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and much more...

Education

No Ebacc...

Education Minister Michael Gove announced in early February that the government has decided to scrap plans for replacing GCSEs in six core subjects with a universally applied 'Ebacc'. This qualification included history, but had excluded the arts and design. 85% of respondents to a consultation thought the choice of Ebacc core subjects was wrong, and Bacc for the Future and other campaigners opposed the plans. The Cultural Learning Alliance pointed out that 15% of schools withdrew an arts subject in 2012 as a response to the impending changes.

News of the U-turn was welcomed by a huge range of arts and culture groups who were concerned that arts subjects would become downgraded 'second tier subjects'.

However, the Ebacc set of subjects remain as an indicator which schools must report on in coming years, and GCSEs are expected to be reformed to give more emphasis to fact learning and exams. Department for Education – Michael Gove's full statement, Cultural Learning Alliance

...but changing approaches to history GCSE

Much of the philosophy behind the GCSE changes is explored in a speech which Michael Gove gave to the Social Market Foundation. Here he argues that a traditional education gives children from less well-off homes a better chance of doing well and becoming represented in the country's future elites.

Responses to proposed changes in history teaching have been mixed: some, like Natasha McEnroe, director of the Florence Nightingale Museum, are concerned that history may be reduced to a single, approved understanding: "History should be where children are able to ask questions in a safe place. I worry about the ideology that history is somehow a series of objective facts."

Nick Winterbotham, Chair of the Group for Education in Museums said that the absence of anything post-17th century in Key Stage 2 could take many social history museums off the menu for primary schools.

Others, like Professor Niall Fergusson, argue that history teaching is not working as currently framed and that the curriculum will not be the tour through stock patriotic figures that some critics fear. Consultation continues on the curriculum until 16th April, and organisations can respond here. Guardian, Social Market Foundation, Museums Association

Cultural property

Chinese artifacts targeted by museum thieves

A man has been arrested on suspicion of trying to steal artifacts from the British Museum. His case was later dropped by the CPS on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

However there is a suspicion, voiced by the Bergen Museum in Norway, that the possible attempt at theft forms part of a pattern, and that someone may have commissioned the theft of Chinese objects to order. In January more than 20 Chinese objects were stolen from their displays, the second theft of such artifacts in three years.

There have also been a string of successful thefts of Chinese objects from UK museums including Durham University's Oriental Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath. Art Newspaper, News in English Norway

Turkey threatens to refuse international loans if disputed artifacts are not returned

Turkey is refusing to lend objects to museums internationally unless they first return disputed artifacts. Culture and tourism minister Ertugrul Gunay said that he believes it will be impossible to mount some exhibitions on the Ottomans or East Roman Empire without loans from Turkey.

The approach has met with some success: Pennsylvania's Penn Museum has returned 24 pieces of gold jewellery, dated around 2400 BC, which were purchased from a Philadelphia dealer in 1966. They will be returning on indefinite loan. Dallas Museum of Art returned a 2nd century Orpheus mosaic after accepting that it had been looted from an archeological site.

However the British Museum has rejected a claim for the return of a Samsat stele (a 1st century BC stone tablet). The V&A has been asked for a head from the Sidamara sarcophagus (3rd century BC) – it offered the piece to Turkey on long term loan, but still asserts ownership. Turkey has not pursued resolution along these lines.

Other museums in Berlin, the US and France have also been approached with claims. It is not clear yet whether the overall effect will see wins for Turkey, or be counterproductive as the country self-excludes from tourism promotion and the sharing of scholarship. Art Newspaper

Old Flo still in limbo

Following the extended row over the ownership of Henry Moore's *Draped Seated Woman* (aka 'Old Flo'), the latest indications are that Tower Hamlets Council intends to press on with the sale of the figure. Financial Times

Correction: We reported last month that another Henry Moore statue in poor repair in Westminster, *Knife Edge Two Pieces* was ownerless. In fact it has been taken into the ownership of the House of Commons, and is being cared for by the Parliamentary Arts Collection. Conservation work has now begun to remove environmental damage and incised graffiti. Art Newspaper

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Access for All

Free entry: debates in the papers

Writing for the Evening Standard, V&A Director Martin Roth points to the huge benefits that free museum entry has brought over the past decade, saying "there are now more visitors to the Exhibition Road museums (the V&A, Natural History and Science Museums) each year than there are to the city of Venice."

