is the capacity to bring high quality and sophisticated learning resources into local centres by computer and then to provide skilled learning support on the ground. New technologies are enormously expanding the potential for community-based education, but the experience of Wirral College demonstrates that it can only be effective if skilled human support is also provided.

### Higher education

The higher education sector has changed dramatically over the last decade. The United Kingdom has replaced higher education for an elite with a mass higher education system. Universities and higher education colleges educated 2.8 million students in 1996/97, and the majority of undergraduates are mature students. Many students study part-time. Almost one-in-three young people now enter higher education compared with one-in-eight in 1979, and almost a million people enrol with higher education institutions each year not to gain a qualification, but to meet a particular skill need or because they just want to learn. The rise in the number of post-graduate students is even more dramatic, increasing by 70% between 1990/91 and 1994/95.

The future development of higher education was the subject of the Dearing Report, published in 1997. In addition to its recommendations on funding, training and development, qualifications and standards, research and information technology, the report - like that of the Kennedy Committee - made recommendations for wider participation in higher education.

In *The Learning Age* the Government endorsed these proposals for broader access. It urged higher education institutions to give high priority to continuation of their outreach programmes for adults, and provided additional funding to the sector to preserve and enhance quality, and to improve access and to help disadvantaged groups as well as those aged 50-54. In order to improve the standards and professional status of teachers in higher education, the Government is establishing a new Institute for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

In the 1970s it was rare for students to use historical objects or works of art in their studies. Today, as a result of the development of critical and historical studies, artefacts and authentic visual and textual sources are an essential element in learning process in the arts and

humanities. Natural history collections have always been a necessary point of reference for natural science students, but in recent years physical science departments have come to regard science museums as important partners in the promotion of public understanding of science.

Programmes for higher education currently provided by museums include study days for tutors, modules based on study collections for students, museum-based research studentships, and academic seminars. Some museums are partners in joint BA and MA degree courses and supervise PhD students, and university museums in particular provide a wide range of services for students. The range of these initiatives is impressive, but they are also small-scale and often rely on personal contacts between individual staff in the two sectors.

Collaboration can bring substantial benefits to museums. Joint projects and staff exchanges with the higher education sector give museums access to a much wider range of expertise. Many projects are eligible for United Kingdom and European funding. Collaborations also provide a channel for the flow of ideas between the two sectors which invigorate and strengthen the departments involved, and change the intellectual climate throughout each institution.

Differences in professional culture between the museum and higher education sectors have inhibited such developments. Each asks different kinds of academic questions and tends to answer them in different ways. Some staff in both sectors are also concerned that, in today's highly competitive research environment, the intellectual property of one might be poached by the other. But many staff regard museums and higher education as sister institutions, and expect the boundaries between the sectors to erode over the coming decade.

A change in higher education that is of particular significance to museums is the shift, hastened by economic pressures, from small group tutorials to individual resource-based projects. Today's students need skills in research and self-directed learning that were not required by their predecessors. In increasing numbers, they are now turning to museums and other cultural institutions for help. Museums cannot easily respond to their needs. Very few, even of the national museums, have adequate facilities for the public to study objects and works of art that are not on display. Very few have digitalised visual and textual documentation for more than a tiny fraction of their collections. Very few have staff who have been trained to support self-directed learners.

The Tate Gallery in London and a few other museums are trying to develop their public galleries as study rooms. But, for the most part, museum collections remain inaccessible to students in many important respects. This is a massive waste of educational and, ultimately, economic potential.

For their part, museums are often frustrated by the lack of research skills, including the skills needed to learn from objects and works of art, of many undergraduate and post-graduate students. This is in part because many tutors have rarely worked with these resources themselves and so cannot pass on such skills to their students.

A structural change in the relationship between museums and the higher education sector is required which will provide museums with the resources and incentive they need to support the work of universities and colleges more effectively.

#### **The development of the higher education sector**

Higher education student numbers have doubled since 1979 and continue to rise. Efforts to improve opportunities for students from ethnic minorities, students with disabilities and applicants who lack formal qualifications have widened access for more people. The proportion of students from poorer families has not yet shown a corresponding increase, but in other respects the United Kingdom now has a much larger and more diverse higher education system than ever before. The sector is now receiving more students who, if from school, have become accustomed to learning from a wider range of resources including museums or, if mature, bring with them a practical, human-orientated, contextual approach to knowledge.

#### **Adult education**

In this century, the adult education and museum sectors have not kept in close touch with best practice in each other's fields. Museums have been deprived of the energy, commitment and sense of purpose that have been characteristic of the adult education movement, and adult education institutions have failed to utilise one of their most important learning resources.

'The country needs to develop a new learning culture, a culture of lifelong learning for all. It is essential to help .... all of its people meet the challenge they now face as they move towards the twenty-first century'.

*Bob Fryer, Chair of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, 1997*

The Fryer report in 1997 called for a transformation of culture, putting learning within the reach of everyone through a partnership between the individual and the wider community. The Government, in its Green Paper *The Learning Age*, endorsed that call and acknowledged that the demand for learning is potentially vast.

Among the new initiatives announced by the Government was the introduction of Individual Learning Accounts. These are based upon two key principles: first, that individuals are best placed to choose what and how they want to learn; and second, that responsibility for investing in learning is shared. The new system of learning accounts allows individuals to save or borrow for investment in their own learning. They can be used, at the learner's choice, to pay for learning - whether an evening class, or a learning programme bought through the University for Industry, or meeting the cost of childcare so as to give time to study. The Government will adopt two main approaches to learning accounts: a universal approach for everyone at work wanting to learn, and a targeted approach to support adults with a particular learning or skill need.

Both the Fryer report and *The Learning Age* acknowledged the importance of learning for its own sake, as a stimulus for the mind and nourishment of the soul. Both also acknowledged the important role that museums and galleries, libraries and other cultural institutions play in lifelong learning. This is a significant and welcome development, and an important step forward, but the potential contribution of museums to adult learning still awaits funding as well as official recognition.

The two sectors have much common ground. Two-thirds of museum audiences are adults. Both sectors are committed to lifelong learning outside as well as inside the formal education sector. Both see adult learning as a source of enrichment of people's lives beyond its instrumental value.

Adult learners are extremely varied. Some already have a strongly developed interest and the confidence, motivation and skills to use museum resources almost unaided. Others, such as learners with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities or the unemployed, may need particular kinds of learning support. There are increasing numbers of people who are retired; some of them revel in the freedom this brings, and some not. The number of older adults will increase significantly over the next decade. They represent the first mass leisure class in history with the opportunity to return to learning, but many are prevented from exploiting this by limited education, infirmity, cost or lack of confidence.

‘We need provision in the areas of culture and creativity. Too often, older people as well as younger feel alienated from rich cultural and artistic heritages. We want education that supports and encourages self-help but does not use it as a substitute for provision.’

*Group of twenty older people, Oxford, 1993*

The first questionnaire survey showed that one of the commonest education programmes in museums for adults is the traditional lecture. What the survey could not show was the quality and diversity of other types of provision which some museums are developing for adults. These include classes for the unemployed; history and reminiscence projects; collaborations with extra mural departments, the Open University and other open and distance-learning organisations; adult literacy and basic skills courses; and accredited and non-accredited programmes for women from ethnic minorities.

Adult self-directed learners are probably present in disproportionate numbers among visitors to all museums, and are drawn to them by a special interest in their subject and collections. Facilities for study of the collections can provide a valuable channel for their expertise and enthusiasm. Adults who are given the opportunity to learn more actively within the institution reward the museum with their committed support. Independent and industrial museums have been particularly effective at developing these kinds of provision for mutual benefit.

Tourists and overseas visitors are another important group of adult visitors who are rarely adequately catered for even though they represent half of the visitors to some major museums. Little research has been done on their museum learning needs, a gap that should be filled in view of the importance of tourism to museums and the United Kingdom economy.

The network of vocational and non-vocational adult education institutions in the United Kingdom is vast. It includes, for example, not only adult education centres and departments, but also trainers in industry and the professions, health and other public service educators, Women’s Institutes and others among the one million or so voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom, as well as the Workers’ Educational Association and the Open University. Many of these institutions have skills in identifying and responding to the learning needs of a wide range of adults. The sector also has strong traditions of support for immigrant groups and of helping communities to confront difficult and provocative social issues. The publication in 1998 of a report on partnerships between WEAs and museums by the National Association of the WEA has provided examples of good practice and a stimulus for future development.

For their part, adult education institutions could make much greater use of museums as informal, social and culturally-rich learning environments in which adult groups can meet, talk and work together. Museum galleries also provide them with historical perspectives on contemporary society and current events. However, few adult educators have been trained in using museums as a learning resource, and equally few museum staff have expertise in adult education issues and methodologies, obstacles which will place a constraint on future development if they are not addressed. Initiatives by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to increase contacts with the museum sector are, therefore, a very positive step.

### **Industry**

In the twenty-first century the workplace will become a significant centre for learning. There is increasing recognition in industry that, at a time of rapid global economic change, its workforce needs more than instrumental training to perform specific tasks. For their part, many employees want a broad education which provides enduring content and value in their lives. Museums can help to meet both needs.

Sponsorship provides a starting point for many museum-industry links. But some museums and businesses are now looking beyond sponsorship to a more creative relationship which involves wider educational and training initiatives. The development of learning centres in the workplace, and the encouragement by enlightened employers of open and distance-learning for their staff, provide new opportunities for museums to develop long-term relationships with both the public and the private sector.

A number of museums have established staff exchanges with other organisations, and some managers have been seconded by industry to work on major projects in museums for up to a year. The collections of many museums relating to the work of particular industries and displays on industrial design, the history of a local employer or the social history of the area have led to joint public education programmes. In some cases, museums have also provided special events and courses for employees.

## Open Museums

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**Target 6:** To make museum education accessible to the widest possible audience

Around 40% of the adult population will visit a museum or art gallery in any one year, but the percentage varies widely – between 22% and 68% – in different localities. Whilst the decision to use museums is for many a matter of personal choice, it is also clear that many people are deterred or excluded from using museums by their past experiences or the policies and practice of museums. The claim of museums to be public institutions, as opposed to being the representatives of particular interests, depends upon the degree to which all sectors are represented, and included, in the life and work of museums.

As well as depriving the people concerned, exclusion of significant sectors of society diminishes museums. In the education sector, it is one of the Government's highest priorities to widen participation in education. Museums, too, are now expected by the Government to enable as many people as possible, beyond their predominantly middle class audience, to use their resources. The three essential strategies for achieving this are access, participation and progression in learning.

'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in the scientific achievement and its benefits.'

*Article 23 of UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

### Access

Access to museums is an entitlement, not an option, of citizenship. Access can be defined in terms of equality of opportunity or equality of outcome. Many museums develop profiles of their audiences from visitor surveys. These are measures of equality of outcome, and can be used by museums to identify which groups are experiencing barriers to access, and to establish targets for change. Educational access can also be measured in terms of quality of experience. In general, such systematic approaches to increasing access are not common in museums.

