BULLETIN of the European Museum Forum

January 2002

EMYA in Luxembourg, 8-11 May 2002 *Registration forms are now available and can be obtained from the Administrator.*

The European Museum Forum celebrates 25 years 2002 is a notable milestone in the history of the European Museum Forum. It is now 25 years since a group of people led by Kenneth Hudson came up with the idea of an award that would recognise excellence in museums throughout Europe. From this initiative has now developed an organisation that spans the length and breadth of Europe. In fact, the scope of our activity has grown geographically and in terms of the activities organised by the European Museum Forum. As more and more countries have signed the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe, under whose auspices we operate, so an increasing number of museums have been able to enter the award competition. This year, for example, we welcomed our first candidates from Bosnia, Bulgaria and the Ukraine. The Annual Awards Meeting has become one of the liveliest occasions on the museums scene, and the Workshop is now a powerhouse of ideas. Welcome to EMF's 25th year! **Patrick Greene, Chairman**

The 2003 European Museum of the Year Award application forms **are available from the Administrator. The closing date is 31 March 2002 and applications are invited from newly opened museums, or from older museums which have undergone extensive renovation or have moved to a new building.**

National Museums in England go free Free entry to all the museums funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport was achieved at the beginning of December 2001. Additional funding has been provided by the ministry to substitute for the income from ticket sales by those museums that had a charge. The museums that were already free, such as the Tate art galleries, the National Gallery and the British Museum do not get any extra revenue from the government - a fact that is causing complaints. The BM has been particularly vociferous as it comes at a time when its own finances are in trouble. A loss of £5 million faces the museum, which has announced 150 redundancies and the partial closure of galleries.

Visitor numbers at the museums that have gone free have shown spectacular increases, none more so than at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the move coincided with the opening of the new British Galleries that have been developed at a cost of over £30 million. Other big increases have been experienced by the Science Museum, including its branch in York - the National Railway Museum, winner of the 2001 European Museum of the Year Award - and the Natural History Museum. The first six weeks of free entry at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (which I direct) resulted in an increase of 110% compared with a year ago. Evidence from Wales and Scotland, where the national museums introduced free entry in April 2001, shows that the effect on visitor numbers has continued well beyond the initial publicity.

It is not all good news, however. According to a report in the *Museums Journal* (January 2002) local authority museums in Wales say that they have been losing visitors to the nationals since the latter became free last April. Some local authorities there have now instituted a free admissions policy in their museums as well. Independent museums, which rely on charges for admission, are complaining that a subsidy for the nationals constitutes unfair competition. **Patrick Greene**

Louvre 'is a shambles' *The Louvre is an administrative shambles, according to a report by France's court of auditors. Funds are said to be short, security measures to protect the priceless pieces in the museum – among them the Mona Lisa – inadequate, and the working culture such that some staff are there for as little as a third of the year. In the information service, the 200 staff take a 30-minute break for every 30 minutes they work. Most of the 1,800 employees are civil servants, so that the management has no powers to discipline, promote or transfer them.* ***Report in the Daily Telegraph (18/01/02)***

The New Europeans – an exhibition of satire **Riksutställningar and the Museum of Work in Norrköping have prepared an exhibition of satirical drawings entitled 'The New Europeans'. The 60 drawings from 18 member countries cover the period 1990-2000 and deal with the concept of Europe and the formation of the European Union. The exhibition is contained in a cube of 15 m² and will tour Swedish museums in the Spring. A European tour is in preparation.** **Contact Inger Jansson, tel 0046 8 691 60 34.**

Le Grand-Hornu: mining complex to Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC) Le Grand-Hornu, a neo-classical style mining complex near Mons in Belgium, was built by the French-born industrialist, Henri de Gorge (1774-1832) between 1810 and 1830. The offices of the colliery are built around two magnificent courtyards and include warehouses, stables, workshops, iron and brass foundries, coke-fired furnaces and engineers' offices. Next to the industrial complex is the De Gorge estate, the first example of industrial town planning in continental Europe, housing workers in 425 houses, each with its own garden. Later additions include a school, a library, a bath house, a dance hall and a hospital.

