



Newsletter July 2008

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:
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Summer 1 May
Autumn 1 September
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 Don't forget you can contact the committee at <http://ukrg.org.index.php>

All change for the UKRG Newsletter

By Jules Breeze,
Newsletter Editor

FOUR COMMITTEE POSTS will fall vacant this autumn: Corporate Officer, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and one of the two Events Secretary posts.

The role of Newsletter Editor is set to change as the newsletter becomes amalgamated into the website. Instead of being issued as a separate quarterly, news items, articles and reports from events will appear in a section of the site. This will allow timely notification and reporting of events, as well as making the site a more dynamic and useful resource.

As a result, there will now be two Web Officers: Web Officer, Development – which will be similar to the role of the current Web Officer post – and Web Officer, Content – which will be responsible for keeping the editorial content of the site up-to-date, in effect replacing the Newsletter Editor.

The job descriptions for these roles are currently in draft form, but will be finalised well before the elections. Job descriptions for the vacant posts are on

pages 2-3. Please have a read through these and start thinking about who you would like to nominate or, indeed, whether you would like to put yourself forward.

UKRG Committee membership offers an interesting and enjoyable two years, where you can learn a great deal about the UKRG. If you have not stood for the Committee before, I would urge you to give it a try.

Finally, do remember that travel bursaries are available for all events and these can be applied for through Varshali Patel, our Treasurer.

The next event will be on 5 September in London – see From the Chair on page 2 for further details. Please let us know by 20 August whether you are planning to attend.

The AGM will be held this year on 31 October in London (details to be announced soon) and don't forget that, in addition to the standard UKRG bursary, you can apply for the Constantine Bursary for November's conference in Basel. The deadline for bursary applications for this event will be 30 September.

UKRG committee job descriptions

GENERAL

Committee members are expected to attend and actively participate in committee meetings and events throughout the year. There are around five or six committee meetings and four events each year. All reasonable expenses for travelling to these meetings will be paid.

The aim is to have a handover of all relevant roles between Committees within four weeks following the AGM. All Committee members must have their organisation's support to undertake the role, and access to a computer from work and/or home to include all Microsoft office applications and email. Access to a photocopier is desirable.

Committee members are accountable to the membership and must give an annual report on all areas of their responsibility at the AGM.

In the event that Committee members are unable to fulfil their UKRG obligations, the Chair and/or Secretary must be contacted at the earliest opportunity to discuss how best to proceed.

CORPORATE OFFICER

Purpose

Serve as contact person for Corporate Members, keep current members informed and try to find new corporate members

Main duties

- Liaise with Corporate Members on UKRG issues.
- Represent Corporate Members and their interests on the UKRG Committee and vice versa.
- Invite them to events as appropriate, and any other relevant information, by ensuring that the Membership Secretary, Events Secretaries and so on have an up to date list of Corporate Members and contact emails.
- Ask them for contributions to events, ideas they would like the Corporate Officer to take to the Committee and so on.
- Send out invoices for renewal of membership and then, when paid, issue receipts (Corporate Members access the membership list via the UKRG website using their membership number and password). The payments are forwarded to

FROM THE CHAIR



Forging ahead

By Nickos Gologos,
Chair, UKRG

AFTER THE VERY successful event on 14 April about **Anti-seizure**, which enabled us to come closer to understanding this burning issue, the planned legislation and its effect on museums, we decided to tackle the labyrinthine world of HM Customs & Excise.

A MOMART- run workshop on 20 June in Edinburgh proved very successful as it discussed

everything our members needed to know about customs procedures but were afraid to ask. Not for the light-hearted...

This event will be repeated on 5 September in London, and we hope to welcome more colleagues, including those from commercial galleries.

In October, we will combine a half-day seminar on **museum disposals** with our AGM.

Next year we are considering courier training and historic loans reconciliation as possible event subjects. We look forward to hearing from you if you would like to get involved.

The Committee has recently had the difficult task of amending old details and updating our **members' list** in order to make it fit for purpose. Please don't forget to let the Membership Secretary know when your contact

details change.

At the same time our **website** is soon to have a new look, with interesting features, which will hopefully make it more user-friendly.

We have also decided to look beyond the simple question of a new logo for the UKRG to the possibility of changing the visual identity of the Group. It is important that a well-known and respected organisation such as the UKRG has a brand that is flexible, consistent across its activities and instantly recognisable. We are looking into the details and will update you soon.

To keep up with the increasing cost of events and administration, and to enable us to fulfil the website development and change of visual identity, which we see as important investments for the future, the Committee recommends the increase

of the **membership fee** to £20 a year or £35 if you renew for two years.

Varshali Patel will collect ballots by 31 July (please email varshali.patel@birmingham.gov.uk).

We hope to implement this increase in the next renewals cycle in September and have it seconded at the AGM.

