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Notting Hill Carnival. Image copyright - Adrian Boot. 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music', British Library.

## NMDC news

### Final chance to join ICOM UK in Belfast

The 2024 ICOM UK Conference which is being held in Belfast on 12 April at Ulster Museum will focus on the role of museums in divided communities. Talks include sessions on the legacy of conflict, borders and boundaries – both locally and internationally and the role of museums in working proactively with local communities. The deadline for tickets is 5 April, NMDC member tickets cost £70. [ICOM UK](#)

## Members' news

### British Museum appoints Nicholas Cullinan as new Director

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, currently Director of the National Portrait Gallery, has been named by the British Museum as the successor to Hartwig Fischer who resigned in August 2023. He said: "One of the greatest museums in the world, it is an honour to become the next Director of the British Museum. I look forward to joining its wonderful and dedicated staff and to work with its hugely impressive Board in leading it into a new chapter. This will encompass the most significant transformations, both architectural and intellectual, happening in any museum globally, to continue making the British Museum the most engaged and collaborative it can be." Cullinan will take over from Interim Director Sir Mark Jones in Summer 2024. [British Museum](#) (press release, pdf), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#), [Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Museums Association](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£) **Also:** Thief sold stolen gems to at least 45 buyers on eBay, British Museum says, [BBC](#)

### Fitzwilliam Museum reopens five main painting galleries

The Fitzwilliam Museum reopened five main painting galleries on 15 March following a major refurbishment and redisplay project. Featuring over 190 works from much loved famous artworks to rediscoveries and contemporary acquisitions. The new hang respects traditional art historical groupings but presents these through a new lens examining how portraits, still lives, nudes, interiors and landscapes have confronted and challenged prevailing cultural and societal expectations at different times. [Fitzwilliam](#) (pdf, press release), [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Museums Association](#)

### Science Museum opens new energy gallery

On 26 March the 'Energy Revolution: The Adani Green Energy Gallery' opened to the public at the Science Museum. The free gallery examines the rapid energy transition and decarbonisation needed globally to limit climate change. Based around three sections; Future Planet, Future Energy and Our Future, it encourages visitors to reflect on past energy transitions and the pioneers who dreamed what might be possible. [Science Museum](#) (gallery), [Science Museum](#) (press release), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

### National Archives first touring exhibition opens at Newcastle's Discovery Museum

The 'Spirit of Invention: A world of creativity from Victorian Britain to the present day' exhibition is inspired by some of the thousands of creative designs registered with the Board of Trade which are held at the National Archives. The free exhibition runs till 23 June 2024 at the Discovery Museum, part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) and it is the first museum to host a travelling exhibition from the National Archives. Keith Merrin, Director of TWAM, said: "It is the first time that The National Archives has worked with a museum in this way to create an exhibition away from its London base and is part of a longstanding relationship that we have for the benefit of the communities of our region." [Discovery Museum](#)

### British Library publishes lessons learnt from their recent cyber-attack

A new paper from the British Library shares 16 key lessons learnt from the recent cyber-attack that brought down their IT systems and had a disruptive impact on their services. The advice shares a timeline of events, the implications for the Library's operations, future infrastructure and risk assessments. It has been written by expert advisors and specialists with a hope of helping others learn from the British Library's experiences. [British Library](#) (blog), [British Library](#) (paper, pdf, 18 pgs)

## Cornwall Museums Partnership completes closure and moves 'live' projects to new homes

Following the loss of Arts Council funding in January 2023, Cornwall Museums Partnership (CMP) has completed its closure process moving 'Safe Access', run in conjunction with Queer Kernow, to the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) with CMP's Jenna Marrion moving to AIM to lead the project. Stephanie Clemens, CMP's Museums Development Officer will also transition to the Cornwall Council Culture Team. The St Ives Digital Town Trail, funded through Central Government's Town Deal Programme, will be further developed and delivered by Leach Pottery. [CMP](#) (press release, pdf), [AIM](#), [Museums Association](#) (Nov 23, news of closure)

**Also:** Tate Britain unveils Keith Piper's artistic response to racist Rex Whistler mural, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) Rothko's Seagram Murals come to Tate St Ives for the first time this Summer, [Tate](#), [FAD](#)

## Images this month

Images this month come from 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music' which opens at the British Library on 26 April until 26 August 2024. The exhibition is about the places where these sounds were born: the clubs, the carnivals, the stages, the kerbside auditoriums. It is the voice of community, resistance, culture and joy. It is a celebration of the trailblazers and innovators that brought new music to the UK, and the layered Black experiences that have birthed a thriving musical culture and history. [British Library](#)

## Government news

### Budget round-up

Following the permanent extension of Museum and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief in last month's budget there have been a number of press articles and briefing notes in response. [NMDC](#) statement, [BBC](#) coverage, [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Heritage Alliance](#) (briefing note), [Charity Finance Group](#) (budget analysis)

**Also:** Lucy Frazer, Culture Secretary, speaks at The Big Creative UK Summit, 7 March. [Gov.uk](#)

### UK Government Levelling Up funding awarded to NMDC members

The National Railway Museum in York, National Museums Liverpool and V&A Dundee were all named by Chancellor Jeremy Hunt as recipients of investment in the Spring Budget. The National Railway Museum, part of the Science Museum Group, will receive £15m towards their £95m masterplan which is investing in capital projects at the York museum and its sister site at Shildon. Director Judith McNicol said: "This is incredible news for the National Railway Museum. The £15 million package is a major milestone in our transformational journey to become the world's railway museum – globally relevant and open for all. It will help us attract upwards of 1.4 million visitors to both museum sites and fulfil our role as the cultural gateway to York Central." National Museums Liverpool were awarded £10m that will go towards their Waterfront Transformation Project at Royal Albert Docks. V&A Dundee will remodel and extend their Scottish Design Galleries with the support of £2.6m. British Library North in Leeds will also receive £10m. The funding is part of £100m that has been set aside for levelling up culture projects. [Gov.uk](#) (news story), [Gov.uk](#) (guidance and list of projects), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### £33 million distributed to museums and libraries across England

