

The Midlands Federation of

MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES

Mid Fed Annual Report 2010

**Incorporating Statement of Accounts and
Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**This report is available in alternative formats
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www.midfed.org.uk

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Report of Council for 2010

Welcome to the Midlands Federation's annual report of activities.

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Presidential Report Philippa Tinsley

As I look back over the past two years as the President of the Midlands Federation, I feel very privileged to have held the role at such a complex time for museum professionals. The word transition has been heard a lot in our sector this year and for many Federation members it has been a difficult one as projects, jobs and museums have shifted gear. My own job has changed significantly over this period as Worcester City Museums has merged into the new joint Museums Worcestershire service and I have moved in and out of TUPE and into a new post.

Throughout this change the Midlands Federation has remained a steadfastly practical and helpful professional organisation. Nick Poole, director of the Collections Trust and the keynote speaker at our spring 2010 meeting, beautifully articulated this soon afterwards in his blog:

The first thing that struck me, as I arrived at the BMAG Collections Centre in Duddeston, was Chair Philippa Tinsley's badge of office, suspended from a ribbon festooned with the names of past chairs stretching back to the mid-Fifties. Here, in the form of the Federation, is an organisation that is all about the long now. Outlived only by the Museums Association, it has seen strategies, wars, strikes, recessions, changes in practice, the invention of the Internet, and has calmly carried on serving a useful purpose through all of them.

In a world in which Twitter helps us look at a resolution of '23 seconds ago', and the Election is pushing us to look at a resolution of the next 6 months, it is really useful to remember that the further back you stand, the more these incipient crises resolve into the flutterings of a general trend that is moving forever upward.

Working on the Strategy Tree for the Federation in 2008 has meant that the Federation council and members know very precisely the strengths of the organisation. The four differently-themed meetings this year and AGM have brought together some inspiring speakers and the opportunity for us all to talk with and learn from our colleagues across the region. The low cost and good discussion opportunities of these meetings continue to impress me.

As Nick Poole predicted, decisions about the sector came rapidly following the election in May 2010: the abolition of the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) council and the local government regions; big changes to Renaissance funding; considerable cuts to be found by local authorities; Arts Council England (ACE) taking on some strategic museum functions. The Museums Association, too, decided to radically change its governance and regional representation. The real implications of most of these decisions will become clearer over the next few years.

In September the Culture Media and Sport Parliamentary Committee requested submissions of evidence for a Funding of the Arts and Heritage inquiry. The Federation Council responded on behalf of the Federation members. We highlighted the benefits that Renaissance funding has brought to the wider museum community, as opposed to just the big regional museums, including professional development and the support of Museum Development Officers (MDOs) and also the vulnerability to the profession of losing skilled staff on short-term contracts. We argued that while there are many best practice examples of work provided in partnerships, working together is not cost-free and that cuts could reduce rather than encourage these possibilities. We said that the sector supports the growth of philanthropy but that we were concerned that our region would lag behind others if this became our primary source of funding, with figures from Arts & Business showing that the East Midlands currently has the second lowest level of individual giving in the UK.

The Federation Council also discussed the issue of the V&A and PRISM grant funds, both of which have enabled some significant purchases by museums big and small across the East and West Midlands. It was good to see that professional concern about the uncertainties of the funds led to a question in the House of Lords on the subject on the 13th January 2011. The government responded with a commitment to maintain the V&A purchase grant fund within ACE and to consult more widely on the matter. The Federation will watch this closely.

I attended a meeting of all the Federations convened at the Museums Association (MA) in January 2011, principally to discuss concerns about the future provision of MDOs. As Federations, we all understand the importance of MDOs at the professional coal face and it was a welcome opportunity to talk to both MA and MLA staff about our concerns. Some Federations are considering bidding to administer the MDO provision in their region in the future. The Midlands Federation Council has discussed this option and concluded there are more suitable providers in our area, but we are keen to support and partner these to ensure a suitable level of provision of support to all museums.

The MA regional representation is also changing from regional board members to correspondents in each region (two across the Midlands). The MA's vision is that the role should be an active one on the ground and that they should work closely with the Federations to do so.

Finally, I want to thank the members of the Federation council who have continued to give generously of their time to support the Federation's aims. Thank you particularly to the two secretaries during my time as President – Jack Kirby and Catriona Smellie, both of whom are inspirational to work alongside. At the AGM I hand over the Presidential duties to Peter Field, Museums & Arts Manager at Northampton Museums – I suspect he'll have just as interesting a tenure!



Exhibition of work by Victorian artist HH Lines; courtesy of Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

Reports of Meetings

4 February 2010, Hard Times: Projects on a Shoestring, Saint Nicholas Place, Kings Norton, Birmingham

Lorna Hetherington, Joint East Midlands Meeting Secretary

This meeting aimed to discover how museums cope financially in a time when funding and money is difficult to come by. Museums need to think of ingenious ways to cope in such a climate. Representatives from museums in the Midlands revealed inspiring ways in which they save money, utilise existing resources, and use volunteers to remain successful, functioning museums.

