

**AMGUEDDFEYDD AC ORIELAU
CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU**

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS & GALLERIES OF
WALES**

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Michael Tooby
Director, National Museum & Gallery Cardiff

Angela Gaffney
Partnerships Research Officer

Working in Partnership

Contents

1.0	Aims and Objectives	5
1.1	Background	6
1.2	Historical Precedents	6
1.3	Definitions	6
1.4	Peer Institutions' Partnerships Schemes	8
2.0	Examples of Current NMGW Partnerships	10
2.1	Research	10
2.2	Curatorial and Educational	12
2.3	Project Development and Investment Partnerships	13
2.4	Partnerships with other National Institutions	14
3.0	Potential Partners	16
4.0	Existing small venues managed by NMGW within a long-standing local partnership	18
5.0	Perception and Awareness of NMGW	19
6.0	The 'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan – Sharing Treasures' Partnership Scheme	21
7.0	Next Steps	22
8.0	What does NMGW gain from having a structured policy?	24
9.0	Conclusions	25

Working in Partnership

1.0 Aims and Objectives:

- This report has been authored by the Partnerships Research Officer and by the Director, National Museum & Gallery Cardiff.
- It introduces the subject of the NMGW's partnerships in Wales and has two aims:
 - To assess the current range of work undertaken by NMGW within Wales in partnership with other bodies;
 - To provide an overview of a potential co-ordinated scheme of partnerships, and a simple structure for its delivery;
- The report explains why there is an emphasis on access to collections in Wales, through loans, exhibitions and displays and related work planned in collaboration with museums and galleries in Wales.
- 'Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan – Sharing Treasures'. The report describes this scheme; which will pursue three main objectives:
 - pilot two year projects with three museums in Wales, through funds made available to the Council of Museums in Wales (CMW) by the Welsh Assembly government;
 - establish an identity for the better promotion of existing loans to the range of museums and galleries with which NMGW works across Wales;
 - assess further partnership that which can be linked to the scheme in future.
- The report concludes with a discussion of 'next steps' for NMGW. The benefits in following a structured policy of partnership working within Wales are outlined.
- The importance of maintaining and promoting existing involvement with partners across the United Kingdom, Europe and beyond is noted as an integral element of future partnership strategy.

1.1 Background:

1.1.1 The decision to appoint a temporary Partnerships Research Officer in November 2001 followed discussions within NMGW about the way in which work with other museums, galleries, educational bodies and other organisations in Wales is organised and promoted. It is important to note that much of the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic planning emphasises "partnership working" in broad terms. There is also a current political focus on the specific issue of regional access to collections and expertise within Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government's Plan for Wales 2001 and the Museum's current remit letter make it clear that NMGW is expected to carry out more activities in partnership with other organisations.

1.2 Historical Precedents:

1.2.1 The concept of NMGW entering into distinct partnerships with local museums in Wales is not new. The idea of affiliation was raised at an archaeological conference held in Swansea in August 1920 when it was suggested that finds should be deposited in museums and that such museums should be affiliated to the National Museum of Wales. This led to a formal scheme of affiliation which was proposed by Mortimer Wheeler in 1922 and launched the following year.

1.2.2 The first meeting with representatives from the affiliated museums was held in Cardiff at the National Museum in October 1924. All members of Council represented the National Museum on the Committee and it was reported that with one exception every museum in Wales had adopted the scheme. The annual meetings eventually evolved into annual Summer Schools based around museum techniques. Of interest is the fact that both the Affiliation Scheme and Summer Schools were the first of their kind to be established in Britain, although there were precedents beyond the United Kingdom such as in Canada and the United States. The Affiliation Scheme functioned successfully for many years but was eventually superseded by the establishment in 1965 of the Council of Museums in Wales and by the Welsh Federation of Museums & Galleries in 1975.

1.3 Definitions:

1.3.1 Before embarking on the research, it was essential to address the question of terminology. 'Partnership' is a multi-layered term. It is often used as 'shorthand' to describe a variety of levels of collaborative working. This inevitably leaves the term open to differing individual and collective interpretations, which can cause confusion over precise meaning. In order, therefore, to clarify the terminology and to establish parameters for the report, a broad definition was adopted:

joint working where two or more partners define goals and share resource issues.

More specifically, it was recognised that, in immediate planning terms, utilisation of NMGW collections within Wales was the core issue represented within current partnership arrangements.

