

*Press Release Extract: April 2011*

# **Green history lessons brought to life**

## **Twelve London museums are accredited green tourist attractions**

A dozen London museums who have made their buildings more sustainable and brought the environmental lessons of the past to life have won Green Tourism awards.

The museums were supported to take part in the Green Tourism Business Scheme by Renaissance London, a partnership set up to foster diverse, vibrant and sustainable regional museums in the capital.

Each museum was awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold after months of work on improvements to energy and water efficiency, waste management, biodiversity and more.

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The **Brunel Museum** in Rotherhithe received silver. The noisy, old-fashioned gas-fired heater was replaced with electric fires which are fitted with motion sensors and turn on and off as visitors move round the museum.

Museum Director Robert Hulse said: "The museum is a leaky old building - it doesn't let the water in but it doesn't half let heat out. We can't insulate it because it doesn't have cavity walls and is a scheduled ancient monument. We made a big shift in our thinking from heating the building to heating people as they move around."

The museum also improved its energy and water efficiency with LED lighting in galleries and toilets. It is estimated that the new lighting uses 50 per cent less energy, and has reduced the annual bill by £400.

Brunel Museum is getting the message out to the public. Mr Hulse adds: "Our volunteers talk about it to visitors, they have become advocates for energy efficiency, and see us as a place illustrating best practice. We don't consume a lot of energy because we're a small museum but we are a showcase for reducing consumption."

The scheme will run again next year with a fund of £20k for improvements for smaller museums.

Head of Renaissance London Fiona Davison says: "Money is tight and although these schemes do pay for themselves, it takes a long time. Renaissance London is willing to put in a bit of money up front to help museums in London deliver long-term savings."

She adds: "These awards show what can be done with small grants and gradual changes. Some museums are daunted by the prospect of making green improvements, but it doesn't mean being told off or being given a million and one things to do. What these museums have done is within reach of even the smallest museum and we hope it will inspire others to follow suit.

"The public is increasingly concerned about the environment, so if museums want to respond to their audience this is a good start. Museums can say 'we're making an effort here, and if you visit us you'll be visiting a more sustainable attraction'."

Green Tourism technical director John Proctor said: “All the museums managed to win an award, and not everybody does that - you have to show real commitment. Being green is not just about technology - it is about telling the story of how people might have lived in the past, how they created things and found solutions to their problems without relying on a global infrastructure. That’s where museums can have tremendous impact, even if it’s just one person changing the way they do things after a visit. As each of us starts moving forward, the whole world moves forward.”