The latest recipients of the Government's Cultural Investment Fund have been announced with 26 museums benefitting from support to carry out vital repairs and upgrades. This third round of MEND (Museum Estate and Development Fund), administered by Arts Council England, brings the total investment so far to more than £62m for 93 museums. The critical infrastructure projects help to boost access, maximise income generation opportunities and help to increase visitor numbers. Projects include:

- The Discovery Museum, part of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums will receive over £3m for repair and refurbishment works.
- Sheffield Museums' Millennium Gallery will receive £577,858.
- £2.3m to Chatham Historic Dockyard.
- £2.1m to the Almonry Museum and Information Tourist Centre, Evesham.

- Powell-Cotton Museum in Kent receives £1.1m for urgent and critical roof repairs.
- £500K to Dinosaur Isle on the Isle of Wight for structural repairs, and improvements to environment and lighting.
- Yorkshire Sculpture Park - £250K to restore and repair its 200 year old Cut Bridge.

[Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (full list), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Scottish Government publishes International Culture Strategy

Running from 2024 to 2030, the strategy is aiming to help Scotland's culture and creative sector to flourish on the world stage. 'Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy' sets out the value of international activity to the long term development of the sector. The strategy has been informed by public consultation that ran in 2023. [Gov.Scot](#) (press release), [Gov.scot](#) (strategy, pdf, 32 pgs)

## Election build-up

### Labour sets out plans for arts, culture and the creative industries

Kier Starmer, Labour leader, spoke at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on Labour's plans to place arts at the centre of a Labour government. Reviewing the school curriculum was mentioned alongside supporting freelancers' rights and improving access to creative apprenticeships. Starmer pledged to make the arts accessible to young people from all backgrounds and stressed the economic contribution of the creative industries. 'Creating Growth, Labour's Plan for the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries' was launched at the event and includes commitments to increase access to museum collections as well as a review of Arts Council England. [Labour Arts Plan](#) (PDF) [Labour](#) (speech), [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Independent](#), [BBC Front Row](#) (podcast, from 00.50)

Thangam Debbonnaire, Shadow Culture Secretary, spoke at The UK Big Creative Summit and set out Labour plans to put creative education at the heart of the school curriculum. [Arts Professional](#)

**Also:** 'I've never heard a Labour leader speak about the arts like Kier Starmer – now I hope words become actions', [Guardian](#)



Dancing, holding can of Guinness, in front of speakers, 1983. Image copyright - Richard Saunders & urbanimage.tv. 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music', British Library.

## Sector news and reports

### Mary Archer to head Arts Council England review

Mary Archer, the former chair of the Science Museum Group, will lead a panel of 14 cultural figures who will undertake a review of Arts Council England (ACE). Part of the Cabinet Office's programme of cross-government public body reviews it is a standard process routinely carried out on all public bodies. It is the first review of ACE since 2017 and part of the panel's remit is to identify how ACE could implement 5% of cost savings. The panel includes NMDC member Tony Butler, Executive Director of Derby Museums. [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

### Historic England publishes research on heritage and life satisfaction

New research from Historic England shows heritage is a boost for wellbeing and estimates that people's day-to-day encounters with heritage are worth £29 billion every year in England. Funded by DCMS the research highlights the importance of preserving and protecting cultural heritage because of the wider benefits it provides people, communities and society. The research explores the non-use value of heritage showing that even living in the proximity of heritage can have positive benefits. 'The research findings show that there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between the density of heritage assets near one's residence and self-reported life satisfaction. A doubling of the density of heritage assets within a 1km radius is associated with a 0.025 rise in life satisfaction scores. This analysis robustly demonstrates that living in close proximity to historic assets holds a modest yet meaningful link to wellbeing.' [Historic England](#) (press release), [Historic England](#) (executive summary), [Historic England](#) (full report, pdf, 48pgs)

### Heritage and cultural property crime highlighted in new report

Research funded by Historic England and carried out between February 2020 and February 2023 has identified the diverse range of active and emerging threats to the historic environment. The research highlights the problems of antisocial behaviour, particularly arson, vandalism and graffiti as well as an assessment of threats such as theft of historic lead and stone, high value burglaries of cultural objects and unlawful metal detecting. The theft of cultural objects from art galleries, museums and stately homes are on the rise, with an estimated £3.2m worth of cultural property stolen in the 2021/22 period. [Historic England](#)

### 23 arts and heritage places to take part in 'Going Places' with Art Fund

Art Fund's 'Going Places' is a new UK-wide programme that will engage underrepresented audiences with museum collections through collaborative touring exhibitions with lead support from the Heritage Fund. Seven networks have been planned to take part in the development phase of the project to plan two touring exhibitions over five years. Local communities will be involved in shaping exhibition themes and outreach programming and will bring their voices to each display by reinterpreting collections to tell new stories. If Art Fund is successful with a subsequent delivery phase application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and with further fundraising, the networks will go on to produce their exhibitions with audiences across the country from 2025 to 2030. [Art Fund](#)

### 'UK Trade in a Global Creative Economy' published

Creative PEC have published the second report in their 'State of the Nations' series that shows the UK's creative service exports continued to rise over the 2010-2021 period despite Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. It confirms the UK's creative industries are a success story but warns against complacency. [Creative PEC](#) (press release), [Creative PEC](#) (report, pdf, 74 pgs), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Heritage Fund Digital Skills for Heritage evaluation has sector recommendations

Running over 4 years between 2020-2024 the Digital Skills for Heritage programme from the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported 55 projects and a total of 53,000 individuals working and volunteering in over 6,400 organisations. The aim was to build confidence among small and volunteer-organisations, to provide digital training and learning opportunities, and support digital leadership across the sector. An evaluation of the scheme has been published with wider recommendations for the sector including:

- Recruiting and supporting digitally confident leaders and board members is an effective way of helping the sector prioritise digital transformation.