'This museum will be like a book with its pages open, and not shut'.

*Henry Cole, first Director of the South Kensington Museum, 1857*

There are many barriers to access to museums. The principal ones are social class, poverty, educational disadvantage, ethnic and cultural background, disability and an individual's own attitudes. These factors often operate in combination, so that a successful strategy to overcome them requires a coordinated programme.

A seminal research report, *Poverty: Access and Participation in the Arts*, published in 1997 by the Combat Poverty Agency and the Arts Council in the Republic of Ireland, found that access to the arts was not among the highest priorities for those living in disadvantaged areas of Ireland, but it was a higher priority than it was perceived to be by arts organisations and policymakers. The report also found that education and arts education are effective methods of improving access.

Initiatives by some United Kingdom museums have demonstrated that barriers to access can be removed. Economic disadvantage has been addressed by removing charges or offering concessions and even by using travel subsidies at some museums. The employment by some museums of staff from the South Asian, Chinese and other minority communities and a long-term commitment to provision of services for these communities have been effective at increasing engagement. Barriers to the use of museums by people with educational disadvantages or disabilities can be addressed directly by changing the nature of museum provision. Negative self-images and attitudes can be changed if people are offered sustained and targeted support through existing social and community networks.

#### **CASE STUDY: AN INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:**

##### **European Cities within Reach**

'European Cities Within Reach' is a consortium funded by the European Commission Directorate General XXIII Tourism Unit. The aim is to draw attention to the barriers to tourism faced by visually-impaired people in Europe and to develop small scale pilot projects that demonstrate the potential for improvement.

Museums and other cultural institutions and organisations of and for visually-impaired people in Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom were involved in the project, and there were links with Japan and the USA. Taped touch tours, tactile pictures and better publicity mechanisms in accessible formats were some of the options being explored in order to make travel and tourism more accessible to the over six million blind and partially-sighted people in Europe. The exchange of



information was also a key function of the consortium. All the ideas developed by the project could be transferred to other institutions, and seminars, access training and conference presentations were organised to enable this to happen.

By 1996, three city guide books, to London, Paris and to Turin and Venice had been produced, with details which will aid visually impaired people. They are available in large print, braille, and on cassette tape in English, French and Italian. Other projects include five audio guides to touch tours in London museums, a guide 'for all the senses' to the Latin Quarter of Paris, and new architectural itineraries with raised images for Turin and Venice, and a city guide to Stockholm.

'European Cities Within Reach' now acts as an informal network, providing participating museums with a knowledge base and networks. Key lessons learnt are that:

- user involvement and pro-active marketing are essential
- touching original objects is very popular
- braille is essential for many blind visitors
- a companion reading out information at the place of discovery is very valuable
- three-dimensional models and tactile and large size plans communicate quickly and effectively
- provision of information in large print on cassette or CD, large size labelling, improved lighting and use of colour schemes can radically improve access.

Educational disadvantage may begin at an early age. In recent years a number of museum professionals have expressed concern that schools from areas of economic deprivation may use museums less frequently than schools from more affluent areas, or independent schools. But this cannot be confirmed without research.

An important dimension of access is informing the public of the opportunities available to them. The Government, in *Treasures in Trust*, encouraged museums to ensure that museum education provision is widely known to potential users. This can be done in many ways from promotional and marketing initiatives (which themselves can play an educational role) to personal contact.

A pioneering research project in Scotland initiated by INTACT, the Intellectual Access Trust, has explored the issue of intellectual access and has published guidance on this neglected dimension of museum provision.

Museums are for those with the skills and confidence to use them independently and successfully. But they are also for those who will use museum resources only if they are encouraged and enabled to do so. If they are to be accessible, museums must take active steps to address the needs of the latter, who number up to half of the United Kingdom population. It is also essential that this provision should be integral to the work of the museum and not intermittent and isolated.

#### **Museums and under-represented groups**

National and local surveys provide some information about who does and who does not visit museums. Social class is one of the most important indicators. A survey by the Henley Centre in 1993-94 found that 34% of socio-economic groups I and II had visited a museum or art gallery, and 41% an historic building, during the previous three months, compared with 10% and 12% respectively of socio-economic groups IV and V. However, recent studies have shown that people in socio-economic group V are more likely to use museums than those in socio-economic group IV. *The Arts in their View*, a survey conducted by the NFER in 1993, also showed that unemployed 14 to 24 year-olds were twice as likely to visit galleries and museums in their leisure time as the total age group, and more likely to do so than any other category of young people; this was not true of going to the theatre, which the young unemployed were least likely to do.

Educational disadvantage is another powerful obstacle. Statistics published in *Social Trends 25*, 1995, show that 28% of the whole population, and 70% of unskilled manual workers, have no educational qualifications; 40% of the population report difficulty with writing and spelling, and nearly a quarter report difficulty with numeracy. Over three-quarters of people fail to understand a complex literary passage which a bright 16-year-old could have completed. *Cultural Trends 12*, 1991, found that people who left school at the age of 16 were significantly less likely to visit museums than those who had continued their education.

A study for the MGC, *By Popular Demand*, found that poverty can also effectively exclude some groups from museums. Families, those with low income and the

under-20s are particularly likely to be deterred by admission charges at institutions where they are applied. There has, however, been no systematic research on the full social impact of admission charges.

Statistical evidence of the use of museums by ethnic minorities is scarce, but it seems from *Cultural Trends 12*, that most Asians and African-Caribbeans do not translate their strong commitment to general post-school education across into museum visiting. Research, including a study for Croydon Museums by Tanya Du Bery, suggests that barriers may include the following: lack of coverage in museums of non-European cultures; language barriers; the mono-culturalism of the staff, services and public image of most museums; the lack of awareness on the part of museums of the norms of other cultures, including their educational traditions; and, in some cases, the absence of a tradition of museum visiting within a particular cultural group.

The six million registered and other people with disabilities form a large group whose use of museums is often inhibited. The needs of wheelchair-users, who represent only 2% of people with disabilities, are often considered, but the requirements of people with other physical disabilities, and those with sensory, emotional and intellectual needs, are usually not. It is not their disabilities which principally hinder these groups, but the policies and practices of 'disabling museums' and their slowness to offer integrated museum-wide provision.

### Participation

Whatever their background, people will only visit a museum if they believe they will be able to participate in it in a way that they enjoy and find interesting. Museums cannot compel their visitors to learn. For some people, participation means personal engagement with an object or work of art, but people who have different learning styles and patterns of intelligence may want to participate through social and practical activities.

Non-users often regard museums as gloomy and boring. Both non-users and infrequent users tend to value the social aspect of their leisure activities, and believe that children are the main reason for going to museums. These people want activities. Children, sociability, comfort and practical activities are, then, the priority for museums that wish to increase participation for users as well as non-users.

### Changing attitudes

A report in 1995 for the Department of National Heritage by The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), *Participating in the Arts, Heritage, Broadcasting and Sport*, identified ten main types of positive attitude to participation by the public, and five types of negative attitude. The latter included a perceived lack of ability, knowledge or skills; feelings of lack of comfort or irrelevance because of aspects of the activity; feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness, awe and intimidation; and barriers because the activity does not conform to self or group image. The report noted that the most successful way to change the negative attitudes of non-participants was to offer sustained, informed and targeted support, to use social networks, and to augment access by, for example, going out into the community.

### Progression in learning

Learning is a process of change, and museums that provide opportunities for progression (on-going development of knowledge and skills) for their visitors greatly enhance their educational value. Schools and other formal educational institutions can develop students' capabilities within their curricula, but it is vital that children – and adults as well – also have the chance to develop interests and skills within a wider framework of personal, social and institutional learning.

The Arts Council of England has recently identified the major stages in young people's engagement with the arts as first the 'inspirational', then the 'aspirational' and finally the 'entrepreneurial'. People of all ages need museums and other cultural institutions to provide them with stepping stones, particularly through education programmes and collaborations with outside organisations, to new skills and experiences. The emphasis in the early stages should be on instilling interest and confidence, developing later to more challenging activities for those who are more assured and self-sufficient. The concept of progression also underlies the Government's policies in support of lifelong learning.

It seems likely that children today get fewer opportunities than their counterparts 30 or 40 years ago to develop such interests and skills in their leisure time with parents and other adults. The lack of opportunities for leisure learning does not just limit the individual. It may also affect society and the economy, because undiscovered and underdeveloped talents may not be used productively in later life.

‘I believe that sustained involvement and pleasure [in the development of skills] was more common in the America of 30 and 40 years ago than it is today. It is my observation that, while children sample many activities, relatively few remain immersed long enough in any particular pursuit to gain the competence and pleasure of which I speak.

When I observed Chinese youngsters carefully developing their aesthetic skills over the course of many years, I gained fresh respect for the importance of such regular application within a domain of competence. There ought to be a place for skill development, and for extended apprenticeship.

Students living in a culture with an ancient past should have the option of pursuing one or more of these traditional practices as part of their own growth’.

*Howard Gardner, educational psychologist, 1989*

The wide variations in local participation rates in museums referred to above indicate that some museums have been extremely successful at overcoming barriers to using their resources, and opening access to their institution. The museum sector can also learn from the example of further and higher education institutions whose access programmes have so successfully engaged those from minority communities or disadvantaged groups who missed out on opportunities for learning the first time around.

## Engaging Other Educators

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**Target 7:** To develop the skills of museum learning in other sectors of education

Museums can enrich the learning process in every school, college, university, adult education institution and community centre in the country. For this to happen, educational institutions at all levels need to establish good practice in learning directly from objects, specimens and works of art as an integral part of their students' work.

The effective use of museums as a learning resource depends primarily on teachers and other educators in these institutions. Some educational institutions recognise that museum learning requires new skills, and invite museum educators to run training courses for their staff and students. A few tutors and teachers have also joined GEM, ENGAGE, and other professional museum groups, giving them access to conferences, training courses and publications in the sector. The current ad hoc voluntary arrangements are not sufficient to provide teachers and other educators with the help and guidance they need. Although the use of museums is now part of the curriculum for schools, and well established in other sectors of education, there is no requirement for initial or in-service training of educators in any sector to include the skills of learning from objects and works of art in museums or sites. A more systematic approach, taking the form of a number of related national initiatives, is now required.

Primary responsibility for encouraging and improving the training of school teachers, which involved research into effective teaching, lies in England and Wales with the Teacher Training Agency (TTA); in Scotland and Northern Ireland it is the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI). The TTA has drawn up a National Curriculum for Initial Teacher Training with more tightly defined standards for all initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It is also developing a professional framework of national standards for teachers, underpinned by high quality training and qualifications; to support this, additional funds are being invested by the Government in continuing development of teachers. Related initiatives will aim to improve teaching standards and training in the further and higher education sectors.