- 1.3.2** A number of current NMGW initiatives do not fit comfortably within this criterion. It is nevertheless extremely important to note the existence of such arrangements and their relevance to the profile of NMGW, since they are often referred to in 'shorthand' terms as partnerships.
- 1.3.3** For example, since May 2001, the image licensing function has been centralised within the **Commercial Department**. In partnership with established and respectable manufacturers, image licensing provides the opportunity to develop products based on collections but without high investment on NMGW's part. This also allows the placing of NMGW products in a national and sometimes international marketplace raising the Museum's profile in the process. Recent partnerships include a range of greeting cards based on the art collection at NMG and a set of sampler kits based on the textile collection at the Museum of Welsh Life (MWL). NMGW is also about to enter a strictly non-exclusive agreement with the Bridgeman Art Library. By placing a selection of images with an external picture library, NMGW gains access to a much wider marketplace. Other commercial partnerships are planned for the future.
- 1.3.4** The perception of NMGW's position as a public sector leader has been enhanced through its work with the **Padarn Forum**. This marketing and promotion partnership has been in existence since 1996 and meets at the Welsh Slate Museum (WSM), usually twice a year. The Forum is chaired by the Director General, NMGW, and is actively involved in the work of Llanberis as a 'destination' and brings together public and private sector partners. It provided a strong basis of support for NMGW's HLF bid at WSM and was then seminal in achieving success with the Objective 5b funding bid which established the **Llanberis Project**. This is aimed primarily at the promotion of Llanberis as a visitor destination, its target area being the holiday resorts along the coast of the north of Wales. The Project ended in June 2002 but has been exceptionally successful in delivering its projected outcomes and was quickly seen as an exemplar of its kind by Gwynedd, the WTB and the WDA as well as by local businesses in Llanberis. The local management team has committed real money as well as 'in kind' assistance and represents a coming together of public and private funding for the common benefit. The Project has won NMGW much praise and has also provided excellent value for money in terms of promoting WSM to a far wider audience.

1.3.5 It is important to note that many of **NMGW's partnerships involve work beyond Wales**. It is essential to recognise that such partnerships deserve wider discussion in other policy and strategy contexts.

1.4 Peer Institutions' Partnership Schemes:

Most of the national museums and galleries in the United Kingdom are developing various forms of partnership schemes. They are nearly all focused on access to objects through geographically spread venues.

Examples include the **Tate Partnership Scheme**, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, where five galleries were selected to take part in a three year scheme: Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal; Castle Museum, Norwich; Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust; The New Art Gallery, Walsall and The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. The scheme aims to increase public access to the Tate Collection through a series of loans and exhibitions and provide new opportunities for training and development.

The National Portrait Gallery has collaborated successfully with historical properties around the country to ensure that important works from the Gallery's collection are seen outside London in appropriate period settings. These regional partnerships have resulted in substantial numbers of important works being on display at Montacute House, Somerset, **Bodelwyddan Castle, north Wales** and Beningbrough Hall, Yorkshire.

The British Museum has set up a flexible network of collaborative partner museums primarily to share travelling exhibitions. Partners meet regularly to share future exhibition plans with the aim of touring them within the range of the partnership. Not every member of the group will take every exhibition, but it is hoped that partners can work collaboratively thus generating innovative and inclusive exhibitions.

Like NMGW they are also involved in a variety of commercial, research and managerial partnerships but these are rarely marketed with external 'branding' as such. Instead they develop their own specific identity according to the project. Examples range from the Tate's partnership with Coffee Republic or B&Q over 'Tate Modern' brands through to the Natural History Museum's participation in the National Biodiversity Network.

1.4.1 The utilisation of such a **broad definition of partnership** reveals that much of current work at NMGW could all, at one level or another, be termed partnership. The following examples have been selected to illustrate the wide range of NMGW activity that could be encompassed by the term

'partnership' but it should be stressed that the **report cannot provide and should not be seen as a comprehensive inventory of current partnerships operating within NMGW**. Paradoxically, this reinforces what has become increasingly apparent during the period of research: that the range and scale of NMGW activity both in and beyond Wales has not always been successfully articulated in the past.

It is hoped that this **report will both celebrate and promote the enormous diversity of NMGW's partnerships** as well as looking as to how these could develop in the future.

