

# DIE ONTWIKKELING VAN DIE MUSEUMWESE

(Die tweede van 'n reeks vroeë-oggend radiopraatjies deur Hannes Oberholzer wat gedurende Desember 1974 uitgesaai is)

DIT was eers in die 16de en 17de eeu dat daar 'n nuwe riglyn in die versamelings en patroon van die ontwikkeling van museums gekom het. Dit was naamlik die opbou van wetenskaplike versamelings, dit wil sê versamelings van gewone en buitengewone, interessante en eksotiese natuurlike voorwerpe, asook mensgemaakte werktuie en instrumente. Tot hierdie versameling is ruim bygedra deur reisigers, filosowe en wetenskaplikes wat alhoewel begin belangstel het in die wêreld daarbuite.

Nou verskuif die belangstelling ook van die ekonomiese en magiese tot voorwerpe wat die werklike natuur en die menslike gedagtegang en vindingrykheid uitbeeld. So word musiekinstrumente, fossiele, harnasse, eierdoppe en skulpe nie meer versamel omrede hul sogenaamde toorkrag nie, maar as bewys van die interessante wêreld daarbuite.

In 1572 word die Vereniging van Antikware gestig met die doel: "to separate falsehood from truth and tradition from evidence".

Baie van die versamelings wat aldus opgebou is, het gelei tot die ontstaan van beroemde museums. So het die versameling van John Tradescant, die 17de eeuse reisiger en botanis, die kern gevorm van die Ashmoleanse Museum wat in 1683 geopen is in Oxford.

Toe die reuseversameling natuurhistoriese voorwerpe, wetenskaplike instrumente en argeologiese en etnologiese voorwerpe van Sir Hans Sloane in 1753, soos in sy testament bepaal, vir die reusebedrag van £20 000 (R40 000) te koop aangebied is aan die Britse Koning, die Parlement of die koninklike Akademies van Petersburg, Berlyn, Parys of Madrid, was daar nie soveel geld in die Britse staatskas nie.

Die tesourie was egter vasberade om hierdie versameling in Engeland te hou en het 'n openbare lotery uitgeskryf om die geld te vind. £95 000 (R190 000) is langs hierdie weg ingesamel, Sir Hans se versameling is aangekoop om die kern te vorm van die nou beroemde Britse Museum, en met die geld wat oorgebly het, is 'n gebou aangekoop om die versameling te huisves. Die Britse Museum is in 1759 oopgestel – of liewer, gedeeltelik oopgestel. Toegang is slegs verleen aan groepe van nie meer as vyftien persone wat vooraf aansoek moes doen, twee



One of the natural history displays in the British Museum, about 1800.

"A legacy of Sir Hans Sloane became the nucleus of the British Museum, and with the addition of the library of George II it was placed in Montague House in the Bloomsbury section of London. Later other famous libraries were added to it. The initial display may seem odd by today's standards. In the entrance hall was a statue of Shakespeare, strange ornaments from a Hindu temple, and the huge skeleton of a hippopotamus.

"Although the doors were opened to the public in 1759, the museum was not immediately as accessible as might have been expected. A Guide Book to the General Contents of the British Museum (published in 1761) notes: 'fifteen persons are allowed to view it in one Company, the Time allotted is two Hours; and when any number not exceeding fifteen are inclined to see it, they must send a list of their Christian and Surnames, additions, and places of abode, to the Porter's Lodge, in order to ensure their being entered in the Book; in a few days the respective Tickets will be made out, specifying the Day and Hour in which they are to come, which, on being sent for, are delivered. If by any accident some of the parties are prevented from coming, it is proper they send their Tickets back to the Lodge, as nobody can be admitted with it but themselves. It is to be remarked that the fewer Names there are in a list, the sooner they are likely to be admitted to see it'."

(Quoted from *Treasure Keepers* by John F. Mills, Jupiter, London, 1973)

tot drie weke wag en dan op 'n Maandag, Dinsdag, Woensdag, of Donderdagoggend tussen 11 en 12 by die museumkantoor aanmeld. Al die voornemende besoekers se persoonlike dokumente is noukeurig nagegaan waarna hulle geplaas is in een van die agt groepe wat daaglik deur die Museum gemarsjeer is. Marsjeer was dit werklik, want niemand mog vassteek om van naderby na iets te kyk nie. Almal moes op 'n vinnige pas deurstep en soveel moontlik probeer

raaksien van die duisende uitgepakte voorwerpe wat feitlik almal ook nog sonder etikette was!

In Spanje, in 1820, kon lede van die publiek die koninklike versameling besigtig op Woensdae en Saterdag "behalwe as dit reën", terwyl in Wene, in 1792, die koninklike versameling weer op Maandae, Woensdae en Vrydae oopgestel is vir besigtiging "deur enigiemand met skoon skoene"!

## FIRST RAADZAAL TO BECOME MUSEUM AGAIN



The First Raadzaal and east wing as it is today. Drawing by Cecilia Bleeden.

Recently the historic First Raadzaal in St. George's Street, Bloemfontein, in which the National Museum was established in 1877, was handed back to the Museum, to become an extension of its historical department. This building, the oldest in town and a declared National Monument was acquired from the State.

The Raadzaal was built by Major Henry Warden in 1849. It was originally used as a school building as well as for the regular sessions of the Legislative Council of the Orange River Sovereignty (1849–1852). It was also used as a church (1849–1852) and for the sessions of the Volksraad (1854–1856). In this building Josias Hoffman (1854) and Jacobus Boshof (1855) were inaugurated as Presidents of the Free State Republic and Andrew Murray was inducted as minister by his father.

From 1877 to 1915 it accommodated the National Museum. Two wings were added to the thatch-roof building for museum purposes in 1885 and 1891. The older one was demolished a few years ago.

A series of displays depicting great historical moments in the history of this building are to be constructed in the existing east wing. It is intended that these displays will be opened to the public on the centenary of the National Museum on 20 July 1977.