This report proposes that to support these developments, there is a need for research on the training of teachers in the use of museums, art galleries and sites as a learning resource, and for these competences to be included in the criteria for accreditation of institutions to run training courses for teachers. Such courses might also include advanced qualifications for more

experienced teachers. In England, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) is responsible for the training of school inspectors, and OFSTED's Inspection Framework already requires inspectors to consider each school's approach to cultural development through visits to museums and art galleries. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, HMI and DENI Inspectors have equivalent responsibilities.

On behalf of the museum sector, MLAC might explore with the relevant government agencies how further, higher and adult education staff, youth and arts and community workers, and initial and in-service training providers could receive training in the use of museums. One option for disseminating good practice is the development nationally of distance-learning publications on education through museums, galleries and historic sites. These could be supported at a local and national level by a coordinated programme of courses that would benefit from the involvement of an established open and distance-learning provider with a national network of centres, such as the Open University.

Museums could also make much greater use of the skills and enthusiasm of the thousands of educators in other sectors who have a strong personal and professional commitment to museums, as well as making greater efforts to increase their numbers. Some museums have already established membership schemes and special events to encourage their participation. Overseas museums, particularly in the United States, have established fellowships for senior teachers and lecturers, with grants to cover their expenses and the costs of cover. Such initiatives extend the networks of museum supporters throughout the education sector.

#### **Good practice in training teachers to use museums**

A comprehensive practical training for teachers in the use of museums as a learning resource was offered in the past by a number of BEd and PGCE courses, including those at the University of Brighton and the Institute of Education at the University of London. This training depended on the enthusiasm of individual tutors.

Student teachers benefited most when they were given the chance to observe experienced museum educators at work, and were introduced to the basic concepts and research on museum learning. They were then encouraged to bring their own classes to the museum on a prepared visit. The visit was monitored by their tutors and museum staff, who subsequently evaluated the visit with the students.

At the course at the University of Brighton, all visits arranged by the students were recorded on video for use in the evaluation process, to enable the students to learn from each other's experiences. When visits to museums organised by students given this training were compared with those of students who did not, it was found that the quality of the visits organised by the mentored group was much higher than that of the other students. The students reported that such practical support and guidance had been essential for them to learn the skills of gallery teaching. It had also given them the confidence they felt they needed to undertake such work alone in future.



Sculpture workshop with visually-impaired adults at the National Portrait Gallery.

*(Photo: Roger Hargreaves)*



## Partnerships

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**Target 8:** To collaborate with different agencies and institutions which share museum objectives

Museums have many reasons to consider working in partnership with different agencies and institutions. Partnerships allow museums to extend the boundaries of what is possible: to share risks, acquire resources, reach new audiences, obtain complementary skills, improve the quality of service, achieve projects that would otherwise have been impossible, acquire validation from an external source, and win community and political support.

The DNH, in *Treasures in Trust*, encouraged museums to cooperate with other museums in provision of educational opportunities. Museums can also seek partners outside the museum sector. In many parts of Great Britain (but not all), where unitary authorities exist, local authority organisation has recently created opportunities for lateral integration of public service functions. In this context, lifelong public education has emerged once again as a fundamental purpose which unites many sectors.

The models for partnership range from one-off projects to the creation of hybrid institutions. Libraries and further education colleges are particularly attractive partners for museums. Hybrid museum/library or museum/college institutions offer the prospect of new kinds of educational entities, in which the whole is greater than, and different from, the sum of the parts.

### Hybrid institutions

Libraries and museums have often shared buildings and histories. Libraries have a strong tradition, through small branch and mobile libraries, of taking services to their local communities. A report in 1995 by ASLIB (the Association for Information Management) on the public library service in England and Wales has advocated the development of hybrid institutions. In Norfolk, the library services have collaborated on an experimental basis with village shops and post offices to provide people with book loans and access to computer networks which would not otherwise have been financially viable. In Denmark, similar experiments have created partnerships between a group of public services to provide hybrid institutions in villages, as part of a deliberate policy to reverse the decline in village life.

**CASE STUDY: MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES WORKING TOGETHER:****The Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums Division (Brighton and Hove)**

Following the Local Government Reorganisation, in April 1997 Brighton and Hove became a Unitary Authority. Rather than retain separate divisions of libraries and museums, a new integrated division was established with over 250 staff responsible for some 30 public facilities including historic buildings, gardens and sites.

Museums and libraries fall within the leisure paradigm (as defined by the policy research organisation *Comedia*) being voluntary, consumer-led cultural facilities, encouraging life-long learning, creativity, self-expression and individual development as well as enjoyment. Both are non-compulsory, neutral, 'open' social spaces, accessible to all. Together they have the potential to provide an integrated public resource to support the development of the 'Learning City' concept. Large museums tend to be city-centre based and a valuable part of the regional tourism industry. Community libraries are locally sited and placed to meet local needs; combined they form an extensive public resource.

The restructure in Brighton and Hove was undertaken on a functional basis with all Heads of Sections serving the entire new division, thus maximising skills, knowledge and expertise from the former separate professions. The management team led by the Head of Service, now consists of two traditional policy 'professional' section heads (Principal Librarian and Head of Museum Collections) working alongside the Heads of Marketing and Visitor Services, Conservation and Design, Commercial Retail, IT and Customer Resources (managing front-line staff across the new division), and Education and Exhibitions.

Such a structure supports coherent training for all front-line staff, single policy development, joint working on digital projects, and the development of new projects such as a Local Studies Centre which will combine all the local studies material in the new division and be managed jointly by library and museum professional staff. The museums have well-developed education, marketing, conservation and commercial skills. The local libraries, with their specialist community knowledge, can support and develop collaborative outreach projects by providing physical locations, skills and resources. Together libraries and

museums become a formidable cultural and educational resource, creating a much richer and broader learning environment with a network of opportunities encompassing different learning styles.

The establishment of the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is likely to result in a variety of creative relationships. The public could benefit significantly in local authority areas where these new relationships include some integration of collections and other resources, as well as cross-sectoral provision for self-directed and other learning in a variety of media. Collaboration on the development of education and learning support services and the creation of content for the National Grid will provide shared goals for the three sectors.

There may be one million voluntary organisations in communities throughout the United Kingdom, of which perhaps 90% are local and autonomous groups. Many are effectively associations of self-directed learners; some have existing relationships with museums. Museums can also collaborate with the health, prison and social services; partnerships with the prison service in Bristol and Market Harborough, and with hospitals in Nottingham, have brought museum education services to people who are unable to visit a museum.

There have been several occasions during this century, including the 1944 Education Act, when educational and cultural institutions might have been brought together under local authority control to deliver an integrated service for lifelong learning. None of these opportunities was taken. In the past, local authorities often saw their role primarily as the delivery of separate services as required by national legislation, but recent changes have challenged old assumptions. One option open to local authorities today is to develop an enabling role as well as, or in place of, one of service delivery. This creates a local environment in which learning and innovation are encouraged.

If lifelong learning for individuals and cultural development for communities are to become realities, then a wide variety of agencies and institutions – museums, libraries, colleges, schools, environmental groups, voluntary organisations, social services and businesses – must coordinate their efforts at a local level.

**CASE STUDY: WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES:****Nottingham Museums and Galleries Access Team**

Museum education has traditionally thrived on collaborations with local education authorities, teacher training establishments and teachers' centres to ensure that its services are relevant, appropriate and well marketed. This notion of networking has been an essential part of work in Nottingham, particularly with regard to developing outreach programmes with the least advantaged groups within the city.

The Museums Education and Outreach Team are essentially enablers, providing relevant physical, intellectual and psychological access to museum collections. As a team they have a commitment to the objectives of equal opportunities but do not have direct working experience of mental health groups, Alzheimer's sufferers, black youths, the elderly, pre-school and other such groups. It is by very close liaison in equal partnership with other agencies that effective work has taken place both outside and inside the museum. In one instance, the Elderly Persons Officer with a community-wide remit enabled reminiscence programmes offered by the museums to get to all the most appropriate groups. In another, the Nottingham Rehabilitation and Community Care Services not only provided contacts and ideas to the team, but also training, monitoring and essential support for working with clients whose behaviour can often be challenging. A training manual, *Developing Practice*, has been produced for museum educators and the outreach sessional workers. A one-year part-time post has also been created to support smaller museums.

These partnerships have helped enormously to make the museum more inclusive and have had an impact on every aspect of their work. Becoming a unitary authority in 1998 has provided more opportunities for cross-agency work in an institutionally strategic way.

There is, in any case, a need for local authorities in each area of the United Kingdom to undertake responsibility for the coordination of provision for lifelong learning. This might involve: researching local needs and provision; supporting joint projects such as the creation of multi-service centres in the buildings of participating organisations or at new sites in the community; acting as a conduit for grants; and establishing integrated digital media projects. Such an initiative would be particularly useful if it targeted specific groups such as young people or the elderly, and helped to establish an accessible cultural base for them. Local

authorities could extend the principle of enablement, without any change of legislation, to include this responsibility.

Since 1997, the Government has recognised the vital role of culture in improving the quality of life, assisting regeneration and tackling exclusion, and is encouraging local authorities to develop and publish cultural strategies. Up to 10 pilot authorities will prepare strategies from Summer 1999, and strategies should be in place for all English authorities during 2002. These strategies will be a valuable mechanism for stimulating a holistic approach to cultural development at a local level, and providing greater synergy between central and local government.

Each local cultural strategy will set out the authority's own broad objectives and priorities. Since it will address the interests and needs of local communities, the strategy should help to develop creative linkages between the different elements of provision, including those areas covered by the voluntary and private sectors. Local cultural strategies will in turn contribute to the Regional Cultural Strategies which will be the responsibility of new Regional Cultural Consortia. They will relate to Regional Economic Strategies, and should help to strengthen the case of local communities for European Union and Lottery funding.

It is vital that the significant role of the cultural sector in provision for lifelong learning should be fully identified and supported in local cultural strategies, and that this imperative should be reflected in the guidance issued by DCMS and the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA). The learning society can only be achieved if learning and culture are closely integrated at a local level.

The United Kingdom can also learn from innovative projects abroad. The selection of Stockholm as Cultural Capital of Europe in 1998 provided an opportunity for the city to extend the concept of museum learning, and the role of the educator onto the streets. In a unique project, *Stockholm Education*, over 1500 taxi drivers, firemen, street traders, traffic wardens, policemen and others who work with the public, studied the people, architecture, social conditions and cultural history of Stockholm and participated in the ongoing debate about the city's development. Many of them in turn shared their rekindled interest in the city with the public.