2.0 Examples of Current NMGW Partnerships:

2.1 Research:

Fieldwork and research are important areas of partnership for NMGW and illustrate the increasingly common use of **joint funding arrangements**. Many scientific partnerships are based around a particular research project and last for the duration of that project. It is possible to argue, however, that they are not 'true' partnerships since they are initiated by one party commissioning work from another. Curatorial departments and Education departments have an extensive network of informal collaborative partnerships with a diverse range of individuals and organisations based in Wales. These usually involve mutual resources, costs and benefits with NMGW often acting as either client or customer.

2.1.1 Collaborative research projects are the key to maximise access to funding and NMGW has been particularly successful in this area. A key example is the **South West Irish Sea Survey (SWISS)**. This is a joint Wales-Ireland project initiated and partly funded under the EU INTERREG programme. The Welsh side of the partnership is led by NMGW in collaboration with the Menai Bridge Marine Laboratory, University of Wales Bangor whilst for Ireland the project is headed by Trinity College Dublin working with Aquafact International Services Ltd (Galway), as well as a number of contracted experts from both countries. The main aims of the SWISS project are to chart the benthic (seabed dwelling) invertebrate assemblages and determine the biodiversity of the area as a whole. NMGW co-ordinated the specimen curation aspects of the project and is the main depository for the material collected. The surveys provided much material for taxonomic research and have also resulted in two high-quality publications.

2.1.2 Further afield, NMGW is actively involved in the **NATO project on Palaeozoic climate change**. As well as NMGW, the project team palaeobotanists from Bulgaria and Canada will compare the changes that took place in the Late Carboniferous vegetation in these widely separated countries. The financial support being provided by NATO is further evidence of the leading international role that BioSyB is playing in the study of the biodiversity of these ancient tropical rain forests. NMGW is now the leading British institution for biodiversity studies on these forests and their potential for understanding the causative link between climate change and tropical vegetation.

2.1.3 The transfer and dissemination of scientific expertise is an integral part of NMGW's work. An example of this is the evolution of '**Mentor Partnerships**' such as that engendered by **East African Molluscan Forest Biodiversity**. This originated from a research grant leading to a project based partnership involving NMGW, the National Museums of Kenya

and National Museums of Tanzania. This is now moving to a mentor partnership, where the staff are now employed at their respective institutions and are supported by NMGW, but are also gaining their own funding for research which contributes to the overall aim of the project.

2.1.4 Local authorities in Wales commission fieldwork but the prime mover in this area is the **Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)** with whom NMGW has enjoyed a number of productive partnerships. This frequently is commissioned work. However, there are again some examples of ‘true’ partnerships. **The Minescan Project** established a formal partnership with a Memorandum of Agreement between NMGW, through the Department of Geology, and CCW, which ran from 1996 to 2001. The Project reviewed 1,300 metal mine sites in Wales and resulted in four substantial volumes; ‘CCW Contract Science Reports’. The Project also resulted in a joint CCW/NMGW publication; ‘The Mineral Wealth of Wales’ which was intended as an introductory text for the lay reader. The benefits to both partners in the Project are particularly beneficial. CCW established a framework for mineral site conservation in Wales whilst NMGW gained invaluable knowledge of the sites and collected specimens from sites, many of which are ‘precarious’ and may well disappear in the years ahead. The Project as a whole provided the most rigorous review of mineral sites yet undertaken worldwide.

2.1.5 South-West Wales Bays and Rias Survey: This collaboration between NMGW and CCW involved extensive benthic sampling in Carmarthen Bay, St Bride’s Bay and Milford Haven and was interlinked with two Ph.D studentships at the University of Wales Swansea. A more recent collaboration between NMGW and CCW is the Welsh Sandbank Survey; a study of the sandbanks off west Wales to provide information relevant to the selection of marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), as required under the EU ‘Habitats Directive’. This project continued the collaboration with the Menai Bridge Marine Laboratory.

2.1.6 An ongoing partnership between CCW and BioSyB is the jointly funded project studying **the geology and palaeontology of the upper Neath and Swansea Valleys**. A Research Fellow was employed to undertake a detailed survey of this part of the south Wales coalfield, mapping and logging the exposures, and collecting a set of voucher specimens from the key fossil-bearing horizons. He will also be identifying any significant issues relating to the conservation of the sites. The success of the project is reflected in the fact that CCW have awarded NMGW another two year contract, this time to look at the younger parts of the coalfield.