- Establishing a new 'digital funders forum' could help share practice and maximise resources.
- Investment and development of the wider heritage sector ecosystem is essential in growing digital skills and confidence.

The funding has also resulted in a Digital Heritage Hub with over 880 online learning resources, guides and toolkits. [Heritage Fund](#) (press release), [Heritage Fund](#) (evaluation, pdf, 68pgs), [CultureHive](#) (Digital Heritage Hub)

**Also:** The Royal Institution has just surpassed 100,000 followers on Instagram, 85,000 joining in the last 5 months. In this LinkedIn post Social Media Manager, Steven Franklin explains how they got there. Via The Audience Agency. [LinkedIn](#)

## Visitor and income statistics

### Annual visitor figures for DCMS sponsored museums

DCMS has published the 2022-23 annual visitor figures for the 15 museums which it directly funds, showing 35.1m visits, an increase of 104.5% from 2021/22 but a decrease of 27.4% from 2018/19 (pre-pandemic). Details include:

- In 2022/23 there were approximately 7m visits by children (under 16) to DCMS sponsored museums and galleries. This is an increase of 116.7% compared to 2021/22 but a decrease of 16.5% when compared to 2018/19.
- Visitors to museums outside of London have recovered at a slower rate since the COVID-19 pandemic than those within London.
- In 2022/23, there were approx. 29.9m visits to museums and galleries within London. An increase of 117% from 2021/22 but a decrease of 20.1% from 2018/19.
- For DCMS sponsored museums and galleries outside of London there were approx. 5.3m visits, an increase of 52.3% compared to 2021/22 but a decrease of 51.8% compared to 2018/19.
- There were an estimated 11.5m overseas visitors to museums and galleries an increase of 728.3% compared to 2021/22 but a decrease of 49.5% compared to 2018/19.
- Websites saw their highest unique visits since records began at 146.5m unique website visits. A 4.8% increase on the 138.9m recorded in 2021/22.
- Under 18s participating in onsite activities is still 40% down on 2018/19 figures and self-directed visits by under 18s in formal education was down 44.1% on 2018/19.
- 2022/23 self-generated income amounted to over £297m an increase of 26% on 2021/22 but a decrease of 9.8% from 2018/19.

[Gov.uk](#) (performance indicators), [Gov.uk](#) (headline data), [Gov.uk](#) (data tables), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Annual income statistics for DCMS-sponsored organisations

DCMS published income statistics for the 19 organisations it directly funds through Grant In Aid for 2022/23. The total income of DCMS-funded cultural organisations was £4.2 billion. Adjusting for inflation this was a 2.7% decrease compared to 2021/22 but an increase of 3.2% compared to 2018/19. Detail includes:

- In 2022/23, DCMS-funded cultural organisations received a total of £1.3b in Grant-in-Aid. Adjusting for inflation, this is a 30% decrease compared to 2021/22, but a an increase of 6.5% compared to 2018/19.
- Organisations generated a total of £492m through fundraising income (excluding donated objects). This is an 11.8% increase compared to 2021/22 but a decrease of 1.4% on 2018/19.
- DCMS-funded cultural organisations generated a total of £2.4b through other activities such as trading, investment income and admission fees. Adjusting for inflation this is a 19.9% increase compared to 2021/22 and a 3.3% increase compared to 2018/19.

[Gov.uk](#) (headline data), [Gov.uk](#) (data tables)

### The British Museum overtakes NHM as most visited museum in latest ALVA visitor numbers

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) has published visitor numbers for 2023 covering members who manage museums, heritage sites, parks and zoos. Visits totalled 146.6m, a 19% increase on the previous year (123.6m), but still a 11% decline on the 163.9m visits in 2019 to the top 374 ALVA sites. The figures also show that:

- Indoor attractions saw a 23% increase compared to a 2% increase in outdoor attractions.
- The most visited UK attraction was the British Museum with over 5.8m visits, a 42% increase on 2022. Followed by the Natural History Museum, Windsor Great Park and the Tate Modern.
- Wales saw a 25% increase in visitors numbers thanks to National Museum Wales joining ALVA. London saw a 24% increase in visitors, Scotland and Northern Ireland saw a 21% increase.
- The East of England saw the largest increase of visitors outside of London up 11%.
- In Scotland the most visited attraction was the National Museum of Scotland which was in 12th place overall with 2.1m visits, an increase of 11%.
- In Northern Ireland Titanic Belfast was the most visited attraction with its most successful year since 2012. In Wales St. Fagans National Museum of History was in top spot.
- The top 10 featured NMDC members include – 1: British Museum, 2: Natural History Museum, 4: Tate Modern, 6: V&A, 7: National Gallery, and 8: Science Museum.
- Attractions that offered heavily discounted tickets for recipients of Universal Credit from February 2023 onwards included ZSL London Zoo saw a 27% increase in visitor numbers.