**CASE STUDY: ENABLING INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS:****Ross and Cromarty District Council**

The 1982 Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act stated that it is a statutory duty of local authorities 'to provide adequate cultural facilities for the inhabitants of (their) area'. Until April 1996 Ross and Cromarty District was a large rural area in the Highlands of Scotland, with a dispersed population. In the museum field, the Council chose to meet its obligations under the Act through enabling the independent sector. As a consequence it ran no museums on its own account, but financially supported eight small independent museums. This was a long-term strategy for development, which resourced a number of volunteer-run museums and enabled them to employ professional staff. It also relied on income from paying tourist visitors in the summer months to subsidise the work programmes. The Council's support covered roughly one-third of the running costs. These resources supported the equivalent of eight full-time curatorial staff, all of whom had, or were studying for, the Museums Diploma and who worked in seven fully and one provisionally Registered museums. It took seven years of nurturing, confidence building and resource acquisition to get to this point. Since 1996 there have been minor structural changes due to local government reorganisation, but the support has continued.

An important point in determining any added value of this approach is that it takes longer than a conventional one. However, in due course, it produces the sort of outputs a larger museum might expect. School loan packs, visit resource packs and post-visit teaching materials were developed by each museum according to local need. After the first teacher placement, many of the museums began to see the value of formal educational work. The main advantage of the provision arranged by Ross and Cromarty lay in the fact that eight separate communities, some with populations as low as eight hundred, had access to professional museum staff and a personal stake in preserving their own unique histories.

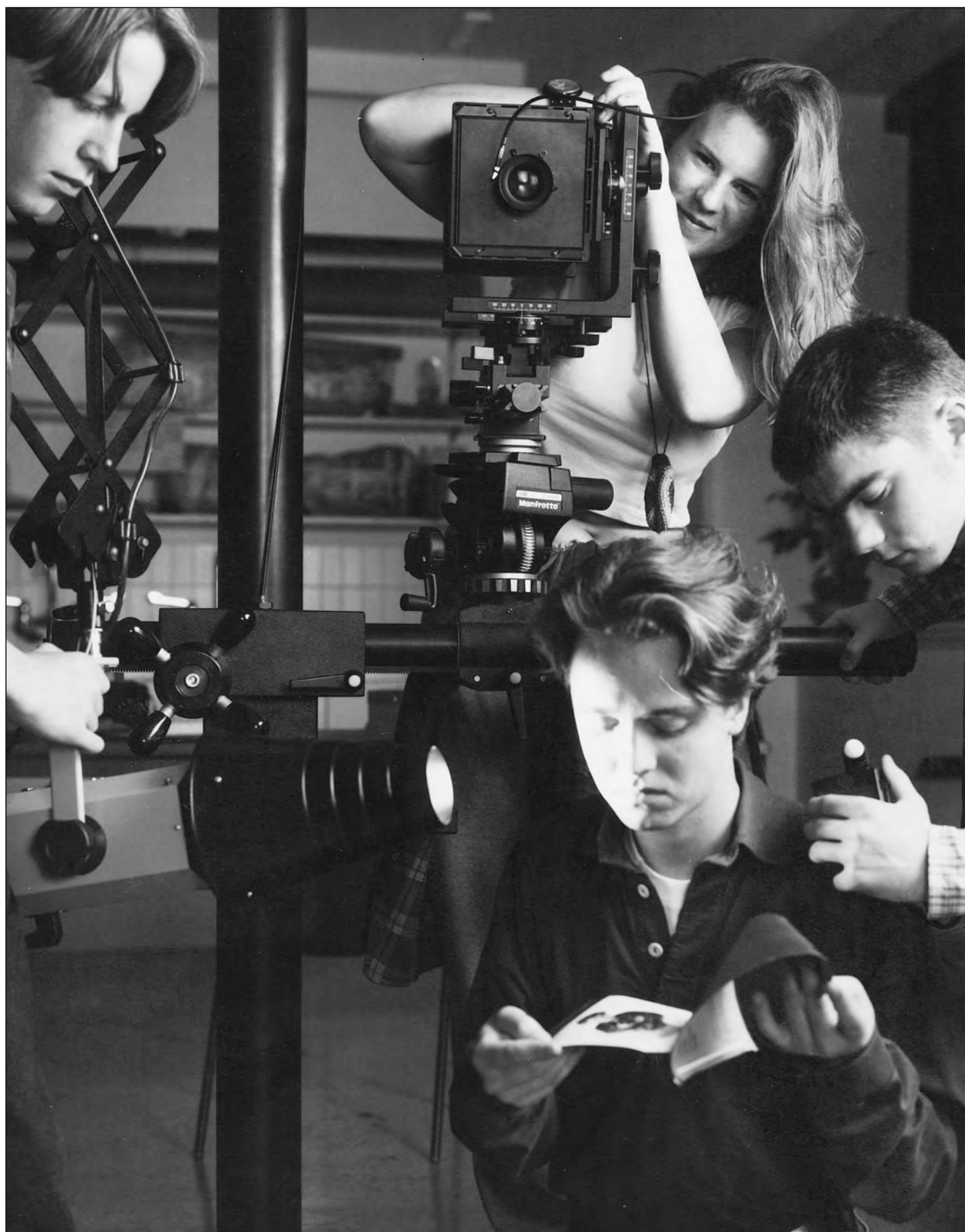


Photo workshop: part of a leisure time programme for young people at the National Portrait Gallery.

*(Photo: Roger Hargreaves)*

## Adequate provision throughout the United Kingdom

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**Target 9:** To ensure that museum learning is available in every area of the country

Museums vary widely in their size, type and financial resources, yet excellence of educational provision can be achieved by all museums if they effectively utilise the human and material resources of their communities as well as those of the institution. Excellence is a matter of priorities and commitment.

There are many small and poorly-resourced institutions which are strongly committed to high standards of educational provision. Their work, while more limited in scale than that of major museums, can still match it in quality. These institutions have well-thought-out education policies, displays that are educationally rich, and education programmes that are stimulating and varied. They show that low standards are not only professionally unacceptable; they are also quite unnecessary. In almost all cases, however, these museums have had outside support.

At a local level, the United Kingdom lacks a secure base for development of museum education. Half of all museums, this report has found, do not achieve even the most basic level of provision for public learning. Neither the public nor local educational institutions can be sure what services will be provided for them. Many areas have no museum education provision whatsoever.

Museums that provide no education services state that the two major obstacles are lack of funds and lack of in-house skills. A general improvement can only be achieved through investment of money and expertise on the ground. This can be done in a number of ways. An earlier section of this report has already identified the success of some local museums in forming consortia to share specialist education staff and resources. Local universities, museum federations and regional arts boards are among the other organisations that can help.

### **The role of Area Museum Councils**

Area Museum Councils have done more to improve professional standards in museums than any other institution in the United Kingdom. The core support provided by AMCs consists of advisory services, improvement grants, training and information; these are directed at raising standards of collections care and developing public services. Many of the initiatives supported already include an educational element. The decision to create the new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council provides a new opportunity for AMCs' role in support of museum education to be considered and developed.



Each AMC deals with a different part of the country with its own pattern of museum provision and its own requirements. However, if the Government's goals for the cultural sector are to be achieved, it is necessary that targets, principles and good practices should be developed consistently throughout the United Kingdom. Over the last decade, with additional funding, AMCs have contributed significantly to improvements in collections management. A similar coordinated effort is needed now to transform the educational role of museums.

Area Museum Councils have responded positively to the increasing opportunities for development of provision for learning, over the last two years. In September 1997 Directors of AMCs met to discuss their response to the first edition of this report. They welcomed the broader definition of education as lifelong learning and are using this as the cornerstone for development. They also agreed two objectives. The first was to build up the expertise available to museums through the creation of museum education posts, facilitating access for museums to expert advice and providing training for both educators and non-educators. The second objective was to encourage museums to adopt education policies.

Some individual AMCs have supported educational development in individual museums by building on their traditional role of supplying grant-in-aid, training and advice. Many have also played a strategic role at a local level, facilitating the creation of new education posts and partnerships, and committing expertise or funds to lever additional funding from other local sources. Some AMCs have sought wider partnerships, working with national organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Museums & Galleries Commission, as well as curriculum advisory bodies, trusts and foundations. Some have themselves also adopted education policies.

A number of AMCs have taken other key initiatives. The Scottish Museums Council, with the support of the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, has taken a strong lead. It was the first to create a new education post in response to the first edition of this report. It also commissioned a survey of its members on education and it has called, in its *National Strategy for Scotland's Museums*, for the establishment by the new Scottish Parliament of a cross-sectoral committee to coordinate relationships between the museum and education sectors. In Northern Ireland, the Museums Council is contributing to a major review of local museums and heritage sites which will be concerned in part with the relationship between museums and education authorities.

In England, the South Eastern Museums Education Unit has received some continued funding from the South Eastern Museums Service, and has produced *Education Basics*, a training manual for preparing curators to develop their education work. The Area Museum Council for the South West has pioneered the establishment of a network of Area Education Development officers across its region. The West Midlands Regional Museums Council has commissioned a report on provision for education by museums in its area and established a new development post for education and communication. The East Midlands Museums Service plans to develop its 'Interact' scheme of freelance museum educators. The North East Museums Service has established education as one of its four key priorities in its Regional Strategy and has appointed a part-time education adviser. In the North West, the Museums Service has commissioned a particularly wide-ranging review which will form the basis for a major investment in education over the next few years, including the creation of a specialist post. Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Service has established an Access Fund for projects which develop new audiences for museums.

Taken together, these initiatives represent a significant step forward. What is lacking, except in Scotland, is a strategic initiative to establish a coherent infrastructure of expertise and other support at a regional level for local museums. Many AMCs also still lack dedicated museum specialists with real expertise on their staff. Portfolio posts filled by staff covering other specialisms as well as education are no substitute for this. Such is the scale of the need on the ground that to be really effective it will need a far bigger investment than AMCs on their own can presently make.

The public, and the museum sector, now need AMCs to spearhead, in partnership with their member museums, local authorities, sponsors and trusts, a national programme to establish a specialist museum education post in each museum or group of museums in the United Kingdom by the year 2001. Education is people-based; a skilled and experienced museum and gallery educator is needed to lead development. There is no substitute for this if standards are to be raised. There is already a chronic skills shortage in the field.

**CASE STUDY: FUNDING A NEW SERVICE:****The Royal Cornwall Museum**

The Royal Cornwall Museum is an independent museum with charitable status, supported by the County Council. A commitment to education is enshrined in its constitution, and the museum staff have always welcomed school visits and responded to requests for help with projects at all levels. Lack of staff, space and funds prevented a more proactive service until a radical programme of new building and re-display in the permanent galleries created the infrastructure which allowed the museum to consider a more ambitious education function.

There was no budget, so a pilot project was devised to attract pump-priming funds. Private sponsors were not interested, but two charitable trusts yielded just enough to pay a part-time Education Officer for six months. Other freelance staff were funded from the fees paid by visiting schools. Schools are charged on a pay-per-use basis, carefully costed to identify the cost per child and an element to cover two-thirds of the animator's time.

