Making a difference: the cultural impact of museums

An essay for NMDC

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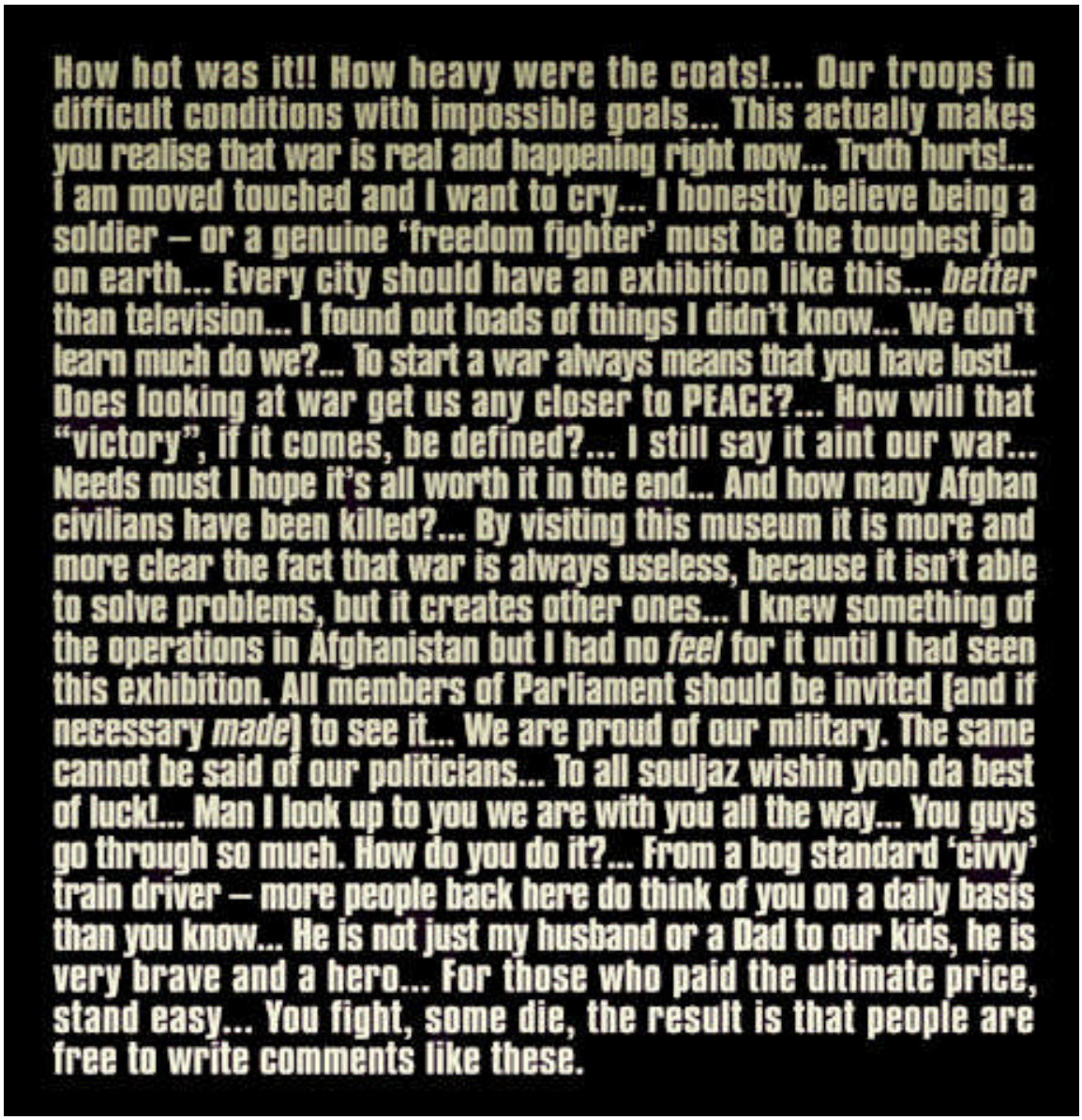

Nearly 1,000 visitor comments have been collected by the museum in response to the exhibition *Helmand: The Soldiers' Story*, which opened in August 2007

> *The exhibition has helped to provoke thought about the conflict, and has generated a quite intense response. We heard from children, parents, pensioners, veterans, soldiers, their families and friends, international visitors. The comments wall took on a life of its own as a social commentary on not only the exhibition but the conflict, the government, the latest media stories and even on other comments made by others. It makes fascinating reading.*

Source: Jo Woolley, exhibition team leader, http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/pages/helmand/ (retrieved 27.06.2010)

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Executive summary

Part 1: Introduction

Although cultural institutions - including museums - are driven by the desire to contribute to the public's cultural experiences, their cultural impact is not always acknowledged in the frameworks designed for government accountability. As NMDC put it

> *The museum sector believes that it makes a real difference to peoples' lives. It is a line that is frequently used to advocate and promote our work to stakeholders; but what does it mean and how might we investigate it? What is the nature of the impact that museums have on the individual and how does this play out in communities, societies and even nations?* (NMDC, undated)

The end of the so-called 'golden age' of New Labour's cultural policy and funding regime is a timely moment to revisit the question of what difference museums make. Indeed, several NMDC members are already exploring how best to demonstrate precisely that.

This essay hopes to provoke thinking within NMDC about museums' cultural impact and how to describe it. This is something that neither government nor the institutions themselves are necessarily used to doing. It attempts to describe the differences that museum collections, exhibitions, displays and other programmes make to people: how they affect their understanding of the world and how people respond to their museum experiences.

This essay draws principally on what NMDC's members identified as their cultural impact in replies to an invitation of January 2010. Responses were received from 22 out of 28 NMDC members. They described around 85 projects, and sent a number of reports and other documents. Taken together, these suggest a number of common interests – both in terms of intentions and subject matter - promoting a wider interest in history and the world in general and more specifically, generating empathy for and understanding of minority groups; addressing marginalization; encouraging community engagement; advancing institutional interests, authority and values; dealing with difficult subject matter; challenging perceptions and creating associations and identities. Other noticeable characteristics were projects' currency; their research-centeredness; the fact that they were conceived as national initiatives, and that they involved some element of digitization. Projects selected as examples to be used in this essay offered the most compelling evidence of their impact.

Part 2: Reflecting on the cultural impact of museums

The sector knows very little about the true extent of its cultural impacts - what they are, how far reaching they are, who benefits and how. As one NMDC member put it

> *In terms of actual evidence of cultural impact, there is not a lot. We have a fair amount of evaluation which points to attitudinal changes amongst visitors/users in response to particular pieces of programming – particularly, for example, exhibitions which add new narratives or perspectives… But it would be hard make a strong case for this leading to cultural change as it could be argued that we are 'preaching to the converted.*

The subject of this essay, the cultural impact of museums, has its origins in the debate about valuing the arts and culture, prompted by New Labour since 1998. The various strands to this

include the highly determined expectations of publicly–funded arts and culture; the presumption of instrumental effects in a sphere of activity largely associated with intrinsic value; the introduction of a target culture and accountability by quantitative performance measures; the predominance of economic value in a field often described as one characterised by market failure, and the use of economic indicators as proxies for social impact.

The debate about how the arts and culture should be valued chimed with the mobilization of the notion of public value, a theory of public management about how best to produce a change in the material conditions of society, which was taken up by Cabinet Office in 2002.

The concept of cultural value fitted advocacy, if not organizational purposes. While some regarded it as politically expedient, others conceived of it differently.

> *We have found that everyone in the arts and cultural sector is struggling with talk about 'value'. It is no good trying to relate all the value of arts and culture to monetary valuations, and equally unhelpful to try to justify the arts as some kind of special case, different from all other spending priorities and subject to unique criteria* (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010: 11)

One school of thought suggested that since different economies need to exist alongside each other, making meaning an inalienable quality should be regarded as standing at the other extreme of our lives tomonetary economy. 'The relationship between the economy of meaning and the economy of money must be carefully managed in order to maintain the vitality of both'.

One effect of agencies regarding themselves, or being regarded, as 'architects of value' was the generation of frameworks of those values that they might be expected to produce. A comparison with American models highlights the utilitarian, if not highly determined nature of the British values and benefits associated with culture. But, under interrogation, these can be seen to vary enormously. Four DCMS-family value frameworks alone contain around 90 different outcomes and values. On the one hand, this demonstrates the extent to which these kinds of generic structures are subject to vacillations in policy, changes of nuance or the absence of joined-up thinking. On the other, they highlight the fact that the outcomes reported tend to be those, which are simply most apposite to the requirements of the framework being used.