'Make Use of Your Friends' described how the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne had used volunteers to refurbish its displays, while 'Yes... We have no bananas!' was an audience engagement project in Staffordshire.

'Carrots to Cookies' was a project where the RAF Museum Cosford utilised human resources. Young adults with differing needs put work into the garden growing vegetables and also came out of the volunteering with many life skills. It was good to hear how volunteering can be very beneficial for both parties.

'Digital Workshops and Other Activities' dealt with how cheap software can produce really interesting interactive workshops for families in museums, with examples from the Potteries Museum. Delegates were told where to purchase these programs for no or very little cost.

The day was completed with an interactive discussion where delegates brainstormed how they would approach a future of recession in their museum. This got everyone talking!



*Saint Nicholas Place, Kings Norton, Birmingham.
Courtesy of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*

25 March 2010 : AGM Meeting, Collections Centre, Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery
Catriona Smellie, Secretary Elect

Nick Poole of the Collections Trust delivered the key-note address, which posed difficult questions about the purposes of collections and of museums, and the need to assess priorities carefully in a climate of cuts and reduced services.

This was followed by what turned into a reply by Maurice Davies of the Museums Association who talked about the 'triple bottom line' of sustainability and ways in which museums could manage sustainable approaches to working.

Both speakers were their usual vibrant and engaging selves.

The remainder of the day focussed on projects in the region which had sustainability at their core, whether economic, environmental or social. Joyce Wallace told delegates about the Whose Story project at the National Trust's Birmingham Back-to-Backs; Steve Millar spoke about the award-winning Ironbridge Gorge Trust's Green Tourism Business Structure; and Robin Clarke told us about Leicestershire Museums' *Green Museums* toolkit to help museums become more environmentally sustainable.

The afternoon workshop asked delegates to consider the question 'how can museums become more financially sustainable?' and considered different modes of governance such as Independent Trusts. Finally, Jeremy Ross

kindly took time to give a guided tour of the Collections Centre.

Thank you to Jack Kirby for organising such a stimulating meeting.

25 May 2010, Talking about their generation – Children, Young People & Engagement, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham
Emma Banks, Joint West Midlands Meetings Secretary

The new art gallery Nottingham Contemporary was the venue for our May meeting. The keynote speaker Ron Inglis of Nottingham City Council provided the Federation with an insight into the Cultural Olympiad project Stories of The World. Ron explained the project is formed of three major exhibitions and discussed the routes of engagement being followed.

The meeting continued with a talk from Pollie Shorthouse and Neepa Patel, Learning and Access Manager and Learning Co-ordinator at the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law. They gave us an overview of their 'Campaign!' project which aims to inspire young people into active citizenship. They particularly discussed the success of a youth panel in taking this project forward and identified key issues in setting up a youth panel including recruitment, retention and engagement.

After a short break Angela Tombs of the Black Country Treasures Project explained how the project had been set up and discussed its aims to unite four boroughs by working with 'treasures' from different collections and to give young people a pride in their heritage. Children helped choose objects for a travelling exhibition and this was extremely successful with 13, 524 people visiting. The project encouraged working together and built stronger relationships across the region.

Christopher Parkin from the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford spoke of 'Steampunk, Telescopes and astrolabes'. Christopher's talk encompassed the extremely successful and much discussed 'Steampunk' exhibition at the museum which attracted a large number of young people. The museum found many people were discussing the exhibition using social networking despite the museum not using it themselves; the exhibition was also the platform for a number of special events. Christopher also discussed family activities at the museum which engaged children and young people through modelling. Examples included making pocket sundials and Galileo's telescope. The workshops were initially

tried and then introduced into their schools programme.

After lunch Alex Woodall, Interpretation Development Officer of Manchester City Galleries told the Federation about *Creative Consultants*, young people (15-19) who were recruited through a variety of methods from across greater Manchester. The group were involved with a Tate funded project called Visual Dialogues. The group worked with artists to develop interpretation for the collections, assisted in the development of events. The project encouraged involving young people in gallery wide decision making. Alex identified that many practical issues arose from setting up a group of young people, this included recruitment, marketing and communication, incentives and planning regarding session structures.

Delegates were then able to enjoy a free tour of the nearby Galleries of Justice or view the exhibitions at Notting-ham Contemporary.

14 July 2010, Old to New – Interpreting Natural Science Collections, Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry.

Varshali Patel (Joint West Midlands Meetings Secretary)

Many organisations have been very active in creating and undertaking projects which tap into natural science collections. Often unused due to resources or expertise, there has been a shift from traditional ways of displaying natural history to a much more creative and innovative approach of interpreting collections by focusing on visitor experience and outreach within communities.

During this event members heard from curators, outreach officers and non museum staff who used natural history to create projects that inspired the visitor to think outside the box. This ranged from talks about interactive galleries displays to environmental projects that challenged public perception and in turn helped communities learn more about their areas.

The event also included a tour of the Elements Gallery. Inspired by the four elements - earth, water, air and fire, each were explored through items from the Herbert's collection and multimedia displays using film and sound.

