

Are Museums becoming obsolete?

If Playstation can supplant 3-D toys in the affections of children and threaten Legoland with extinction, what chance the museum?

The conference will take a challenging look at the opportunities and threats facing museums in today's world.

Museums must survive in an environment where they have to compete for resources and attention with a wide range of attractions and distractions that comprise the spoilt-for-choice options of the modern cultural consumer.



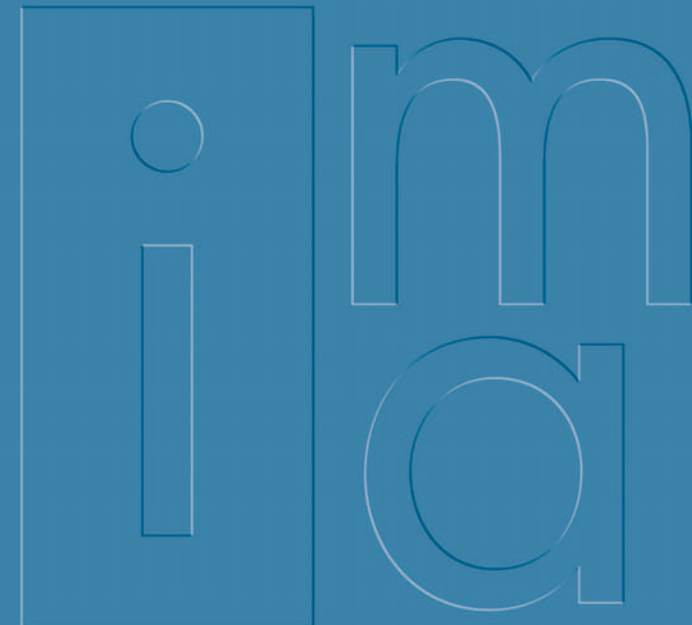
Irish Museums Association
Pearse Museum
St Enda's Park
Rathfarnham
Dublin 16
087-2790518
office@irishmuseums.org

irish museums association
cumann mhúsaeim na héireann

Irish Museums Association

Annual Conference

Are Museums becoming
obsolete?



Metropole Hotel, Cork, 25-27 February 2005

Friday

25th February

2.30 - 4.30

Workshop 1

Young Citizens in Museums

A joint IMA and Public Achievement cross-border project.

After a brief introduction to the project, teenagers and staff from Cavan, Fermanagh and Monaghan County Museums and the Ulster Museum will talk about their work, its outcomes and benefits and how each partner feels about the project.

Friday 25th February

2.30 - 4.30

Workshop 2

Industrial Archaeology: a Cork Perspective

Dr Colin Rynne will explore some problems and solutions to collecting and displaying objects of our industrial heritage with emphasis on recent projects in Cork.

7.30pm

Reception

Saturday

26th February

9-10am

Registration

10am – 10.15am

Welcome

by *Pat Cooke*, Chairman IMA

10.15 – 11am

The changing role of the museum in society

Dr David Fleming, Director, National Museums of Liverpool

Have museums become 'commodified' like so many other aspects of culture? Do traditional aspirations to mould civic consciousness and instil popular enlightenment still hold in a world where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the citizen from the customer?

Metropole Hotel

Metropole Hotel

Cork Public Museum

Metropole Hotel



11.00 – 11.30am

Engaging with the contemporary

Sally Yerkovich, President and CEO, New Jersey Historical Society

To what extent should museums make an effort to understand the emotional and imaginative concerns, the interests and preoccupations, of contemporary life? What methods can be used to elicit this kind of understanding? How might the insights gained be used to make exhibitions and educational offerings that appeal more directly to visitors?

11.30 – 11.45

Coffee

11.45 – 12.15pm

What is our audience? How do we find it?

Dr Fiona McLean, Department of Marketing, University of Stirling

How do we track the changing nature of the audience? What techniques can we use to gain an accurate picture of evolving public tastes and audience composition in order to adapt promotional and educational strategies to be more effective? How do we balance educational goals against optimising commercial income in designing promotional campaigns and museum offerings?

12.15 – 12.30pm

Discussion

12.30 – 2.15pm

Lunch

Crawford Art Gallery

2.15 – 2.45

Competing for attention: museums in the context of cultural tourism

Metropole Hotel

Ronald Kane, Cultural and Heritage Officer, Belfast City Council

Museums are essentially in competition with other cultural attractions for visitors, a significant proportion of which are foreign and domestic tourists. Are museums providing the kind of exhibitions and services that meet the



expectations of visitors, or do they need to do more? Are they being superseded by heritage centres and 'experiences' in the eyes of those designing the tourism product?

2.45 – 3.15pm

The virtual museum

Jon Pratty, Editor, 24 Hour Museum

Does putting the collection on the web and interfacing with virtual audiences for educational purposes undermine the fundamental value of a museum as a place where unique objects are stored and presented to be witnessed in person? Has the web fundamentally changed the way potential visitors see the museum?

3.15 – 3.45pm

The real thing: the core role of the object in the life of the museum

Pat Cooke, Curator of Pearse Museum and Kilmainham Gaol and Museum

To what extent can museums hope to succeed by doing the traditional things well: putting real objects on display and interpreting them accurately on the basis of in-depth scholarship? Does the future lie in sticking with traditional values of authenticity and scholarship?

3.45 – 4.15pm

Concluding discussion with coffee

6.30pm

Reception

Cork Butter Museum

8.00pm

Conference Dinner

Metropole Hotel

Sunday

27th February

10.00am

Bus leaving Metropole Hotel for Cork City Gaol and the Glucksman Gallery UCC