Henri de Gorge was very receptive to the latest advances in technology and greatly increased productivity at Grand-Hornu's mines. He took Belgian nationality and was elected a Senator in 1831, but died a year later during a cholera epidemic. In 1843 a limited company was created by his successors which was dissolved in 1950, and mining finally ceased in 1954.

In 1969 a Royal Decree ordered the demolition of Grand-Hornu, but in 1971 a local architect, Henri Guchez, bought the ruined complex and began the task of restoration, installing his offices in some of the buildings and using others for exhibitions and conferences. The Province of Hainaut took over ownership of Grand-Hornu in 1989, when the idea of establishing a Museum of Contemporary Art was first proposed.

With the support of the French Community, the Walloon Region and the European Union, the plans were given the green light. After three years' intensive work they are nearing fruition, thanks to the determination, perseverance and professional expertise of three people - Laurent Busine (for 20 years director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Charleroi) and currently artistic director of MAC; Chantal Dassonville, who has been responsible for the infrastructure; and Pierre Hebbelinck, architect and the brains behind the concept. The museum's opening is scheduled for 13 September 2002 and the aim is to hold three or four high-quality exhibitions a year. Associations have already been established for young people and for those who live in the region, and collaborations initiated with other institutions in the area as well as other European

museums. Restoration work on the enormous site is likely to continue for many years. **Danièle van den Abeelen, EMF National Correspondent**

Dreamers of Dreams *For nearly two years museum experts in Hungary have been waiting with eager anticipation for the opening of a spectacular exhibition entitled 'Dreamers of Dreams – world scale Hungarians'. The occasion was the millennium of the Hungarian State, and the intention of the organisers of the exhibition was to show the contributions made to human civilisation by their fellow countrymen and women. Many museums were invited to lend material, although the majority of the exhibition consists of texts and photographs of eminent people, past and present, with various interactive devices. You would be surprised – as we Hungarians were – at the number of explorations, achievements, improvements and inventions have Hungarian connections, from the biro pen and the atomic bomb to the Rubik cube, not to mention important contributions to poetry, music, film, art and sport.*

Some may think it a strange combination, museum objects on sort of image-expo. But think of the role of the Greek Muses. The venue is fascinating: an old factory, the Ganz Works for heavy machinery, was transformed into a modern city park – a lake, trees, orchards, even grapes, a playground, a stage for open-air performances, a theatre, meeting points, cafeteria and exhibition buildings. The exhibition will be open at least until the end of 2002, so if you happen to come to Budapest, do not miss it – together with a Hungarian-speaking friend! ***Tamás Vásárhelyi, Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest and EMF National Correspondent***

Leventis Museum to double in size **The 1991 EMYA winner, The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, has just purchased the adjoining building and small 19th-century house and plans to convert it for additional and much-needed exhibition galleries. When work is completed in two years' time it is hoped the museum will become a large complex for cultural activities in Cyprus.**

Differences between audiences of small and large museums: a survey in the Netherlands *Under the auspices of the Dutch Museums Association (NMV), a survey was carried out to find out details of small museums' audiences. Some of the interesting results included:*

- *The average level of education of the audience of small museums is lower than of large museums (45% versus 60% higher education or university).*

- *Small museums attract more senior citizens than large ones (20% versus 15%).*

- *Small museums have 50% of their visitors from their own region, large museums attract 75% from further away.*

- *The most interesting conclusion of the survey: small museums have a significantly higher score when it comes to customer friendliness than large museums.*

Of course, most of these conclusions are not really so surprising, but it is interesting to get some real facts about what common sense already suspects. Small museums

have the flexibility that goes with their size and the customer orientation that they need in order to survive. This makes them ideal nurseries for new ideas, as an EMF workshop two years ago has already concluded. ***Frans Ellenbroek, Brabant Natural History Museum, Tilburg and EMF National Correspondent***

Romanies in Sweden **According to the Steering Group for the planning of a National Romany Museum in Malmö, it is time that Swedish museums got to grips with difficult subjects, such as discrimination, repression and prejudice. Their reaction was prompted by an article in the journal *Illustrated Science*, which described gypsies as 'free, colourful and pretty devilish'.**