During the first six months, 2,500 children were attracted to eight different workshops on subjects ranging from the Egyptians to the Victorian family at work. With the project clearly a success the Area Museum Council and the County Council were applied to for funding to consolidate the crucial post of Education Officer, without whom the programme would be impossible to sustain. They eventually agreed to fund 80% of the cost for one year.

By the end of the Summer term in 1995, 5,000 children had taken part in a workshop, from schools all over Cornwall. By 1998, every one of the County's primary schools had taken part in at least one workshop. Unfortunately, in 1996/97 the County Council signalled a cut of nearly 50% in their grant for the Education Officer's post, but the AMC granted an additional three years' funding for the post on a 60:40:20 reducing basis. Without the AMC's contribution it would not have been possible to maintain the post.

The service now generates enough income to be able to employ another trained teacher in term times only, and in the past year two New Deal trainees have also been attached to the Department. The service has plans to address the problems of reaching secondary schools and tertiary colleges through ICT and video-conferencing, and will shortly be submitting grant applications to support these projects.

In general, AMCs are moving from direct service provision to their members to an advisory and developmental role, and this is reflected in their role in development of museum education. Museums will continue to need extensive advice, support and training from AMCs on many aspects of museum education. The development by the South Eastern Museums Education Unit, on behalf of the Committee of Area Museum Councils, of the training pack *Education Basics* on museum education has made basic training in the field more widely available.

Through their grants to members, AMCs exercise a powerful influence on the development of museums in their areas. The provision of grants and evaluation of their results also acts as a strong incentive to museums to improve the quality of their work. A new programme of grants for museum education is now needed to enhance the range and quality of educational provision. It is also essential that AMC grants for museum projects should be based on clear educational criteria that reflect current best practice, in order to ensure that the public educational benefits which should accrue are actually achieved.

In order to implement the measures proposed here, AMCs would require additional funding. They also all need to develop their own education policies and strategic plans, and to employ specialist education advisory staff. The four Arts Councils also play a strategic role in the development of arts education. Art museums would benefit greatly if the Arts Councils (Regional Arts Boards in England), working in collaboration with the AMCs, Regional Cultural Consortia, ENGAGE and other arts organisations, were also actively to support their educational development.

### **Centres of excellence**

The DNH's *Treasures in Trust* encouraged museums with well-developed skills and experience in the field of educational provision (especially among the national museums) to share their expertise with others. This report supports this proposal. There is a need for a number of major museums in the United Kingdom to act as centres of excellence in museum education, practice and research, which could help AMCs to provide advice and assistance to other museums in their area, and to museums throughout the United Kingdom with similar types of collections.

These centres of excellence might (but certainly need not) be Designated museums, which should in any case be expected to promote excellence in museum education. They might, alternatively, be other major regional and national museums. Since good practice in museum education often derives from the expertise of a particular individual or team, it is important

that an institution's status as a centre of excellence should be dependent on quality of performance, which should be monitored at regular intervals. Museums selected as centres of excellence would require additional funding through AMCs to enable them to provide services to other museums.



Face to face with a gilded leopard in the Silver Galleries during Christmas events for families at the Victoria and Albert Museum.  
(Photo: V&A Museum)

## A National Framework

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**Target 10:** To establish the infrastructure that is required at a national level to support development of museum education

The United Kingdom has two complementary national resources for public education. One is the formal education sector, which provides formal education and training. The other is the cultural sector, which includes the arts, heritage and media, and which provides lifelong informal learning while also supporting the formal education sector. These two sectors, once almost entirely separate, are now once again growing closer as museums, libraries and other cultural institutions rediscover their educational purpose.

The development of the education role of the cultural sector is of national as well as local concern. The cultural sector is one of the fastest growing parts of the global economy and will be vital for the social and economic growth of the United Kingdom. Through new media technologies, it will provide hundreds of millions of people across the world with access to learning. It is a sector which is already one of the largest and most dynamic in the United Kingdom. This country, with its wealth of cultural resources and educational expertise, is well placed to lead the world in this field, provided the necessary investment is made.

### **The role of Government**

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the respective devolved administrations are responsible for education of all kinds, as well as for cultural development. In England, the DfEE has responsibility for formal education and training, and the DCMS has responsibility for the cultural sector. For the DCMS, personal learning and development for every adult and child represents a rationale which unites all parts of the Department. It is, therefore, well placed to ensure that learning through cultural resources is given the priority in policy and funding that it deserves.

The DNH's policy statement in 1996 on museums, *Treasures in Trust*, strongly endorsed the role of museums in lifelong learning. It identified as one of its nine key objectives that museums should meet a wide range of educational needs within the context of lifelong learning by: making education an integral part of their forward plans; ensuring that museum education facilities are widely known to potential users; encouraging greater cooperation between museums in provision of education; encouraging museums with expertise in education to share this with other museums; and making more extensive use of digital technology.

There was an early realisation by the new Government in 1997 of the educational potential of the cultural sector and the contribution it could make to the learning society. This was closely followed by the renaming of the Department of National Heritage in July 1997 as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The change was more than cosmetic. It recognised that culture made a significant contribution to the evolution of society by bringing together the energies of peoples of the past with those of the present.

In July 1998, DCMS announced the results of its Comprehensive Spending Review. Its outcomes set four main objectives for the museum sector: **to promote education** through formal and informal learning and by providing opportunities for lifelong learning; **to provide physical and intellectual access** to collections, including contemporary cultures; **to help to tackle social exclusion** by encouraging participation in museum activity and reaching across social and economic barriers; and **to support economic prosperity** by helping to sustain and regenerate communities and providing services for commercial and business users. As well as being an objective in its own right, provision for learning is clearly also a significant means to help Government achieve its other objectives.

The establishment of a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with an advisory, executive and funding role, will provide strong strategic leadership to these sectors. Among its responsibilities is the setting of standards, including the development of new standards for provision of museum education. The creation of the new body recognises the common purposes of the cultural sectors, as well as those functions which are different but complementary. DCMS sees a clear role for the Council to improve lifelong learning, including the development of digitised content through greater use of new media. The establishment of MLAC could also provide an opportunity for the Government to replace the definition used in the MGC's 1986 Royal Charter of museums and galleries as places 'for the collection, documentation, conservation, preservation, display or exhibition of material evidence and associated evidence for public benefit', with one more in keeping with the Government's current thinking on the role of museums as centres for public learning and access.

DCMS also announced additional resources to allow greater access to the museums and galleries which it funds directly. All those which charged for admission have been allocated extra funds to allow free admission for children from Spring 1999 and for pensioners from April 2000. This programme will be taken further in following years. Extra funds have also been found to ensure that those which did not charge for admission are able to remain free.

The Department also noted the lack of information available from the museum sector about museum users, numbers of return visits, user satisfaction, and satisfaction with education provision. The MGC has undertaken a programme of research into who visits museums and galleries and the reasons for doing so, which they plan to continue in order to monitor changes over coming years. DCMS has also included more specific measures and targets on this issue within the Funding Agreements with the museums and galleries it directly funds as well as encouragement for them to play a more prominent role in providing support for the wider museum community.

The Department recognised that the changes it wished to implement in the cultural sector had implications for its own internal structure. Central units devoted to education and the creative industries have been formed, with the Department's Strategy Unit leading on access and social inclusion issues. The latter is at present focused on the Policy Action Team looking at the contribution by arts and sports to neighbourhood renewal following the 1998 report of the Social Exclusion Unit. The responsibilities of the Education Unit include training and education, coordination with DfEE, the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA).

The Government could extend this policy commitment to museum education in other practical ways. One is to develop, in consultation with MLAC, a limited number of strategic national goals for museum education, based on objectives in the Review as well as proposals in this report, which MLAC could then translate into specific targets for the sector. Another would be for Government departments to strengthen their criteria for assessment of the policies and forward plans of the museums and museum agencies they directly fund in relation to their educational provision. In addition, the Government could encourage joint projects between museums, libraries, and the arts, media and education sectors in support of lifelong learning, as it has already committed itself to do through new digital media. The Government could also encourage the museums and museum agencies they fund directly to develop education policies and to employ specialist educators to implement them.

Earlier sections of this report have also made proposals for enhancing the use of museums by the education sector. Among these proposals are recommendations to Government on how it could contribute to this development. These are that Government should, in each of the countries of the United Kingdom, ask the public bodies responsible for school curricula and assessment to encourage schools' use of museums; ask the public bodies responsible for schools inspection to train inspectors to monitor and report on this use; and ask the public bodies



responsible for teacher training to conduct research on the training of teachers in the use of museums, and to include these competences in initial and in-service training courses for teachers.

These steps would greatly enhance the coherence and effectiveness of museum education at a national level. However, two other steps are also needed. The first would be to create a Standing Committee on Museum Education (or on education throughout the cultural sector, including museums) on which would be represented all Government departments and agencies with a responsibility or interest in museum education. This body would be responsible for the coordination of relationships between museums and the education sector. The second would be to extend to the United Kingdom the statutory requirement that already exists in Scotland for local authorities to ensure adequate provision for cultural activities, including museums, and to define what this should mean. It is widely agreed that access to cultural resources should be an entitlement of every citizen. By defining this entitlement the Government could provide guidance to museums on the standards of education provision that can be expected of them.

### **The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council**

The MGC has been an important agent for change in the museum sector. In partnership with AMCs, the MGC helped museums to improve the care of their collections. Similar leadership will be needed if museums are to improve the quality and range of provision for education.

The creation by Government of a new framework and goals for the culture sector means that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will operate in a very different environment from that of which the MGC was part. This will provide an opportunity for the Council to look afresh at the priority to be given to learning as a central purpose of the museum sector.

The changes of recent years have ameliorated a deep-rooted problem of lack of learning provision in museums and galleries (as well as libraries and archives), rather than removed it. Every individual member of the public is entitled to expect accessible, high quality and appropriate learning experiences and support from any publicly funded museum or gallery. Our society, for social, economic and other reasons, also needs such provision, yet the infrastructure required of staff with the necessary skills in public learning, facilities and resources at a local, regional and national level is not yet in place. It will be one of the most important tasks of MLAC over the next decade to lead the sector in achieving this.

An example of an area where the MLAC's leadership will be needed is audience research. It has been noted earlier in this report that no single institution has been prepared to undertake the generic and long-term research that would benefit every museum. This report has therefore proposed that an independent committee should be created to develop an agenda and programme for research on museum learning. MLAC could support this initiative by developing guidelines on good practice in educational research, evaluation and comparative studies. In addition MLAC should itself commission research. To do this effectively, the Commission will need expert advice on museum learning if it is to identify funding sources, assess research proposals and evaluate the significance of the results.

The museum, library and archives sectors also need representation at a national level in their contacts with other sectors with responsibility for public learning, including the broadcasting media as well as the education sector. The museum sector has already established contacts with QCA, OFSTED and TTA, and could extend these discussions to identify how teachers and other educators in all sectors can be helped to make effective use of museums, possibly through the development of open and distance-learning resources.