By definition, generic frameworks override the particular, they make no distinction between different cultural activities and no reference to the subject matter or content which encompasses particular values or generates particular outcomes. The quantitative indicators, generated by the Generic Leaning Outcomes, for example, were crucial in fulfilling a political purpose, which was to convince the Treasury to release more money for Renaissance and Strategic Commissioning. Given their emphasis on learning, they also demonstrated that the excitement, enjoyment and inspirational quality of the museum/gallery experience stimulated the acquisition of facts and the development of attitudes and perceptions. However, use of the toolkit did not result in an understanding of museums' consequent impacts on visitors - even in relation to policy priorities.

But there might be other ways of identifying, and reporting, museums' cultural impact. The models referred to include those used by the Arts Council England, UK Film Council and HEFCE. These include direct consultation to assess public value, self-evaluation, peer and user-review, and stakeholder analysis. Indeed, an increasing body of work is being developed around such approaches. However, to date, DCMS have largely relied on peer and specialist review, drawing on small, professional networks rather than end-users.

This essay attempts to explore cultural impacts, as distinct from economic or social impacts. They may or may not be instrumental. They relate specifically to the difference that museum

programmes make to individuals and organisations. They focus on programmes' subject matter and content, and on responses to them in some depth. Wherever possible, the evidence used is that of the impactee rather than the impactor.

Part 3: Strategies for making a difference

Quite apart from their standard means of presentation – exhibitions, displays, education programmes, events and publications, museums seek to exert cultural impact in various ways:

- Some NMDC museums reported rebranding in an attempt to extend, or reinforce, their sphere of influence and to encourage a better appreciation of their public value.
- They undertake research projects, intended to generate new knowledge and understanding of museum collections. Several such projects have been facilitated by the UK Research Council's development of a portfolio of knowledge transfer activities, which embrace interactions between the research base and user community, commercialisation, collaborative research and development, and collaborative training.
- NMDC members are involved in partnerships and networks including those with academics and museum colleagues centred around the sharing of expertise and collections, and the potential to reach more, if not different, audiences. Others involve completely different organisations. Some are prompted, and certainly supported by funding initiatives; others are driven by common goals – such as those dedicated to contributing to changing attitudes to science.
- Digital technologies have opened up the possibilities of cultural organisations overcoming the traditional constraints imposed by physical sites; expanding their audience reach; opening new avenues for developing areas of activity; creating new sources of economic and cultural value, and prompting new business models.

Part 4: The kinds of impacts that museums exert

The kinds of impacts that museums exert are often perceived very broadly – not least in terms of making places cultural. They tend to report those that comply with generic frameworks, although they may - in some cases - regard such outcomes as secondary to their main purpose.

This section explores what audiences, themselves, have said about how their museum experiences have impacted on them – what they have been prompted to think about, and why. It describes people responding to museum programmes in terms of

- saying the unsaid – articulating and exploring sensitive and difficult issues within the context of a national institution;
- generating a sense of belonging and integrating themselves within local communities and society;
- opening themselves up to different attitudes and perceptions – envisaging potentialand revisiting personal histories;
- considering their affiliations and associations – albeit to the personal and the national.

It also highlights changes in museums' own cultures of collecting and making exhibitions.

The problem lies in the fact that there is little or no space built into the system to allow 'different' work. Put another way, 'good work' becomes that which is covered by the PI, can be externally evaluated in a quantitative manner and can supply hard data. As a result, some types of work and some types of professional practice become seen as 'difficult' because they are not susceptible to this form of evaluation… this places pressure on certain groups of professionals to change their working practices or become marginalized within the system and thus risk a reduction or cessation in funding for no other reason than the fact that their work does not fit the requirements of audit and therefore cannot be 'trusted' in the same way as more structured professional practice. For many professionals who fall into this group the choice is stark: change working practices or risk extinction. However, the risk of such an isomorphic approach to service delivery is that professional innovation, judgment and autonomy will disappear which may directly affect the development of service provision. (Barton, 2008: 275)

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> *Thinking about the outcomes that we want to see as a result of our mission… is more challenging - and interesting - than recording standard traditional information about outputs such as the number of reader visits received, enquiries dealt with or hits on the website. It requires us to think about what our users do with the resources they access… Do they use these resources to create new valuable knowledge? Or is their interaction with [our] resources and services superficial? Of course, we really don't know the answer to these questions. We do know that many users are creating valuable new knowledge - and we can probably also assume that for other users, much interaction with our resources is indeed superficial.* (Hunter, 2009: 6-7)

Part 1: Introduction

This essay was originally commissioned by Alec Coles, former Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, who was leading the National Museum Directors' Conference's work on understanding the social impact of museums. It is intended to explore, and to demonstrate where possible, the wide range of cultural impacts and influences that museums and museum projects exert. It is based on evidence from NMDC members.

Although cultural institutions - including museums - are fundamentally driven by the desire to contribute to the public's cultural experiences, their cultural impact is not always acknowledged in the frameworks designed for government accountability. As NMDC put it

> *The museum sector believes that it makes a real difference to people's lives. It is a line that is frequently used to advocate and promote our work to stakeholders; but what does it mean and how might we investigate it? What is the nature of the impact that museums have on the individual and how does this play out in communities, societies and even nations?* (NMDC, undated)

Over the past decade or so, rather than focusing on how they change people's sense of the world, museums have become habituated to articulating what they deliver in terms of the attributes required by instrumentalist government policies. That has applied throughout the sector, including those museums funded through Renaissance in the Regions, a government initiative, which was principally intended to address their structural problems.

This suggests that there may be gaps between the interests that drive museums' acquisitions, scholarship and programmes; the impacts that they exert on various constituencies (professionals and their public) and the way in which they account for themselves. Moreover, the absence of certain kinds of evidence does not mean that particular impacts '…do not occur, but that some have been more rigorously researched or evidenced than others' (ACE, 2004: 3).

However, the landscape is changing, not least in terms of public expenditure being tightened in response to the recession. The majority of Department for Culture, Media and Sport's funded bodies were cut by 3 per cent in May 2010 (DCMS, 2010a). The June 2010 Budget implied that the Department is likely to face a shortfall of around 25 per cent over the four years from April 2011 (Osborne, 2010). All its funded bodies have been asked to model reductions of 25-30 per cent over four years. It is reported that the Treasury has ordered Cabinet ministers to plan for cuts of 40 per cent in their departmental budgets (see, for example, Helm et al, 2010). In July 2010 it was announced that MLA would be abolished (DCMS, 2010c). Full details of public sector

cost cutting will emerge in the October Spending Review. It is feared that some museums, particularly those currently supported by local authorities, may close.

Given that public funding often serves as leverage for private support, levels of sponsorship and individual giving may also shrink. A number of the most generous givers are reported to have written to the government 'warning that philanthropy is in addition to, not a substitute for state funding and that tax breaks for living donors – over which the Treasury has been agonising for years – are essential for any major expansion in donations' (Kennedy, 2010). The change of government may not only signal cuts in spending, but also changes to cultural policy[i].

All this marks the end of the so-called 'golden age' of New Labour's cultural policy and funding regime. This, then, is a timely moment to revisit the question of what difference museums make. Indeed, several NMDC members are already exploring how best to demonstrate 'the difference that we make' as a result of their public value (for example, British Library, 2008; Hunter, 2009; Travers, 2010).

This essay attempts to move beyond Labour's preoccupations with economic and social impacts to demonstrate ways in which museums expand people's understanding of the world and the kinds of cultural effects that they have on them. It also intends to provoke those engaged in museums – policy makers, funders and the people who work in them - to reflect on the nature and quality of experiences that they are promoting, and to provide a resource for NMDC members, practitioners, policy makers and funders.

NMDC's commissioning of *Making a difference* was partly prompted by McMaster's 2008 report for DCMS which recommended a new system of assessing cultural organisations, based on judgement rather than measurement. it was believed that this could, and would, encourage and reward excellence. In adhering to the notions of judgement and excellence, this essay attempts to focus on the content and substance of museum programmes, themselves. Despite being fundamental to museums' impacts they have been relatively neglected in the policy debates of the last decade.

Making a difference is organised in three parts:

- The remainder of Part 1 introduces its aims and objectives; the overall approach taken; the principles and assumptions upon which is based; the definitions used, and the nature of the themes and case studies pursued.

- Part 2 discusses the background to this exploration of the cultural impact of museums. It touches on concepts of public value and cultural value; value and outcomes frameworks; instrumentalism; economic orthodoxy and the economy of meaning. It considers ways in which cultural impact might be identified and assessed.

- Part 3 explores NMDC members' strategic approaches to making a difference, including rebranding; research; partnerships and networks and digital dissemination

- Part 4 considers the kinds of differences that NMDC members are exerting. It refers to evidence of museums' public saying the unsaid – articulating and exploring sensitive and difficult issues within the context of national institutions; being better equipped to integrate themselves within local communities and society; opening themselves up to different attitudes and perceptions; and considering personal affiliations and associations. It also considers examples of cultural change within the museums' sector itself.