Shattering a Myth – The Wehrmacht Exhibition in the Kunst-Werke Berlin e.V.
An old man looks at a photograph of civilians shot dead by German Wehrmacht soldiers with tears in his eyes. 'My father was a soldier in Russia at the time. he never talked about it and I never dared to ask him about it'. Suppressing, simplifying and banning the subject was characteristic of the way post-war German society dealt with the crimes committed by the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. Despite undeniable research findings to the contrary, the myth of the 'untouchable' Wehrmacht has still not disappeared from collective consciousness. Now the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung) has made a successful attempt to demystify the matter with the exhibition, 'Crimes of the Wehrmacht. Dimensions of the War of Extermination, 1941-1944'.

Background: The detection of incorrect captions marked the beginning of the end of the first Wehrmacht exhibition set up by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. Loud accusations were made, pointing out manipulation and generalisation. Mounting criticism benefited the members of the old school, even though historical research supported the exhibition's thesis that the Wehrmacht actively and passively participated in crimes against non-Jewish civilians as well as participating in the elimination of Jews in eastern and south-east Europe. Jan Philipp Reemtsma, the Institute's head, applied the emergency brake and closed the exhibition temporarily. A commission of experts recommended a revised, or better, an entirely new concept. Up to this point the Wehrmacht exhibition had been drawing huge crowds. More than 800,000 people had been to see the exhibition between 1995 and 1999. At the same time it initiated widespread public dispute, so much so that it was even discussed in two debates in the lower house of the German Parliament.

Concept: Speaker Ulrike Jureit organised a team of 16 historians, aged between 30 and 40, to redesign the exhibition. Its current 1,000 m² is double the size of the previous exhibition area. The all-white rooms give an objective, almost cold feel. Experience showed in the initial exhibition that a factual, scientific accuracy was necessary in order to deal with this sensitive subject: the photos and the textual documentation left no one unmoved and therefore needed no additional dramatising effect. The new concept takes the visitor on a tour on three levels. In contrast to the previous exhibition, the objects are no longer grouped by theatres of war, but by systematic points of view – War and Law, Genocide, Prisoners of War, Deportation, The War for Food, Partisan Warfare. It now does completely without the power of photos, without staging or provocative elements. The new exhibition subtly differentiates and accurately names the source – photos always have detailed explanations. The large number of texts might overwhelm visitors and they may need

more time to get into the subject. In glass showcases with seats one can read folders stating the source, and put on headphones to hear original soundtracks of, for instance, eyewitness accounts on atrocities. Additional texts can be read on computer screens by clicking the mouse. At the end of the tour the visitor comes to a room entitled 'Room for Manoeuvre', showing by means of case studies that the war of extermination, for example the mass murder of Jews under the pretext of partisan warfare, had not been an abstract war system, but the result of individual human acts. In October 1941 a battalion commander ordered three company officers to shoot all the Jewish inhabitants in their region, under the pretext that they were partisans. The first officer carried out the command without hesitation. The second asked for written confirmation of the order, because he feared a reprimand, and then shot the Jews. The third officer refused to execute the order because he did not see any connection between the partisans and the Jews. His refusal had almost no consequence – he was judged as being 'too soft'.

Response: Around 31,000 visitors, including many older people, have visited the exhibition since November 2001. Because of its enormous success the exhibition will stay open to the public until midnight for the final two days. Again there were protests from people whose views will not change. The National-Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland) demonstrated near the exhibition building, which is only one street away from the Jewish synagogue. As a silent protest a particularly large number of visitors came to the exhibition that day, so that about 250 people had to wait outside in the cold before they could get in. Hans Mommsen, an internationally renowned National Socialism historian, attempted a connection to the present in his speech during the opening ceremony. He recognised that the Wehrmacht exhibition is also meant to be a warning to us all. In every war lies the danger that the rights of the people are sacrificed for 'necessary' military actions. **Elke Jahnke/Joachim Kallinich, Museum für Kommunikation, Berlin and EMF National Correspondent**

Bruges: European City of Culture 2002 *More than 70,000 reservations have already been made for the large range of events taking place this year. These include three important exhibitions: 'La Hanse: Bruges au coeur de l'Europe Hanséatique'; 'Jan Van Eyck et le Sud' and 'Le vaste Monde à livre ouvert'.*