Both the museum sector and the education sector need regular, reliable statistical data and qualitative surveys of formal and informal educational provision by museums. The MGC's decision, referred to above, to include regular in-depth surveys through the Digest of Museum Statistics (DOMUS) of important museum activities such as education is, therefore, to be welcomed. These could provide regular information on education staffing, facilities, services and policies against which future provision could be compared, and would be of great value to policy makers.

The MGC's 1997 Public Services Survey addressed some of these areas, but there has been no in-depth museum education survey since that undertaken in 1994 for this report. Another full survey, undertaken under the guidance of a recognised arts education research organisation, is needed if progress is to be monitored. There is a need also for accurate national data on the use of museums by schools, colleges, families and other formal and informal audiences. National statistics on museum users can only be gathered if the museum sector begins to use a standard audience classification system, which is presently lacking and which the new Council could provide.

At present, the cultural sector is obliged to use audience classification systems - mainly those based on socio-economic groups - devised for very different purposes such as health or

employment policy. The nature and purposes of the cultural sector are different from those of other sectors, and require their own tools for analysis. In the case of museums and other cultural institutions, it is the nature and level of engagement with cultural resources and sites that needs to be measured, if issues of access and inclusion are to be addressed. Development of a new classification system based on usage will be a complex and challenging research task, but the benefits in terms of public policy for the whole cultural sector could be very considerable. So far as can be ascertained there is no model for such a classification system elsewhere in the world.

A key function of MLAC will be setting and monitoring standards. The publication in 1996 of the MGC's *Guidelines* on museum education for the first time provided museums with a basic framework of good practice, but these proposals have advisory status only. The MGC Registration Scheme is used by many grant-making bodies inside and outside museums as an indication that an applicant has achieved professional standards in certain aspects of museum practice, but it does not at present include a requirement for educational provision. The creation of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will provide an opportunity for the sector to make the establishment of education standards for libraries and archives as well as museums an urgent priority.

The lack of such benchmarks is one of the reasons why standards in museum education are so variable. Governing bodies, local and central Government, trusts and foundations currently have no independent measure of the performance of the museums they fund in an area which many of them believe should be a priority for expenditure.

Work is now underway in a number of countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada, to develop more sophisticated methods of setting standards for education and other public services. In the United States, the American Association of Museums' Museum Accreditation Programme (MAP) has included standards of educational provision for a number of years. Rather than specifying requirements in terms of quantity provision (which is almost impossible, given the differences in the nature and size of museums), it mainly assesses instead the quality of the process of policy development and provision. Although initial assessment is based on documentation provided by the applicant institution, regular visits to accredited museums by trained and experienced museum professionals are an essential part of the scheme, and particularly important as a way to ensure that services on the ground achieve the standards promised on paper. This approach, which makes allowances for differences between museums, could provide a starting point for the museum sector in the United Kingdom.

There is also an urgent need for a scheme that identifies good practice for museums of all sizes and gives a ‘Museum for Learning’ Award to all that achieve it. Museums achieving this standard would be more likely to receive external funding and support; the scheme would in this way encourage and reward the achievement of high standards. MLAC, as the agency responsible for monitoring standards in museums, would be the most appropriate organisation to investigate the feasibility of this proposal.

#### **‘Museum for Learning’ Award - possible assessment criteria**

An award scheme for all museums which achieve high standards of educational provision would require clear criteria applicable to a wide range of institutions. The following criteria could be considered for such an award:

- full implementation of the MGC’s *Guidelines* on museum education;
- regular evaluation of the educational effectiveness of galleries, education programmes and other public services;
- active, long-term involvement of a museum education specialist (either freelance or a member of staff) in the strategic development and delivery of educational provision across the institution;
- a minimum level of provision from a wide range of options, as appropriate to the size and resources of the institution;
- regular research on the learning needs of users and potential users, and regular consultations with these groups regarding the museum’s educational provision;
- implementation of an access policy for the institution; and
- regular monitoring of continued achievement of the necessary standard, to ensure continued implementation of the above.

The DfEE in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in consultation with relevant agencies, have already set national targets for the formal education and training sectors. MLAC, on behalf of the museum sector, could also set appropriate targets for the development of museum education, based on strategic goals defined by the DCMS and the devolved administrations as these are developed.

The initiatives proposed here cannot be achieved without a proper infrastructure or additional resources. It is also important that MLAC should set an example of good practice to the rest of the museum sector. If MLAC is to undertake a leadership role in museum education, it needs a

full-time museum education specialist at a senior level, with support staff, to coordinate policies, programmes and research. The Council may also wish to consider the creation of an education advisory committee to help it in this work in the first few years.

#### **Possible national targets for museum and gallery education**

MLAC might set and monitor the following targets to be achieved by the year 2002.

These could address, for example:

- the development of digital technology links between the museum and education sectors;
- the establishment of a basic standard of public educational provision in all Registered museums in the UK;
- the development and implementation of a standard audience classification system to be used by the sector, and collection of data based upon it;
- the establishment, in collaboration with AMCs, of a museum education post in each museum or group of museums;
- the establishment of a range of audience targets or outcomes for the sector, including increased participation of specified groups currently under-represented among museum users (possibly defined by age group, ethnic background, disability, level of formal education attainment, employment status); and
- in-service training in museum and gallery learning, including digital learning, for a given percentage of museum staff.

#### **GEM and ENGAGE**

The Group for Education in Museums (GEM) and the National Association for Gallery Education (ENGAGE) are the professional associations for museum and gallery educators, and can act as agents for change. Both provide active training, networking and support for their members. Through their conferences, study days, publications and other activities, they provide guidance and support for individual members. The two organisations are well placed to take a leading role in setting the future educational agenda for museum professionals. ENGAGE in particular has been successful in bringing the potential of museums and galleries for learning to public attention over the last few years. Its annual Gallery Week now involves over 400 institutions nationwide.

There is considerable potential for further collaboration between ENGAGE and GEM at both

a regional and national level across a wide range of activities, from research to joint lobbying on issues relevant to their members. However, both organisations are under pressure to cope with the demands of a rapidly growing field of professional work, and without additional resources may be hard-pressed to meet these needs.

### **National museums**

National museums in the United Kingdom have had no clearly defined national responsibilities with reference to museum education. The National Museums and Galleries of Wales was the only national museum service in the past to have provided, through its loan service, a direct service to the whole of its country. The national museums of Scotland and Northern Ireland have also fulfilled a significant pastoral role; for the most part national museums in England have not done so in the field of museum education.

While there is as much, if not more, innovative and high quality educational work being done by local and major regional museums as by the national museums, the status and resources of national museums place upon them particular responsibilities for the educational development of the subject or disciplines they represent within the museum sector. In doing so, they should work closely with the AMCs. In accordance with the Government's wish to see national museums establish closer and more supportive relationships with other museums, national museums could initiate joint projects with regional partners (such as the Victoria and Albert Museum has established with museums in Sheffield), and could also provide advice, training and opportunities for staff of other museums.

Such support might include helping museums currently without education staff or services to develop educational provision; organising conferences; running regional courses and events; and producing publications which disseminate good practice. National museums should also be at the forefront of new initiatives in practitioner research in museum learning. They should use their easier access to sponsors to create projects which involve and benefit other museums at a regional and national level. In addition, the development of media technologies provides new opportunities for national museums to undertake a truly national role, as the Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network (SCRAN) project in Scotland has already demonstrated.

## Investment

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**Target 11:** To commit the resources that are required for growth

Financial investment by museums is repaid twice over: by the public which invests its time and expertise in museums as resources for learning, and often also by sponsors and other external funding bodies, who support the educational purpose of museums. A museum's financial investment is thus a catalyst for a far wider social investment in personal learning and cultural development, which is largely invisible as a return in a museum's financial accounts, but which brings almost immeasurable benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

'Culture, in the general sense of the lifestyle of a community, is performed and exists only in performance, no less than does culture in the limited sense of the arts. Cultures are products of human individuation, and they are reinterpreted, translated, by every individual and every generation. Cultural variety does not have to be nurtured: it is an inevitable outcome of human sociability and creativity. What does have to be cultivated is an environment in which people can grow and interact.'

*John Blacking, ethnomusicologist, 1990*

The lack of investment by a majority of museums in provision for public learning therefore represents a substantial opportunity lost to these institutions and society. Even those museums that make provision for education allocate on average less than 5% of their total net revenue expenditure directly on this. An optimistic average for the sector as a whole would be 2½% (approximately £12.5 million per annum on museum education throughout the United Kingdom, or 25 pence per adult or child). The fall between 1991-92 and 1993-94 of 5% in expenditure on education as a proportion of total museum expenditure, identified in the first questionnaire survey, is also a cause for serious concern, although this decline may have been halted in response to recent changes in Government policy.

Responsibility for ensuring that educational provision, as a core museum function, is funded as fully and comprehensively as other core functions lies unequivocally with each museum and its governing body. It is a responsibility, it seems, that not all museums are willing to accept. Two factors in recent decades have encouraged them to believe that education was not their responsibility but that of some outside agency. One was the long-standing arrangement

whereby museum education posts were funded by education authorities (an arrangement which also distorted the balance of museum education services towards schools, and thereby led to the neglect of the learning needs of other audiences). The recent reorganisation of local government has led to the closure of some of the country's most important education services, and highlighted the risks for museums of relying on external funding for core educational provision.

The second factor that has undermined education's status as a core function is the increasing dependence of museum education services on generated income and sponsorship. The principle of a mixed economy for funding is well established in many museums and can be highly effective when properly applied. It works best when the institution makes an absolute commitment to core funding of museum education, as a guarantee to potential partners that educational development is part of the institution's long-term strategy. But in museums which lack commitment to education, education services are being asked to become nearly or completely self-financing. Comprehensive educational provision in museums cannot be funded on this basis. Several services have now closed because they could not achieve this inappropriate target, and a number of others are under threat. It is a reality of public funding that museums face financial constraints but, equally, museums which do not themselves make a long-term commitment to education should not expect others to do so. The mixed economy model works precisely by enrichment of each partner by the other.

The development of museum education depends for its success upon individual museums showing commitment and enterprise in obtaining funding, but museums, with their existing limited resources of staff skills and funding, cannot achieve this alone. They need resources from AMCs and MLAC if they are to train their staff, conduct research on public learning needs, introduce new programmes and services, improve standards, and establish specialist education posts to guide their development as educational institutions. MLAC and AMCs can only provide this help if they, too, have the resources they need to create an infrastructure of support. This, in turn, requires a major strategic investment at a national and regional level.

At present, responsibility for funding museums and, therefore, development of museum education is divided between a number of Government departments and agencies including, among others, DCMS, the devolved administrations, the Ministry of Defence, MLAC and the Lottery distributing bodies. One consequence of this, highlighted earlier in this report, is that there is no clear relationship between the funding of museums and the services (or lack of



them) which those museums provide to schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions, as well as to the wider public, on the other.

