DRAFT
Notes of the Advisory Committee on Works of Art Meeting held on
Tuesday 12 March 2013 at 9.30am in Meeting Room T, Portcullis House

Members present:  Frank Doran (Chair)
George Hollingbery
Tristram Hunt
Jacob Rees-Mogg

Apologies:  Sir Alan Haselhurst
Rt Hon Charles Kennedy
David Lammy
Ian Liddell-Grainger
Alison McGovern
Caroline Nokes
Hywel Williams

In attendance:  Malcolm Hay, Curator
Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator
Emma Gormley, Assistant Curator
Lee Bridges, Head of Media & Communications
Anikka Weerasinghe, Senior Media & Communications Officer

1. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Committee agreed the draft agenda.

2. INFORMAL NOTES AND MATTERS ARISING AND PROGRESS REPORT

Parliamentary Art Collection Drop-in Discovery Event (5 February 2013): The Committee noted that the event with the Public Catalogue Foundation was a success with a very high level of attendance.

Margot Asquith portrait: Inaugural International Women’s Day talk by Professor Krista Cowman (7 March 2013): The Committee noted that the event was a success and thanked Caroline Nokes for chairing proceedings.

Donations Policy and proposal from the Executive Director of the National Secular Society for a commissioned work of art to commemorate Charles Bradlaugh: The Committee noted that the proposed donation would be considered at the April meeting.

Media coverage of the marble statue of Margaret Thatcher by Neil Simmons: The Committee noted a letter had been sent to the Corporation of London clarifying that the House of Commons was entirely happy with the existing loan arrangements for the marble statue of Baroness Thatcher, which is on display at the Guildhall Art Gallery, and has no plans to seek an alternative venue for this statue.

The Committee agreed the informal note.
3. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee noted the Financial Report.

4. **PARLIAMENTARY HERITAGE STRATEGY GROUP AND ARCHIVES ACCOMMODATION**

The Director of Parliamentary Archives reported on the Parliamentary Heritage Strategy Group and the Archives accommodation pre-feasibility study.

The Parliamentary Heritage Strategy Group brings together heritage professionals from across both Houses in order to be a concerted voice for the benefits and needs of heritage within Parliament, to co-ordinate plans and upcoming activities, to share knowledge and provide heritage disaster planning and salvage operations.

The Parliamentary Archives accommodation pre-feasibility study will review the suitability of the accommodation currently occupied by the Parliamentary Archives and examine whether there is a strategic business case for re-locating the Archives to a permanent site away from the Palace, bearing in mind potential alternative uses of accommodation currently occupied, including the Victoria Tower. There will be scope within the pre-feasibility study to include options that consider wider specialist storage requirements across Parliament, including those for works of art.

The Committee noted the update from the Director of Parliamentary Archives.

5. **RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE COLLECTION**

The Chairman updated the Committee that a meeting was held on 6 February 2013 to discuss raising the profile of the Collection. The meeting was attended by the Chairman and House of Commons staff representing the Media Office, Public Engagement, Education and the Curator’s Office.

The meeting identified that there is potential to grow public awareness and engagement with the Collection. Actions were identified for the Media Office to produce a media strategy (item 6) and for stronger links to be built with Education events and Visitor Services activities (to be considered by the Committee in April 2013).

The Committee noted progress on raising the profile of the Collection.

6. **MEDIA STRATEGY**

The Head of Media & Communications presented a draft Media and Communications Strategy. The principles upon which to base media work were discussed, including proactively communicating the work of the Committee and the Collection and using the Collection as a tool to convey the history and significance of Parliament and its daily business. A more detailed media strategy will be developed based on these principles.

The Committee agreed the draft Media and Communications Strategy.
7. HENRY MOORE CONSERVATION WORK

The Deputy Curator updated the Committee that conservation work on ‘Knife Edge Two Piece’ has been very successful so far and all damage has been removed from the surface of the sculpture. It was noted that the public can view progress of the conservation work through windows in the protective enclosure around the sculpture, where leaflets are also available. There has been good media coverage and a Flickr site gives daily updates.

The Committee noted progress on conservation work.

8. PORTRAIT COMMISSIONS

The Committee discussed future portraits and the Curator updated the Committee on progress on potential sitters for portrait commissions.