Many other events are planned, including an international artistic 'happening' for young people. On 20 February 2002 a brand new concert building dedicated entirely to music and musical history will be opened, in a building backing onto the historical area of the city. It includes a 'lantern tower' from where there are excellent views of the city and the Low Countries. Further information from www.brugge2002.be

Christina Hallman new director of Sweden's Museum of Natural History **In August 2001 the former director of the Museum of Natural History, Desirée Edmar, resigned in protest because the Swedish Government would not act to solve the problem of space for the museum's collections. They are housed in inadequate premises which are not fireproof. The museum wants to build new storage rooms in the rock grounds of the museum.**

The Government has now appointed Christina Hallman, since 1997 director general of Stockholm's Riksutställningar/Swedish Travelling Exhibitions, to take up her new position on 1 March 2002. The museum has also been granted extra

money for the housing of the collections. The museum is one of the three most popular in the Swedish capital, although with a drop of visitors in 2001. The most visited museums are Skansen and Vasa. **Stella Westerlund, Riksutställningar/Swedish Travelling Exhibitions and EMF national correspondent**

Museo Vivo opens in Naples This science centre, housed in an industrial building c.1850, is the first stage of the Città della Scienza complex in the city and presents the history of scientific discoveries and the evolution of scientific thinking. Updated interactive maps and a series of events and demonstrations are supplemented by BIT, a virtual guide which talks to the visitor. Sections include the Science Gym; Signs, Symbols and Signals; a Children's Workshop and a Planetarium. A large space is set aside for temporary exhibitions, the current one being 'Package', which claims to be the first in Italy to present the challenge of combining sophisticated scientific requirements relating to the preservation of goods, with functional demands related to transport and with critical aesthetic features to turn a product into a market success. Further information from Anne-Marie Bruyas, bruyas@cittadellascienza.it, www.cittadellascienza.it **From ECSITE, Winter 2001**

200th Anniversary of Hungarian Museums *In 1802 Count Ferenc Széchényi donated a 15,000-item library, including documents, drawings, maps and coins, to the nation. This formed the foundation of the national collection of Hungary, because the treasuries of the Hungarian kings, who were at the same time the Habsburg Kaisers, ended up in the State museums of Vienna. Many intellectuals and rich citizens followed Széchényi's noble example. The official language of the country was Latin, and during the Austro-Hungarian period it was German. There was no bourgeoisie, or much industrial or economic development. After the Enlightenment the Hungarian language was improved, national institutions were set up, roads and railways established, public and private buildings constructed, civil scientific societies and the Academy of Sciences founded.*

This development continued until the 1848 revolution and the war against the Habsburgs, which Hungary lost, causing a depression which lasted for a long decade. The last part of the 19th century saw great developments in the country as well as in its museums. The collections of the National Museum grew enormously and some developed into separate museums – the Museum of Fine Arts, Ethnography, Natural History. By 2002 there are more than 1,000 museums and exhibition sites in Hungary, and a series of events is planned to celebrate the two centuries of Hungarian museums. ***Tamás Vásárhelyi***

Elisabet Olofsson: the only north European member of ICOM's new Executive Council Elisabet Olofsson has worked for more than 10 years as co-ordinator of SAMP, the Swedish-African Programme funded by Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). SAMP is the very successful programme of twinship activities in African and Swedish museums. As EMF Committee member, Ulla Keding Olofsson, president of the Swedish ICOM Committee 1986-92, and one of SAMP's initiators, described it in 1992: 'The Swedish African Museum Programme is an exchange programme, not an aid programme. The goal is that the contacts that are established and the projects that are initiated shall operate via direct contacts between the museums concerned in each country.' Museums in 20 African countries are taking part in activities organised by SAMP. A current example is a joint Marketing Plan Project with Kulturen Museum, Lund, Sweden, and Swaziland