2.1.7 Collaboration on projects such as these where funding is provided by an outside agency with NMGW providing staff to undertake fieldwork enables

both partners to achieve objectives and facilitate the exchange of scientific data. Equally important is the provision of information for CCW to assist in developing a coherent conservation strategy whilst supplementing NMGW collections with new material. Yet there may be **opportunities for even closer partnership with CCW. In particular a goal should be the involvement of NMGW staff with proposed research initiatives at the planning rather than the implementation stage.**

2.1.8 NMGW staff in all disciplines have established strong intellectual links particularly involving **formal teaching at universities** in Wales and beyond. A recent example of research collaboration is the Research Fellowship which has been jointly funded for two years by NMGW and the University of Swansea. This project has studied the development of Swansea as an industrial and maritime centre and has resulted in a number of forthcoming publications. An academic monograph based on the research is currently being considered by the University of Wales Press. If this goes ahead, the publication is planned to coincide with the opening date of the new museum in Swansea.

Universities in Wales have the additional benefit of ‘on-hand’ expertise as evidenced by staff contributions to one of the few archaeology courses held in Britain on numismatics. Students from Cardiff University and University of Wales, Bangor, have also taken part in a number of archaeological digs in Wales providing invaluable opportunities for training future archaeologists. Most of this work is carried out on an ad hoc basis, or rather ‘within normal service provision’. This can also be applied to academic input to the organisation and work of learned societies.

Whilst this work enhances NMGW’s national reputation, it is not always successful in raising the Museum’s public profile. Similarly, multi-disciplinary research expertise is recognised and respected both nationally and internationally and has been particularly successful in obtaining grants for project based partnerships. Yet the **high quality of the research work and the resulting enhancement of NMGW’s profile and status** may not always be fully appreciated and it is suggested that the strength of such partnerships and associated academic research links should be acknowledged and supported.

2.2 Curatorial and Educational:

2.2.1 A useful example of NMGW’s work in this area is the **Portable Antiquities Scheme**, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which records finds of archaeological importance. NMGW is working with a number of partner organisations including the Council of Museums in Wales (CMW), the Royal

Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries in Wales and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts. The Finds Co-ordinator Post is based in the Department of Archaeology & Numismatics at NMG but by working closely with the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and local museums, a network of reporting centres has been established throughout Wales where finds can be taken for recording.

2.2.2 The Education Department is involved in numerous collaborative projects around Wales encompassing schools, businesses and local authorities and often work directly with education authorities. NMGW was also closely involved in the successful 'Science in the City' for National Science Week in March 2002. **The Museums and Galleries Access Fund Project 'On Common Ground'** also co-ordinated by the Education Department, will target 16-24 year olds who do not currently visit museums. Four distinct communities in Wales have agreed to participate in the project; Denbigh, Swansea, Tenby and a community in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Young people will have the opportunity to participate in workshops and activities to produce a resource relevant to the target audience highlighting the value of heritage resources and collections.

2.2.3 Working with further and higher education providers in Wales has always been a priority for NMGW and a recent example which gained widespread praise was the '**Fibre Weave Blanket**' project carried out in 2001. This was an exhibition of woven surfaces using recycled materials created in collaboration between the Museum of the Welsh Woollen Industry (MWWI) and second year students on the BA Contemporary Textile Practice Course at Cardiff School of Art and Design, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. The project provided a unique opportunity for the museum's collections to be used to inspire new designers.

2.2.4 A further crucial area of NMGW work is the **provision of curatorial and conservation advice**. This occurs so frequently throughout Wales that it is automatically deemed to be within normal service provision. Until recently, evidence of the extent of this service and how well it is received locally, was largely anecdotal. In March 2002, CMW carried out an audit of their registered museums and included, at NMGW's request, questions directly related to the provision of service in Wales. A sample of replies confirms the extent of NMGW staff expertise in museums around Wales primarily in the form of conservation advice, information on research and assistance with identification. **It is important to note that this occurred both in NMGW loan venues and in other institutions that have no formal loan arrangements with us.**

2.3 Project Development and Investment Partnerships:

2.3.1 The partnership between **NMGW and City & County of Swansea (CCS)** to establish a new museum is unique but does fit well within NMGW's strategic thrust of creating new partnerships to deliver enhanced museum activity throughout Wales. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Project partners was signed in April 1999. It was agreed that a new company would be established, having charitable status and limited by guarantee, with a Board represented 50:50 between NMGW and CCS, and with an independent chair. The original purpose of the company, which was established in July 2001, was to provide the vehicle through which CCS and NMGW would collaborate in developing the new Museum in partnership.

