

RENAISSANCE SOUTH EAST museums for changing lives



BERKSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Newsletter

Produced by the Museum Development Service for everyone working in museums and galleries across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire

Closures, moves and transfers

Much has changed regionally since the last newsletter. MLA South East closed its doors for the last time on 31 December making way for a new regional MLA structure, headed up by Sam Bestwick, Director of Engagement for the Eastern region (made up of the South East, East of England and East Midlands). For more information on the new MLA Council structure, visit their website: www.mla.gov.uk

As part of the transition towards a new regional structure, the management of the Museum Development Service transferred to the Renaissance South East Hub on 1 November. In practical terms, this means that Helen Gibbons, Museum Development Service Manager and Jennifer Mitchell, Renaissance Administrator are now based at Chilcomb House in Winchester, the home of Hampshire County Museum Service and Renaissance South East Hub Lead. In terms of your local MDO, there is no change, they haven't moved and continue to work and support you in the same way.

The Strategic Commissioning programme in the South East which you may be aware of transferred to MLA Council on 31 December. Trish Popkin is still heading up the programme in the South East and can be contacted via email at: trish.popkin@mla.gov.uk

Spotlight on regional learning

Sharon Bristow is the Learning Manager for Renaissance South East supporting museums across the region to develop high quality learning resources. Here are details of some of the work Sharon is doing now:

SLIME spreads through South East region!

SLIME stands for Science Links in Museum Education, a network of museums in the South East who want to promote and support science in museums for schools, families and other audiences. Currently there are 75 museums in SLIME. Any museum in the South East can join, there is no membership fee and all activities and resources are free to SLIME museums.

Since SLIME began in autumn 2006 there have been four training days, a partnership day, and resources such as Museum Detectives and the SLIME Roadshow have been developed, all responding to the needs

identified by its members. The Ruth Borthwick Award has also been launched to promote excellence in science education in museums and has been won in the first year by the Mary Rose Museum.

SLIME on the road

The SLIME Roadshow will be set in motion in February 2009. The Roadshow will be available FREE to SLIME museums for a minimum period of one week and a maximum period of three weeks throughout the year. The first roadshow will be on minibuses.

Green SLIME

Everyone's attention is now turning to sustainability and green issues and SLIME museums too are thinking about the many links between science and sustainability. For example, an issue such as Waste we can link to the study of Materials in the Science National Curriculum. Museums with transport collections might address the subject of energy.

At the moment SLIME is scoping a sustainability initiative, developing partnerships and potential funders "Green SLIME" is the working title. If you are interested in being involved, please get in touch.

MADNet

MADNet is the Museums Art and Design Network and aims to do for Art and Design what SLIME is doing for Science. MADNet will be organised slightly differently from SLIME in that there will be an online forum on the Renaissance South East website where museums interested in Art and Design can sign on to exchange news and information. To access the link go to: www.museumse.org.uk/learning

Contact

Helen Gibbons
Museum Development Service
Manager

Email Helen.Gibbons@hants.gov.uk
Tel 01962 826706

Sharon Bristow
Renaissance South East
Learning Manager

Email Sharon.Bristow@hants.gov.uk
Tel 07843 367142

Jennifer Mitchell
Renaissance Administrator

Email Jenny.Mitchell@hants.gov.uk
Tel 01962 826706

Designed by Hampshire County Council Recreation & Heritage Design Unit • 01962 826746

News from the MDO

Christine Beresford, your interim MDO

I have been holding the MDS fort in the BOB region since 1 September 2008 and will probably be around until the end of March 2009. As I only work 2 days a week I had to practice what we MDOs encourage our museums to do, and that it is to prioritise. So I decided that the most important activities to support were:

- The MDF Grants Programme
- Accreditation
- Giving general planning/development advice

The result is that I spend little time in the Woodstock office as I am out and about visiting museums to discuss grant applications, improvement plans and other thorny issues. By Christmas I had been to 12 museums and there are more visits in the diary for the next three months. Getting to know the region is great fun. I often think how lucky I am to be paid for doing what most people do in their spare time: driving through picture postcard Cotswolds villages, or the Chiltern beech woods in their autumn glory, or crossing the Thames at different stages of its life, and then seeing a wide range of fascinating museums. There are rewards for getting stuck behind a tractor or missing a rail connection by one minute. If you are going through the Accreditation process, considering of applying for an MDF grant, or in need of general museum management advice, please do not hesitate to contact me. The best way to get in touch is

by email, as I can read that from home in between my visits to Woodstock. We hope to be able to recruit a fulltime MDO very soon so that normal service resumes in April 2009. In the meantime don't forget that I am working on your behalf even if you haven't seen me.



For info

Do you have any news, views, events or projects that you would like to share with the rest of the museum community? Then we want to hear from you.