[ALVA \(table\)](#), [ALVA \(overview\)](#), [BBC](#), [Independent](#), [Evening Standard](#), [Scotsman](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Some UK institutions still lagging as international museum visitors return

The Art Newspaper has published findings from its annual survey of visits to art museums globally. Many of the world's museums have matched or surpassed visitor data from 2019, and there has been a slow recovery with 54m visits in 2020, 71m in 2021 and 141m in 2022. 2023 saw 176m visits to the world's top 100 museums. Other data showed:

- The Louvre was again the most visited site with 8.9m visitors, just 8% below its 2019 figure.
- Some major world museums had more visitors than pre-pandemic levels in 2019 including Musée d'Orsay which was up 6% on 2019 to 3.9m and Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence was up 15%, to 2.7m.
- London's National Gallery had the biggest absolute fall in visitor numbers of any museum in the survey – it received 3.1m visitors in 2023, down 48% on 2019. Although the Sainsbury Wing has been closed throughout 2023 and is due to reopen in 2025.
- Tate Britain and Tate Liverpool were still down 40% on 2019 although the former was closed for a rehang and the latter has been closed since October. Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, was down 47% and V&A Dundee was down 45%.
- The top ten US museums in 2023 were still on average 9% down on 2019 figures.

[Art Newspaper](#) (overview), [Art Newspaper](#) (figures and analysis)

**Also:** Boost for tourism as Scottish attractions pull in more than 48m visitors, [STV News](#)

## Cultural funding cuts

### UK Museum Mapping data shows at least 467 museums have closed since 2000

New data on UK Museum Closure from 2000-2024 has shown that at least 467 museums have closed. Research from Mapping Museums Lab, based at Birkbeck University and King's College London, also shows that the sector is still bigger than it was in 2000. For most of the past twenty-four years more museums have opened than closed. Local authority museums have seen the highest number of closures, with numbers reducing 9% from 774 in 2000 to 702 in 2024. [Mapping Museums Lab](#)

### Leeds Museums and Galleries face closure of Thwaite Watermill

Leeds Council is proposing the closure of Thwaite Watermill to save costs in the region of £660,000 to £756,000 over the next five years. One of 9 sites operated by Leeds Museums and Galleries it currently only welcomes the public on weekends and school holidays, and during term time for pre-booked groups. A final decision has not been made to surrender the lease but the watermill will be closed to the public from April 2024. [Leeds.gov](#), [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

## Call for evidence on the future of local cultural decision making

Cultural Commons and sector partners are exploring 'the future of local cultural decision making' by running a 12 month open policy development programme. The project will see a coalition of organisations from across local government, sector representative bodies, universities, arm's length bodies, and grant giving organisations come together. To ensure a wide body of evidence Cultural Commons are making an open call for evidence to gather perspectives from individuals and organisations on how increased local decision making might affect the creative and cultural life of the UK. The deadline for submissions is Sunday 2 June 2024. [Cultural Commons](#) (call out), [Cultural Commons](#) (development programme)

**Also: Podcast:** Local government funding crisis, includes interview with Zak Mensah, Co-CEO of Birmingham Museums Trust, [Arts & Culture](#) – The Association for Cultural Enterprises Podcast, (from 17.48)

**Also:** 'We're barely hanging on': England's cultural jewels fall into the red, [Observer](#) **Also:** Museums in the firing line as UK council funding crisis bites, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) **Also:** Arts funding has collapsed under 14 years of Tory rule. Here are three ways Labour can fix it, [Guardian](#)

## Climate crisis

### Help provide data for the Act Green Survey – Register now

The Act Green Survey 2024 looks to help organisations understand how different audience groups view the role of cultural organisations in tackling the climate crisis, it aims to develop impactful ways to communicate with different audience groups and shape strategies for involving audiences in sustainability initiatives. The Act Green Survey in 2023 captured 17,500 from 86 organisations with 77% of audiences thinking that cultural organisations have a responsibility to make radical change to address the climate emergency. This is an opportunity to capture audience views on how museums should be involved in tackling the climate crisis. The survey opens in May but you can register now. [Act Green](#)

### Panel discussion on the 'Earth Crisis' chaired by Nick Merriman

The Conduit member's club has a panel discussion on 'Museums, Galleries and the Earth Crisis' on 10 April from 6-7.15pm. Nick Merriman, Chief Executive of English Heritage and former Director of the Horniman Museum and Chair of last year's NMDK UK Museum COP event, will be chairing the panel. Tickets are free but you need to register. The panel also includes Heath Lowndes from the Gallery Climate Coalition and Alison Tickell from Julie's Bicycle. [Conduit](#) (event info), [non-members](#) (registration)