The National Waterfront Museum Swansea (NWMS) will be a catalyst for partnership development. Whilst it is appropriate that many partners will contribute museum and archive material to the NWMS displays, NMGW is equally keen that all other registered industrial and maritime museums in Wales benefit from its collections, particularly those it cannot display itself. This aspiration fits well with the declared aims of NWMS, one of which is to offer a synoptic vision of the field in Wales, and act as a 'gateway' to all other industrial and maritime museums and heritage sites in Wales.

2.4 Partnerships with other National Institutions:

The following examples illustrate how **partnerships involving NMGW can evolve informally** either through individual contact or through groups of staff building relationships through contact and sharing expertise.

2.4.1 Staff throughout NMGW have always had a good informal relationship with their counterparts at the **National Library of Wales (NLW)**. Examples of 'protocols' which enable complementary work are the agreements about various collecting areas, such as the acquisition of works of art which depict Welsh topography or individuals. Since the establishment of the National Screen and Sound Archive (NSSA) in 2001, the relationship between NLW staff and staff based at the Museum of Welsh Life (MWL) has been put on a more formal footing. Quarterly meetings are held to discuss joint events, acquisitions and collecting policies with co-operative thinking encouraged at all levels. MWL is also involved with the potential establishment of a Welsh Audio-Visual Archive Forum, again working with NLW and a number of other national organisations including the BBC and S4C.

2.4.2 A prominent and long-standing example of partnership exists between NMGW and **Cadw** at the Roman Legionary Museum (RLM), Caerleon. Prior to free entry, the RLM and Fortress Baths managed by Cadw, both offered a joint ticket, 'splitting' takings equally between NMGW and Cadw. The Education Officer post at RLM has been jointly funded since 1994 and Cadw

contribute towards the education budget. Joint events are organised every two years. This partnership has successfully underpinned handling potentially difficult issues such as the separation of admission charges when free admission to NMGW sites was introduced a year ago.

2.4.3 The '**Gathering the Jewels**' project originated in response to a call for funding from the New Opportunities Fund under the Cultural Enrichment strand of its programme for the 'Digitisation of Learning Materials'. The Board of Gathering the Jewels Ltd. is based on the original consortium partnership and NMGW is one of a number of partners who, in total, represent 172 separate institutions across Wales. The aim of the project is to digitise over 20,000 images of cultural heritage material held in institutions all over Wales. It will bring those images together as part of a single Web site which will become a new national learning resource, and which will reflect and promote the extraordinary diversity and significance of materials held in Welsh libraries, museums and archives.

2.4.4 Alongside shared database projects such as 'Gathering the Jewels', NMGW is also being asked to work in other partnerships to deliver dedicated projects to create access to information. A current example is the '**National Biodiversity Network**'. This is an initiative to create linked on-line access to environmental information, kept current through a network of partners, from major organisations such as NMGW, the National Museum of Scotland and the Natural History Museum, through organisation such as CCW and the Environment Agency, through to local groups who monitor local environments through amateur activity.

2.4.5 NMGW has a number of projects with the **National Botanic Garden of Wales**. These include research and species monitoring through to assisting the art exhibitions programme ranging from introductory texts and background information on recent exhibitions of botanical illustrations, and a display of recent Welsh art drawn from the Derek Williams collection.

2.4.6 **The National Inventory of European Paintings** (NIEP) has been initiated by the National Gallery in London in liaison with colleagues in other national and regional institutions. The NIEP is intended to bring together information on some 22,500 old master paintings in the public collections in the UK into one online, illustrated, searchable database. NMGW are actively supporting the joint application by a number of museums in Wales and will provide office accommodation and access to its extensive archive and professional expertise within the Department of Art. The results of the research will undoubtedly benefit the NIEP whilst also enhancing communication and co-operation between regional museums and NMGW.