12 October 2010, Digitising the Dead, New Walk Museum, Leicester

Laura Hadland, Joint East Midlands Meeting Secretary

The meeting was well attended at New Walk Museum. There were a variety of speakers covering topics of digitisation and new media in relation to collections and exhibitions about past societies. A wide range of perspectives were covered, including the digitisation of human remains at the Natural History museum, the Renaissance East Midlands MUBU programme and the work of De Montfort University in creating a virtual Roman Leicester.

Discussions focussed around the digitisation of human remains in several of the London museums (MoL and NHM), which led to an interesting debate about the ethics around the topic and use to which digital capture of archaeological burials can be put. Also, delegates were very interested in the Virtual Romans project and the cross-disciplinary work being done to find new and engaging ways to interpret archaeological collections.



Primus: Virtual Romans, courtesy of the Institute of Creative Technologies, De Montfort University

Reports of Council Officers

Honorary Treasurer's Report Dean Emery

This year's expenditure was less than our income again but this year enhanced by the payment of all of the cost for the July Meeting by Renaissance West Midlands – listed as a refund of £851.30 which includes the donation to The Great Fen Project for £125 as well as most of our travel expenses for the year. We also donated our usual £200 to the MA Benevolence Fund, which was not banked by the MA last year for various reasons, and so shows up on this year's accounts as two payments. The offer of a bursary was taken up

and £350 was paid out for this. Membership subscriptions have been paid promptly on the whole and both subscriptions and fees for attending meetings have continued to be kept up despite the present financial climate. We have ended the year in a healthy financial state and we could manage a few difficult years without worry if necessary.

Honorary Secretary's Report

Catriona Smellie

The Fed's Council saw some changes in membership this year with several longstanding Council Members standing down from their previous roles. This included Josie Hickin, Roger Sellick, and Liz Taylor (née Braby), as well as Jack Kirby, who has kindly agreed to remain on Council as a Personal Member. As per usual, all the Officers and Members of Council have worked hard for the Federation on top of increasingly demanding jobs and at a difficult time across the sector. Participation on Council remains a valuable CPD opportunity as well as an ideal way to develop and maintain sector contacts.

At the AGM this year, our Treasurer, Dean Emery, will be standing down. Dean has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Fed's finances are maintained to a professional standard as well as within the rules of the charity. I would like to thank Dean personally for his assistance over the past year.

Helen's work to develop our e-publicity has, I think, proven to be invaluable. We are trialling an electronic Annual Report this year to those Members who have signed up to our email lists in a bid to reduce costs, which seems eminently sensible at a time when we are all being asked to consider sustainable methods of working.

This year has been somewhat of a 'learning curve' for me in my first year as Honorary Secretary. That I was appointed Secretary Elect to shadow Jack Kirby, the previous Honorary Secretary, for a year prior to taking over the reins was enormously helpful. Jack has continued to offer support and guidance throughout this past year, for which I am extremely grateful. Thank you to all members of Council who have been patient with me as I learn the ropes.

Membership Secretary's Report

Jennifer Thomson

The total membership as at 8th December 2010 was 83, up approximately 14% on the figure for

the same period in the previous year and one more than the same period in 2008-9. Some of this increase can be attributed to the fact that a number of new members joined after the Membership Secretary's report was completed last year, and these memberships were carried forward into 2010-11. There are currently 54 personal members, 22 institutional members and 7 honorary members.

Three new members have joined Federation as a result of the combined 'meeting and membership fee' payment option which was introduced at meetings following on from the AGM in March 2010.

8 personal members and 1 institutional member did not renew. In the case of the institution this was because budgetary constraints had led them to reduce their expenditure on subscriptions. The subject of institutional members and the various subscription rates and benefits for this category of membership were discussed at several Council meetings in the latter part of the year.

7 new personal members joined during 2010-11, and two lapsed members rejoined. One new institution joined during 2010-11 and two lapsed institutional members rejoined, all are institutions in the West Midlands.

There are 24 personal and honorary members and 7 institutional members from the East Midlands, and 36 personal and honorary members and 14 institutional members from the West Midlands, showing that the tendency of recent years for more members to come from the West Midlands is continuing. One personal member and one institutional member, the Museums Association, are not based in the region.

Publicity and Website Officer's Report

Helen Sharp

Work has continued in improving the Federation's contacts during 2010 with the aim of reaching more people working in museums and galleries in the Midlands. Members continue to be informed of events and news via the Fed's Googlemail account (midfed@googlemail.com). During the next year we hope to encourage non-members to join our e-mailing list by submitting their details via event booking forms, thus reaching people who may only attend the odd event and keeping them informed of our activities.

Our website, provided by the Collections Trust and developed by Culture 24 (www.midfed.org.uk), continues to provide details of all the Federation's activities. During 2010 we began to make presentations from our events available to download in PDF format, enabling anyone to get an idea of the content of an event even if they cannot attend in person. The aim for 2011 is to have presentations from all event speakers available on the website immediately following an event.