The copy deadline for the next issue of BOB Newsletter is 1 April 2009

STOP PRESS: THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF GRANTS IS 16 FEBRUARY 2009

Widening access to Oxfordshire's military heritage

A new kind of military museum is being planned at The Museum of Oxfordshire (TOM) in Woodstock. Until recently Oxfordshire's county regimental museum was hidden away "behind the wire" on the outskirts of Oxford. The barracks at Headington were closed last summer and the collections of objects and archives are now temporarily displayed and stored on another MOD site at Caversfield near Bicester, where access is by appointment only. This site is due to close in the coming year and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust (SOFO) are fundraising to build a research centre for the permanent display and storage of the collections in the grounds of TOM.

To launch the fundraising campaign The Museum of Oxfordshire is hosting two exhibitions:

Part-Time Defenders

Celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Territorial Army.

Bugles and Busbies

Displays a selection of paintings and official and personal souvenirs from the two county regiments' collections.

A programme of storytelling workshops inspired by objects from the exhibitions has been arranged for primary schools in the spring term.



Part-Time Defenders



Bugles and Busbies



Case Study

Archive storage improvements at Amersham Museum

Two Renaissance programmes have helped Amersham Museum improve the storage of their archives. Under the South East "Caring for Archives in Museums" project, the museum had an advisory visit from two specialists whose recommendations formed the basis of an improvement plan. The museum then successfully applied to the MDS grants programme for a grant of £1294 to cover the cost of buying conservation grade materials.

Five volunteers worked on the project. As they sorted photographs, maps and ephemera and put them into protective sleeves, they got to know the collection and were surprised at the range of material held by the museum. One volunteer, inspired by the collection of one family's photographs, has now embarked on a research of the Lord of the Manor of Amersham.

Enquiries from the public can now be dealt with more effectively as maps and photographs are easier to find and can be seen without being damaged. Curator Jane Bowen said that the cost of the specialist materials was high, and "this project would not have been possible without grant funding."

MDS Grants Awarded

The following grants were approved in November 2008:

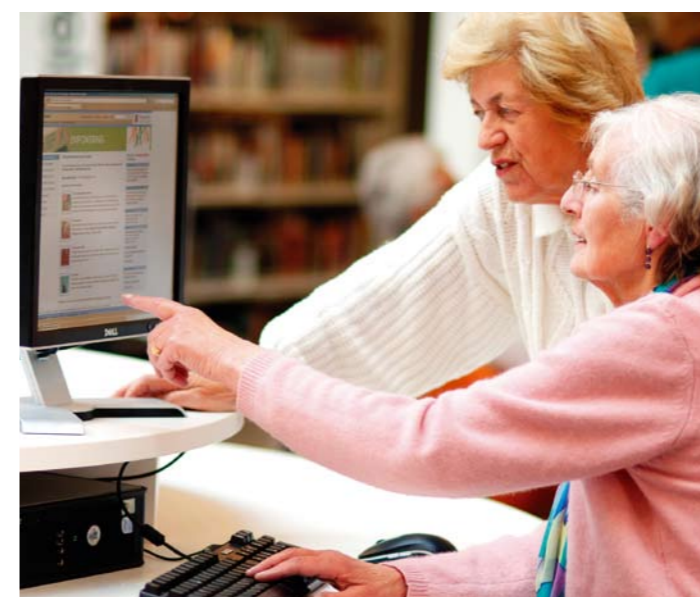
- **Bloxham Village Museum:** £876 for display improvements.
- **River and Rowing Museum:** £2562 to develop and pilot interpretation for people with learning disabilities and visual impairment.
- **Buckinghamshire Railway Centre:** £2000 to adapt a railway carriage for wheelchair users.
- **Hughenden Manor:** £2900 to develop and install audio-visual displays.
- **Champs Chapel Museum:** £2942 to employ a consultant to draw up an interpretation plan.

The deadline for the final round of grants in 2008-09 is **Monday 16 February**.

If you are thinking of applying please contact Christine Beresford by email: mdo.office@oxfordshire.gov.uk before completing an application form.

Free computer courses

SCIP is a social enterprise providing IT services for charities and community organisations. Over the past two years they have worked with MDOs to raise standards of IT management and competence in museums in the South East. Between now and the end of March they are offering a training package aimed at helping you survive in the ever spreading IT jungle – see the next column for dates. Don't be daunted by the prospect of a whole day spent dedicated to IT: the courses are jargon free and non-technical. To make a booking please contact jane.hill@scip.org.uk or call her on 01273 234049



Diary dates

Wednesday 28 January
Museums and the World wide web

To book a place email:
jane.hill@scip.org.uk

Thursday 5 February
Fundraising Workshop
Putting fundraising theory into practice.

To book a place email:
jenny.mitchell@hants.gov.uk

Tuesday 10 February
Getting the most from your computer

To book a place email:
jane.hill@scip.org.uk

Friday 13 February
PC self-defence: how to protect your computer system

To book a place email:
jane.hill@scip.org.uk

Thursday 5 March
Getting the most from your computer

To book a place email:
jane.hill@scip.org.uk

Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 March
Project management for museums

To book a place email:
jenny.mitchell@hants.gov.uk

Contact

Christine Beresford
Interim Museum Development Officer for
Berkshire, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire

c/o Fletcher's House, Park Street,
Woodstock OX20 1SN

Phone **01993 814108**

Email mdo.office@oxfordshire.gov.uk