3.0 Potential Partners:

It is evident that, having taken a view of the range of partnerships across NMGW, the specific strategic issue of access to collections and related expertise through organisations within Wales is complex. The diversity of NMGW's collections and curatorial expertise means that NMGW staff work with organisations from different sectors in the museums, galleries and 'heritage' community. **The following categories reflect 'strands' of potential partnerships:**

3.1 Council of Museums in Wales: CMW have been given £40,000 by the Welsh Assembly Government to develop pilot partnership schemes with NMGW. CMW have identified three venues to participate in the pilot schemes; **Anglesey County Museums and Culture Service, Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery and Wrexham County Borough Museum.** Each venue has submitted proposals for using the funds to develop projects and enhance infrastructure provision (e.g. display and storage provision) to enable them to access NMGW collections. They will also develop local outreach and, where possible and appropriate, staff development opportunities.

Examples of outcomes range from a programme of rotating exhibits of locally relevant botanical and archaeological material, to local education initiatives to promote this with a particular target audience. The key component is how each potential partnership in turn finds the most effective way to develop the opportunity to work with NMGW by creating the possibility of a proper capital and human resource base to 'draw down' NMGW's collections and educational resource.

3.2 Art Galleries: Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Oriel 31, Newtown and Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno are all leading art galleries in Wales, and are **key revenue clients of the Arts Council of Wales.** NMGW regularly works with such venues, from lending works to providing texts, lectures and other curatorial and educational support. However, they are not members of CMW since they are not 'registered museums', and so are not eligible for membership or funding under the CMW current partnership programme.

The recent **Pratley Report** to the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) has echoes of the options being raised in the Consultation on Display of Art process being developed by NMGW. The Pratley report recommends investment in regional partners to enable them to share with NMGW in the planning of complementary exhibitions and displays around Wales.

3.3 Centres for interpreting the local community or environment: Many small museums may have long-term loans from NMGW which, over the years, have become essential elements of local displays. These museums do

not often possess infrastructure or resources which allows them to borrow from NMGW any new works or small-scale exhibitions, since their staffing and facilities may not have kept pace with curatorial development.

These museums often have a focus on archaeology, social history, and natural history, all areas where the balance between display and interpretation is complex. Aspects of their roles as educators and focal points for local groups and incoming visitors may have been overtaken in local contexts by other centres of interpretation, such as National Parks Visitor Centres, private educational trusts and private sector visitor attractions.

NMGW may find in future that it has a difficult choice over how to work with a range of such bodies within a given locality.

4.0 Existing small venues managed by NMGW within a long-standing local partnership:

- 4.1 Segontium Roman Museum (SRM):** The SRM steering group has commissioned David Clarke Associates (DCA) to make a study of the development options and business plan models for managing SRM. Options include managing the existing site; a 'flat' site with no building at all, the exhibits to be displayed elsewhere; and an improved site, with a more integrated approach to working with other bodies in Caernarfon and Gwynedd. It will propose ways of establishing a trust or similar management body. A report from DCA on work in progress was received by the Segontium steering group in February 2002 with further work planned on the possible business planning issues for the proposals.
- 4.2 Turner House:** The Director NMG and the Keeper of Art have now had confidential exploratory discussions with two external organisations, about the separate possibilities of their taking on a management arrangement for Turner House which would keep the building in NMGW's ownership but provide a vehicle for it staying open to the public for the display of art, as stated in its deeds.

These reflect a period when **NMGW was seen as a central provider of museum management to small scale local communities.** They require clarification and economic review, whilst ensuring that the desire to generate local ownership is not interpreted in the locality or region as NMGW wishing to divest itself of its national role in localities where it wishes to withdraw. The formation of local bodies which then become part of a partnership scheme is a device which may be effective in creating an arm's length management approach to both sites.

- 4.3 Sutherland Centre, St Davids:** This has now evolved into a project where the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is leading the partnership initiative. A suitable site has been agreed and a Business Development Consultant has been commissioned to produce a business plan. NMGW will contribute to that study along with several partners. The study will include issues of ownership of the site and its management.

5.0 Perception and Awareness of NMGW:

Loans and exhibition are very much the public face of NMGW and dissemination of collections around Wales has always been a priority. A key area for the research to address was the perception of NMGW's approach to loans and to question whether the full reach of the Museum's work in Wales is fully understood or acknowledged.