The V&A alone has tripled its footfall to 3m visitors a year. This has attracted businesses to fund exhibitions, and has allowed outreach work with socially deprived groups who could not otherwise afford to participate in programmes. The number of schoolchildren has also increased by 200% "inspiring the Jonathan Ives, Terence Conrans and Alexander McQueens of tomorrow".

However, in an article in the Independent, Dominic Lawson has asked why museums remain free when free swimming for children and pensioners has been abolished, and ascribes the choices to a 'powerful arts lobby'. He argues that if museums choose free entry, since they can generate money from visitors in other ways museums themselves, not the state, should bear the burden of free entry costs.

Replying in the letters page, NMDC Chair and Natural History Museum Director Dr. Michael Dixon wrote highlighted the 'fundamental, erroneous assumptions' made about free admission:

"First, the cost of the free admission policy for national museums was indeed circa £45m per annum when introduced in 2001, but the additional circa £315m generated is the estimated value to the wider UK economy in the form of expenditure by foreign tourists in the UK. Only a tiny proportion of this directly benefits the museums themselves. That is, the cost to the Exchequer has a multiplied effect in terms of wider economic benefit."

He also points to the huge growth in attendance at the Natural History Museum – from 1.6 million to 5.1 million since the reintroduction of free attendance, including a significant growth in the number of people from lower socio-economic groups who have visited. Evening Standard, Independent (Dominic Lawson), Independent (scroll down for Michael Dixon's letter)

Also: A Trustee of the Tate has suggested that arts cuts are so deep that even the Tate may charge, despite being "100 per cent committed" to free entry. (A spokeswoman for the Tate said that there were no plans to charge.) The piece looks at the extent of cuts across the country, including severe reductions to the London Transport Museum's grant by 2016. Independent

Welsh Assembly affirms the positive effect of museums in combating child poverty

In a debate in the Welsh Assembly, Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage affirmed the positive role that museums play in helping children disadvantaged by poverty. He said:

"Members will be familiar with my view that the eradication of child poverty is the responsibility, not of one department, or solely of Government, but of civil society as a whole in Wales. With each cut that comes from Westminster, that joint approach becomes ever more important. The role of our cultural institutions is vital to this. After family and school life, it is perhaps our museums and libraries—as gateways to knowledge, lifelong learning and better understanding—that have the greatest opportunity to help to give our children the best start in life."

Since November £2.9m has been put into schemes to help develop work in this area, despite a background of museums losing posts because of cuts. In his speech he announced a further £150,000 before April 2013 to widen access and further participation.

He also affirmed a commitment to free admission and to creating a cultural sector which commemorated "the built heritage of working people in the south Wales Valleys, which is every bit as important as castles, cathedrals and discovering kings in car parks". Welsh Assembly (the relevant part of the debate begins at 3pm)

Family Friendly Museum award launched

The Telegraph and Kids in Museums have opened a new award for the UK's most family friendly museum. Both the public and museum professionals are encouraged to make nominations, and venues can focus on a welcome for children and/or teenagers. Closing date is 10th May 2013. Telegraph, Kids in Museums

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Cuts roundup

122 staff lost from five national museums since 2010

It has emerged that five of the UK's largest museums: The British Museum, National Gallery, Tate, Victoria & Albert and National Maritime museum have lost 122 posts to redundancy since 2010. Recent losses include two part time outreach posts at the V&A and the Deputy Director position at the British Museum, following Andrew Burnett's recent retirement. DCMS-funded national museums have had cuts to their funding of 18% since 2010.

Andy Bodle, head of HR at the National Maritime Museum said that the redundancies are a direct consequence of the cuts. "Museums are a knowledge-based industry, so the greatest cuts will be in staffing when you have to look for savings in the long term." As we reported last month, National Museums Wales are also losing 35 posts as they look for savings. Art Newspaper, Museums Association

Newcastle cultural cuts row resolution

Intensive talks took place throughout February over Newcastle Council's plans to cut their arts budget by 100%, and the budget for museums by around 50%. Newcastle MPs, the Arts Council and Deputy Labour Leader Harriet Harman have all been involved.

