



## Association of Independent Museums

The National Body Connecting, Supporting and Representing Independent Museums

### Association of Independent Museums AIM E-News – September 2012 – Number 37 **EXTRACTS**

#### **AIM calls for rates relief protection**

AIM has urged the Government to ensure that mandatory charity business rates relief is fully protected in the Local Government Finance Bill, currently going through the House of Lords. The move follows concerns that the bill's provisions may prevent local authorities' support for charitable projects. The bill will enable local authorities to retain for local purposes some 50% of the local business rates. But it is unclear whether the existing system of charity rates relief will continue under the new arrangements. Currently all charities receive a mandatory relief of 80% of the business rate liability on their premises (the remaining 20% is discretionary). The 80% relief is 'funded' by central government, not the local taxpayer. But under the possible new arrangements, local authorities may be obliged to pick up the cost of 50% of that relief. AIM chairman Matthew Tanner has written to Baroness Hanham, parliamentary under-secretary of state in the Department of Communities & Local Government to point out two potentially unforeseen implications. Firstly, the proposed transfer of existing heritage and museum functions from local authority ownership into independent charities may be affected as the financial benefit for local authorities, as far as rates is concerned, could amount to around half of the existing cost, rather than all of it. Secondly, existing independent museums may find proposals to expand their charitable activities into new areas or sites are hit, as local authority partners would lose 50% of the rates revenue. Further information in AIM Bulletin, October issue.

#### **New culture appointments**

Maria Miller is to be the new Culture secretary under the recent Government reshuffle, which saw Jeremy Hunt moved to Health. A relatively unknown quantity, she was the former disability minister, and will now have a cabinet seat. John Penrose has stepped down as minister for heritage and tourism following the decision to reduce the size of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) after the Olympics and Ed Vaizey will take over the heritage portfolio while Hugh Robertson will take on tourism. In the same week Sir Peter Bazalgette was appointed as the new chairman of Arts Council England (ACE) replacing Dame Liz Forgan. A television producer who brought the reality show Big Brother to the UK, he is chairman of English National Opera and a non-executive director of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport. A descendant of Joseph Bazalgette who designed London's sewer network, he is also chairman of AIM member, the Crossness Engines Trust, the preserved sewerage pumping station on the Thames. Meanwhile, Dame Helen Ghosh is to be the next Director-General of the National Trust. She is currently permanent secretary to the Home Office and has been a lifelong admirer of NT. And William Shawcross has been appointed as the next chairman of the Charity Commission.

#### **Museums and schools partnerships announced**

Arts Council England (ACE) has announced the 10 regional museums and schools partnerships awarded £3.6 million until 2015 through the Museums & Schools Programme. An initiative of the Department for Education, the funding is a response to the Henley review on Cultural Education. The regional museums will partner with clusters of local schools, national museums and 'bridge' organisations to increase the number of quality educational visits by schools in areas with lower than average cultural engagement. Projects include: Great Yarmouth Museums' *Stories of the Sea* programme working with Royal Museums Greenwich to develop literacy skills; ss Great Britain and the Science Museum's walking tours led by Victorian engineer IK Brunel coupled with educational games based on museum objects; Maidstone Museum, working with the British Museum and Artsworld to create new activities utilising the collections and spaces in the museum's new east wing, and in Lincolnshire schools will work with the Aviation Heritage

Partnership, supported by the Royal Air Force Museum. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/museums-and-schools-programme/>. ACE has also announced that the new Cultural Education Partnership Group will be testing its shared approach towards cultural education in three areas, the city of Bristol, Barking and Dagenham, and Great Yarmouth. The group includes ACE, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the British Film Institute and English Heritage. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/cultural-education-partnership-group/>

#### **Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme “not fit for purpose”?**

Voluntary sector umbrella bodies have called for the Government to scrap elements of the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, intended to allow charities to claim Gift Aid-like payments on up to £5,000 of small cash donations a year, without accompanying Gift Aid forms. To claim the full £1,250 charities must have claimed at least £625 of Gift Aid in the same year and can only claim if they have claimed Gift Aid in three of the past seven years. The Institute of Fundraising says some of the scheme’s details do not appear to be “fit for purpose for the original aims”. [http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/bulletin/third\\_sector\\_fundraising\\_bulletin/article/1146302/umbrella-bodies-call-parts-gift-aid-small-donations-scheme-scrapped/?DCMP=EMC-CONThirdSectorFundraising](http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/bulletin/third_sector_fundraising_bulletin/article/1146302/umbrella-bodies-call-parts-gift-aid-small-donations-scheme-scrapped/?DCMP=EMC-CONThirdSectorFundraising)

Meanwhile draft regulations setting out the legal framework for the scheme have been published by the Government for consultation, open until 5

December. [http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/bulletin/third\\_sector\\_fundraising\\_bulletin/article/1149991/egal-framework-gift-aid-small-donations-scheme-consultation/?DCMP=EMC-CONThirdSectorFundraising](http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/bulletin/third_sector_fundraising_bulletin/article/1149991/egal-framework-gift-aid-small-donations-scheme-consultation/?DCMP=EMC-CONThirdSectorFundraising)

#### **New tips for trustees on reserves policies**

New tips to ensure trustees explain their reserves policy have been released by the Charity Commission in Charities and Reserves CC19. Charities are encouraged to have a reserves policy and to explain it clearly in the annual report. Many charities do not explain clearly enough why they hold reserves and under which circumstances they may be used. Charity law requires charities to spend income within a reasonable period of time. Case studies of charities’ approach to reserves, together with practical tips, are included. <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Publications/cc19.aspx> and [http://www.cfg.org.uk/resources/Publications/~~/media/Files/Resources/CFDG%20Publications/SV\\_Reserves\\_Final.ashx](http://www.cfg.org.uk/resources/Publications/~~/media/Files/Resources/CFDG%20Publications/SV_Reserves_Final.ashx)

The Information Commissioner’s Office is offering charities the chance to take part in free **one-day advisory visits**, to help them understand how to meet their legal requirements under the **Data Protection Act**. Launched last year, over 40 organisations have already taken up the opportunity. [http://www.ico.gov.uk/for\\_organisations/data\\_protection/working\\_with\\_the\\_ico/advisory\\_visits.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/working_with_the_ico/advisory_visits.aspx)

Rural Museums East is holding a day looking at the **care and conservation of large awkward items** often in the care of rural museums. The event, also an opportunity for people working in rural museums in the East of England to get together, is being held at Ramsey Museum on **11 October**. [http://www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/course-collections.aspx?course=conserving-large-objects-a-rural-museums-east-network-event&date=11\\_Oct\\_2012](http://www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk/course-collections.aspx?course=conserving-large-objects-a-rural-museums-east-network-event&date=11_Oct_2012)

The European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage (E-FAITH) is holding its **Industrial Heritage Weekend** in London on **26-28 October**. The group promotes contact between non-profit volunteer associations engaged in the research, preservation, interpretation and/or presentation of industrial and technical heritage. Site visits will include House Mill in the East End of London, said to be the largest tidal mill in the world; the Abbey Mills pumping station; Testing Museum in Southwark; and Kew Engines Museum. Go to [www.efait.org](http://www.efait.org) or email [2012@e-faith.org](mailto:2012@e-faith.org)