- 5.1** The full extent of NMGW's loans programme in Wales is impressive. Excluding the Outreach Collection managed by the Education Department, at present NMGW has **3,135 objects on loan to 134 venues in Wales**. Approximately 15% are for research and not for display. It should be stressed that these are figures for current loans out of NMGW and do not include short-term loans to temporary exhibitions that will occur during the year, meaning these numbers will inevitably rise.
- 5.2** With this level of activity, NMGW should be confident of a positive reception to its work in Wales. This has not always been the case. During the research for this report a number of 'cold calls' were made to venues where material from NMGW was on loan for display purposes. On a number of occasions the objects either were on display but with **no acknowledgement to NMGW**, or the **objects were not on display**. The reason for this was straightforward. The current NMGW standard conditions of loan form does not require venues either to acknowledge loans or to inform the Museum when objects were no longer on display. It was assumed that venues would naturally acknowledge a loan from NMGW's collections but research suggests that this has not always happened.
- 5.3** This may be a key reason for **lack of public perception of NMGW's work** in Wales. The dissemination of collections throughout Wales is and always has been an integral element in curatorial and educational practice. Yet if the venue has not been asked to acknowledge NMGW then perhaps it is not surprising if public reaction and response in Wales is not always positive. It should be noted that this has been acted upon by NMGW with immediate effect. The Collections Management Group has added two additional conditions to the standard conditions of loan form. One states that loans from NMGW must be acknowledged on the wall label, and another stating that if a display loan is removed from display NMGW must be informed at once and appropriate action taken which may be withdrawal of the loan or discussion about re-arrangements. The further 'roll out' of our loans labelling will boost this formal requirement (see **5.5**).
- 5.4** **Improved monitoring of NMGW's loan programme** is essential to raise and maintain awareness of the Museum's work in Wales. This could be organised to coincide with conservation checks, particularly for long-term

loans. For example, it should be possible to set up a timetable for examining the loan collections by grouping the museums geographically. Arranging these visits to coalesce with normal partnership activity around Wales would have the additional benefit of improving our accessibility for advice and ensure systematic monitoring of our loan collection.

- 5.5** There is therefore scope for **a two-tier exercise in ‘branding’ collaborative and partnership working**. For example, where loans are provided to a museum as part of NMGW’s normal curatorial work, this should be more clearly labelled as such, perhaps introducing a distinct ‘logo’ or icon specifically designed for loan or exhibition purposes. However, where NMGW has been involved in planning from the earliest stages a joint approach to a project, this should be considered for inclusion in a higher level of promotion.

6.0 The ‘Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan – Sharing Treasures’ Partnership Scheme:

- 6.1** This scheme will **operate at two levels**. In a ‘higher level scheme’, a group of partners will work on specific collaborative curatorial, educational and managerial projects. At the ‘lower level’, all NMGW loans and displays of any note will be labelled as part of the scheme, giving a consistent identity and profile across Wales.
- 6.2** It is proposed that each ‘higher level’ partnership established within this scheme works in a **time-limited framework**. These will be underpinned by a contractual arrangement between NMGW and each venue. It is suggested that the existing three pilots in the CMW scheme work in an initial **two-year cycle**. We will then seek further funding, via CMW and via other agencies such as ACW and CCW, for a subsequent group of five-year relationships.
- 6.3** There will inevitably be a **funding-led element** to the inputs that can be made to each scheme. Each venue will need to review how the partnership will enable them to lever further funding through local and external routes.
- 6.4** If supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, the scheme will be managed by a post which will be based at NMGW, entitled **‘Partnerships Officer’**. During the pilot scheme period there will be a further review of mechanisms for creating a fully developed management structure for the scheme, and its best location, geographically and organisationally.
- 6.5** The range of loans in the ‘lower level’ scheme would be monitored by the NMGW officer responsible for the scheme. This officer would also act as **organisational liaison officer with local authorities**, as required by the Welsh Assembly Government. NMGW is keen to broaden collaboration and co-operation as evidenced through our work with Big Pit Mining Museum (Torfaen County Borough Council), Llanberis (Gwynedd Council) and the development of NWMS (City and County of Swansea).

7.0 Next Steps:

7.1 It is important to achieve a **balance between what is expected politically and what NMGW wants and is able to do**. The pilot schemes will establish parameters with the long-term aim of broadening the scheme thereby enabling more venues to work with NMGW but this must be balanced against the realistic delivery of service.

7.2 Revenue implications for NMGW are important. The standard practice with loans and access to collections is a principle of “borrower pays”. This has important implications for NMGW’s ability to work with potential borrowers in Wales.