Under a new deal, significantly steered by the Arts Council, Newcastle will now provide £600,000 in funding, down from £1.15m. The money will be placed in a separate Newcastle Cultural Fund budget, which they hope will be topped up by other donors. The deal also includes the opportunity for arts organisations to borrow money from a £6m capital loan facility.

Council leader Nick Forbes said "This frees arts up from the boom and bust of uncertain council funding and allows others to also back the arts. I have had people contact me saying they would love to make a contribution to the arts in Newcastle, but are not sure how to do it. This is that chance. We also had some very wealthy artists take an interest in the arts. This is their opportunity

to do something.”

Alison Clark-Jenkins, Arts Council England's regional director for the north-east, said “It hasn't been easy or straightforward and it has taken a lot of diplomacy by the Arts Council and a really good campaign by some of the arts organisations – the ‘not 100% campaign’. That measured campaign contributed a lot.” Guardian, The Stage

Also: Newcastle is among the cities promoted in VisitEngland's latest campaign, selling tourist destinations on the strength of their ‘world class culture and entertainment’. Visit England Newcastle

Moray Council latest to propose 100% arts cuts

Moray Council is the latest to say that it will cut its arts provision by 100%. The decision will save only £90,000 out of a total of £30m cuts and will mean the Council loses its only arts development officer. The Council argues that in all its meetings with Moray residents, the arts were at the bottom of their priority list.

The Scottish Government has strongly opposed the decision, adding “Councils are autonomous bodies, responsible for managing their own day to day business and answerable to their electorates. We would, however, hope they would revisit and reassess this disappointing decision.”

In a statement to NMDC news, a Moray Council spokesperson said that the council also wants to cease funding both of its museums, although the detail has not yet been agreed.

“Moray Council runs the Falconer Museum in Forres and a small museum at Tomintoul which shares accommodation with the local tourist information centre. Museums come under a separate budget heading from the arts and the decision taken by elected members on museums was to ‘make museums available for transfer to the community’ which will save the council £125,000 in a full financial year. There are as yet no details of when and how the museums might be transferred to the respective communities.” Arts Industry, The Scotsman, Guardian

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Philanthropy

Denis Mahon's private collection of Baroque paintings given to UK galleries

The art historian and collector Sir Denis Mahon, who died aged 100 in 2011, has gifted his collection of 57 Italian Baroque masterpieces to the nation. Bought for around £50,000, the collection is now worth hundreds of millions. Many of the works in the bequest have long been on public display, and Sir Denis' association with the National Gallery stretched back nearly eighty years.

Director of the National Gallery Dr. Nicholas Penny said “As a hyperactive trustee of the gallery and exacting friend of many curators he did much to urge us to acquire great Baroque paintings. He is one of our greatest benefactors and we will always honour his memory.”

The Art Fund, with which Mahon had also been associated since 1926, oversaw the distribution of the paintings which go to or are confirmed in their existing homes at the National Gallery, Ashmolean Museum, Scottish National Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and Temple Newsam House, Leeds.

Sir Denis was a longstanding advocate of free access to art, and the terms of the bequest are that if the institutions concerned begin to charge an entry fee, then the works will be repossessed by the Art Fund. Art Fund, Guardian, Telegraph

Philanthropy groups collaborate on new web resource

A number of philanthropy organisations have come together to create a website of resources for potential philanthropists, offering case studies and advice. It also carries resources of interest to organisations seeking funding, including topics such as removing barriers to legacy giving, next generation philanthropy and the impact of the recession. Philanthropy Impact

Funding

Call for applications to the final year of the Art Fund's 'Collect'

The Art Fund and Crafts Council are running a scheme which allows contemporary curators to bid for a share of £75,000 towards the purchase of works for their museum or gallery. The work must be selected from COLLECT, Europe's major craft fair. Curators will visit galleries across the world who will be exhibiting there to find items that will add to their collections. The closing date is March 25th, with the winners being announced in May. Art Fund's Collect scheme, Crafts Council

Ten free bursaries offered for Oxford Aspire conference

Oxford Aspire, a consortium of Oxford museums, is running a conference in July on the future of ethnographic museums. This is the concluding event of a five year European Commission funded project working collaboratively with nine other large European ethnography museums.