Benefits of UKRG- membership include access to a contact network of more than 300 museum professionals and 20 corporate sponsors, a series of events on in-depth aspects of professional practice, access to widely used publications such as the *Facilities Report*, travel bursaries for events and conferences, discounted participation in Institute of Art & Law seminars, access to job vacancy adverts and other museum sector information.

I wish a wonderful summer to everyone!

the Treasurer for cashing.

- Look after Corporate Members at events.

TREASURER

Purpose

The Treasurer is responsible for managing the accounts of the UKRG, including the entering of all income/expenditure into the ledger, as well as the paying in and issuing of cheques. At the UKRG AGM, held every October, the Treasurer is responsible for presenting a report to the membership of income/expenditure for the UKRG financial year.

Main duties

- Issue cheques to corporations and individuals for UKRG-funded activities. These include events (venue hire, catering, speaker's expenses), travel bursaries, admin costs (such as postage), website-related costs, as well as any other individual projects organised by the UKRG.
- Pay in cheques received from individual and corporate subscriptions to the UKRG's bank account.
- Enter all expenditure and income into the UKRG ledger, in both its hard and soft (Excel) forms, and check all transactions against the monthly bank statements.
- Update the membership database on the website as cheques are received, and chase any outstanding late payments.
- Manage the UKRG budget and keep the UKRG Committee informed of the current state of the Group's finances.
- Manage the issuing of travel bursaries and keep records as to who has claimed each year.
- Organise the auditing of the UKRG accounts at the end of the financial year (31 August).
- Any other necessary duties, including research into any finance related issues, such as tax and so on.

- Report to the Chair on all financial matters, as requested.

Other information

- The UKRG offers four travel bursaries for up to £100 for every UK event.
- There are 10 conference bursaries of £150 available for European and overseas events.
- Speakers for UK events are able to claim back travel expenses.
- Committee members are able to claim back travel expenses for committee meetings and committee business where applicable.
- Committee members are able to claim a conference bursary if they are in post during the European conference.

WEB OFFICER, CONTENT (to be finalised)

Purpose

Co-manage the UKRG website with Web Officer; development to ensure that the content of the website is clear, informative and up-to-date. A working knowledge of and familiarity with websites is desirable but not essential for this post.

Main duties

- Add information to the Events section, ensuring that the information is timely, accurate and up-to-date.
- Receive and solicit articles for the website from UKRG members, Committee members and other relevant parties.
- Edit text of articles received to ensure that the website maintains a clear and consistent style.
- Seek opinion from the Chair and Committee on content of some articles required, as well as timing for release of information.
- Check for and correct typographical and grammatical errors on the website.

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DCMS seminar

Anti-seizure legislation

Following the highly successful UKRG Anti-Seizure event at the National Gallery in April, DCMS held a seminar on Monday 16 June to explain in detail the new legislation and the process of applying for museum-approved status

*By Nickos Gogolos,
UKRG Chair*

Part 6 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 provides immunity from seizure for cultural objects which are loaned from overseas to temporary public exhibitions in approved museums or galleries in the UK. The following conditions must be met when the object enters the UK:

- The object is usually kept outside the UK.
- It is not owned by a person who is resident in the UK.
- The import of the object does not contravene any law.
- The object is brought into the UK only for the purpose of a temporary public exhibition at an approved museum or gallery.
- The museum or gallery has published on the website provenance information about the object at least four weeks and a day before the object enters the UK.
- The information must be available for further 12 weeks or for the duration of the exhibition, whichever is longer.

When deciding whether to approve a museum or gallery, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport must take account of the institution's procedures for establishing the provenance and ownership of objects, and compliance with guidance on procedures published by the Secretary of State. Three independent advisers scrutinise the application for approval and make recommendations to the

Secretary of State.

In order for a borrowing museum to get approved status, it is required to submit:

- A completed DCMS questionnaire signed by the Director.
- Copy of the loan form (for example, is the lender the rightful owner? Do they have a right to lend the object? Are they aware of any third party claims?)
- Copy of the loans-in policy (for example, is it ethical?)
- Due Diligence procedures (for example, has the museum signed up to the DCMS Combating Illicit Trade guidelines of 2005?)
- A checklist for internal use by curators conducting provenance research.
- A few examples of provenance research for loaned objects.
- Methodology of provenance research for a specific exhibition.
- Staff training programme.

The Tate and the British Museum were the first museums scrutinised and finally approved under the Regulations, for the current Gustav Klimt retrospective at Tate Liverpool and the forthcoming Hadrian exhibition respectively. More museums have already applied for approval.

Part 6 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 puts the onus on the museums to ensure that the following significant practices are in place:

- Compliance with national and international standards and treaties/codes of ethics

(MA, ICOM, UNESCO 1970 Convention and so on).

- Due Diligence procedures for loans (including provenance checks).
- Ethical loans policy.
- Good record keeping and established training of staff in all the above.
- Ultimate responsibility for due diligence in accordance with the Act lies with the Director.