7.2.1 Firstly, it means that its **international profile is maintained since foreign institutions and organisations can raise funds to enable them to pay for NMGW’s costs**. In the loan of objects, costs incurred from the moment the object is moved in its normal location to the point at which it is returned are all covered by the borrower. Secondly, however, **it has meant that NMGW has rarely itself borrowed within the internal ‘market’ in Wales**. Small venues in Wales have been able to borrow exhibitions from NMGW when NMGW’s funding and fundraising has enabled exhibitions to be toured cheaply. For example, the recent NMGW Sisters Select exhibition toured to Aberystwyth and Conwy. Apart from costs, no fee was charged to either venue. The Piranesi exhibition from the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, recently shown at NMG, is a similar size to Sisters Select. This cost NMGW £2,700 plus courier costs. Equally, NMGW has no internal budget or dedicated corporate staff to manage loans out, whilst venues are not resourced to cover the costs expected of borrowers, such as crates, mounting and framing, transport and courier costs.

7.2.2 Costs for the Partnership Scheme are shown as £150,000 to NMGW. This includes the following:

- i) a central co-ordinator of the scheme plus secretarial support and an office base
(£35,000)
- ii) the internal generation of support material e.g. print / signage / labelling / promotional work etc.
(£30,000)
- iii) the provision of exhibition and display material which is not normally available for such purposes. e.g. crates / framing / mounting / conservation
(£85,000)

This complements partner funding and is designed to minimise the costs which fall on partners as a result of generating the exhibitions, displays and loans for the scheme.

7.2.3 The current corporate plan signals the future needs to NMGW if it is to meet these costs on behalf of potential partners. **Through addressing these issues, NMGW will broaden its reach through partnerships while continuing to build on its strengths in stewardship, scholarship and education.** The requirement to increase and enhance access to the nation's collections is growing, while the need to invest resources in stewardship (conservation, documentation, security and storage of collections) becomes ever more important.

7.3 It is important that the **expectations of potential partners** are considered. Partnership implies a two-way relationship between equals and we have to be wary of the 'centre-out' process. Equally important, however, is the level of commitment demonstrated by each partner. Some partners in the initial pilot scheme have already commented on the importance of finding local matching investment. Potential partner authorities will need to consider carefully the long-term revenue costs which will be vital when planning future partnership schemes.

7.3.1 NMGW should also be prepared for **possible negative reaction** from those who may feel 'left-out' or alienated by the public announcement of the scheme. The possibility of Wales-wide 'branding' and the continuation of other work across our curatorial and education programmes will potentially offset this. It should also be stressed that the nature of such a scheme is not new in its development, with many partnership initiatives between NMGW and local / regional museums already in operation.

8.0 What does NMGW gain from having a structured policy?

- 8.1** The partnership scheme will be successful if it can **influence the perception of NMGW's overall presence within Wales**. There are clear and obvious benefits to NMGW and partners in developing a coherent and consistent approach to sharing access to collections and expertise around Wales.
- 8.2** A **demonstrable national policy** is important. Even though NMGW has always operated a Wales-wide policy for curatorial and conservation expertise and advice, emphasis on the promotion of service will raise awareness of the range of NMGW activity and lead to an increased sense of affinity with the wider community in Wales.
- 8.3** The imminent CMW pilots also have the effect of raising the issue of **how such working is funded**. They have already led to debate about what costs are appropriate for a 'borrower' to meet, what costs are for NMGW, and what dedicated funding can legitimately cover for either side.
- 8.4** A structured policy will have the effect of **articulating available funds**, and the decisions to apply them to particular projects or areas of work, which are developed with partners beyond NMGW.

9.0 Conclusions:

- Research for this report suggests that a **small number of partnerships** with mutually agreed targets set within a specific time-span provides an appropriate framework within which pilot schemes could operate.
- The creation of a **labelled identity for the scheme within Wales** will enable these particular partnerships to proceed and develop within a broader pattern of working on other forms of partnership. A wider policy and organisational commitment to partnership is already becoming central to NMGW's approach to projects and the strategies for NMGW's work in general. This will continue to be the case as future plans are addressed.
- That the **scheme should develop 'strands'** to reflect different organisational and funding streams.
- NMGW must seek to **maintain its involvement with partners beyond Wales**. There are a host of other partnerships across the United Kingdom, Europe and beyond which are of vital importance to NMGW's work and which should not be diminished by this equally important focus on Wales.

August 2002