- Part 5 contains some observations about museums' cultural impact.

1.1 Aims & objectives

This essay hopes to provoke thinking within NMDC about museums' cultural impact and how to describe it. This is something that neither government nor the institutions themselves are used to doing. It attempts to describe the differences that museum collections, exhibitions, displays and other programmes make to people; how they affect their understanding of the world, and, how people respond to their museum experiences.

1.2 Approach

This essay draws principally on what NMDC's members identified as their cultural impact in replies to an invitation of January 2010. Responses were received from 22 out of 28 NMDC members, describing a wide variety of projects and attaching, where possible, details of their public's reactions.

Those communications came from a range of post-holders - directors, their advisors, assistants and managers; curators; those concerned with research, as well as with strategy, policy and planning, partnerships, learning and education, information and access, marketing, press and public affairs (see Acknowledgements). That breadth of respondents is, arguably, indicative of the extent of interest in museums' cultural impact.

This essay also draws on the relevant grey and academic literature, and transcripts of public debates. These have been gathered from various sources including databases held by CASE (DCMS's Culture and Sport Evidence Programme); the Impact database, developed and maintained by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Glasgow[ii]; MLA's Research & Evidence Resources Website[iii] and Intute[iv]. As expected, the majority of entries in these databases refer to instrumental, economic and social impacts[v].

Where possible, different models for capturing cultural impact were considered. While museums may contribute to maintaining the status quo, they also adopt new paradigms, attitudes and outlooks; capture the changing spirit and preoccupations of the time and contribute to those cumulative impacts that play a part in long-term social changes and shifts in cultural attitudes.[vi]

1.3 Principles & assumptions

In principle, this essay has sought to

- introduce the notion of 'cultural impact', as complementary to existing approaches to the assessment of museums' impacts[vii];
- suggest an approach which is credible to museums, their funders and user communities;
- encompass cultural, quality-of-life benefits and other public policy benefits;
- accommodate various disciplines and areas of activity within a single broad approach; and
- be of practical value.

Its exploration of museums' impacts was intended to be confined to actual effects, as distinct from potential impacts. But, in practice, this proved difficult. On the one hand, NMDC members described a number of current projects due to be evaluated in the future. On the other hand, this investigation prompted types of questions that are not usually addressed by museums, and the evidence that was being asked for is sparse. Generally approving and enthusiastic feedback was available in droves (as in 'This is an extraordinarily intelligent exhibition with impressively careful selection of paintings. Thank you!'; 'The best museum I've ever been to!'). But such comments reveal little about museums' cultural impact on their visitors. The absence of evidence partly

reflects institutions' singular reflex in responding to government requirements; and partly, a general lack of will to support longitudinal studies[viii].

The end users' accounts used here (in preference to museums' own statements) have been gathered from evaluations, visitor studies or online sources (in the blogosphere or on social networking sites).

1.4 Working definitions

In that it is essentially exploratory, this essay adopts broad working definitions of culture, impacts and evidence. As already stated, its emphasis is on the personal, rather than the institutional, and the accounts that it presents tend to be first person rather than third.

- As the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Tessa Jowell, pointed out, '**culture** is a slippery concept' (2004). But whereas the Department's definition of culture pragmatically refers to its own remit (CASE, undated a), the working definition of culture used here is somewhat broader - 'stories we tell ourselves about ourselves' (Geertz, 1973) and, by extension, those that we tell others (Narval Media et al, 2009). Since the content of national museums' exhibitions, displays and public programmes covers a range of disciplines from the sciences to the arts, the definition of culture used here necessarily encompasses a wide array of subject matter. This could be described as ranging from the particular experiences of soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan alongside a fundamental enquiry into the Tree of Life; from the appreciation of contemporary visual art to contributing to the integration of immigrant communities.

  This essay touches on cultural value, which is regarded as related to, but distinct from cultural impact (value being to do with worth and importance; impact about effect). One of DCMS's most recent definitions of value derives from Accenture's Public Service Value Model (2006), which is essentially about value for money. It tracks public-service organizations' performance against outcomes (the purpose and goals of the organization in delivery of services to citizens) and cost-effectiveness (minimizing cost without compromising the quality of services)[ix]

  The Department recognises two different kinds of value. 'Use value', like instrumental value, achieves 'hard outcomes' associated with social and economic purposes. These may be educational, economic, or community focused, and are captured through quantitative measures. Intrinsic value, which is related to soft benefits (individuals' experiences), has traditionally been measured by experts (CASE, undated a: v-vi; b: 5). However, DCMS acknowledges that citizens' juries, for instance, are challenging the received wisdom of measurement by experts. In its opinion, 'intrinsic value is best captured by the amalgamation of judgements by experts, citizens and local communities. However, it has not yet explored this in any detail (CASE, undated a: vi). Such an omission is particularly pertinent in terms of an increasing emphasis on community engagement (Joss, 2008), one of the themes explored here.

- DCMS understands **'impact'** as 'a dynamic concept which pre-supposes a relationship of cause and effect. It can be measured through the outcomes of the evaluation of the outcomes of particular actions, be that an initiative, a set of initiatives which form policy or a set of policies which form a strategy' (cited from Landry et al, 1993). In the context of the Department's strategic objectives[x], 'impact' is understood to be something that might effect personal development; social cohesion; community image/regeneration; health and well-being; education and learning.

> *Although the debate around cultural value has been focused on 'intrinsic', 'instrumental' and 'institutional' values*[xi]*, it has been assumed here that* ***cultural impact*** *manifests in relation to the sense that people make of the world, and to institutional change. The National Libraries Scotland, thus, describes its mission as 'generating knowledge and understanding.* (Hunter, 2009: 7)

One of NMSI's objectives, for example, is to deliver life-enhancing experiences and it is explicitly concerned to measure its performance in order to continually develop and improve its offer. In creating this objective, NMSI used the MLA's Generic Learning Outcomes and Campaign for Learning definitions to define learning and its outcomes. It defines learning 'the process of active engagement with experience' as

> *…what people to do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective leaning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more* (NMSI, 2009:4 – adapted from the Campaign for Learning's definition).

Thinking about cultural impact, perhaps less obviously, also relates to discussions about 'knowledge transfer'. That concept is usually applied to the transmission of research in science and technology disciplines. Its application to the creative industries and the arts is regarded as somewhat problematic – especially where their forms of knowledge transfer are forced into models devised for science and technology. But, for museum staff, as for the professional artist, the effects of new knowledge might be '… difficult to identify let alone to bottle, protect and transmit…' Nevertheless, the experience may have changed them, and that change will be '…articulated through his creative work, then and in the future' (Crossick, 2006: 5).

The literature on knowledge transfer focuses on professional research, creative processes and innovation in particular. Its benefits are rarely considered in relation to transfers involving the public but for museum users new knowledge is likely to emerge from personal interactions that contribute to different ways of thinking and doing things. Indeed, this is fundamental to the ways in which cultural experience is considered to be important: 'fostering individuals, families and communities that are reflexive, thoughtful, aware of diversity and complexity, conscious of themselves and of others, including others who are very different in place or time' (op cit: 1).

According to Geoffrey Crossick, incoming Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, the crucial factor in knowledge transfer are the spaces in which interactions can take place.

> *…what is needed is not a system to transfer from one party to another some knowledge that has already been produced, to transfer something that has already happened. But, rather, the need is for a system to create spaces in which something can happen. In the creative industries, much of the time, once it has happened it has already been transferred* (op cit: 14).

By extension, we should be focusing on museums as such spaces.

Even without adding knowledge transfer into the equation, the workings of 'cultural impact' are sufficiently complex to have been identified as a 'wicked problem' – wicked problems being classically associated with economic, environmental and political issues, whose solutions requires large groups of individuals to change their mindsets and behaviors (Barrett, 2009: 9)[xii].

1.5 The selection of examples

While not all projects described by NMDC members have been used, all the detailed examples of cultural impact referred to here are theirs. They describe the wide-ranging effects, generated by museums' learning and curatorial activities, their research and its contribution to the development of ideas and, more generally, their institution-wide commitments and ethos.

NMDC museums submitted details of around 85 projects (listed in Appendix 4), as well as a number of reports and other documents. Taken together, these suggest a number of common interests – both in terms of subject matter and intentions: promoting a wider interest in history and the world in general – and more specifically, generating empathy for and understanding of minority groups; addressing marginalization; encouraging community engagement; advancing institutional interests, authority and values; dealing with difficult and/or sensitive subject matter; challenging perceptions; creating associations and identities. Other noticeable characteristics of projects described were their currency (these tended to lack evidence of cultural impact); their research-centeredness; the fact that they were conceived as national initiatives, and that they involved some element of digitization. Projects were selected to be used as examples in this essay on the basis of offering the most compelling evidence.