The main points:

- Borrowing museums must be approved in advance.
- Approval is not linked to a specific exhibition.
- Lenders must agree to conditions for protection – for example, disclosure of their personal details (or those of an agent).
- The law covers the objects against any type of seizure, except when the courts need to enforce European or international treaties, which take precedence over national legislation.
- The law does not prevent claims for compensation against the borrowing institution.
- When proceeding with a loan and after it has conducted a full provenance check, the borrowing museum must satisfy itself that the risk of a claim (seizure) is minimal or none.
- Provenance information is to be published on the website only for specific objects in an exhibition, for which a claim is still considered possible and, either the museum has nonetheless decided to go ahead with the loan or their lender demands immunity.



International Expert Meeting on Deaccessioning Institute of Cultural Heritage of Netherlands

Amsterdam, 28 March 2008

By Nickos Gogolos, UKRG Chair

PART I

In November 2006, the Institute of Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands published guidelines for the deaccessioning of museum objects following a similar strategy to the Museums Association guidelines in the UK. The Institute has also undertaken a large number of disposals, some through sale (notably on eBay), has funded the publication of a book and created a website for publicising objects that are offered for disposal to other museums.

I represented the Museum of London at this meeting to speak about the disposal via international transfer of a collection of stained glass

production drawings from the Whitefriars Glassworks factory to the Corning Museum of Glass in New York.

I gave a brief outline of the acquisition of the overall Whitefriars business archive (which is not part of the disposal), the history of the unaccessioned production drawings, the reasons for the disposal and the previous attempts to do it and, finally, a timeline of the current disposal between September 2005 and March 2008.

At the meeting there were representatives from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Romania and the UK.

The participants considered

the specific guidelines on disposal from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2006 and the legislation on museums and the differences in museum policy in the respective EU member states. They all contributed a presentation on the deaccessioning policies (or lack of), the ethical and legal framework and the procedures or disposing cultural objects in their countries.

Subjects that were discussed in more detail include:

- The relation between the governing body as the owner and the museum as the keeper of the collection.
- Disposal through sale.
- Undocumented (orphaned) objects. ▶▶

UKRG corporate members

Alban Shipping, Blackwall Green, Constantine, Crystilization Systems, Euronova Ltd, Fine Art Services, Gallery Systems, Gander & White, HSBC Insurance Brokers Ltd, Institute of Art & Law, KE Software, Kent Services, Masterpiece, Momart, Mtec, OES, USArt Co Inc

- Disposal on an international level.
- Available tools for facilitating disposals (online resources, subsidies and so on).

Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK all have a long-established framework, guidelines and legislation within which disposals are carried out by museums. In other countries, the experience of museums has been more reactive than proactive.

The extent to which it is undertaken and the reasons behind it vary and largely depend on the following:

- Are museum collections considered national (state) property and are therefore inalienable?
- The legislative and administrative framework of cultural affairs (for example, German states have different laws on disposal and, in most cases, disposal is a taboo practice with connotations of Nazi ideas of degenerate art (*entartete kunst*)).
- Are the overall museum collections heavily biased towards archaeology and linked to notions of national identity? There seemed to be a resistance among archaeologists in the group to accept deaccessioning as part of a comprehensive and sustainable collections management strategy.
- Sale is a major taboo subject.

A representative from the Museums Association (MA) presented their revised guidance on disposals and the new Disposals Toolkit. The strong presumption against disposal has been replaced by a more proactive and outcome-focused approach. More details can be found at:

www.museumsassociation.org/asset_arena/text/it/disposal_toolkit.pdf.

It was mentioned that the MA is to produce an online

disposals listings service to replace posting adverts in the *Museums Journal*.

Since the meeting, the ICN has asked the participants to sign a formal Amsterdam Declaration, in which all agree the following:

- Museum professionals (the keepers of the collection) initiate the disposal process while the owners (state, municipality, foundation) decide.
- Disposal of museum collections is an integrated part of a clearly defined collections policy.
- Disposal should be solely undertaken for the benefit of the collection and the public.
- In the disposal process, the confidence of the public in the professionalism of the museum has to be secured.
- Positive communication in case of a disposal process is important.
- Every collection type needs its own approach in the disposal process.
- The quality of a disposal process is secured by the involvement of external expert advisers.
- A disposal process should be conducted in an accurate, responsible and transparent way.

The ICN plans to continue this discussion in recurring meetings with the following aims:

- To share information on disposal of museum collections.
- To develop a glossary of terminology on disposal.
- To promote an international discussion on quality, valuation,

selection criteria, selling of collections and financial revenues.

- To consider the possibility of international transfer of collections.

The UKRG is planning a seminar on disposals and the new Museums Association guidance/toolkit to take place on the day of our AGM next October. Please let the Events Officers know if you would like to be a speaker.