During 2011 we will sign up to an online payments provider, enabling payment for events and membership via this method linked from our website.

The Federation now has a Twitter account, @MidFed, keeping followers updated with all the latest news and website updates as well as tweeting news from the wider museum world. We hope to gain many more followers during 2011!



Lycaenidae butterflies at Leicestershire Museums' Collections Resources Centre. Courtesy of Leicestershire County Council.

Museum Association Matters

A difficult year, successfully navigated.

The MA has successfully negotiated a number of financial issues during 2010. A significant reduction in some areas of income, and consequent impact on staffing numbers mean that the MA had to reconsider priorities and capacity to deliver.

In October MA membership reached 6,217 members, the highest in the MA's history, and the result of a strong membership campaign. 74 members were awarded the AMA in 2010, with 110 people registered for the updated scheme. The 2010 Conference took place in Manchester. A successful event with 1,391 delegates, exhibitors and visitors attending. Conference, training and other MA events have been financially and critically successful, however it should be noted that numbers of attendees at events have reduced.

This year is the last year of the Diversify programme with all funding ending in March 2011. Effective Collections is due to launch a new grant scheme in 2011. The Esmée Fairbairne Collection Fund focuses on collections work outside the scope of an organisation's core resources, and will make £800,000 available per year over two grant rounds. Especially popular has been the advocacy programmeLove Museums, a set of advocacy tools disseminated via workshops and online.

Through the summer and autumn the MA took a higher profile approach to policy with public statements, both on the MA website and in the wider media. The MA website received record visitors in 2010. Increased news, a new social media presence, and a weekly e-newsletter have all contributed to these rises. The MA e-newsletter reaches 30,000 people.

MA representatives have been quoted in: BBC Newsnight, BBC Radio 4 Today, Six O'clock News and Front Row (several times), Daily Mail, Sunday Times, Guardian, Financial Times, the Art Newspaper and several local and sector-specific media outlets.

The key priority for MA was lobbying for the case for continued central government regional museum funding in England. At the beginning of the summer Renaissance had a low profile with new ministers at DCMS. MA undertook activities to put Renaissance on their agenda. Priority was also given to lobbying for crucial MLA functions to be retained in new arrangements for museums. MA has continued to work closely with museums, discussing key policy priorities for museums with national sector organisations.

MA will publish its own key policy priorities for the sector and advocate these widely. Current plans are to use the MA's policy priorities as the basis of an enhanced presentation of policy and ethics on the MA website. See <http://bit.ly/h5T1bH> for details on the MA's plans for 2011.

Rachel Cockett
MA Regional Councillor, West Midlands
6 Jan 2011

Conference Bursaries and Report

There was only one application to the Fed for a conference bursary this year, and it was approved by Council.

Museums Association Conference 2010 Report

In October 2010 I attended the three day Museum Association Conference in Manchester. I was able to attend this conference because of the bursary that was kindly awarded to me by the Midland Federation of Museums and Art Galleries. It was a great opportunity for me and I really appreciate the Federation's generosity.

My conference experience kicked off with a session at Manchester Art Gallery aimed at first time delegates. It was an opportunity for all the 'newbies' to find out how the timetable worked and get some tips for getting the most out of the experience.

The Conference had three themes; Showing off, Working in partnership and Whose museum is it anyway? I chose to mainly attend sessions that fitted in to the latter two themes. These were of particular interest to me in my role as assistant collections officer at Buxton Museum. It is a varied position that takes in a lot of partnership working and outreach. Most of the partners I have been working with have been reasonably traditional – libraries, schools, local history groups and societies. It was interesting to hear case studies from more unusual partnerships and the benefits and challenges that these created. I enjoyed both the 'Ultimate participation' and 'Sack the curator' sessions that opened a debate about the level of power and decision making given to the public regarding collections. It was interesting to discuss the level of responsibility that different institutions give partner organisations when co-creating. And whether we would expect the end result to be of the same standard or whether we make exceptions when working with different groups? The 'Prevention or cure' session on Wednesday was interesting and discussed whether museums are doing enough to promote health and well-being. This has left me thinking about possible new partnerships for the future and a list of contacts to approach if I need advice (which I am sure I will!).

On Tuesday I attended two of the seminars in the exhibition hall. Both of these seminars focused on using ICT to interpret collections and in particular looked at digital storytelling. Watching some of the films created by the 'Culture Shock' project in the North East has really inspired me and I hope to get a digital storytelling project off the ground at Buxton soon.

Throughout the three days there were a lot of opportunities to meet people, especially at the networking reception that was held at the People's History Museum on Monday evening. I

caught up with past colleagues and met many new people. It was particularly useful meeting people from the East Midlands – a network that I am new to. Talk was predictably dominated by the financial uncertainty facing all of us and the upcoming comprehensive spending review loomed heavy in our minds. It was therefore fitting that Tuesdays key-note address was by Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative industries. He predictably got a fair amount of grilling from the audience with a lot of questions being thrown in his direction. He covered the abolishment of the MLA, the future of Renaissance and talked generally about the cuts that would be hitting the sector. He stressed the need for museums to become more self-sufficient and focus on sponsorship, philanthropy and income generation. This was the kind of thing that I expected to hear although I was particularly interested in Vaizey's ideas on collections management. He thought that museums should take a more proactive approach to loans, even going as far as to say that museums have an obligation to loan objects in store to other institutions, schools, universities etc. This idea was also discussed by Neil MacGregor, Director at the British Museum who talked about the potential for more national-regional collaboration and the potential of more loans. This I felt was good news for smaller regional museums although it won't be without its problems.