Part 2: The cultural impact of museums

> *…we all have to face some tough facts. Museums can do a lot of good work, but… we are not at the top of the agenda for the groups of people we are talking about here. We are not going to persuade a young person to put down their weapon and lead a more productive life because a 500 year old Museum says so* (Armstrong, 2008).

How best to understand, articulate and demonstrate the differences that culture makes, not least that receiving public support, is a longstanding issue. While the sector may have gown inured to them, efforts to 'measure culture', particularly in respect to the delivery of identified, instrumental objectives, have been determined by policy and the political process - not least, DCMS's adherence to the Treasury's *Green Book*[xiii].

Since the late 1970s, non-market, cultural institutions have been subject to concerns about their financial value. It has been noted that many impact studies of arts and cultural activities overstate their measurable economic values but ignore the non-use values that they generate, - which can be considerable. 'Fresh thinking is needed on how to articulate and, where possible, measure, the full range of benefits that arise from the work of arts and cultural organisations (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2010b: 58). However, cultural impacts are often intangible, hard to explain and prove (see, for example, AEA, 2005; Wavell et al, 2002).

The reporting of impacts is sometimes subject to the compounding of intentions and effects. There are considerable difficulties around verifying claims; and attribution is often inferred rather than specific [xiv]. There are questions about how long it takes for impacts to take effect – whether they are immediate or long term.

Cultural institutions themselves are often myopic about commissioning impact evaluations, and use them to assess the effectiveness of their own management systems rather than finding out whether they have made a difference to their audiences, or contributed in some way to cultural change.

Whatever museum directors might aspire to (see, for instance Cuno, 2004), single moments of wonderment or epiphanies are probably rare. But as Stephen Jay Gould explained (Box 1), museums can, nevertheless, play a crucial part in the evolution of individual's thinking.

Box 1: Stephen Jay Gould interview

SJG: 'I have wanted to be a paleontologist since I was five or six years old…'

Q: How did you become interested in paleontology at such an early age?

SJG: ' There are several answers to that. One is the five-year-old's answer. You go to the Museum of Natural History and the dinosaurs are so awesome, in the literal meaning of that word… that's a five-year-old's answer, it's a perfectly legitimate one. I guess the adult's answer grows right out of that.'

Q: Can you describe that moment as a five-year-old when you were at the Museum of Natural History and it struck you that this is what you wanted to do?

SJG: 'Everybody thinks that's such an interesting apocalyptic moment. If you look at most professions, and ask people why they got into it, they'd probably say, 'I was in college, I got fascinated and kind of wandered into it.' Now if you ask paleontologists that, you'd get a very different distribution. First of all, you get a lot of people who got into it just for exactly that reason, they wandered into a geology course that was fascinating. But you find a very strong

group who were dinosaur nuts as kids. Either they were rural, country kids who collected fossils in the backyards or the local streambeds, or they were city kids, like me, who went to museums and saw dinosaurs. So even though the story seems to fascinate a lot of people, it's the most ordinary thing in the world, because there are so many paleontologists who got into their interest as a child through going to museums. It's the main reason for my commitment to museums.'

Source: Stephen Jay Gould interview, 28 June 1991
http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/gou0int-1 (retrieved 29.06.2010)

But, in general, the sector knows very little about the true extent of its cultural impacts - what they are, how far reaching they are, who benefits and how (HEFCE/ Universities UK, 2008: 4; HEFCE, 2009: 15). As one NMDC member put it

> *In terms of actual evidence of cultural impact, there is not a lot. We have a fair amount of evaluation which points to attitudinal changes amongst visitors/users in response to particular pieces of programming - particularly for example exhibitions which add new narratives or perspectives… But it would be hard make a strong case for this leading to cultural change as it could be argued that we are 'preaching to the converted' - people with an interest in a particular subject are more likely to visit these exhibitions and getting honest responses to attitudinal questions in relation to diversity is tricky*[xv].

One particular research project, which was still ongoing at the time of writing, is concerned – in part - with how museums affect people. Several NMDC members were involved in programmes about the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. The research project ***1807 Commemorated. The abolition of the slave trade*** (2007)[xvi]. The project mapped and analysed public debate and activity around the event itself, including those organized by museums. One of its concerns is to explore the consequences of the messages that people take away from exhibitions and the extent to which these experiences feed into personal, family, regional and national identity.

> *We are concerned with identifying and understanding how 1807 is being marked by different agencies and communities in Britain and the consequences of this for the expression of national, local and community identity, and for the development of a range of social debates addressing multiculturalism and social inclusion*[xvii].

It has found that the impact of the exhibitions depended on strategies of connecting localities to the established histories of slavery and abolition; uncovering the 'hidden history' of these localities' connections to slavery; and using voices from the present-day community to draw meaning from the histories being considered (Cubitt, 2009). Those principles, consciously or unconsciously, inform many of the examples of museums' projects considered below.

2. 1 Valuing culture

> *The problem of valuing the arts is at the centre of British Liberalism, from Bentham's assertion that push-penny was as valuable as poetry if the quantity of pleasure was the same, to Mill's attempt to justify higher pleasures*[xviii].

The most recent manifestation of the debate about valuing the arts was prompted by New Labour's politicization of museums, their economic and social inclusion agendas, which revived historic arguments about philistinism, utilitarianism, national and civic competitiveness (see, for example, Appleton, 2001).

The 2003 conference, *Valuing Culture,* highlighted questions about cultural organisations' obligation to comply with targets and deliver on instrumentalist policies to justify their receipt of public funding (Holden, 2003). The then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport's response was to publish a personal essay, *Government and the Value of Culture*, in which she explicitly acknowledged a central dilemma facing her department: 'How, in going beyond targets, can we best capture the value of culture?' (Jowell, 2004: 18. See also Jowell, 2005). It would appear that since 1979 effectively no value (value being synonymous with financial value) had easily been attached to non-market institutions[xix].

2.2 Public value

Jowell's reflections on the value of culture not only referred to the government's preoccupations with targets, but also to its rhetoric around public value and DCMS's concern to comply with central concerns.

Public value, a theory of public management, was mobilized by the Harvard academic, Mark Moore, in 1995 (Box 2). It resonated with UK policy makers and public service delivery bodies because it addressed such key questions as how best to reform and improve public services; how to measure the impact of public services; what the public itself values and is prepared to pay for, and how the relationship between public service providers and users should develop. In short, it appeared to provide a way of tackling what the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, subsequently described as the need to overcome the 'decades' old assumption that the task of public service delivery was to fit the user to the service' (2004).

Box 2: Mark Moore interview

Thinking on Public Value emerged from the Kennedy School around 20 years ago, when we started teaching public sector managers. We decided that we would prepare to teach by constructing a theory of public sector leadership and management that started with practice and worked up, rather than starting with theory and working down. Consequently, we invited practitioners to become part of the faculty, young faculty members went to serve in government, we wrote up cases of managers operating in various situations and, perhaps most importantly, we met large numbers of public sector executives through our Executive Program classrooms. As head of the Executive Program I spent a long time listening, and wrote up what I had learned. My book 'Creating Public Value', published in 1995, has served as a continuing basis for our executive education.

At the core of the idea was the notion that we had to talk about the purposes of the public sector manager, and the instruments available to them. Language around this idea had previously centred on efficient, effective accomplishment of the mission of the organisation, and the protection of public interest. But there was something missing - the private sector is always looking to create value for shareholders and workers, and there seemed to be no equivalent for the public sector in models of corporate strategy.

What if the job of the public sector executive were to find and create opportunities for public value - an idea stripped of its financial basis, stripped of individual material success? In the private sector the answer is quite straightforward - customers making the decision to spend their money with you. What makes the government scenario different is that it isn't the individual customer who ascribes value, it is the collective who, through the process of government, makes a commitment to tax and regulate themselves for the purposes of producing a change in the material conditions of society. This became the idea behind public value.

The idea found itself in opposition to the idea of 'customer-orientated' government because it wasn't clear from the latter whether the customer was the client with whom it interacted, or whether it was citizens and society representatives. Consequently, an important part of being an effective manager involved orchestrating a coherent conversation in the collective around what should be produced, as well as figuring out how to produce it. Once you've added entrepreneurship and facilitating conversations to ideas of

innovating in pursuit of improved service delivery, you've got a different idea of the role of the public sector executive, and the skills required.

Source: Interview with National School of Government principal, David Spencer, 2006
http://www.nationalschool.gov.uk/news_events/stories/Mark_Moore_Interview.asp

A British version of public value was set out in the blueprint produced by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Creating Public Value: An Analytical Framework For Public Service Reform* (Kelly et al, 2002). It emphasised the importance of citizen consultation and public engagement in the design and delivery of public services. It argued that public value would help to create more personalised services that would effectively meet the needs of service users, and closely associated this with the drive towards co-production - citizens working with government and public bodies to shape what services might look like. There is, however, a degree of ambiguity as to what public value encompasses.