National Museum. Through workshops, led by a consultant, in Swaziland and Sweden, the project team members will acquire knowledge and basic skills in marketing research methods and analysis to enable them to develop marketing strategies. The book, 'Cultural Adventures/Une aventure culturelle', sums up SAMP – ten years of Swedish-African museum exchanges, and can be ordered free of charge from samp@sampmus.org or www.sampmus.org **Stella Westerlund**

Thorough advice or expensive hot air? *In the December 2001 issue of* Museumvisie, *Homme Siebenga writes: The influence of organisation-consultancies in the museum world has met with explosive growth in the last 15 years. However, do the external experts also deliver quality for their money and are museums themselves capable of robustly pulling the strings?*

Cees van 't Veen is director of two museums in Leeuwarden. His advice to museums is a critical stand towards the agencies, because they sometimes charge fees that are far too high and do not deliver sufficient quality.

Rik Vos is director of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage. He warns against consultants who put on paper too rosy pictures of the future. According to him, the museums themselves are to be blamed for that, because they are often incapable of providing adequate guidelines for the agencies. Museum advisor Pim Witteveen's opinion is that consultancies often earn their high fees too easily by turning to him for advice.

Hein Reedijk (Twynstra Gudde) thinks that, also in the future, there will still be a lot of work for consultancies, for museums will have to respond to fast changes in the behaviour of visitors. Ocker van Munster (Bureau Berenschot) foresees especially many assignments that would exceed actual museum work from the municipalities, because they want a coherent idea of the future for the whole gamut of cultural institutions.

Award for head of the Experimentarium, Copenhagen **The Danish Society for the Dissemination of Natural Science (Selskabet for Naturlaerens Udbredelse) has awarded the H C Orsted Bronze Medal to Asger Høeg, chief executive officer of the Experimentarium since April 1988. The Society acknowledges the contribution of Asger Høeg's energetic, focused efforts and activities at the Experimentarium, and his contribution in promoting the objectives formulated by H C Orsted – to disseminate knowledge about exact natural science to a broad group of the population. From ECSITE, Winter 2001**

MuseumsQuartier Wien: 18 institutions within one bandwidth A report by Albert A. J. Scheffers in *Museumvisie*, December 2001.

The new MuseumsQuartier has been accommodated in the former Imperial stables, where the winter lodgings for the famous Vienna Riding School (1720) were also established. After the end of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918 and the rise of the motorcar shortly afterwards, the Imperial stables became superfluous and they were turned into a Bourse, a function they fulfilled until some 30 years ago.

After years of public debate a cultural purpose was decided upon in 1986. The complex contains an exhibition centre, a multi-purpose auditorium, the Museum of

Modern Art, the Museum of Austrian Modern Art, a media forum, the Tobacco Museum, the Austrian Centre for Cultural Education, and a number of non-museum facilities. By making it a landmark in the middle of the classical inner city, the architect brothers Ortner linked their MuseumsQuartier with the Centre Pompidou, the Tate Modern in London and the Guggenheim in Bilbao. But public debate thwarted their original plan for a towering building.

Now that the architectural details have been realised, the organisation is concentrating on the exploitation and joint marketing of all the activities. Access to the three large museum institutions within the complex has been free of charge from the beginning and they are therefore inclined to pursue their own course. To keep those different courses within one bandwidth requires a large measure of diplomacy and therefore a lot of energy from the general director. However, bit would have been much better for all concerned if one directorate had been also in charge of the exploitation of the building complex. If it was indeed been the intention for the crowd-pulling institutions of the MuseumsQuartier to operate together, then one directorate would have worked better than each institution having a director of its own. In that case, not only marketing but also administration, personnel management, exhibition and events programming could have been co-ordinated. Close co-operation of this programming is certainly to be expected, if the complex of organisations is not to fall apart.

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EMF websites can be found at

http://www.serlachiusartmuseum.fi and then LINKS and EMF logo
http://www.hdg.de and then 'International Co-operation'
http://www.msim.org.uk and then 'I-connect'
http://www.naturalis.nl and then 'Gelieerde instellingen'
http://stars.coe.int/museum/e_index.htm

The *Bulletin*, edited by Ann Nicholls, is issued every three months, as a news supplement to the Forum's other publications. For further information on the work of the European Museum Forum, and the opportunity to become an institutional or individual member of its Association, contact

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