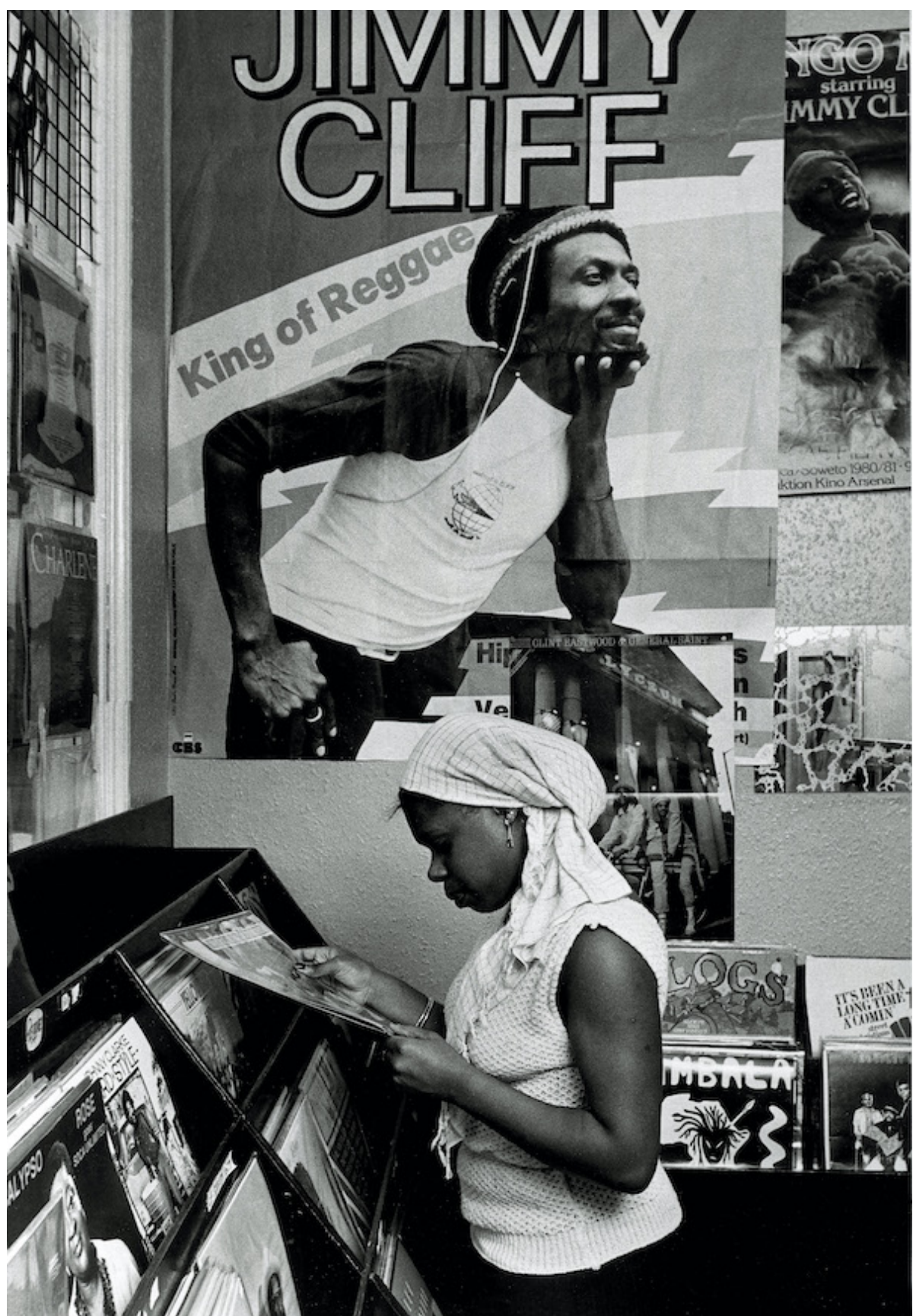
### Speakers announced for Greenloop 24

Nick Merriman will also be joining the line up at this year's Greenloop conference. The event will be focussed on sustainability in UK visitor attractions. The online conference will be held on 30 April with tickets costing £20 each which reduces to £10 with a group option of 5 tickets (+VAT). [Greenloop](#)

### Guidance on Climate Protection in Museums published by NEMO

The Network of European Museum Organisations has published guidance on making an active contribution to climate and environmental protection at all levels of the museum. The guide is broken down into understanding the need for action, how to get started, organisation, acting and mobilising. It has lots of tips and advice to help museums think about their impact and mitigation on climate change. [NEMO](#) (press release), [NEMO](#) (guide, pdf, 34 pgs)





Girl selecting a record, beneath Jimmy Cliff poster, in record shop. Image copyright - Richard Saunders. 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music', British Library.

## Collections and restitution

### Major funding announced to digitise natural, historic specimens in UK museums

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has announced that more than £155m from the UK Research and Innovation Infrastructure Fund will support the Natural History Museum Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DiSSCo) that will digitise most of the UK's 137 million natural science specimens. The 10 year programme involves 90 partners across the UK. The collections, spanning 4.6 billion years, will enable researchers to find solutions to global problems like biodiversity loss and food security. By deploying the latest AI-derived innovations, DiSSCo UK will deliver tools to study and explore environmental systems, applying AI to inform policy and assist with environmental management decisions. Once digitised, the data will be freely available to anyone worldwide, meaning greater access and opportunities for global collaboration as we navigate the planetary emergency. [Gov.uk](#), [NHM](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

### Three disputed Rubens paintings to remain at the Courtauld Gallery

The UK Spoliation Advisory Panel has ruled that three disputed Rubens paintings, once owned by German banker, Franz Wilhelm Koenigs, should stay at the Courtauld Gallery. It is the fifth time the restitution panels in the UK and the Netherlands have considered claims over the three paintings. [Gov.uk](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

**Also:** Most countries have made little to no progress in returning Nazi-looted art, report finds, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) **Also:** Germany to replace Nazi-loot advisory panel with binding arbitration, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

### Spectrum collections management system now available in Welsh

The Welsh Government have provided funding to make Spectrum 5.1 available online in Welsh for the first time to support museums in Wales to meet accreditation standards. [Collections Trust](#) **Also:** There are two training dates on offer for those who are new to the Spectrum standard or need a refresher, priority will be given to Welsh museums. Running on 9 April 10-12 noon and 25 April 2-4pm. Email [events@collectionstrust.org.uk](mailto:events@collectionstrust.org.uk) to book.

## Funding news

### The Weston Loan Programme announces regional museums and galleries benefitting from national loans

The latest recipients of the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund include 12 regional galleries and museums from the Piers Art Centre in Orkney to The MAC in Belfast. The Garfield Weston Foundation support the fund, with £308,606 distributed in this round. The grants for new exhibitions will be supported by loans from national institutions including the National Portrait Gallery and Tate. Exhibitions include:

- The first major retrospective on Black British artist, Donald Rodney at Nottingham Contemporary.
- Lowry's fascination with the sea will be explored at Maltings (Berwick) Trust.
- Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery will tell the little know story of American art collector Peggy Guggenheim's time spent living near Petersfield.