Oxford Aspire is offering ten bursaries worth £475 (covering conference place and accommodation) to new and emerging leaders working with ethnography collections. The deadline for applications is 31st March. Conference details, Full bursary details

New funds for disability history

Shape, the disability-led arts organisation, has received an initial grant of £100k from the Heritage Lottery Fund to chart the history of the disability arts movement, with the prospect of £862,000 more if their final plans are accepted.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "We're delighted to be giving initial support for Shape's ambitious and thoughtful plans to tell the story of disability arts – a story that has never been properly told before now. This is particularly timely after last September's inspiring Paralympics and we hope that as the project develops it will tap into and build on the legacy of London 2012."

Disabled and non-disabled volunteers will help create the work, which will include interviews with protagonists, an online archive, exhibitions and events. Heritage Lottery Fund

Also: English Heritage and London Metropolitan Archive are running a one day conference looking at successful research projects which have uncovered the story of disabled people. In December 2012 English Heritage also launched an online resource tracking the story of disabled people, particularly through the built environment, from 1050 to the present. English Heritage, EH's History of Disability

New grants for manuscript preservation

The National Manuscripts Conservation Trust offers regular grants for the preservation and restoration of books and manuscripts, which should then become more accessible to the public. The next deadline for applications is 1st April. National Manuscripts Conservation Trust

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Tourism

ACE and VisitEngland agreement creates greater synergy between tourism and culture

ACE and Visit England are collaborating to create a greater synergy between the cultural and tourist offers of areas of the UK. Over the next 3 years, they will be offering £3m in local grants for projects which bring tourism campaigns and culture together. They will also be offering strategic help and expertise to areas which have the potential to grow economically through cultural tourism.

Both organisations are responding to the need for greater partnership working against a background where they have lost aspects of their regional networks to restructuring.

Applications to the £3m Growing Tourism Locally fund will open in early July. Other priorities including building leadership capacity, maximising the legacy of 2012, and possibly extending Visit England's Visitor Attractions Quality Accreditation Scheme to be used more widely in the cultural sector. DCMS, Visit England

Data and evaluation

Nesta's *Counting What Counts* report says better data is essential to the cultural sector

A new report from Nesta argues that the cultural sector needs to be more savvy about data collection, and that few large organisations take it seriously beyond the work required to satisfy funders.

Nesta contrasts the level of information sought by funders and institutions with the deep data mining that powers hugely successful operations like Amazon or the children's online game Moshi Monsters. They suggest there are three levels of data awareness: 1.0, where organisations are doing little more than responding to ticket sales, and 2.0 where Google Analytics-type data is harvested from online operations; very few cultural sector organisations have reached a third stage where powerful CRM systems track complex information and the information from 1.0 and 2.0 are integrated into a far larger picture. If cultural groups are to win audiences in a climate where many other business-driven models are using such sophisticated data to anticipate and respond, they will fall behind.

One of the principle recommendations of the report is for 'Pathfinder projects' which allow cultural organisations to trial this more sophisticated level of data use. They also explore the 'siege mentality' that many organisations feel when they rely on repeated funding bids for survival, or to do anything beyond core work. 'Cultural good' can often seem intangible and hard to capture with statistics but, Nesta argues, it becomes easier with deep data mining, and could make justifying funding more credible.

The report cites the Tate's work in spring 2012 as an example of excellence in better use of data. *Counting what Counts* report Making Sense of the Numbers (Tate report)

Also: Nesta, along with the Arts Council and the AHRC, are also behind a new annual survey which tracks how the arts and cultural sector are using digital technology over the next three years. Participants will receive private copies of the research. Organisations should nominate one senior staff member with responsibility for technology to fill out the survey on behalf of their organisation. Museums Association

Ten years of counting heritage

English Heritage has published its tenth annual 'Heritage Counts' report, looking at the health of the heritage sector over the previous year – and looking back over the previous decade since it began collecting data.

