



Newsletter

September 2007

UKRG News is issued quarterly as a membership benefit of the UK Registrar's Group. Articles and news to be included in the newsletter are welcome from members.

Contributions should be emailed to: jules.breeze@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Copy deadlines:
Spring 1 February
Summer 1 May
Autumn 1 September
Winter 1 December

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 Don't forget you can contact the committee at <http://ukrg.org.index.php>

A call for nominations

by Jules Breeze,
Newsletter Editor

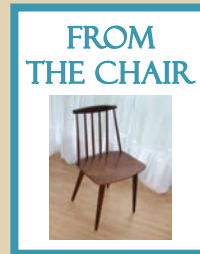
THE NIGHTS are drawing in, but don't despair – you have the new edition of the newsletter to read. It carries details of the next UKRG event, to be held in conjunction with the AGM on Tuesday 19 October at the Clore Gallery, Tate Britain. And there is a report on the very successful Summer Event in Cardiff.

A number of committee posts fall vacant this year. We are seeking nominations from members for the following posts: Chair, Secretary, Web Officer, Membership Secretary and one of the two Events Secretaries' posts. We are also seeking a Supporting Member of the Committee.

Please send your nominations to the Secretary Catherine Clement by email to catherine.clement@tate.org.uk by Monday 1 October, ensuring that the person you put forward has agreed to stand! You may nominate yourself, but all self-nominations should be seconded.

Voting forms will be sent to all members, along with a job description for each of the vacant posts, on Tuesday 2 October. These must be completed and returned by Monday 15 October.

Finally, I would like to remind you that seven travel bursaries are still available for the forthcoming RC-AAM Chicago conference in November. To apply for a bursary, contact Treasurer Varshali Patel on varshali_patel@birmingham.gov.uk. Awards will be made on a first come, first served basis. Bursaries can be applied for retrospectively.



by Stephen Dunn,
Chair, UKRG

IT IS HOPED that Hillary Bauer will be able to give a quick update on Immunity from seizure, and indemnity's 'war risk' and 'negligence' clauses at the AGM.

Encouragingly, the auguries, when we last spoke, could be favourable. Another good reason to come to the AGM.

OCTOBER EVENT AND AGM EMERGING MARKETS, BROADENING HORIZONS

19 October 2007, The Clore Auditorium,
The Clore Gallery at Tate Britain

Our next event, to be held in conjunction with the AGM, will look at the increasing number of loans to and from regions such as China, the Middle East and South America.

In the morning will be talks from UKRG Members and Corporate Members, relating their experiences in borrowing and lending in these 'emerging markets'. After a break for the AGM, the day will end with a panel session, giving the usual opportunity to open up discussions to the floor, and offering members a chance to put their questions to one another and to our panel of experts.

Look out for an email containing further details soon!

Anne Steinberg
Events Secretary

IT'S TIME FOR A MAKEOVER

THE LOGO

The UKRG Committee is seeking ideas from members for a new design for the UKRG logo – something that is simple, stylish and reflects what UKRG stands for. We welcome your suggestions, thoughts and designs, which can be sent as either image or text to the Newsletter Editor at jules.breeze@culture.gsi.gov.uk or the Chair to stephen.dunn@tate.org.uk. To help get your creative juices going, below are some logos from our European colleagues.

A final decision on the design will be made by the Committee at the AGM on Friday 19 October – so please send your ideas before then.



THE WEBSITE

During the past few months, the Committee has been working on a new-look UKRG website with Henry Ssajjabbii, who designed and maintains the existing site. Our intention has been to update and refresh the current website and add some new features to make it more useful to members. The new developments include:

- a new design to bring the site up to date, including photos and images
- changes to the layout and site navigation, with a new-look members area
- an area to post jobs and papers from past events
- online forms, including a feedback form and a form to allow members to apply for bursaries online
- improvements to the administration area of the site to make it easier to manage

We're hoping that the changes will be complete before the AGM and look forward to hearing your feedback once the new site is up and running. We would also be interested to hear from members who have any ideas for additional features they would like to see in the newsletter or website.

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Summer event

Capital idea or major headache?

National Museums of Wales in Cardiff, Friday 27 July

The National Museums of Wales in Cardiff (pictured) was a fitting venue as the museum is undergoing a major refurbishment programme as part of its centenary, which has been supported by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The UKRG event coincided with an exhibition entitled *Industry to Impressionism*, which opened on 14 July. For the members who managed to get there early and have a look, the show focused on how Gwendolyn and Margaret Davies – two unmarried sisters who lived most of their lives in the Montgomeryshire countryside – donated the best part of their art collection to the museum, thus giving Cardiff one of the most important impressionist collections in the world.

After the floods, the sun started to shine in Cardiff and the day started off in usual UKRG style with lunch and an opportunity to network. It was great to see members from as far as Scotland and Ireland to the UKRG's first event in Wales!

The purpose of the day was to look at the ever-changing work of the Registrar and how it is now influenced by large-scale refurbishments, new buildings and collection moves, most made possible by capital funding.

The afternoon kicked off with a presentation called *The Big Flit* (a Scottish term for moving house) by [Jane Raftery](#). As the assistant collection manager at Glasgow Museums, she played a key role in the decant of Kelvingrove Museum which had been successful in receiving HLF funding for a major refurbishment. Kelvingrove, which holds around one million objects, had to be completely emptied and all collections moved to Glasgow Museums Resource Centre for the three-year fit-out.