The Committee noted progress with portrait commissioning.

The Assistant Curator introduced a proposal for a programme of themed group photographic portrait commissions. The Committee discussed initial themes to pursue to start off the programme. It was agreed that those involved in significant Parliamentary Commissions of Inquiry, such as the Banking Commission, and subject areas of potential historical importance, such as media, are worthy of record within the Collection.

The Committee agreed to the principle of a forward programme of themed group photographic portraits and that the Banking Commission and the media theme should be investigated as initial subject areas.

9. DONATIONS POLICY

The Committee considered the draft Donations Policy. It was noted that terms and conditions for donations will make it clear to both parties what they are signing up to.

The Committee agreed the Donations Policy, but decided it should return to the Committee in April to be considered by other members of the Committee.

10. LOANS, ACQUISITIONS, MOVES AND EXHIBITIONS

Loan of Michael Foot Portrait: The Committee considered a loan request for the large portrait of Michael Foot from Plymouth Arts Centre. It was discussed that the portrait will require conservation work to replace the glass and frame to enable it to be safe to travel. Its size also means handling and travel costs to Plymouth Arts Centre may be high.

The Committee agreed the Michael Foot portrait loan subject to the standard formalities, including the usual arrangements for the lender to meet all costs associated with the loan.

Proposed statue of Harold Wilson: The Committee considered a request from Barry Sheerman MP for a full-length statue of Harold Wilson on the Parliamentary Estate. The Committee discussed Harold Wilson’s significant Parliamentary contribution and identified how this is currently represented within the Parliamentary Art Collection. In
the Contemporary portrait collection there is a large commissioned portrait by Henry Mee and a portrait by Ruskin Spear is also on loan from the Government Art Collection. Harold Wilson is represented in the 20th Century Prime Ministerial statuary group in Members Lobby. The portrait bust was commissioned by the Works of Art Committee and unveiled by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at a reception in Speaker’s House in 2001, attended by Lady Wilson.

It was noted that 2016 would be the centenary of the births of both Harold Wilson and Edward Heath, which could present an opportunity for a special exhibition.

The Committee **agreed not to progress** a full-length statue of Harold Wilson at this time.

**Dods photography exhibition:** On 20 November 2012 the Committee accepted a proposal to hold a photography exhibition on the glass wall in Portcullis House as part of an agreed programme of events with Dods. At that time the content of the exhibition had not been finalised. The Assistant Curator informed the Committee that the proposed content of the exhibition is photographic portraits of Members of Parliament between 1945 and 1970, in association with the History of Parliament Oral History Project. The photographs are all by Michael Waller-Bridge.

The Committee **agreed** the content of the Dods exhibition on the Portcullis House glass wall.

**Art House Competition exhibition:** The Committee viewed the winning entries of the Art House Competition, a schools art competition for children aged 7 -11 years run by the Parliamentary Education Service. Schools were invited to engage with the Parliamentary Art Collection by studying three different works from the collection and pupils created their own work inspired by what they learned.

The winning entries will go on display in the House of Lords and the Parliamentary Education Service would also like to exhibit them on the glass wall in Portcullis House.

The Committee **agreed** the Art House Competition exhibition on the Portcullis House glass wall.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Houses of Parliaments’ official guidebook:** The guidebook, published last year, was the only publication to receive a special mention at the Association of Cultural Enterprises’ (ACE) Best Product Awards in the Best Publication category. It was noted for being ‘very well put together... attractive... an outstanding guidebook’. ACE Chairman, John Stachiewicz, said that, as a result, a Best Guidebook category would be added in future years.

The Committee **noted** the special mention of the guidebook at the ACE Best Product Awards.

**Bust of Gladstone** by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm: The bust, which the Committee acquired with the support of the Speaker’s Art Fund in 2011, has been transferred into its permanent display case on Committee Corridor.

The Committee **noted** the revised display of the bust of Gladstone.
**Portrait of Sheridan** by Joshua Reynolds: The portrait has been returned to the Members Dining Room post conservation.

The Committee noted the return of the portrait of Sheridan.

12. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

   9.30am on Tuesday 23 April, Room S, Portcullis House.

*Emma Wharton, March 2013*