Highlights of loans include Jane Austen's writing desk which will be travelling to God's House Tower in Southampton. [Art Fund](#)

### Scottish museums benefit from £521K Capital Resilience Funding

14 museums and galleries across Scotland have been awarded funding to support capital costs that directly increase the resilience of museums by increasing energy efficiency, reducing running costs or preventing increases in maintenance and repair costs. The projects include the Dundee Heritage Trust generating and championing local renewable energy at Verdant Works by installing a solar photovoltaic array. Glasgow Women's Library also hopes to achieve a 30% overall reduction in their building's overall energy consumption through insulating the walls, basement and loft. [MGS](#) (press release), [MGS](#) (full list of grants)

### Museums Galleries Scotland award £175K through the Sustainable Co-Production Fund

Five museums have been supported to work with communities on collaborative projects; Paxton House, HMS Unicorn, Glasgow School of Art, David Livingstone Birthplace and Glasgow Life Museums, have all benefitted from funding. The fund is part of Delivering Change, a collaborative effort to restructure organisations on anti-oppressive principles. Projects include looking at new narratives within the complex realities and legacies of slavery and colonialism at David Livingstone Birthplace and £40K went to Glasgow Life Museums to work with the Mental Health Foundation's refugees and asylum seekers team. [MGS](#)

### 36 small museums funded to tell science stories

The Royal Society's Places of Science Scheme has funded 36 small museums to engage their local communities with science stories. The fifth round of the scheme has given out grants of up to £3,500 to help explore science connections. Grants include 'Criminal Science and its relationship to Social Justice and Community' at the Tetbury Police Museum & Courtroom and 'Urban microclimates and their potential impact on summer sport in future' at the Museum of Welsh Cricket. [Royal Society](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

## Funding opportunities

### Reminder – MEND Round 4 now open for applications

The online portal for expressions of interest for Museum Estate and Development Fund Round 4 opened on 4 March and closes midday on Thursday 18 April for grants ranging from £50,000 to £5m. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport provide the funding, distributed by Arts Council England, for vital infrastructure and urgent maintenance for non-national accredited museums across England and/or local authorities based in England who are responsible for the maintenance of non-national accredited museum buildings. Full applications open on Tuesday 28 May 2024. [Gov.uk](#), [ACE](#) (applications)

### Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund open for applications

Run by the Museums Association (MA), the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund supports museums and their community partners to develop together, using collections. In a change to previous years, the fund will support core costs for the funding period. Grants range up to £100k for up to two years for projects that have a focus on inclusion and collections. Applicants are invited to speak to a member of the Collections Fund staff at the MA before submitting an expression of interest (EOI). The deadline for submission of EOI is 22 April 2024. [Museums Association](#)

### AHRC Community-led Heritage Research and Skills Hub funding

New funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is looking to fund a hub that will convene a consortium of heritage organisations across the UK to undertake heritage and collections research driven by local communities. The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £1 million over three years. AHRC will fund a combination of 80% and 100% of the FEC. The hub will be expected to award funding to community-led heritage research projects across the UK. The deadline for applications is 26 June 2024. [UKRI](#)

### Lloyd's Register Foundation offering up to £10,000 for maritime heritage grants

Small grants, up to £10,000, are on offer from the Lloyd's Register Foundation that lead to the promotion and public access of collections focussed on maritime history after 1760. This can include projects that involve interpretation, digitisation, cataloguing, exhibitions, or conservation required to enable public engagement. The deadline for applications is Monday 13 May 2024. [Lloyd's Register Foundation](#), [M+H Advisor](#)



The Selector with Pauline Black. Image copyright - Adrian Boot & urbanimage.tv. 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music', British Library.

## Professional development

### Inclusive Cultures opens for applications

Clore Leadership have opened their six-month disabled-led professional development programme for applications. Inclusive Cultures is designed for cultural leaders seeking to take a step towards systemic change. The programme draws on Inclusive Leadership theories and practice, and the lived experiences of d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people/communities. The course involves 4 days of online learning beginning on Friday 14 June. Fees range from £75 for freelancers to £125 for small organisations (up to 250 employees) and £175 for large organisations. The deadline for applications is 29 April. [Clore](#)

## Awards

### M+H announces Awards shortlist

The shortlist for the annual Museums + Heritage Awards has been announced, there are 18 categories and a new award for 2024 – Museums and Heritage Sector Impact Award. A summary list of nominees includes the following NMDC members:

- **Best Use of Digital** – V&A for mused, National Portrait Gallery Schools Hub.
- **Community Engagement Programme of the Year** – National Galleries of Scotland and Rowan Alba for Enriching Lives and Supporting Recovery, History of Science & Pitt Rivers Museum for MultakaOxford, Imperial War Museum for Perspectives: Remembrance.
- **Learning Programme of the Year** – National Museums NI for Museum on the Move, Real World Science Partners and the Natural History Museum for Explore: Urban Nature, Horniman Museum and Gardens.
- **Marketing and Communications Campaign of the Year** – British Museum for The Citi Exhibition China's hidden century, V&A Dundee for Tartan, National Portrait Gallery for Reopening Campaign, Black Country Living Museum for 75 babies.

- **Museums and Heritage Sector Impact Award** – National Museums Liverpool for House of Memories, Leeds Museums and Galleries for Learning and Access Team.
- **Partnership of the Year** – Manchester Museum and PINC College
- **Permanent Exhibition of the Year** – Manchester Museum for South Asian Gallery.
- **Temporary or Touring Exhibition (budget under £80k)** – Leeds Museums and Galleries for A Hip Hop Journey: 50 years of Kulture.
- **Temporary or Touring Exhibition (budget over £80k)** – Fitzwilliam Museum for Black Atlantic, Natural History Museum for Titanosaur.