This presented Jane with a number of issues such as documenting the objects, creating a clear audit trail for the moves and the actual decant and transport.

Jane, giving a number of tips and advice, showed how careful preparation, along with dedicated staff and allocated financial resources, made their project run as smoothly as possible. She also spoke about the legacy of the project and how it has actually improved the running of the museums and resource centre. This includes the introduction of a CMS database and policies and procedures for all staff on upholding documentation and collection care standards.

The second talk was from [Jen Kaines of Leeds Museums Service](#). Her talk, *A day in the life of a Leeds Registrar*, looked at the reality of working at a large local authority museum, managing nine sites, including the new Discovery Centre. She also gave the membership an overview of her involvement in other simultaneous large-scale projects currently underway in the city.

Last year alone, Jen took on a number of duties in addition to her 'day job' such as acting as the head of collections, being an art curator, managing 11 staff along with the Discovery Centre and the refurbishment at Leeds Art Gallery.

This highlighted the fact that

much of a Registrar's work can be reactive to changes within the workplace, such as staff leaving posts and a lack of resources to solve long-term plans and issues.

Jane and Jen both touched on the subject of rationalisation of collections when considering storage at a new site, and talked briefly about every curator's nightmare: disposing or transferring 'unwanted' objects.

The afternoon ended with a panel-based discussion with the audience. Jane and Jen were joined by [Clare Smith from the host venue](#), [Deborah Cane from Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery](#), and [Mike O'Connell from National Museums Liverpool](#).

Each panel member briefly described projects they had recently been involved with.

Clare talked about the ongoing project at Cardiff and how they were looking to meet the deadline for opening in October 2007. Deborah gave us an insight into managing large collections moves at short notice from a conservation point of view, while Mike, who is head of capital projects at Liverpool Museums, talked about the formation of his team and some of the projects he is managing, including the much advertised International Museum of Slavery.

The discussion ranged from quite light-hearted issues to the serious issues that face most of us, whatever the institution. It seemed that everyone on the panel had a good and bad experiences of being involved in a capital project but the end result, whether a new collection centre or refurbished art gallery, brought about a new way of working for the staff involved – and of course a new visitor experience.

[Varshali Patel](#)
Treasurer

OXFORD EXHIBITION SERVICES

The latest in our series of corporate member articles designed to give UKRG members information about products and services

The exhibition *The Art Treasures of Wales*, a selection of works from the Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales Department of Art in Cardiff, went on show in the Great Room at Christie's during the second week of January 2007. Behind the grandeur of the exhibition and its extensive press coverage lay months of preparation and meticulous planning – not least being the secure transportation of the valuable collection from Cardiff to central London.

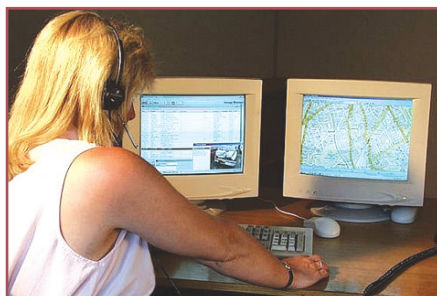
Oxford Exhibition Services (OES) was the company of choice for the transportation for Tim Egan, Registrar at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, because of the high level of security it was able to put in place for the collections and deliveries. Art theft is big business these days – the theft of Goya's *Children with a Cart*, which disappeared en route to the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in New York last year is perhaps the most recent of a string of high-value cases to have hit the headlines. Directors and registrars are obliged to maximise the protection of their loans when in transit – one of the stages when art works are most at risk.

The now almost industry-standard GPS tracking system was fitted to OES vehicles, which ensured a constant monitoring of all the vehicles involved. Michael Festenstein at OES also researched and implemented an extra level of security for those works most at risk because of their fame and value, such as the beautiful Renoir *La Parisienne* (pictured).

Within each individual crate



Loading the OES truck.



Vehicle satellite tracking system monitors 24 hours a day



PICTURE: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES

an additional tracking device was carefully lodged which, using the mobile phone network, allowed OES controllers to monitor the movement of these crates – should they be removed before reaching their destination. On

top of this, a sophisticated radio homing beacon was implanted that would allow a crate to be located to within a few feet.

Both of these transmitters were monitored by Festenstein, the museum and the professional 'recovery' agency, on standby in case of any emergency all the time the works were in transit – an impressive level of surveillance.

Two vehicles were involved and, with military-like precision, the timetabling of the journeys of the works of art and their escorts was worked out to the minute. *La Parisienne*, along with all the other treasures in the national collection, were safely delivered to London and back again to Cardiff.

OES has researched and invested in the subtleties of the new tracking capabilities which, in conjunction with extensive communications networks, add extra levels of security to its operations. Whether the robbery of the Goya was meticulously planned or a target-of-opportunity theft, the fact was that it was at risk. Only chance information led the FBI to its recovery.

With thorough preparation, point of the arrow technology, painstaking attention to detail and execution, such as was shown by the Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and Oxford Exhibition Services, spectacular art thefts will become ever more difficult for the bad guys to accomplish.

**Michael Festenstein, director,
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UKRG corporate members

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