The focus of the report for 2012 is on sector resilience, and how the cultural sector links to the economy. It reports opportunities for heritage groups through the emergence of the green economy and growing urban populations. It also notes challenges from a difficult economic climate and changes to planning regulations and VAT charges.

The report captures both the big and small picture: there were 62 million visits to historic attractions in 2011, up 28% from 2002 and 7% from 2010. But with the falling economy there has been less investment in apprenticeships, and a drop in local authority officers charged with focusing on heritage. Cultural sector involvement has been linked to greater happiness, irrespective of income.

The report looks at case studies of resilient heritage organisations, including the Beamish Museum. *Heritage Counts* report (national), *Heritage Counts* overview (with links to nine regional reports).

Better evaluation without reinventing the wheel

In a blog for the Guardian which echoes many of Nesta's conclusions, Nicky Boyd explores whether museums are going through the motions with evaluation, and whether fear of admitting failure inhibits opportunities to learn. She points to excellent projects by the V&A and Natural History Museum, who have invested in more scientific evaluation and have published the results. She argues that sharing alone may not be enough: institutions must make sure that the questions they are asking are the right ones. *Guardian Cultural Professionals*

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Saving cultural heritage

'Seven most endangered' heritage sites scheme launched

Europa Nostra has launched a scheme to identify and save Europe's seven most endangered heritage sites. The 'most endangered' will be chosen from a long list of 14, and the winners will receive expert help to put together a sustainable plan to save them. The deadline for nominations is 15th March. Europa Nostra

'One of our castles is missing': English Heritage celebrates a century since the 1913 Ancient Monuments Act

It started with Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire: sold several times in the early 20th century, it was purchased in 1911 by a consortium of American businessmen, who removed the stone fireplaces to be taken abroad, and then planned to sell the rest of the castle for scrap, or export the whole building for redisplay in the States.

Enter Lord Curzon, former Viceroy of India and restorer of the Taj Mahal: he personally bought the castle, and had the ports watched until he was able to recover the castle's straying fireplaces. In a burst of patriotism, they were returned to their original home, covered in Union Jacks.

These events set the scene for the 1913 Ancient Monuments Act providing much stronger protection for the historic environment, and was the turning point which prevented ancient monuments from being carelessly destroyed. Lindisfarne Castle was acquired the same year; in 2012 the medieval Harmondsworth Barn in West London became the latest place to join the National Heritage Collection.

A BBC4 series planned for later in the spring will commemorate these events.

Culture Secretary Maria Miller, reflecting on being the 65th minister responsible for protecting heritage since the passing of the Act, blogs: "For me, it's also reassuring that heritage protection has been a Government concern throughout, and that these days it's a topic that is represented around the cabinet table. And it's not hard to see why. Today our heritage is an essential part of our tourism 'offer', with four out of ten 'leisure' visitors to the UK citing it as their primary reason for choosing us over other, shall we say, 'warmer' destinations." English Heritage, Heritage! The Battle for Britain's Past, DCMS blog

Also: taking a long view is the Victorian Society's *Saving a Century* exhibition, which looks at the successes and failures in 100 years of campaigning for Victorian architecture. The Victorian Society

Stolen Banksy surfaces in Miami

A Banksy mural, *Slave Labour* which had been on the side of a Poundland in North London since last May has been stolen and resurfaced at a Miami auction house. It was being offered for sale between \$5 – 700,000, before being withdrawn in late February. Wood Green residents are seeking the return of the mural, and have been filmed singing in protest at the site of the theft. After this publicity, a second Banksy-like image has appeared in Wood Green on the site of the stolen mural. LATimes, BBC, Guardian

Export ban for Stubbs kangaroo

George Stubbs is most famous for his pictures of dogs, horses and sport, but in the early 1770s he painted a kangaroo, based on verbal descriptions and an inflated skin brought back from the new world by Captain Cook. Now DCMS has imposed an export ban on the picture to give a last opportunity to raise the £5.5m necessary to keep it in the UK. DCMS

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A People's History: community led history projects

Radical collaboration

Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History is unusual in that its whole programming comes from community collaboration. In a blog written for the London Museums Group, its Director describes how "it's not unusual for us to meet with an environmental activist, a balloon artist, a farmer, and the Mayor of Santa Cruz all in one day." She emphasises the importance of face to face meetings and involving the whole community not just self appointed 'usual suspects'. LMG blog