The Work Foundation[xx] dedicated a strand of its work to public value, and identified a number of understandings to it

> *…an academic theory; a corrective to new public management theory; as a slogan or rallying cry to reinvigorate the public sector; as a system of networked governance; and as an approach that attempts to quantify and monetise the value of a public institution.* (Horner et al, 2006: 6)

The Work Foundation assumes public value to be something that 'addresses many of the contemporary concerns facing public managers. These include problems of securing legitimacy for decision-making, resource allocation and measuring service outcomes' (Horner et al, 2007: 2). But, for other commentators, it is largely characterized by its ambiguity:

> *… is at least one of: an approach to management; an end product of the management process; a set of processes that organisations could/should/ought to pursue. The general idea appears to be that the delivery of public services should be focused at the improvement of both general processes within government so that the delivery of goods and services is improved (ie. the public will benefit and achieve improved 'value' from improvements in how public sector organisations operate), and at developing a better linkage between public sector organisations and the general public so that there is a better match of expectations between the two*. (Grey, 2008: 4)

Despite, if not because of, that ambiguity the concept of public value has been important to DCMS. A search of its website in April 2010 generated 2,150 results for public+value[xxi]. The Department referred to 'the value of museums' in particular in the titles of two evaluations of the national and regional museums partnership programme of education work it co-funded with DfES (Hooper Greenhilll et al, 2004 & 2007), and in its 2005 consultation paper for its proposed national museums strategy, *Understanding the Future: Museums and 21st Century Life. The Value of Museums.* In Spring 2010, DCMS was collecting evidence of its funded organisations' public value in the form of evaluations, user surveys, feedback forms, case studies, appraisals, contract performance indicators, business cases etc. The Department's prevailing concern was that any evidence should be factual and not entirely anecdotal[xxii].

Elsewhere within the DCMS family, Arts Council England (ACE) instigated a high profile investigation into the public value of the arts in 2006 though its 'arts debate'.

> *A large-scale programme of research and consultation, its purpose was to engage a wide range of people in a debate about the value of the arts and the role of public funding. In*

> *particular, the arts debate sought to explore how public value is currently created by the arts today and what it would mean for the Arts Council and the individuals and organisations we fund to create greater public value* (Keaney et al, 2007: 8).

ACE is currently engaged in a three-year programme of research and development 'to put public value at the heart of everything the Arts Council does' (see Bunting, 2007).

2.3 Cultural value

The application of public value to culture has prompted various commentators to identify cultural values for advocacy, if not organisational purposes. The think-tank, Demos, for example, regarded cultural value as a way to provide 'a set of broad principles and useful tools for people working in the cultural sector':

> *The sector is in search of a convincing narrative to validate its activities – a narrative that must convince the world at large. A new language is needed to develop both a cast-iron case for public funding of culture and the systemic and organisational forms and practices needed to deliver continuing public support. This will only come about if we can find ways to recognise why people value culture, and if we can find ways to articulate how public institutions – funders and funded cultural organisations – create value*. (Holden 2004: 47-8)

Demos' theory of cultural value sought to make explicit the range of values (including non-monetized values) implicit to culture, and emphasise the legitimacy of the subjective experiences of participants and citizens. It, thus, credited the Heritage Lottery Fund with being able to create a rich mix of intrinsic, instrumental and institutional values, namely:

- *Stewardship: preserving the past – the intrinsic value of heritage – in the interest*
- *of the future*
- *Trust: that is, producing enhanced trust in public institutions*
- *The promotion of equity and fairness in the distribution of Lottery money*
- *Efficiency and resilience in organisations that receive funding*
- *An enhanced sense of well-being and an improved quality of life for visitors*
- *The contribution that heritage makes towards general prosperity and employment*
- *The encouragement of learning and personal development*
- *The strengthening of communities, particularly by rediscovering a sense of connection to place.* (Hewison & Holden, 2006: 16—17)

2.4 Value frameworks

It was, perhaps, inevitable that one effect of, if not contribution to, agencies regarding themselves, or being regarded, as 'architects of value' (Brown, 2006: 24) has been the proliferation of generic outcome frameworks. These are something that museums have been encouraged to use, particularly those that are driven by the desire for advocacy. Not surprisingly, a number of evaluations have been determined by museums' compliance with MLA's Inspiring Leaning for All Framework (see, for example, Morris Hargreaves Macintyre, 2005).

According to the Work Foundation's public value assessment framework (Box 3), generated, in part, with DCMS support, the V&A creates public value through its access and audiences; national and international; creative design and efficiency and effectiveness (Horner et al, 2007).

Box 3: The Work Foundation's public value assessment framework

1. What public value does the organisation create?		2. How does the organisation create public value?	
A: Qualities	Universal	A: Authorisation	Construction
	Equitable		Conception
	Accountable		Ethos
	Transparent		Democratic legitimation
B: Services	Satisfaction		Methods of consultation
	Information		Democratic accountability
	Choice		Political calculus
	Employee advocacy		Justifying resource allocation
	Ethos	B: Creation	Public value as a strategic goal
C: Outcomes			Public value as a management tool
D: Trust			Managing citizen expectations
		C: Measurement	Why and what to measure
			Clarifying intentions
			Measurement that destroys public value
			Measurement that creates public value
			Public accountability

Source: Horner et al, 2006: 72-75

A list of some of the more ubiquitous values and outcomes identified by the Department and its agencies are set out in Appendix 1. The Appendix also includes, for comparative purposes, the benefits and values identified in *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts* (McCarthy et al, 2005), an independent overview produced in the US published the non-profit RAND Corporation, and a subsequent mapping of arts benefits adapted from that which sought to address the fact that 'much about the ways people are changed by art remains to be researched and codified' (Brown, 2006: 1).

Generic frameworks override the particular, by definition. They make no distinction between different cultural activities and no reference to the particular subject matter or content, which encompasses particular values or generates particular outcomes. The quantitative indicators, generated by the Generic Leaning Outcomes, for example, were crucial in fulfilling a political purpose - to convince the Treasury to release more money for Renaissance and Strategic Commissioning. Given their emphasis on learning, they also demonstrated that the excitement, enjoyment and inspirational quality of the museum/gallery experience stimulated the acquisition of facts and the development of attitudes and perceptions[xxiii]. However, the GLO toolkit did not result in any understanding of those experiences' consequent impacts on visitors - even in relation to policy priorities (Shared Intelligence, 2007: 4.123 - 4.124). DCMS's most recent research, the two-year CASE programme, has also produced a generalised account of how museums impact on young people's learning. Attending a museum or gallery with supplementary learning support is seen to have 'promising' impacts on learning (suggesting that further investigation may be warranted) and as leading to improved student learning (DCMS, 2010d: 28)[xxiv].

2.5 Instrumentalism

A cursory comparison between these US and those UK models included in Appendix 1, highlights the utilitarian, if not highly determined nature of the latter. The British list, derived from just four DCMS-family value frameworks, and shaped by government policy, contains around 90 different outcomes and values. The differences in the descriptors used for reporting back to government may or may not be attributable to shifts in policy, or to differently nuanced aspirations. They nevertheless raise a number of questions.

As Belfiore & Bennett (2010:126) observed, these assume that there is a functional relationship between personal and societal transformation - although this remains largely unexplored and unexplained[xxv]. They suggest a degree of predictive behaviour although people may react to experiences very differently and little is known about the mechanism by which people are affected by cultural experiences[xxvi]. This suggests that broad generalisations about peoples' experiences of the arts are unconvincing, and that measurements of those effects are implausible. Moreover, it is unclear how organisations might purposefully generate these kinds of value (Keaney, 2006: 40).

As Jowell's essay, *Government and the Value of Culture* implied, DCMS together with its various ministers and Secretaries of State, have struggled with the political imperatives of measuring the effects of cultural provision and justifying the investment of public funds in relation to particular claims made for it. This may explain Holden's aspiration for 'cultural value' as something that might 'enable the cultural sector to achieve a working concordat between funders, the funded and the public' (Holden, 2004: 60). Mobilizing the concept of 'cultural value', as distinct from promoting instrumental value (Holden, 2003; 2004; 2006; Morris, 2003: Jowell, 2004) and shifting the focus away from 'measurement to judgment' and 'excellence' (McMaster, 2008), evidently had considerable appeal to the cultural sector, itself.

But despite its emphasis on intrinsic value, the Department's understanding of the inherent value of culture appears to have remained synonymous with what it credited as its 'transformative power' and, therefore, with instrumentalism. The generation of a greater sense of well being, connectedness, confidence and personal meaning through cultural interventions is inextricably linked with its desire for the creation of more aspirant individuals, better communities and a thriving economy.