The winners will be announced on Wednesday 15 May 2024. [M+H Awards](#) **Also:** Reminder M+H Show from 15-16 May – London Olympia, [M+H Show](#)

### Activism Museum Award 2024 selects three winners

UK based Museum X, Salt Museum in Greece and international collective Lusophone Museum of Sexual Diversity have been named as the three winners of the Activism Museum Award for 2024. The award given by University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries recognises work that fosters activist thinking within the museum community. Each winner has been given £1,000 to support the development of their ideas and they have also been invited to showcase their work across the sector. Museum X, based in London, is an experimental museum bringing people, places and stories together to test ideas and reimagine African and Caribbean heritage. [University of Leicester](#), [Museums Association](#)

### Collections Trust Award goes to Museum of Gloucester

The Museum of Gloucester's 'Buttons, Badges and Blazers' exhibition funded by Arts Council England and Museum Development South West was named as the winner of the £1,000 prize. The judges felt the exhibition increased access to the costume collection, enhanced catalogue records and strengthened community partnerships. The Egypt Centre and The National Museum of the Royal Navy were also highly commended for their collections projects. [Collections Trust](#), [Museum of Gloucester](#)

### Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award opens for nominations

The 2024 Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award is now open for nominations. There are five categories: Best Small Museum, Best Medium Museum, Best Large Museum, Best Accessible Museum and a new category for 2024 – Best Museum Youth Group. The 2023 overall winner was Craven Museum in Skipton Town Hall. Nominations are welcome until 5pm on Monday 3 June with winners announced in October 2024. [Kids in Museums](#)

## Conferences and events

### Social media as a site for contemporary collecting seminar

Dr Arran Rees will look at social media platforms as sites for contemporary collecting in museums. The talk will look at the types of collecting that might take place through social media, some of the practical considerations of acquiring and accessioning social media artifacts and the ethical dimensions of collecting social media. This free seminar from the Museum Social Media Cultures Research Network is on Thursday 11 April from 4-5pm. [Eventbrite](#)

### Multi-sensory learning in museums training from the British Museum

The British Museum Schools Team and education experts are offering a day to explore how to develop and deliver multi-sensory activities which support and enrich learning for students with additional needs in museums, heritage sites, art galleries and cultural organisations. Held at the British Museum on 26 April from 10-4.30pm the day will include covering themes such as; reviewing the use of text in SEND resources, understanding and supporting neurodiverse learners and ensuring engagement and enjoyment for students with additional physical and learning needs. There are also 10 bursary places available for the British Museum's national partners. Contact Katharine Hoare for details [khoare@britishmuseum.org](mailto:khoare@britishmuseum.org)

### **The Public Country House Conference May 2024**

Taking place at the V&A South Kensington on 16-17 May 2024 and organised in collaboration with the National Trust, this conference will explore the role the country house plays in our national understanding of social and global histories and art and culture. Titled 'Public Country House: 'Treasure of quiet beauty' or site for public history?' the conference will look at diverse audience expectations, the climate crisis and national historical narratives. The conference will focus on public country houses: those owned, opened, and managed by charitable organisations with an obligation to provide public benefit. Tickets cost from £20-£40. [V&A](#)

### **Choosing Collections Software with the Collections Trust, June 2024**

This online training from the Collections Trust takes place over two hours and is aimed at museum staff and volunteers who are interested in upgrading or changing their collections software. It includes impartial advice on how to go about choosing software, guidance about developing a brief followed by a virtual trade fair with the opportunity to meet up to three Spectrum Partners of your choosing. The session is on 13 June 3-5pm. [Collections Trust](#)

### **Histories At Risk online seminar on 'Conservative Public History'**

The AHRC funded Histories At Risk network have organised an online workshop on Thursday 20 June from 10-6.30pm to look at the global perspective on the rise of right-wing popular political movements and the harnessing of the past as a means for attacking and challenging liberal consensus. Speakers from the UK include Corinne Fowler, Subhadra Das and Matthew Stallard. The online seminar is free. [Histories At Risk](#)

### **Gardens for Museums Conference July 2024 – The Garden Museum**

A timely conference looking at the creation of museum gardens and their role in building audiences, supporting income generation and their place in local cultural placemaking. The one day conference will be on 3 July at the Garden Museum in London. Aimed primarily at museum and gallery professionals and landscape design professionals who wish to develop a well thought-through garden project. Presentations include contributions from The Hepworth Wakefield Garden, Horniman Museum and Gardens and Natural History Museum. The in-person and online day costs from £50 for the livestream to £70 for Museums Association and AIM members to £100 for standard tickets. [Garden Museum](#)

### **Museum Ideas Conference October 2024**

This year's conference will be chaired by Dan Hicks, Professor of Contemporary Archaeology and Curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, alongside speakers including; Zandra Yeaman, Curator of Discomfort at the Hunterian in Glasgow; Korantema Anyimadu, Senior Curator of Anthropology at the Horniman Museum; and David Watson, Executive Director of Audiences and Media at National Museums Liverpool. The conference on 10 October at the Museum of London will explore the ideas shaping the future of museums. Tickets are £167 for one attendee with cheaper options for group bookings. [Museum Ideas](#)

### **IAASF Conference on 'Developing Resilience for the Protection of Cultural Venues' Oct 2024**

The International Arts and Antiquities Security Form (IAASF) Conference is being held at Redworth Hall in County Durham on 16-17 October. Attendees will gain a better understanding of the current and emerging threats to the arts, cultural and heritage sectors, alongside risk management resilience and security design concepts. Early Bird tickets are available until 30 April at £140 + VAT, standard tickets cost £175 + VAT. [IAASF](#)



Exterior of the Four Aces, London. Image copyright - Alan Denney. 'Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music', British Library.