All in all I had a fascinating (and tiring) three days at conference. I came back with lots of ideas buzzing around my head, new contacts to approach and an open mind to new partnership possibilities. It was useful to step out of the 'office' and take some time to look at the bigger picture. Attending the conference gave me the opportunity to do this and I thank the Midlands Federation of Museums and Art Galleries for making this possible.

*Anna Rhodes, Assistant Collections Officer,
Buxton Museum and Art Gallery.
January 2011.*

Personal members of the Federation can apply for a bursary for their first attendance at any residential conference organised by a museum-related group with a UK national remit.

The bursary can be for any amount up to the total advertised cost of the conference, including conference and residential fees (travel to the venue is not included).

Application is by letter or email (see contact details at the end of the Annual Report). Your application should set out details of the

conference and dates, the amount you are applying for and how and why you would benefit from attendance. If you would be attending the conference to fulfil a continuing professional development goal (e.g. as part of the AMA or other scheme), please explain how and why the conference is relevant to your CPD.

Bursaries are assessed by the Federation's council on a rolling basis, so please apply well in advance.

If you would like to tell others about the bursaries, there are details on the Resources page of the Fed's website at: <http://www.midlands.specialistnetwork.org.uk/resources>



Roman glass cremation urn from Barrow-Upon-Soar, Leicestershire. Courtesy of Leicestershire County Council

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity name: The Midlands Federation of Museums & Art Galleries

Charity Registration Number: 225103

Principal Office: George Marshall Medical Museum, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester, WR5 1DD

Council: Members of Council, who are trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are:

Philippa Tinsley (President and Chair from 11 March 2009)

Peter Field (President Elect from March 2010)
Yolanda Courtney (Past President to March 2010)
Catriona Smellie
Dean Emery
Helen Sharp
Jennifer Thomson
Lorna Hetherington
Emma Banks
Josie Hickin (to March 2010)
Nicola Jones (to March 2010)
Laura Hadland (from March 2010)
Varshali Patel (from March 2010; resigned 14 December 2010)
Kate Whitworth (from March 2010; resigned 28 November 2010)
Jack Kirby
Anja Rohde
Liz Taylor (resigned 26 October 2010)
Roger Sellick (resigned August 2010)
Ruth Bellamy (from March 2010; resigned 6 December 2010)
Lisa Moore (from March 2010)

Co-opted ex-officio members of Council:

Rachel Cockett, Renaissance West Midlands
Michael Cooke, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
Susan Lansdale, East Midlands Museums Service

Reporting Officer: Jonathan Wallis, MA Regional Councillor for the East Midlands

Structure, government and management:

The organisation is an unincorporated association governed by a constitution (amended 2000). Trustees are nominated and elected by members in accordance with detailed provisions in the constitution. The Council consists of Officers and six Personal Members and the Council may co-opt up to three persons (who are not trustees) for up to a year at a time.

Objectives and activities: The objects of the charity, as set out in the constitution, are to promote within the areas covered by the East and West Midlands Government Offices the objects of the Museums Association (as set down in its Memorandum of Association), by holding meetings of an educational nature for the purpose of reading original papers, for discussions, for demonstrations in museum technique and by the provision of information and by encouraging the better administration of museums and art galleries in the Federation area.

Financial review: The unexamined statement of receipts and payments for the year appears on pages 15 and 16 of this report. The Treasurer's report appears on page 5. The report of independent examiners required by the Constitution is presented to members at the AGM. The Federation does not have a reserves policy.

Public benefit: In planning the Federation's activities during the year, members of Council have at their Council Meetings borne in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Federation's activities all contribute to the central vision of supporting the museum workforce to serve audiences and collections. This is achieved by holding meetings that enable people who work in museums to develop their professional competence, providing grants to support individual members with continuing professional development, enabling networking and sharing information between museum professionals, and advocating on regional and national museum issues.

The Federation's activities benefit visitors to museums in the East and West Midlands and the public in general by helping museums and galleries and professionals working for them to ensure that people are able to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment, and to collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which museums hold in trust for society. These benefits are defined by the Museum's Association's definition of a museum.

The charity's beneficiaries are people working within museums and galleries in the East and West Midlands. The Federation is a membership organisation but it is not necessary to be a member to attend meetings, which are open to all. Fees charged for meetings are kept to a minimum and are substantially below fees charged by commercial organisations for equivalent events.