2.6 Economic orthodoxy

A greater emphasis on qualitative, cultural outcomes might suggest a trend away from quantitative targets and outputs. But, as the debate about cultural value and the moment of McMaster recede, DCMS's default to quantitative performance indicators in terms of public accountability remains standard [xxvii]. Metrics and monetary value have continued to be used as proxies for qualitative experiences. Advertising value equivalents are a standard way of quantifying the degree of public awareness of a particular institution or project.

In a world in which 'orthodoxy is economic' (Slouka, 2009), value remains principally associated with the economy. It is no coincidence that the first section of a review of research and literature to inform the Arts Council's 10-year strategic framework specifically refers to the arts economy (Bunting, 2010: 5). The sector appears to regard econometrics as a form of enhanced advocacy[xxviii]. More generally, contingent valuation and stated preference models, as used by the British Library (undated; Pung et al, 2004), for example, typically ask how much money people would be willing to pay (or accept) to maintain the existence of (or be compensated for the loss of) a cultural faciiity, which is normally free at the point of admission.

Following the lead of the Cabinet Office (2009), MLA has attempted to prove the social impact of

its sectors in economic terms through SROI (Social Return on Investment) (MLA/NEF, 2009). DCMS's CASE research values the 'outputs' of engaging in culture and sport as predominantly of economic value (CASE, undated b).It demonstrates the economic value of engagement in terms of the subjective well-being income compensation of the arts (DCMS, 2010d).

Elsewhere, economists have sought to demonstrate that they can provide the tools to 'measure' and validate the intrinsic value of art, in ways that are commensurable with other measures of value for other calls on the public purse (Bakhshi et al, 2009).

This continued emphasis on economic indicators necessarily implies that institutions regard themselves as economically active and likely to maintain, if not to improve on, their performance. However, in the current financial climate, cultural organisations which depend on public funding might wish prioritize their own sustainability and the enjoyment and well-being of their public (Jackson, 2009), and articulate their impacts in a different way.

2.7 The economy of meaning

The International Futures Forum's[xxix] exploration of cultural value is focused on how the arts work in society and their apparent dislocation from our everyday lives. It proposes an 'ecologically informed dynamic framework for understanding creativity, the arts and how the arts should be funded in the future'.

> *We have found that everyone in the arts and cultural sector is struggling with talk about 'value'. It is no good trying to relate all the value of arts and culture to monetary valuations, and equally unhelpful to try to justify the arts as some kind of special case, different from all other spending priorities and subject to unique criteria* (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010: 11)

IFF's solution is based on a logic which derives from its 'ecological thinking' and its central assumption that 'the pattern of life is a connected whole'. It regards life as an eco-system that depends on various economies that support sharing and exchanging things, knowledge and experience. Only one of these economies is based on money, but all contribute to the health and sustainability of our shared lives. Each is defined and configured by a different currency, the integrity of which must be maintained in order to keep that economy healthy.

Whereas monetary economy is alienable (in that its value rests on the idea of transferability i.e. transferring things that we own to other people whether or not for payment), making meaning is inalienable: it is something that we own but cannot transfer: 'I can share my taste in music, but I cannot give it away. It is proper to me, a quality of my life'. (Sharpe, 2010: 2). It thus stands at the other extreme of our lives to monetary economy. IFF identifies art as the currency of our economy of experience – what enables us to use our unique, individual experiences as the basis for shared meaning.

> *As soon as the money economy is dethroned from its position as the arbiter of all economic value, we can start to bring ecological concepts into the heart of economic thinking, understanding economies as patterns of shared life. We can explore what keeps each economy healthy, what sort of wealth each one accumulates, what sort of policies are most supportive of innovation and sustainability and so on. We can also explore boundaries, and how resources should move between economies in ways that are mutually sustainable and do not corrupt them. We can make distinctions between 'outcomes' that are intrinsic to an economy and its proper functioning, and those that entail using its resources for other purposes in other economies.*

We find that this new way of thinking breaks free from the eternal cycle of arguments about intrinsic value, instrumentalism and so on and speaks to the reality of producers who are constantly reconciling meaning and money as an active creative process itself. It also brings into the foreground the role everyone in society plays as co-producers of every sort of value, and helps us focus on enhancing the artistic potential of every individual in our shared cultural life.

….The relationship between the economy of meaning and the economy of money must be carefully managed in order to maintain the vitality of both. [xxx]

2. 8 Identifying cultural impact

Given these issues raised above, how might it be possible to identify cultural impact, or at least contemporary cultural impact?[xxxi]

There are various ways of ascertaining, if not assessing, museums' qualitative impact, other than by economic proxies. These include: direct consultation to assess public value (Keaney, 2006: 41); self-evaluations, peer and user-review; and stakeholder analysis. Indeed, an increasing body of work is being developed around such approaches. But, to date, this has largely relied on peer and specialist review, which draws on small, professional networks rather than end-users.

The fact that there is a growing body of literature on the merit of arts organisations' conducting 'artistic self-assessment' may be relevant within the context of this exploration of cultural impact. Bailey & Richardson (forthcoming), for example, have suggested that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to assessing what Australasians refer to as 'artistic vibrancy' (and what we refer to as 'excellence'.

The idea that universal templates can be developed across companies and/or artforms is thus belied by empirical evidence, and as the literature shows, attempts to create such templates often degenerate into box-ticking or a focus on financial reporting, in turn met by frustration, aversion or confusion as to their ultimate value.

Methods suggested by their case studies, which include peer and staff opinion, could include 'assessment panels, guest artist surveys and staff days – reflecting the 360 degree review approach supported by much of the literature on performance measurement'.

Although DCMS has not followed up its pilot peer review of museums' self-assessments (2009), ACE is currently rolling out an Artistic Assessment Scheme, intended to 'provide a fair, robust and transparent platform for discussions about artistic quality and to develop over time a broader evidence base to inform our funding decisions'. This is centred on 'artistic assessments by assessors who have knowledge and expertise in the arts' (ACE, 2009: 1-2) and focuses on excellence rather than impact.

Other agencies are less myopic. The UK Film Council's 2009 report, *Stories we tell ourselves. The Cultural Impact of UK Film 1946–2006,* explored the growing recognition of UK film as one of the most powerful cultural agents of the last 100 years. Like ACE, its initial default was to draw on expert opinion – in that it drew on an 'intuitive sample of 200 films generally regarded by professional observers as significant and of lasting value' (Narval Media et al, 2009: 5). Its research looked to a number of indicators that include capturing the spirit and preoccupations of time (the zeitgeist) and those cumulative impacts that contribute to long-term changes of cultural attitudes and social change. But, the Film Council has since acknowledged the importance of understanding what films mean to the public more generally and is currently developing work that embraces audience research (Barratt, 2009: 22).

Amongst the evidence submitted by NMDC members to this essay, the National Galleries of Scotland identified two film documentaries of its outreach projects, which include forthright views from participants[xxxii].

Other ways of identifying museums' cultural impact might also look to the field of research impact – 'a process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared' with a range of stakeholders and audiences (HEFCE, 2009: 6). Although the considerable experience of peer review in academia and the literature on it (summarised in Research Information Network, 2010) is rarely considered by the museum sector, the following paragraphs look to models intended to measure the impact of research undertaken in Higher Education Institutions. This is justified partly because of the UK Research Councils' acknowledgement that research takes place in museums (see Part 3); partly because of certain commonalities between museums and the humanities. Both are concerned with the exploration of the human condition and with products of human existence - language, beliefs, writings, artefacts, social and cultural institutions (Bennett & Belfiore, 2010: 123) [xxxiii].

> *The case for the humanities is not hard to make, though it can be difficult…The humanities, done right, are the crucible within which our evolving notions of what it means to be fully human are put to the test; they teach us, incrementally, endlessly, not what to do but how to be. Their method is confrontational, their domain unlimited, their 'product' not truth but the reasoned search for truth, their 'success' something very much like Frost's momentary stay against confusion*[xxxiv]*.*
>
> *They are thus, inescapably, political. Why? Because they complicate our vision, pull our most cherished notions out by the roots, flay our pieties. Because they grow uncertainty. Because they expand the reach of our understanding (and therefore our compassion), even as they force us to draw and redraw the borders of tolerance. Because out of all this work of self-building might emerge an individual capable of humility in the face of complexity; an individual formed through questioning and therefore unlikely to cede that right; an individual resistant to coercion, to manipulation and demagoguery in all their forms. The humanities, in short, are a superb delivery mechanism for what we might call democratic values. There is no better that I am aware of.*
>
> *This, I would submit, is value…* (Slouka, 2009)

Over many years, concerns about the quality of academic research within the arts and humanities have led to doubts about the value of citations and metrics as indicators of value. Moreover, the higher education sector has become increasingly conscious of the value of external perceptions since government specified that it 'should take better account of the impact research makes on the economy and society' (HEFCE, 2009: 4), to the extent of identifying this as synonymous with 'user value' (HEFCE, 2008: 3). HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council of England) is currently addressing how to capture research impacts in anticipation of the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework. A background paper commissioned from Rand Europe (2009: v) considered various models used elsewhere including case studies; questionnaires that refer to potential research impacts and self-assessment; institutions' own strategic (impact) goals; evidence-based impact statements which address institutions' engagement with end users; evidence of end users taking up new paradigms, attitudes, outlooks; the benefits to them, and the relative magnitude or extent of the impact experienced. These suggest possible approaches to describing the cultural impact of museums, which is explored in Part 4.

