

**BRITISH MUSEUM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
29 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**AT
9.00 AM**

PRESENT

Sir John Boyd (Chairman)
Mr Hasan Askari
Lord Broers
Professor Barry Cunliffe
Mrs Val Gooding
Ms Bonnie Greer
Professor Martin Kemp
Dr Olga Kennard
Mr Richard Lambert
Mrs Edimée Leventis
Mr David Lindsell
Mr David Norgrove
Mr Tom Phillips
Mr Eric Salama
Mr Vikram Seth
Sir Keith Thomas
Sir John Tusa

The Director (Mr Neil MacGregor), the Deputy Director Resources (Mrs Dawn Austwick), the Deputy Director Collections (Dr Andrew Burnett), the Director of Finance (Dr Christopher Herring) and the Head of Legal Services (Mr Tony Doubleday) were also present.

The Head of Marketing (Mrs Honor Wilson-Fletcher) attended the meeting for item 5.2.

The Deputy Director Resources, the Deputy Director Collections and the Director of Finance were not present for item 5.2.

The reports and minutes referred to below may contain exempt information within the meaning of Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PRELIMINARY

1.1 *Apologies:* Apologies had been received from Chief Anyaoku, Sir Ronald Cohen, Mr Francis Finlay, Mr Stephen Green, Baroness Kennedy, Mr Philip Lader and Lord Powell

1.2 *Declaration of Interests:* No conflicts of interest were declared.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2. *Chairman's Report:* The Chairman drew the Board's attention to the importance of the Director's recent visit to China and the success to date of the exhibition *Forgotten Empire: the world of Ancient Persia*, which had opened on 8 September 2005.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 *Minutes of previous Board meetings:* The Board agreed that the minutes of the Board meeting of 20 July 2005 be signed as amended by the Chairman as a correct record of their proceedings.

3.2 *Matters Arising:* The Director reiterated that the events of 7 July 2005 had demonstrated that the Museum's emergency planning procedures worked well.

MATTERS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

4.1 *The Feldmann claim:* The Board considered the note of the meeting on 8 September with the claimants' representatives (item 4.1). Although they did not resile from their decision of 27 July 2002 the Trustees agreed that the claimants be urged to reconsider whether their interest would not be best served by an ex gratia payment in response to their claim; and that the claim should be submitted to the Spoliation Advisory Panel for its independent advice.

4.2 *Purchase of Anglo Saxon Gold Ring:* The Board noted that informal independent advice from the Ashmolean Museum had been taken by the Deputy Director Collections. Although the implication of the last sentence of the seventh bullet point in the report (item 4.2) was not accepted, the Trustees agreed that the ring be purchased having regard to the oral presentation received and the other information set out in the report.

4.3 *Investment Sub-Committee:* The Trustees agreed to the revised terms of reference for the Investment Sub-Committee set out in the minutes thereof dated 23 September 2005.

Matters Discussed

5.1 *Management Reorganisation:* The Board considered the report on Management Reorganisation (item 5. 1). It was noted that the Standing Committee's role in financial and income generation oversight would be of particular assistance to the Director in the new structure. The Director would report further should it emerge that further managerial changes were necessary.

5.2 *Marketing:* The Board discussed the report and presentation by the Head of Marketing (item 5.2) on national audiences in the London and the UK. A *pdf.* format version of the presentation would be circulated to Trustees together with data on the national audience profile. The Board noted the importance of (i) the use of the internet and new media technologies to engage with a wider audience; (ii) aligning the business planning of the British Museum Company with the marketing priorities of the Museum; (iii) the advocacy of the content and value of the Museum's collection; and (iv) better means of measurement of the use of the Museum's website

Management Reports

6.1 *Museum Management Report:* The Board noted the Museum Management Report (item 6.1).

6.1.1 The Director reported that visitor numbers were now down by only 12% (by comparison with 2004) and that there had been large number of visitors to the exhibition *Forgotten Empire* during its first three weeks. He also drew attention to the success of the exhibition *Treasures of the World's Cultures: The British Museum*

after 250 years in Korea. The implications of these successes would be considered carefully. The Board noted that the DCMS Code of Practice on human remains had not yet been published.

6.2 *International Relations:* The Board considered the Director's report on his visit to China (item 6.2) and endorsed the broad 5-10 year strategy and resource implications which followed. The Trustees wished to record their appreciation of the work of Lord Powell, the Director and Jane Portal.

6.2.1 The Director reported that on 26 September 2005 a letter claiming the restitution of an inscribed stele (GR 1927.12-14.1) had been received from the First Counsellor at the Turkish Embassy. The Director would approach the Ambassador for clarification concerning the matter.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

9. *Minutes of Committees:* The minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee on 9 June 2005 (item 7.1) and the minutes of the meetings of the Standing Committee on 15 September 2005 (item 7.2) were noted.