Only members can benefit from grants to support individuals with their continuing professional development, but membership is open to open to all those who work for, or have worked with, historic collections, or who support the aims of the Museums Association. Fees charged for personal membership are minimal and a 50% discount is offered to people who are retired, volunteers, or have a low income. Fees for institutional members are tiered according to revenue budget.

The preceding report details the charity's achievements and performance during the year.

Minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Midlands Federation of Museums & Art Galleries

Held on 25th March 2010 at the Collections Centre, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

Present:

Council officers and council members

Philippa Tinsley (President), Catriona Smellie (Honorary Secretary), Jennifer Thomson (Membership Secretary), Helen Sharp (Website and Publicity Officer), Rachel Cockett (Personal Member), Mike Constable (Deputy Hon Treasurer)

Members and guests

Peter Field, Varshali Patel, Laura Hadland, Nick Poole, Mike Constable, Matt Edwards, Wendy Scott, Jane Arthur, David Bailey, Robin Hill, Pippa Ashmore, Marie Fowler, Glynis Powell, Gemma Oakley, Helen Johnson, Kate Whitworth, Janine Fox, Kathy Gee, Susan Lansdale, Claire Cooper, Paulette Francis-Green, Andrea Newton, Jeremy Ross, Robin Clarke.

The meeting opened at 10.30am

10/23 apologies for absence

Received from: Emma Banks, Ruth Bellamy, Yolanda Courtney, Josie Hickin, Jack Kirby, Michelle Phillips, Anja Rohde, Jonathan Wallis, Iain Rutherford, Roger Sellick, Karen Spry, Anne Meredith, Sue Constable.

10/24 Minutes of the last AGM held on 11th March 2009

The minutes had been included in the Annual Report. Jane Arthur proposed, Rachel Cockett seconded that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. The motion was unanimously carried.

10/25 Matters arising

09/22 To elect Members of Council

The vacancy for a personal member of Council was filled by Liz Taylor, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

09/25 Any other business

The Federation has had some discussions with the MA about holding a joint meeting, but it has not yet proved possible to find a suitable opportunity. The MA is keen to work more closely with regional federations and it is possible that we will organise something in the next year.

10/26 Presidential Address

Philippa Tinsley referred to her written report to members, which had been published in the Annual Report for 2009, and distributed prior to the meeting. 2009 had been a challenging year for museums and museums staff, particularly in the Midlands which had been seriously affected by the recession.

The Federation had remained stable despite this and had continued to offer an excellent programme of meetings throughout the year, offering practical advice and inspiration. Philippa reminded members present to take up the Federation training bursaries as there had been no applications for this in 2009.

Philippa summarised the consultations that the Federation had produced for Renaissance, the Museums Association, and MLA, as contained in the Annual Report. The continued strengths of the Federation are its independence and its cross-regional viewpoint.

At the beginning of 2010, the election on the horizon will bring further change, and the Federation will continue to provide independent support to the sector.

Philippa closed with a vote of thanks to Jack Kirby for his sterling work as Honorary Secretary, and said that his work was considerably appreciated by the Federation and particularly by herself.

10/27 Honorary Secretary's Report

Jack Kirby sent his apologies for not being present. His report had been included in the Annual Report circulated to members. Jack wished to reiterate Philippa's reminder about the bursaries for first time attendance at national conferences, and to remind members that details are on the website at www.midfed.org.uk. He wished to request that members encourage colleagues to join the Federation and to apply for the bursaries.

Jack also wanted to highlight that membership has risen since the Annual Report was published. Jennifer Thomson, our membership secretary, reported from the floor that the revised membership totals were as follows: 53 personal members (of which 32 are from the West, 21 from the East Midlands). There were 11 new members; 20 institutional members (of which 11 are from the West, 8 from the East Midlands, and one is the Museums Association); 8 honorary members.

10/28 Honorary Treasurer's Report

Dean Emery also sent his apologies due to sick leave; his written report was also contained within the Annual Report and copies of the signed accounts had been distributed. Catriona Smellie read a written update:

Our finances remain healthy as evidenced in the examined accounts. Due to lower costs for meetings, one meeting being deferred from the Autumn until February, and no bursaries being

taken up, we have made a surplus on the year. There are also a small number of payment that had fallen into 2010, including our donation to the MA Benevolent Fund, as the MA did not cash our cheque until early 2010.

Council had discussed this surplus and agreed that we will improve the promotion of bursaries, and also where deemed appropriate, pay for room hire with the aim of ensuring that the meetings budgets break even rather than making a surplus.

The key change to our financial procedures this year was the closure of our Lombard investment account, which was no longer earning a competitive rate of interest. We have investigated the situation but there are no accounts aimed at small charities that earn any significantly greater interest than our current account.

Philippa asked the meeting on the behalf of Council to consider whether we should consider an investment account. We provided details of the Charities Aid Foundation Bond Income Fund for members at the meeting. This is a professionally-managed investment in UK Government bonds and overseas government and corporate fixed-interest securities. It should be seen as a long term investment of at least five years, particularly given the current economic situation. Council proposed investing a small amount in this fund, perhaps £2,000. As noted in the literature, the value of investments can fall as well as rise and we may not get back the money invested. However, irrespective of the value of the investment, there will still be more than two year's expenditure available on deposit.