Part 3: Strategies for making a difference

Part 3 considers some of the strategies that NMDC members are employing to help exert cultural impact, in particular rebranding; research; partnerships and networks and digital dissemination.

3.1 Rebranding

By definition, the cultural impacts identified here reflect institutional interests and values. Several NMDC museums reported rebranding strategies, undertaken in an attempt to extend, or reinforce, their sphere of influence and to encourage perceptions of their public value. The Natural History Museum, for example, is concerned to promote itself as a major scientific research facility, which fulfils a number of roles in the contemporary world (NHM, 2010; Travers & Brown, 2010). The Royal Armouries have effectively rebranded themselves as a museum of violence.

- *As the UK's national museum of arts and armour the **Royal Armouries** might be expected to play a pretty straight–forward cultural role… Without doubt, many visitors in 2010 are seeking a day out, fun with a little learning. Few would list having their attitudes and behaviour challenged and changed as a reason for their visit… No museum has had as long a history of exploring the moulding of culture as the Armouries…*

  By creating a varied set of different (to some, possibly, conflicting) opportunities the Armouries has, in recent years, responded to changing cultural landscape of its particular subject area…. the first phase of this began in about 1990 and came to fruition with the opening of the Royal Armouries Museum in April 1996 - a month after the Dunblaine Massacre and two months before the Manchester IRA bombing.

  The thinking that had gone into the creation of the New Museum was [thus] explained…

  > *'The use of violence by mankind for supremacy and survival, or its sublimation into sport or play, always has been, and probably always will be, one of the main forces for historical change. This is the underlying theme of the new Royal Armouries. It is a fascinating and disturbing story of great importance to us and our children. It is the responsibility of the new museums to make this story relevant for future generations.'*

  ….While programming falconry and horse-shows on the one hand, to draw in the non-arts & armour audience, the Armouries also sought to address some of the difficult and painful subjects that cannot be avoided if the Museum does not simply define itself as about ' history', 'art' and 'technology'. Exhibitions in the period 1996-2001 tackled 'hot' topics like landmines, the treatment of conscientious objectors and violence in contemporary art, but it was inevitable that these temporary initiatives could generate little in the way of coherent cultural influence, despite the establishment of a 'peace curator' post. In parallel, through… its events programme, the Royal Armouries established itself as active in other areas of cultural opinions formation and change – for example, through its high profile in Armistice Day ceremonies and activities involving veterans. These were largely accepted without question.

  Following the introduction of free admission… [this] and several other factors, led the Royal Armouries Directors and Trustees to ask the questions: 'What difference do we make? Would anybody care if we closed tomorrow?' As a result of a review, it was recognised that the organisation occupied a position, which meant that… it had a duty to

encourage informed discussion of many topics which were consistently in and out of the headlines – often as 'political footballs'.

For some staff… the Armouries' adoption of a more contemporary and potentially controversial role was worrying. However… the Museum began to take up themes that had either been ignored or played down in the 1996 galleries. The development of the IMPACT display, about gun crime and its effects on the community, was a significant starting point[xxxv]*.*

3.2 Research

Around 10 per cent of the projects described by NMDC members were research projects intended to generate new knowledge and understanding of museum collections. They ranged from those concerned with the legacies of slavery to international scientific collaboration and forensics and the approaches that they employed were very different.

- The Natural History Museum's ***Slavery & Nature*** project, 2006-8, for example, contributed a unique angle to the nationwide dialogue on the bicentenary of the transatlantic slave trade. Having been founded within the context of empire, colonisation and exploration, the Museum had many connections with the slave trade. However its publications, journals and diaries only provide European narratives of the time: there are no writings by enslaved Africans or indigenous people of the Americas.

  The aims of the project were to:

  - create a platform for broader access to, and dialogue around the Museum building, its collections, scientists and research;
  - interpret its collections in new ways that are relevant to a larger more diverse audience;
  - contribute to the nationwide cross-institutional dialogue on the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and abolition;
  - place the relevant information in the public realm for 2007 and beyond.

  In 2005 the Museum embarked on a process of community consultation before deciding on specific outputs. In partnership with an African grass-roots organisation, it invited local residents, community partners, activists and cultural professionals to participate in a number of consultation sessions. The participants contributed to expanding the project's research brief. They also provided guidance on the presentation of findings, requesting an honest and open presentation of the history, 'the transatlantic slave trade must no longer remain hidden history'. The subjects that generated most interest included plantation crops; food; health; medicines and herbs; resistance; Europeans connected to the slave trade and natural history; enslaved and freed Africans.

  Further research culminated in a display of images and narratives in the Library's Rare Books Room. The related public programme concentrated on medicines and poisons, plants used in everyday life and the diet and nutrition of enslaved peoples. Events also illustrated resistance and the links between slavery and the development of science.

  - *Excellent. I didn't realise you could get so much from a natural history angle and such insight into aspects of slavery.*

- *This is just the beginning. The best thing I saw this year was a collection of rare books, who'd have thought some of the best material on this subject was sitting in the library of The Natural History Museum? More research is needed.*
- *The exhibition I saw a few weeks ago in your library made a real impact on me, I have read so much but I have never seen material like this, I keep thinking about it.*

- The National Maritime Museum was one of several European museums and universities involved in the ***Climatological Database for the World's Oceans 1750-1850*** *(*2001-3). The partnership abstracted, interpreted and analysed data from naval and merchant ships' logbooks to build a picture of day-to-day weather patterns between 1750 and 1850 in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. It marked the first attempt by scientists to explore this resource.

  Amongst other things, the project resulted in a freely available database of great value to climatic studies; contributed to scientists' ability to reconstruct atmospheric pressure over the oceans, and to further studies based on range of information in logbooks[xxxvi]

- The Royal Armouries houses one of **LGC Forensics** eight UK laboratories, which undertakes works for police force and on incidents in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also involved in a programme to help identify the soldiers who fell at the Battle of Fromelles in northern France on 19 July 1916.

  By the same token, another forensics company, the **Forensic Science Service** is turning to forensic entomology specialists at the Natural History Museum, to help them to solve murders and other crimes, and identify the causes of death. Indeed, the Museum is able to deliver a range of scientific expert witnessing services to the legal community, with qualified experts available to perform in situ investigations, laboratory examinations and information assessments in such areas as marine insurance; protection and indemnity; environmental impact assessment; forensic entomology; specimen identification, and due diligence.[xxxvii]

Other projects are research related, as opposed to research-centred. The National Maritime Museum's ***Understanding Slavery Initiative*** (2003-), for example, is a national education initiative in which a partnership of five museums has promoted and supported the effective teaching of the history and legacies of the transatlantic slave trade in schools and communities. The project created a permanent appointment at the NMM and has generated related (Arts and Humanities Research Council) AHRC-funded PhD fellowships. This has affected how the museum thinks about itself, and contributed to its developing a stronger profile with local communities, new ways of working with them and dealing with sensitive issues more generally.

Museums' award of AHRC-funded PhD fellowships is significant. Several museums' research projects have been facilitated, if not prompted, by the UK Research Councils' development of a portfolio of knowledge transfer activities, which embrace interactions between the research base and user community; commercialisation; collaborative research and development and collaborative training (Oakley & Selwood, 2010).

The Research Councils' CASE (Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering) schemes, for example, provide opportunities for PhD students to work within external organisations. ESRC CASE studentship partners have included the National Museum of Science and Industry and NERC (The Natural Environment Research Council) CASE studentships' partners include the Natural History Museum (see below). AHRC's equivalent of CASE studentships are its Collaborative Doctoral Awards, launched in 2005. Between 40 and 60 such awards are made per year, several of which involve NMDC museums. Appendix 2 lists the 2009 involving NMDC

members[xxxviii]. In May 2010 the Museum of London was host to as many as seven AHRC-funded Collaborative Doctoral Awards[xxxix]

As this suggests, much research is made possible because of partnerships and networks.

3.3 Partnerships and networks

Many of the projects described depend on partnerships, which allow museums to expand their capacities and skills, and to forge relationships with various constituencies of interest including colleagues in other museums, public services, universities and communities (Box 4).