Welsh experience of WW1: public asked to bring papers for digitisation

The public are being asked to bring any papers, letters or other mementos relating to the First World War to Galeri Caernarfon on March 5th for digitisation. Further details: info@culturenetcymru.com CymruWW1

Sharing heritage: £3m from HLF for uncovering local history

Sharing Heritage is a new funding programme which allows local groups to explore any aspect of the history of their area, using grants from £3k–10k. The programme is a result of the huge success of a 2012 one-off small grants scheme which accompanied BBC2's *The Great British Story: A People's History*.

Projects can include exploring local archaeology, a community's cultures and traditions, identifying and recording local wildlife and protecting the surrounding environment, collecting and digitising old photos, producing local history publications, conserving sites or items of local significance, managing and training volunteers, and holding festivals and events to commemorate the past. Heritage Lottery Fund, MANDH

Green museums

Greening the Museum

English Heritage's overview of the built heritage sector *Heritage Counts* says that history venues are often well positioned to provide thought leadership around making buildings more environmentally sustainable.

A variety of projects are currently looking at how to 'green' museums. 13 museums in the Midlands are trying to save energy and the organisers are blogging about their experiences here. Their project addresses the nitty gritty of providing a safe environment for delicate collections and how to deal with the limitations of listed buildings. So far one small museum has been fully evaluated and helped to save 20% of its total energy costs.

The Happy Museum project is also backing these ideas at a more philosophical level. Their visioning work anticipates a future where consumerism is reduced in the face of finite resources, but where there is a greater emphasis on happiness. The project itself is housed in a Grade II* listed Georgian building which will shortly be carbon neutral. Maurice Davies blogs about their recent symposium, and further examples of good practice from museums here.

The Collections Trust are also offering a one day free workshop on 26th March for London's non-national museums who would like to become more energy efficient. Museums Association, Collections Link, Museums: Going Green, Happy Museum Symposium on film

Also: Meanwhile the government's Green Deal legislation has prompted a series of workshops to show historic houses how to take advantage of long term loans to make heating historic houses greener and cheaper. Heritage Alliance e-bulletin

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Digital partners: reaching beyond the museum

British Library partners with Futurelearn

New startups bringing free online versions of top university courses to the world have been a feature of the past couple of years, with Coursera and Udacity being among the prominent players. The 'Moocs' ('massive open online course') are so called because tens of thousands of people globally may sign up to a single course.

Now the first UK platform Futurelearn has opened, created by the Open University, and has formed a partnership with the British Library to use their resources for future courses.

The Library is the first non-university to join. Its freely available digital collections include over 800 medieval manuscripts, 40,000 nineteenth-century books and 50,000 sound recordings.

Open University Vice Chancellor Martin Bean said "I'm convinced that Futurelearn will quickly become a great, innovative British export. We're building on the country's 800-year history of higher education to deliver a best in class teaching and learning experience that will benefit students all over the world". British Library

Imperial War Museum gets share of £7m for digital arts development

The Imperial War Museum has begun a new project with Historypin to allow the public to add to information on their First World War art collection. Using specially developed technology, the public will be able to see and locate the artworks and then link them to contextual sources, tag emotional responses and 'facts', such as people, battles, military units, objects, and discuss them before the results are sifted and curated for an online exhibition. The work will be evaluated by the University of Edinburgh.

The work is supported by a new £7m Digital R&D fund created by Nesta, Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Cheltenham Festivals and the Museum of Design and Plastics are among the other recipients. Arts Industry

Also: The Imperial War Museum is among the first UK institutions to pioneer work with Google's Cultural Institute. Their online exhibition on D-Day allows people to see individual items in great detail with background information, or simply follow the main narrative route through a gripping day in history. Amongst the material is a picture of HMS Belfast, now itself a museum, in action on D-Day. Imperial War Museums, Google Cultural Institute D-Day exhibition