### **The Lottery and museum learning**

The creation of the Lottery distributing bodies has opened up exciting possibilities for the development of the arts in the United Kingdom. It has also prompted a national debate on funding of the arts. One of the explicit aims of the Lottery distributing bodies is to increase public access to the arts and heritage, and education is one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to achieve this. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has made the development of the educational role of museums and other heritage institutions one of their principal strategic objectives. It has also made the assessment of their educational effectiveness an important criterion when funding museum projects which are to be used by the public.

For most members of the public, education can only be enjoyable and successful if it is active, participatory and social. Galleries and other fixed facilities are an essential element in museum provision for learning, but if funding goes only to these then museums are in danger of becoming empty citadels. New galleries in themselves are not sufficient to extend public access to museums. By embracing the full range of additional educational provision that is required by the public, including programmes, services and, above all, the skills and experience of educators, the Heritage Lottery Fund has reaffirmed that education works mainly through people, not buildings. The Arts Council of England's 'Arts for Everyone' programme has supported the same principle.

The National Heritage Act 1997 was a landmark development. It provided the Heritage Lottery Fund with new powers to support projects relating to access, education and digital media, as well as widening the range of potential applicants. The Act shifted the focus away from spending exclusively on buildings and other capital projects and ensured that some money went also to people and revenue programmes.

The Act has enabled the Heritage Lottery Fund to give strategic support to the development of public learning through museums in ways that previously had not been permitted. The current low level of provision for education in many museums, highlighted in this report, has made this development both necessary and timely. It is, however, essential that Heritage Lottery funding should extend rather than replace existing posts and provision. The Heritage Lottery Fund can have a particularly important role, with others, in supporting the sector in establishing a national infrastructure for museum education. At a local level it can help to

improve standards and expand the range of educational provision, as well as opening new opportunities for educational institutions and community groups to use museums for educational purposes.

The National Lottery Act, 1998, created a sixth good cause - the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) - to support health, education and the environment. The Act enabled distributors to solicit applications, delegate decision-making and run joint schemes. It also established the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), to support and promote talent, innovation and creativity.

**The Heritage Lottery Fund.** The HLF has strengthened the educational dimension of its projects in a number of ways:

- making education a higher priority in its Main Grants Programme (for capital projects);
- putting emphasis on increasing the total volume and quality of educational activity when assessing projects with educational objectives;
- requiring details of an organisation's wider education policy and objectives for capital or revenue projects mainly intended to widen and enhance understanding, study and enjoyment of the heritage;
- establishing a new Revenue Grants Programme to widen and enhance popular access to the heritage;
- establishing a Museums and Galleries Access Fund, to support projects which are developing innovative, exciting and imaginative ways to make their collections accessible.

**The New Opportunities Fund.** Initiatives which are supported by the NOF include:

- developing a study support programme for outside school hours which complements and supports the work of teachers in the classroom;
- creating digitised content to support informal and self-directed learning by the public which should be available through the Public Library Network and the National Grid for Learning;
- supporting Community Access to Lifelong Learning through a network of centres for community learning, mainly for people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged and those with few or no formal qualifications;

- establishing a Summer Schools initiative with places for 250,000 children throughout the UK.

**The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts.** Recognising that human creativity is fast becoming the single most important factor in national prosperity and national security, NESTA will work to develop creativity in the interests of the national economy by:

- helping talented individuals to develop their full potential in the creative industries, science and technology;
- turning creativity and ideas into products and services which are effectively exploited with rights effectively protected; and
- advancing public education about, and awareness and appreciation of, the creative industries, science, technology and the new art forms, and their contribution to the quality of life.

Given the importance of a strategic approach to the development of education in museums, libraries and archives it might be appropriate for the sector led by MLAC to make a coordinated bid to one or more of the Lottery distributing bodies for funding to enable the sector to put in place the developmental infrastructure that is needed at a local, regional and national level. MLAC and AMCs will also need adequate core funding from Government to enable them to provide the leadership in museum education the sector needs.

The changes implemented by HLF have made it a positive force for educational development in the United Kingdom. There are, however, some further steps which could be taken to enhance their support for public learning. One is to fund essential research and evaluation projects which are of value to the whole sector, without requiring that they should form part of a wider eligible project. Another is to take a strategic role, through its capital and revenue funding, in the development of an infrastructure of support for museum education at a local level in the thousand or more museums which presently make little or no provision for public learning, and lack the expertise and resources to do so.

### **Private Funding**

Trusts, foundations and private sector sponsors can also, through their funding criteria, exert an influence that is far greater than their total expenditure on museums might suggest in encouraging museums to make a commitment to education. In particular, by funding innovative projects, or those which benefit the sector as a whole rather than single institutions,

these bodies can act as catalysts for change. It is to be hoped that they will use their influence to encourage museums to take a developmental approach to their educational work.

**Investment by trusts and foundations**

In October 1998, in an act of significant generosity, the Clore Foundation and the Vivien Duffield Foundation provided over £6 million for the creation of education centres at three major national museums - the British Museum, the Tate Gallery of Modern Art at Bankside and the Natural History Museum. At the same time, they launched a new £1 million Small Grants Programme to support museum and gallery education projects ranging from £2,000 to £25,000 in cost. This is only the latest in a series of strategic museum funding initiatives by these and other trusts and foundations including the Lloyds TSB, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Carnegie UK Trust and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in recent years, which have helped to transform provision for visitors in many museums and galleries across the country.

## Advocacy

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### *Target 12:* To make museums part of the life-blood of society

Museums have the potential to enrich many aspects of national life, but they can only do this if they themselves become part of the life-blood of society. For this to happen, museums need to identify their value.

Education is an intrinsic responsibility of museums. It also brings many direct instrumental benefits. However, this report has found that many in the museum profession are not fully aware of these benefits, both to their own institutions or to society. Although there have been a number of recent studies on the contribution of museums, and the arts in general, to economic and cultural development, few of these have included serious consideration of their educational role. There seems to have been no research specifically on the wider social and economic value of learning of this kind – and what is unknown is unlikely to be supported and developed.

Research on the value of formal education from nursery level onward has demonstrated the economic benefits of investment in education. It is likely that similar studies of museum learning would also validate expenditure on economic grounds alone. Education is, however, more than investment in human capital. Other measures, qualitative as well as quantitative, are needed if research is to capture the ways in which enriched personal experience can change the lives of individuals and communities.

Studies of the value of museum learning would enable managers, governing bodies and national Government to allocate resources efficiently. Such studies are also needed by the museum sector for advocacy on behalf of museums and museum education. In the absence of existing models, a national research project, supported by case studies of institutions, is required to establish appropriate methodologies. It is clear that the results could be used by many individual museums and would be of real practical value.

In the breadth of its coverage of education in the *Museums Journal*, and the increasingly forward-looking debates at its annual conferences, as well as the development of its advisory services to members, the Museums Association (MA) has done much to create a climate within the profession that is supportive of museum education. Following publication of the first edition of this report, the Association took the lead in the museum sector in pressing for implementation of its recommendations. At its conference in September 1997, the MA passed a resolution to adopt the report as its policy; and revised its definition of a museum to give

greater emphasis to learning. The Association was also determined to promote the development of museum education, and established a Campaign for Learning through Museums, coordinated by the MA itself with the support of the Campaign for Learning, Association of Independent Museums (AIM), ENGAGE, and other museum organisations.

Further advocacy will be needed from the MA and other professional bodies if museums are to be perceived as an important part of the learning society by other educational and cultural institutions, independent policy and research bodies, and Government. Individual museums and their staff can support this process by promoting the value of museums for learning within their communities.



Trestle Theatre Company, drama and history workshop for Key Stage 2 pupils at the National Portrait Gallery.  
(Photo: Roger Hargreaves)

## Conclusions

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Museums find their voice through their educational work. Over the last decade, learning has become a central concern of Government, industry and arts organisations, and the subject of many reports. It is seen as a connective purpose which is fundamental to the development of this country in the twenty-first century, and permeates every aspect of the life of the individual. Kierkegaard wrote, 'Life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards'; and museums are places where people, through learning, can do both. A full commitment to learning has become an imperative for museums if they wish to be part of the mainstream of society.

Education in the United Kingdom is in transition from a model of predominantly state provision through formal institutions, to the broader concept of a mixed economy of formal and informal learning in which community participation, training and formal education are mutually enriching processes. The formal education sector once grew out of voluntary provision and it is likely that informal and self-directed learning, which is such an important part of the function of museums, may now do the same. Museums will make a vital contribution to this new world of personal learning

Museums, then, are only at the beginning of a process of fundamental change into proactive centres for public learning. This change will transform their image, give them a central role in cultural development and bring them, together with other cultural institutions such as libraries, to the centre of public policy.

The current separation of different kinds of institutions in the cultural and educational sectors has in the past had organisational and professional logic. However, if museums and other institutions are to meet the needs of the public, they also need to develop strong cross-sectoral links, particularly in support of education. Many museums are currently very active, within the limits of their resources, at developing local networks. Their educational efforts will be much more effective if they are coordinated in support of wider policy objectives for lifelong learning and cultural development which could provide a purpose and context for their work.

A small national investment each year would produce extraordinary results. What is required to transform the use of museums for learning and to provide access for large numbers of additional users is, in effect, the last piece of the jigsaw. Many of the necessary resources, in terms of care of the collections, the research expertise of staff and displays, are already in place,

although more investment is needed here too. Education is the logical next step. Many indicators – the increase in student numbers, the growth in resource-based learning, demand created by the National Lottery – all point towards this conclusion. These positive developments will be frustrated without sustained structural investment in resources for museum learning, and the development of an enabling environment of policy support and leadership.

Lifelong formal and informal learning can provide museums with a rationale for their work as public institutions. It remains for the museum sector and Government to decide whether learning, by staff and the public, by museums and their communities is, or is not, to be the central purpose of museums. If it is, then it should be done professionally and with commitment at all levels.

Museums are a vast public learning resource that awaits development. They are a resource we can no longer afford to neglect.



# Appendices

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## Appendix 1

### The Steering Committee, 1993 - 1997

Eileen Aird, Principal, Hillcroft College.

Sue Bennett, Professional Officer for History, National Curriculum Council/School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Valerie Bott, Deputy Director, Museums and Galleries Commission (from 1996).

The Baroness Brigstocke, Commissioner, Museums and Galleries Commission.

Neil Chalmers, Director, Natural History Museum.

Patrick Fallon, Department of National Heritage (Chairman from August 1996).

Jemima Fraser, Museum Education Officer, Glasgow Museums.

Philip Gregory, Department of National Heritage (Chairman until August 1996).

Pat Higgins, Department of Education, Northern Ireland.

Walter Jones, Head of Education (until 1995), National Museums and Galleries of Wales.

Ian Loveless, Department for Education and Employment.