## Call for papers

### 'My Evidence: Creating LGBTQI+ Art and Archives' Conference

Taking place on 3-4 October 2024 in Amsterdam, this conference organised by 'Perverse Collections: Building Europe's Queer and Trans Archives' Consortium will be focussing on the question - What kinds of artistic and historical sources are circulated as evidence for trans and queer lives, and how should we evaluate the personal and creative dimensions of its presentation? The call for presentations on the ethical considerations when archives work with artists and who continues to be marginalized in LGBTQI+ archives? Deadline for contributions is 1 May. [Heritage Research Hub](#)

### Historic house museums conference call for papers

'Public Houses: What makes civic custodianship of historic house museums in Britain different and where next?' is a two day conference running on 9-10 October 2024 at Temple Newsam, Leeds. It is an interdisciplinary event from Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds, supported by the Paul Mellon Foundation. The call for papers is looking for presentations and interactive dialogues of no more than 20 minutes on topics including (but not limited to); creative models for new forms of engagement with historic houses, funding and stability of historic houses and the role and purpose of historic houses in public ownership. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on 10 May. [Leeds Museums & Galleries](#)

## Obituaries

### Mar Dixon

Mar Dixon, social media consultant and museum sector innovator, has died aged 53. Mar was instrumental in connecting people across sector in the early days of social media. Creator of many digital sector campaigns including Museum Selfie Day, 52 Museums and Ask A Curator. She was also Project Coordinator for the first Museomix in the UK, founder of Culture Themes and alongside Linda Spurdle, Head of Digital for Birmingham Museums Trust, set up Museumcamp an 'unconference' focussing around people, museums and cake worldwide. [M+H Advisor](#), [Museums Association](#), [Shropshire Star](#)

## Openings

### Perth Museum opens after £27m redevelopment

Perth Museum opened on Saturday 30 March with the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Stone of Scone, at the heart of the museum, which returns to Perthshire for the first time in 700 years. The opening exhibition is Unicorn, the first UK exhibition to explore the mythical beast and emblem of Scotland. [Perth Museum](#), [Guardian](#), [Scotsman](#), [Courier](#), [Museums Association](#)

### Blackpool's Showtown Museum welcomes the public with fun and circus skills

Showtown Museum opened on 15 March with six galleries that tell the story of the seaside, magic, circus, illuminations, shows and dance. Costing £13m the museum, located in a former nightclub, is on the famous Golden Mile seafront strip. Designed by Casson Mann, Showtown explores Blackpool's history of entertainment and show business. [Showtown](#), [Telegraph](#), [Museums Association](#), [RIBA](#), [BBC Front Row](#) (podcast, from 17.25)

**Also:** Gibraltar to welcome its first major art museum, [ArtForum](#)

## Appointments

**Sandy Nairne** has been appointed as the new Chair of the Art Fund succeeding Chris Smith who has been leading the charity since 2014. Nairne was Director of the National Portrait Gallery from 2002 to 2015 and over the course of a 45 year career has held roles at Tate, Arts Council and the Institute of Contemporary Arts alongside advisory roles at a number of organisations including the National Trust and the Wolfson Foundation. He will take over the role in Autumn 2024. [Art Fund](#)

The National Gallery has appointed broadcaster and journalist **Andrew Marr** as a Cultural/Academic Trustee. His four year term commenced on 12 February 2024. [Gov.uk](#)

The Postal Museum has named **Sue Wilkinson** as their new Chair, succeeding Rick Wills who has been in post for 8 years. Wilkinson is a trained teacher who has held significant roles in the arts and education sectors including Chief Executive of the Reading Agency. [Postal Museum](#)

**Dr Rebecca Jones** has been appointed by National Museums Scotland as Keeper of Scottish History and Archaeology. She is currently Director of Alumni Relations at the University of Edinburgh having previously worked at Historic Environment Scotland. Jones also led on the development of Scotland's first Archaeology Strategy which launched in 2015. She takes up her role in June. [LinkedIn](#)

## Catch up

University to close glass and ceramics course over costs, 26 March 2024, [BBC](#)

Mary Beard calls for National Trust to 'loosen up' in its handling of heritage, 21 March 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [National Trust](#) (YouTube, lecture, 45 mins)

18% fall in clothes moths 'excellent news' for textile collections says National Trust, 15 March 2024, [M+H Advisor](#)

Paisley Museum refurbishment wins prestigious international award, 15 March 2024, [Herald](#)

Wandsworth named London Borough of Culture from April 2025, 11 March 2024, [BBC](#)

## International news

US museums blame falling visitor numbers for staff redundancies, 26 March 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

New York museum's former chief financial officer claims in lawsuit she was fired for raising concerns about director's expenses, 26 March 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Metropolitan Museum of Art hires its first provenance research head, 22 March 2024, [ARTnews](#)



Smithsonian moves towards 'informed consent' principle for human remains, 12 March 2024, [Museums Association](#)

'You cannot look away': Amsterdam Holocaust Museum opens amid protests, 10 March 2024, [Guardian](#)

Russia opens up new museum front in its war against Ukraine, 7 March 2024, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

## Jobs

Posts being advertised on the [NMDC jobs board](#) this month include:

- [Head of National and International Partnerships - National Museums Scotland](#)
- [Senior People Partner - National Museums Scotland](#)
- [Conservator - British Library](#)
- [Lead Business Analyst - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Conservation and Collections Care Manager - Science Museum Group](#)
- [Curator, Public Programmes - Tate](#)

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/news/newsletters/>