Creative Scotland provides £89k for digitising the cultural sector

As part of a three year programme, Creative Scotland has provided funds for a variety of cultural organisations to improve their digital presence. Most awards go to arts bodies, but the work includes digital reconstruction of archeological sites to allow 'time travel' to the past. IFACCA, Creative Scotland

Cultural Kent goes digital

The Arts Council has supported a project to allow the whole of Kent's cultural offering to go online on a single mobile-enabled platform. The database that drives the new site will automatically retrieve stories from cultural partners across Kent, so local listings and event information will reach many more people without duplication. Jon Pratty for the Arts Council said "It has the potential to be a sustainable new digital model for other regions, in joining up tourism and cultural opportunities." Arts Council

CultureGrid puts out call for Art Nouveau Collections

The Collections Trust is working with organisations including the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Glasgow School of Art and Manchester Metropolitan University to increase the Art Nouveau material available through Culture Grid and Europeana. Organisations with Art Nouveau in their collections who would like to contribute should contact phill@collectionstrust.org.uk Art Nouveau on the Collections Trust site

Members news

MShed's innovative twist brings in one million visitors for local history

M Shed is one of Bristol's newest museums: opened in June 2011, it tells the story of the city, and replaces an old Industrial Museum which had closed in 2006. It has just announced that in less than two years it has attracted one million visitors.

The popular museum has tried to break new ground in its approach to local history with a personal and digital twist: "What it seeks to do is to reflect people's experiences of living or visiting the city across time. It tells people's stories of what they have seen and done, in the first person if possible, and illustrates those stories with objects from across the museums service... As well as the historic stories, the museum reflects contemporary issues and encourages visitors to contribute their own experiences through the use of computer kiosks (and remotely via the website)." MShed

EMYA 2013 shortlist has Scottish flavour

The European Museum Forum has announced the shortlist for its annual 'Museum of the Year' Award. The contenders include NMDC members the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the Riverside Museum in Glasgow and the National Museum of Scotland. The winners will be announced at the end of the year. EMYA press release, The shortlist in full

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Three new museums for landmark moments in English history

Richard III

Three significant new museum spaces are being planned or are launching this year, associated with landmark moments in history. Following the discovery of the body of Richard III in a Leicester carpark, a museum is planned to be opened in 2014. The body itself is likely to be interred in Leicester Cathedral, although City of York Council has written to the Ministry of Justice and the Queen asking for Richard III to be buried in York. However York Cathedral have supported the burial of the monarch in Leicester. Museums Association (museum plans) Visit Leicester, Museums Association (York claim)

Stonehenge

Meanwhile English Heritage says that a much anticipated new visitor centre at Stonehenge will be finished by the end of the year. Comprising two 'pods' 1.5 miles from Stonehenge, it will include an exhibition space, a café and (in early 2014) Neolithic huts reconstructed by volunteers. English Heritage

Mary Rose

The Mary Rose museum will open in the next couple of months, following a successful round of fundraising for the final £35,000 needed for the new building. It was able to raise the extra money in only a week. ALVA

Staff moves

Arts Council England has announced who its regional directors will be when it restructures in July. Sarah Maxfield will cover the north, Peter Knott the Midlands, Phil Gibby the south-west, Hedley Swain the south-east and Joyce Wilson London. Museums Association

Meanwhile Nick Dodd has been appointed as interim Director of Derby Museum's Trust following the surprise resignation of Stuart Gillis a month ago. Museums Association

Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- University of Cambridge Museums Connecting Collections Programme Curator based at Kettle's Yard

- Director of Sir John Soane's Museum
- V&A Exhibition Co-ordinator
- National Maritime Museum Audience Inclusion Officer (part time)
- National Galleries Scotland Chief Curator, Deputy Director

Explore all jobs here

And finally...

"When the museum closed down in the 70s, everything was taken down into the nuclear bunker. And that's where they've been, all this time..."

Not the opening gambit of a Dr Who episode; just the story of one set of oil paintings among many in local authority ownership which are held in extraordinary places. It's part of a three minute film produced by the BBC much earlier in its Your Paintings project, which has now recorded all the publically owned paintings in the UK.

We've only just caught up with the film here, and think it is still the best introduction to the huge project. It's a reminder of the love and commitment that people clearly feel towards locally-held artworks.

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