David Bailey requested that Council take savings accounts into consideration again before making an investment.

Glynis Powell stated that she would be glad to see the Federation banking with an ethical organization like the CAF.

Nick Poole commented that The Collections Trust has placed funds with the CAF and has found them to be very good. He also noted that the CAF has a variety of grant programmes and that it might be in the interests of the Federation to bank with the CAF as a way of opening up these funding routes.

Mike Constable requested that Council consider raising the amount planned to be placed within the bond above the suggested £2000.

Mike Constable proposed and Jane Arthur seconded the motion, 'The Meeting authorizes the Federation's Council to invest in a bond income fund with CAF'. A show of hands was received and the motion was unanimously approved.

10/29 Appointment of Examiners

Of our two existing examiners, Iain Rutherford was willing to continue in post, but Jim Andrew wished to retire after several years' service. The new examiner was proposed as Michael Duffy of Renaissance West Midlands, proposed by Mike Constable, seconded by Rachel Cockett, and unanimously approved.

10/30 To elect Officers of Council

The nominations for Officers from existing members of Council had been agreed at the Council meeting of 21st October 2009 and notified to members in the Annual Report as: Philippa Tinsley (President), Catriona Smellie (Honorary Secretary), Dean Emery (Honorary Treasurer), Jennifer Thomson (Membership Secretary), Lorna Hetherington (Joint Meetings Secretary (East)), Emma Banks (Joint Meetings Secretary (West)), and Helen Sharp (Publicity and Website Officer).

Nominations had been received for the three vacant posts: Peter Field (President Elect), Laura Hadland (Joint Meetings Secretary East), and Varshali Patel (Joint Meetings Secretary West).

As there was no competition for posts, the election of all of the above named officers was proposed by Jane Arthur seconded by Kathy Gee, and unanimously approved.

10/31 To elect Members of Council

Anje Rohde and Roger Sellick were continuing in post and Council had agreed that Michael Cooke should be co-opted rather than elected from this year, in his role as Regional Manager for the West Midlands. There were four vacancies this year and three nominations had been received: Lisa Moore, Ruth Bellamy, and Jack Kirby.

Because there was no competition for these posts, they were deemed elected.

In line with the constitution, nominations were invited from the floor for the final vacancy for a Personal Member, but none were received. Catriona Smellie reminded all present that the role involved little commitment in terms of time and that it would be an excellent CPD

opportunity, She invited anybody interested in the role to contact her after the meeting for further details.

10/32 Museums Association Matters

Jonathan Wallis, the MA councillor for the East Midlands sent his apologies for not being able to attend the AGM, and his report was contained within the Annual Report.

Rachel Cockett, MA councillor for the West Midlands, gave an updated report based on a meeting of regional MA councillors on 18th March 2010.

During this meeting, the MA emphasised the importance of the federations in communicating MA information to the regions. However, in March 2011, the MA council will reduce from 36 to 12 elected members, and there won't necessarily be regional representation. If the proposals to change the current structure are accepted by MA members, the current council will be dissolved at end March 2010. Rachel suggested that perhaps the Mid Fed could report to this board to maintain the regional link that might be lost if no regional representatives remain on the new MA board of 12 elected members.

The MA Business Plan includes: Who should the MA speak for, how wide should the MA cast its net, and the Independence of the MA. Rachel suggested that perhaps the Federation might comment on this Plan.

Rachel reported that the final edition of Museum Practice has been published as of March 2010, but that some elements would be retained within Museums Journal or online. Museums Journal news is now updated online on a weekly basis.

12 hosts had been recruited for final phase of Diversify. The process of recruiting was ongoing and includes traineeships for those from less affluent backgrounds, management level traineeships and a new round of Bill Kirby traineeships for deaf/disabled.

Changes to the AMA had been well received since the re-launch in October 2009. The MA would continue to work with employers to encourage them to enable employees to take up the AMA, and to support those that do so.

10/33 Museums Association Benevolent Fund

In Dean Emery's absence, Philippa Tinsley proposed that the Federation should make a donation to the MA Benevolent Fund to support

members of the profession in economic hardship. Last year, this donation was increased to £200 in view of the economic downturn and likely increase in hardship. This year, given the Federation's healthy financial position and continuing economic difficulties in the sector, Philippa again proposed an amount of £200.

Mike Constable seconded this and it was unanimously approved.

10/34 Any other business

Jane Arthur, in her role as Secretary for the West Midlands Museum Policy Forum, reminded members of the next meeting of the Forum on 12th May 2010 at the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery, Coventry.

Susan Lansdale announced an EMMS company meeting on 30th April 2010 and that it would be on a theme of 'protecting our cultural heritage through partnership working' in the morning, and looking at insurance in focus groups in the afternoon.

Claire Cooper announced the next AIM conference in the West Midlands to be held at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, from 3rd to 5th June 2010. This was to be on a theme of the tourist economy.

The meeting closed at 11.06am.

