

# National Portrait Gallery

## 721st MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees held at the National Portrait Gallery on  
Thursday 14 July 2005

**Present:** Sir David Scholey (Chairman)  
Professor Robert Boucher  
Professor David Cannadine  
The Marchioness of Douro  
Ms Amelia Fawcett  
Ms Flora Fraser  
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova  
Mr Tom Phillips  
Ms Sara Selwood  
Miss Alexandra Shulman  
Sir John Weston

**In attendance:** Mr Sandy Nairne  
Mr Jacob Simon

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Rt Hon Baroness Amos, Ms Zeinab Badawi, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw and Sir Christopher Ondaatje.

### 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2005 were approved.

### 3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 4. Director's Report

The Director reported the successful event to launch five new commissions, which had seen Alfred Brendel, Bill Morris and Jan Morris as guests, together with four of the five artists. He also reported that Dame Cicely Saunders, the subject of a commission earlier this year, was gravely ill [in fact she died on the day of the Trustees meeting]. The Director drew attention to the report on Communications and Development and in particular the confirmed sponsorship of Herbert Smith as our Partner for the Anniversary year and as headline sponsor of the Portrait Gala. It has been agreed that this sponsorship would extend until the end of the 2006 calendar year and so the period of the anniversary celebrations would be extended accordingly. The David Hockney exhibition would be sponsored by Burberry. The Trustees welcomed the report on Research and in particular the proposed application to the newly formed Arts and Humanities Research Council for 'Academic Analogue' institutional status.

### 5. Portraits on Offer

In response to questions the Chief Curator reported that the Gallery routinely consulted the Scottish National Portrait Gallery to avoid a conflict of interest in portraits of Scottish significance. He reported that a Gallery Patron, Edgar Astaire, had offered £4000 towards the acquisition of the self-portrait drawing by Dora Carrington, an offer that the Trustees

welcomed. As to the drawing of Lytton Strachey, the Chief Curator reported that the Gallery's practice is not to collect studies relating to portraits in its collection except where they are particularly illuminating of the process of portraiture or of our understanding of a particular portrait.

- THE TRUSTEES agreed to the purchase of the portraits on the appended list

## **6. Commissions**

The Trustees welcomed the progress on Annual Commissions. The Chief Curator reported on progress on Photograph Commissions.

## **7. Finance and Planning**

In introducing the Annual Report and Accounts, Barbara Jotham drew attention to the Financial Report to 31 March 2005, which confirmed that the Gallery had generated £750,000 in excess of the original budget, and to the proposed drawing on the Investment and Contingency Fund. Trustees suggested that consideration should be given to the delegation of power to spend Investment and Contingency funds up to a certain level. Sir John Weston reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee had examined the statutory Annual Report and Accounts and was happy to commend them to Trustees subject to some very minor alterations. There was one outstanding issue concerning a severance payment which it was hoped would be sorted out shortly with the Treasury but which could lead to deferring the laying of the Annual Report and Accounts until after the summer recess and, if the Accounts had to be qualified, to including a footnote of explanation. The Chairman noted that the Annual Report contained the first public mention of the Portrait Fund. Trustees commented on the very good visitor figures and on the underspend on marketing and development.

- THE TRUSTEES approved the allocation of up to £120,000 from the Investment and Contingency Fund to specified projects, subject to Chairman's approval of the actual figure to be allocated; a sum of £25,000 would be allocated to digitisation to maintain the continuity of the programme
- THE TRUSTEES approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2005

## **8. Audit and Compliance Committee**

Sir John Weston reported on the recent review of the Risk Management Register, and drew attention to the risks relating to the external economic environment and to terrorist risks where the Committee was satisfied that the Gallery was at a high state of alert. There could be implications for attendance if the current situation continued. He noted that the increased risk to the digitisation programme reflected the timing of the end of current funding sources and that risks to the flow of funding from sponsorship could be mitigated if major sponsorships did not come to an end simultaneously.

## **9. Data Protection**

The Director reported that the Data Protection Policy had been prepared by Charlotte Brunskill, Records Manager. The Trustees welcomed the policy and advised that the method of communicating it to staff in a digestible form would be important and that consideration should be given to recording that training had been given to individual members of staff. The Director said that the Policy would be available on the All Staff drive and that consideration would be given to arranging training seminars under the aegis of the Records Manager.

## **10. New Commissions**

The Trustees welcomed the table of recent and current commissions by area of achievement and in particular the list of international awards and honours. There was a lively discussion about areas of contemporary achievement appropriate for new commissions, including social reform, welfare, the military and explorers, and on the methodology for selecting individual sitters, which should involve external consultation where this is helpful and appropriate. In consulting external bodies, the instance of Susan Greenfield was cited where the Gallery chose to commission a portrait although the Royal Society did not recognise her achievement for its purposes.

A central question was whether to go beyond the traditional process of recognising achievement to a situation where occasionally a Gallery commission would in itself be a central part of the recognition process; here the aim of commissioning was recalled, namely 'to achieve each year a number of outstanding portraits of figures who have made or are making a significant contribution to British life and culture at the highest level and are likely to be of continuing historical interest'. It was also asked whether we were seeking individuals whose achievement extended to an identifiable impact on national life and who would therefore interest the public. It was generally felt that given the limited number of commissions each year, there is bound to be something arbitrary about the process within any one year but that over a longer period something closer to balance would be achieved. In looking at the list of areas of achievement, there was a feeling that some sitters would fit in more than one category and that the categories themselves should be reviewed.

The Director said that a successful commission was partly about timing. He said that before the next meeting the categories of achievement would be re-examined with the help of one or two Trustees with a view to focusing on a few specific categories this year. It would be invaluable to gain a sense of preferences before making decisions at the November meeting.

#### **11. Matters for Report**

Reports on Communications and Development, Learning and Access and Loan requests were noted.

#### **12. Any Other Business**

Concerning arrangements for the Trustees Dinner on Wednesday 16 November, the Director said that Trustees would be supplied with further details shortly. The next Trustees meeting would take place on Thursday 17 November. The Trustees Review Day would take place on Thursday 15 September.

#### **13. Retirement of Chairman**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, David Cannadine expressed his appreciation of the contribution made by Sir David Scholey over 13 years of trusteeship and four years as chairman. He singled out two matters for special note: our exemplary standing with DCMS and the way in which Sir David as Chairman had encouraged open discussion about larger issues. In response, the Chairman expressed his sense of privilege on being invited to serve as Trustee and his even greater sense of honour at being elected Chairman. He expressed his appreciation for the support he had received, the welcome and the sense of edification during this period.

### **Appended list of approved portrait purchases, 14 July 2005**

#### **THOMAS TOD STODDART**

Seven drawings by Richard George Mathews in pencil, pastel or chalk  
**DAME EMMA ALBANI**

**MAUD ALLAN  
CHARLES FREDERIC MOBERLY BELL  
SIR JOHN MARTIN-HARVEY  
HENRY ALGERNON GEORGE PERCY, EARL PERCY  
HILDA TREVELYAN  
SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM**

**DORA CARRINGTON**

**SIR ARTHUR GEORGE TANSLEY**

**GILES LYTTON STRACHEY**