Jane Middleton, Chair (from 1995), Group for Education in Museums.

Ian Miller, Welsh Office (from 1996).

Hazel Moffat, Museum and Heritage Education Consultant, formerly HMI with responsibility for museum education.

Chris Newbery, Deputy Director, Museums & Galleries Commission (until 1995); Director, Museum Training Institute (from 1995).

Emyr Roberts, Welsh Office (to 1996).

Jessica Rutherford, Head of Libraries and Museums, Director of the Royal Pavilion (Brighton and Hove).

Katrina Siliprandi, Chair (until 1995), Group for Education in Museums.

Sheela Speers, Head of Education (until 1995), Ulster Museum.

Ian Taylor, Director, North West Museums Service.

Mark Taylor, Director, Museums Association.

John Wastle, Scottish Office.

Christopher Zeuner, Director, Weald and Downland Museum.

## Appendix 2

### Recommendations from the first edition of the report

***The Government is recommended to:***

1. Implement its proposals to use new media technologies to link cultural and educational institutions.
2. Ask public bodies with responsibility for curricula and assessment to encourage every school, through statutory definitions of the curriculum and non-statutory guidance, to make regular, effective and creative use of museums.
3. Ask school inspectors to monitor, and publish regular statistical reports on, schools' use of museums.
4. Review, and if possible extend, the role of AMCs in development of museum education.
5. In consultation with MLAC, identify strategic national goals for development of museum education.
6. Establish a Standing Committee on Museum Education or on education through the cultural sector.
7. Consider introducing legislation to make it a statutory requirement for local authorities throughout the United Kingdom to make adequate provision in their area for cultural activities, including museums and museum education.
8. Ensure that MLAC and AMCs are adequately funded to enable them to extend their leadership role in development of museum education.

***The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (then the Museums and Galleries Commission) is recommended to:***

9. Develop guidelines for museum staff on good practice in research, evaluation and comparative studies on public learning in museums.
10. With the Arts Council, investigate the potential for open and distance-learning providers to produce and disseminate distance-learning packages for educators in all sectors, and to establish national training initiatives, on the educational use of museums, art galleries and sites.

11. Investigate, in collaboration with interested public bodies and relevant professional associations, how training resources and courses on the educational use of museums can be provided for teachers in further, higher and adult education as well as for youth, arts and community educators.
12. In consultation with AMCs, investigate the feasibility of establishing selected museums throughout the United Kingdom as centres of excellence in museum education.
13. Implement the proposals in *Treasures in Trust* for development of museum education.
14. Set national targets for development of museum education.
15. Establish standards of provision for education through the publication and promotion of guidelines (and where possible, through the Registration Scheme), then monitor the achievement of these standards.
16. Develop a full policy and plan for education within the framework of its business plan. For this it needs a senior full-time museum educator with support staff to enable it to fulfil its educational responsibilities.
17. Consider creating a 'Museum for Learning' Award scheme that would give recognition to museums that achieve high standards, including the requirements of the MGC's *Guidelines* on museum education.
18. Commission research on the social and economic value of museum learning to individuals, communities and society as a whole.
19. Establish an independent museum learning research committee to develop a national research agenda and provide guidance on development of museum learning research.

***The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (then the Museum Training Institute) is recommended to:***

20. Review its standards of competence and qualifications. Take into account the requirements of both specialist educators and other staff in museums, and include a unit or units on education in the mandatory framework of all museum qualifications.

***Museum Documentation Association is recommended to:***

21. In collaboration with CHNTO, develop guidelines and training programmes on good practice in the production of educational digital media programmes based on museum resources.
22. Set up a digital media learning group to exchange information, run demonstrations and conferences, and provide advice for museums and staff who want to develop digital media learning resources.

***The Teacher Training Agency and other public bodies with responsibility for teacher training are recommended to:***

23. Consider, when developing a framework of standards for teacher training, conducting research on the training of teachers in the use of museums; including these competencies in its criteria for accreditation of institutions to run teacher training courses; and ensuring that all teachers have access to in-service training and advanced qualifications in these skills.

***The Office for Standards in Education in England, Her Majesty's Inspectors in Scotland and Wales and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland are recommended to:***

24. Enhance the training of inspectors to enable them to monitor and report on the use of museums by school and initial teacher training institutions.

***The National Heritage Memorial Fund is recommended to:***

25. In collaboration with MLAC and the MDA, consider funding a limited number of flagship projects on digital media learning from museum resources.
26. With other Lottery distributing bodies, consult with relevant bodies including MLAC, the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the Museums Association (MA), to identify how National Lottery funding might better support the development of public learning in museums at a local and a national level.

***Area Museum Councils are recommended to:***

27. Develop and implement a policy and plan for education, and appoint specialist education advisory staff to improve provision of museum education in their areas.
28. In consultation with MLAC and CHNTO, provide advice, establish long-term training programmes on museum education for their members, and establish a new programme

of grants to enhance the range and quality of educational provision in member museums.

***The Museums Association is recommended to:***

29. Adopt a new definition of a museum which is more inclusive of the public.

***Local Authorities are recommended to:***

30. Undertake for their areas a review of public need and provision for lifelong learning through museums and other organisations, enable the development of a plan for such learning, and monitor its development, at least once every three years.

***National Museums are recommended to:***

31. Develop their role as centres for research and good practice in museum education, and support the development of museum education throughout the sector.

***ENGAGE and GEM are recommended to:***

32. Consider establishing additional arrangements for consultation and collaboration.

***Higher Education Institutions are recommended to:***

33. Establish a centre or centres to encourage and enable research, teaching and development in museum education.
34. Include museum education as a core element in museum studies courses.

***Museum staff are recommended to:***

35. Seek guidance if they are museum educators new to the profession from experienced practitioners; these in turn should develop their knowledge and skills through secondments, exchanges, study leave, peer reviews and involvement in professional associations and networks.
36. Adopt the MA's scheme for Continuing Professional Development.

***Trusts, Foundations and Sponsors are recommended to:***

37. Encourage museums to adopt good practice in their educational work.

***The MA, AIM, GEM and ENGAGE, as well as individual museums, are recommended to:***

38. Promote the value of museums as educational institutions to Government, public bodies, funding bodies and other organisations inside and outside the museum sector.

***Individual Museums are recommended to:***

39. Implement the MGC's *Guidelines* on museum education in full.
40. Through their directors and governing bodies, ensure that education is central to their missions, policies and strategic plans, and is accepted by all staff as a core function of the museum.
41. Through their governing body, have a commitment to and responsibility for the strategic development of education.
42. Accommodate a diversity of learning needs in the design and operation of their galleries.
43. Use their education programmes as instruments of change to develop new audiences, and enhance the capabilities and enjoyment of the public.
44. Encourage and help the public to use their resources for self-directed learning and provide services and facilities to enable them to do so.
45. Use skilled outside specialists of all kinds to enhance the public's experience of the museum.
46. Develop the potential for using new media technologies to enhance their educational provision.
47. Aim to have one (or more) comfortable, well-equipped space(s) for use in a variety of formal and informal educational activities.
48. Employ a specialist museum educator, alone or with a group of other museums, to guide and develop its educational work.
49. Adopt a staff training and development policy, and ensure that all staff who provide services for the public have the appropriate training and experience to equip them for it.
50. Make educational research and evaluation a high priority, and encourage their staff to make it an integral part of all projects for the public.
51. Make greater use of comparative education studies when undertaking new project for the public.

52. Identify their audiences and direct educational provision to target groups, taking account of the needs of people for learning throughout life.
53. Research the learning needs of their own current and potential users.
54. Make a sustained long-term commitment to work with their communities.
55. Explore the potential for development of educational services for industry.
56. Develop closer contacts with the child, youth, further, higher and adult education sectors.
57. Enhance access to their educational resources by taking active steps to identify and overcome barriers in their policies and provision.
58. Provide their public with varied education opportunities for active participation and progression in learning skills, in and beyond the institution.
59. Seek to provide opportunities for educators from other sectors to participate in their activities, and consider establishing and funding local fellowships for teachers and lecturers.
60. Seek opportunities for educational partnerships with other agencies and institutions.
61. Make a long-term commitment, through their governing bodies, of core funds to support educational provision.
62. With AMCs, assess the need for, and provide if required, training courses for specialist, freelance and non-specialist museum education staff.

## Appendix 3

### Colloquia held for the report in 1995

1. **Identifying the economic and other value of museum education**, held at the University of Leicester, Department of Museum Studies, on 26 May 1995. Key presenters: Kevin Thompson, Dartington College of Arts; Peter Johnson and Barry Thomas, University of Durham.
2. **The significance of developments in new media technologies for museum learning**, held at the North of England Museums Service, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on 3 June 1995. Key presenter: Tim Benton, Open University.
3. **Developing learning research in the museum sector**, held at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, on 12 June 1995. Key presenters: Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, University of Leicester; Lynn Dierking, Science Learning Inc, USA; Annie Storr, Smithsonian Institution, USA.
4. **Managing museums for learning**, held at St Mungo's Museum, Glasgow, on 19 June 1995. Key presenter: Patrick Greene, Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.
5. **Britain and abroad: examples and opportunities**, held at the South Eastern Museums Service, London, on 23 June 1995. Key presenter: Tim Ambrose, City University, London.
6. **Adult non-formal learning through museums**, held at Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry, on 10 July 1995. Key presenter: Lalage Bown, University of Warwick.
7. **Maximising provision of education services in the context of resource constraints: the role of other museum specialists in the development of museum education**, held at the Area Museum Council for the South West, Taunton, on 17 July 1995. Key presenters: Sue Wilkinson, South Eastern Museums Education Unit, and Caroline Dudley, Royal Cornwall Museum.
8. **Museums and their communities: integrating educational opportunities**, held at the Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council, Leeds, on 19 July 1995. Key presenter: Hazel Moffat, Museum and Heritage Education Consultant.



9. **Families and children in museums**, held at the Museum of the Science and Industry in Manchester, on 25 July 1995. Key presenters: Gillian Thomas, Science Museum, London, and Lesley Abbott, Manchester Metropolitan University.
10. **Museum education in Scotland**, held at the City Art Gallery, Edinburgh, on 28 August 1995. Chair: Ronnie Cramond; key presenters: Graham Watson, Highland Council, Andrew Hill, Aberdeenshire Heritage and Chris McElroy, Scottish Office Education Department.
11. **Museum education in Northern Ireland**, held at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Holywood, on 18 September 1995. Chair: Ruth Jarman, Queen's University, Belfast.
12. **The contribution of museums in the development of schools' learning**, held at the Museum of Welsh Life, Cardiff, on 22 September 1995. Key presenter: John Reeve, British Museum.
13. **Museum education in Wales**, held at the Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, on 6 October 1995. Chair: Walter Jones, formerly National Museums and Galleries of Wales.
14. **Museums and higher education**, held at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, on 1 December 1995. Key presenter: Christopher Frayling, Royal College of Art.

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