Notice of Annual General Meeting 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the Midlands Federation of Museums & Art Galleries will be held at 10.00 on Wednesday 23rd March at the Guildhall, Leicester, LE1 5FQ. The AGM will be followed by the Spring Meeting, details of which will be circulated in due course.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the last AGM held on 23 March 2010
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Presidential Address
- 5 Honorary Secretary's report
- 6 Honorary Treasurer's report
- 7 Appointment of Examiners
- 8 To elect Officers of Council
- 9 To elect Members of Council
- 10 Museums Association Matters
- 11 Museums Association Benevolent Fund
- 12 Any other business

Vacancies on Council

The Council consists of the Officers and six Personal Members.

This year there are vacancies for Joint Meetings Secretary (East), Joint Meetings Secretary (West), and three vacancies for Personal Members of Council. Please make nominations on the enclosed form and return it to Catriona Smellie, the Honorary Secretary, by Monday 28th February 2011.

Previously elected Officers and Members of Council whose posts are already confirmed for 2011 are as follows:

Philippa Tinsley (President to 2011 AGM)
Peter Field (President from 2011 AGM to 2013 AGM, retires as Past President 2014 AGM)
Michael Cooke (Member, retires 2011 AGM)
Anja Rohde (Member, retires 2012 AGM)
Jack Kirby (Member, retires 2013 AGM)
Lisa Moore (Member, retires 2013 AGM)

The nominations agreed by Council for annually appointed Officers to be approved at the AGM (as laid down in the Constitution paragraph 5b) are as follows:

Honorary Secretary: Catriona Smellie
Treasurer: David Powell
Membership Secretary: Jennifer Thomson
Joint Meetings Secretary (East): Laura Hadland
Joint Meetings Secretary (West): Emma Banks
Publicity and Website Officer: Helen Sharp

The remaining vacancies will be filled at the AGM (as laid down in the Constitution paragraph 5c). A nomination form is enclosed with this report.

Mid Fed Contact Details

General and website/publicity enquiries

Helen Sharp
Harborough Museum, Council Offices, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7AG
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East Midlands Meetings

Laura Hadland
Jewry Wall Museum, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 4LB
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West Midlands Meetings

Emma Banks
Chedham's Yard,
2 School Road
Wellesborne

CV35 9NH
01789 841434
emmabanks100@hotmail.com

New Members

Jennifer Thomson
Walsall Museum, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1
1TR
01922 654 315
ThomsonJ@walsall.gov.uk

Conference Bursaries, AGM and Council business

Catriona Smellie
Curator, George Marshall Medical Museum,
Charles Hastings Education Centre,
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*Doll's wickerwork pram, 1930s. Courtesy of
Leicestershire County Council*

The Annual Report is edited by Catriona Smellie
– January 2011. With thanks to Helen Sharp
and Philippa Tinsely for supplying images.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday 10th May 2011

What can Social Media do for You?

The Public, West Bromwich

Over recent years there have been many courses and meetings for museums and galleries focused on *how* to utilise social media. So what has happened at organisations who embraced new technologies? Come along to our next meeting to hear case studies of positive and negative factors encountered and catch a glimpse into what might be next on the horizon!

Speakers include Jim Richardson of Sumo and Tim Johnson of the University of Worcester. The final programme will be confirmed shortly. Contact Emma Banks for bookings and enquiries.

Thursday 7th July 2011

Producing Exhibitions

The Carnegie, Melton Mowbray

This event will consider some of the more practical elements involved in putting together new temporary and permanent exhibitions from a variety of disciplines and delegates will have an opportunity to share experiences and advice.

Full programme and speakers to be confirmed. Contact Laura Hadland for bookings and enquiries.

Midlands Federation of Museums and Art Galleries

Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2010

Period to 31/12/2009	Payments	Period to 31/12/2010	Period to 31/12/2009	Receipts	Period to 31/12/2010
£74.30	Travelling Expenses	£498.28	£385.00	Subscriptions Personal	£370.00
£249.44	Stationary and Postage	£181.60	£1,625.00	Subscriptions Institutional	£1,800.00
£89.70	Meeting Room Hire	£405.74	£892.00	Income from Meetings	£1,111.00
887.91	Meeting Catering	£1,065.54	£18.58	Lombard N/C Deposit Account Interest	£0.00
£0.00	President's Chain	£0.00			
£0.00	Conference Grants	£350.00	£0.00	Tax Reclamation	£0.00
£0.00	M.A. Benevolent Fund	£400.00	£0.00	Training	£0.00
£0.00	Other Donation	£125.00	£240.00	Refunds	£851.30
£6.88	Other	£0.00	£50.00	Other	£0.33
<u>£1,308.23</u>		<u>£3,026.16</u>	<u>£3,210.58</u>		<u>£4,132.63</u>
<u>£1,902.35</u>	Excess Income over Expenditure	<u>£1,106.47</u>		Excess Income over Expenditure	£1,106.47
				Current Account at 01.01.10	£14,902.49
				Current Account at 01.01.11	<u>£16,008.96</u>