Box 4: The Natural History Museum's research and HE partnerships

The Natural History Museum's primary aim is to explore natural diversity and promote responsible interactions with the natural world. As it described in its 2009 scientific review, it is

> *…where some of the world's most respected researchers carry out investigations of great value and significance…As well as enriching our understanding of the natural world, the knowledge that our scientists are creating is helping to address urgent issues from biodiversity conservation to control of parasitic diseases and sustainable mineral extraction. They are also supporting the development of innovative technologies in emerging areas such as bioengineering* (NHM,2009:1)

Its research focuses on six lines of enquiry: assembling the Tree of Life; the relationship between genetic diversity, environment and evolution; how large-scale geological processes have influenced evolution; what determines biological diversity; the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning; and the interactions between hosts and their parasites together with their impact on disease.

In terms of collaborations with higher education, the NHM works in partnership with large numbers of universities at any one time: its MA, MSc and MRes courses are collaborations with Imperial College and UCL, and the supervision of its 100 to 150 PhD students, is shared with staff from between 30 and 50 universities.

The museum itself has Independent Research Status with three of the six national research councils: National Environment and the Research Council, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, and Science and Technologies Facilities Council. It employs more than 300 scientists and runs a major student programme intended to enable participants to achieve their full potential in terms of professional development. More specifically, it is concerned to attract researchers to the museum, to train those with whom it may collaborate in the future and to extend its work around systematics.

The NHM assesses its own research according to a number of indicators of esteem and impact:

- Around 10 per cent of the NHM's staff are funded through the UKRCs and the EC's Marie Curie and SYNTHESYS programmes. It leads the latter on behalf of 20 institutions.
- It generates commercial income through NHM Consulting, which also demonstrates the relevance of its specialist knowledge to applied issues. It has clients in such areas as forensics, where its entomological skills are employed to help to establish facts at crime schemes for police forces. Its ore specialists work with the mining industry to develop methods for the more sustainable extraction of metals from beyond the Earth's surface

Sources: http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/postgraduate/index.html; Natural History Museum, 2009; Oakley and Selwood, 2010.

Other forms of partnerships in which NMDC members are involved include those centred around the sharing of expertise and collections, and are driven by the potential to reach more, if not different, audiences.

Although some such collaborations pre-date particular government funding initiatives, they have nevertheless proliferated as a result of them. Examples include the 167 museums involved in regional hubs (Selwood, 2009) and the 14 Subject Specialist Networks[xl] supported by Renaissance, as well as those benefiting from Strategic Commissioning, an initiative funded by DCMS and the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

- *Tate Connects,* for example, aims to support the development of the visual arts across the UK, and to foster a climate where exchange and partnership can flourish. It contributes to a network of up to 15 organisations for the benefit of the wider public, expanding Tate's reach, and increasing public access to the national collection of British and international modern and contemporary art. It also comprises a small number of strategic collaborative projects dedicated to Partnerships, Projects & Touring Exhibitions and Knowledge Exchange[xli].

- *British Museum Partnership UK* is a network of 17 museums, which undertake collaborative activities, programmes and loans with other museums and organisations around the UK. The Partnership pursues the Museum's core purpose of using its expertise and collection as a shared resource, and benefits from the knowledge and skills of others. Its aim is to increase public enjoyment and understanding of material that is both universal and particular in meaning, to which all have right of access. The British Museum's loan of the iconic Gayer-Anderson Cat to Brent Museum's exhibition, *The Devine Cat – Speaking to the gods in Ancient Egyp*t, is a case in point. According to the Head of London and National Programmes, at the BM, it increased the Museum's capacity: 'I think we had a far greater impact than we would have had working independently' (London Hub, undated)

- *The Museum Network* is a partnership between a leading national museum, the Wallace Collection and four important English regional collections: The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle; Compton Verney; the Holburne Museum of Art in Bath; and Waddesdon Manor. All five museums are located in historic buildings and four are formed from great 19th-century private collections. The fifth, Compton Verney, is the home of a growing collection which closely reflects the tastes of its founder Sir Peter Moores. Its activities include education projects; e learning; community and other projects[xlii]

A number of projects associated with the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum are dedicated to contributing to changing attitudes to science**.**

> *As every parent knows, most of the obstacles to getting children interested in science stem from outmoded preconceptions and prejudice* (Margaret Hodge, cited in NHM, 2008: 2).

The Science Museum's ***Launchpad Gallery*** (2007), for example, is intended to inspire 8-14 year-olds (and the adults who visit with them) to explore and question science and biotechnology though hands-on experience of real phenomena in an environment that promotes curiosity. Since opening, it has had more than 2.6 million visitors with millions more playing the Launchball game, which is available online and as an iphone app, which has ranked among the top five iphone educational games. The Museum's evaluation demonstrated that it has succeeded in challenging and changing people's negative perceptions of science as 'remote, boring and irrelevant' by shifting the visitor views about science as interesting, exciting and relevant to 'real life'.

Hodge described the NHM's strategic commissioning project, ***Real World Science*** as helping to ' blow away' the old narrow-mindedness about science. A partnership with Manchester Museum, Oxford University Museum of Natural History and Tyne & Wear Museum, it was about getting students to learn outside the classroom, to see how science works in the real world and inspire them to continue studying science. As one teacher observed, 'Students were actually able to see come aspect of Chemistry in real life, some have actually started to think of changing direction when applying for university' – something that was reiterated by students themselves:

- *I never thought of ever doing it but I actually wish to become a geologist;*
- *[The visit has] made me interested in forensics, a different side of biology I hadn't considered;*
- *[The visit] has, in fact, encouraged me to research taxonomy careers;*
- *It helped me to see how many different jobs can be done using Biology and made me consider studying Biology further in the future;*
- *Made me think about the issues. I hadn't realised there was a debate about this topic, but this made meconsider [the other ide of] the argument;*
- *I have changed my mind about palaeontology as a whole, and now believe that it may be an option for my future - I had not considered this before.* (NHM, 2008)

The NHM and the Science Museum have formed a partnership with MLA. ***Science in Your World*** which is committed to enabling museums across England to develop science learning opportunities for schools and families. New resources and activities will provide opportunities to discover the science behind collections, to meet scientists and engineers, and to put school science in a real world context, enriching the curriculum in and out of school hours. *Science in Your World* is funded through the MLA's Strategic Commissioning programme until March 2011. ☐

Other partnership projects operate outside statutory education, and in partnership with other types of organisation:

- The Royal Armouries' ongoing ***IMPACT*** project started as a display about gun crime and its effects on the community. Its partners include the police, youth offending services and the Home Office). After the addition of displays about knife crime, IMPACT has become a focal point for visits and courses tailored for a wide range of ages. While the displays are visited by the general audience, they are also used specifically for small numbers of 'at risk' young people for Weapons Awareness training, final warning sessions etc.

  > *Numbers do not matter, it is the quality of the experience that counts. The Royal Armouries brings an unique contribution, a extra card in the hand, that makes some young offenders say ' I won't do that again'. Impact and its related programmes many not be the answer to tacking knife crime, but they are part of the solution.*

NMDC members are also involved in the initiation of a number of less formal initiatives, in which numerous partners effectively opt in. These tend to be national projects, and often celebrate significant anniversaries of nationwide importance. Partners may include other museums, heritage organisations, schools and the media. Examples include

- National Maritime Museum's ***SeaBritain*** (2005) was a national celebration, inspired by the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death in action of Admiral Lord Nelson and intended to raise awareness of the sea. Over 80 national bodies and hundreds of local organisations recruited through 15 regional 'roadshows', around the UK, became partners. Over 2,000 events took place under the SeaBritain 2005 umbrella all around the UK.

The BBC was another partner. It initiated *Coast*, a 13-part series, intended to reawaken the nation's love of its coastal heritage. The Open University, BBC Birmingham, BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Scotland and BBC Wales, and the BBC's Natural History Unit, Bristol were all involved.

- Natural History Museum's ***Darwin200*** (2009), was a national programme of events celebrating Charles Darwin's bicentenary and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. In addition to the museum's own Darwin exhibition, Darwin200 involved some 145 organisations and over 30 events and activities[xliii].

3.4 Digital dissemination

Digital technologies are producing 'seismic changes in consumer expectations and behaviour', and social media platforms are recognised as important venues 'for the discovery and discussion of creative content' challenging established models for promotion based on advertising and marketing (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2010a: 3).

Cultural organisations can now reach audiences in ways that were previously unimaginable. Consumers can access content 'anywhere, anytime' and social networks are becoming important as places where people can discover and discuss content, challenging established models for promotion based on advertising and marketing (Ibid). Indeed, a recent report for DCMS (2010) suggested that all cultural organisations should have an overarching digital strategy that fits their overall strategic purpose, their vision and mission and that their assets should be made available via social networks, other institutions and media organisations.

Despite an increasing literature, relatively little is known is about how digital technologies are impacting on people's commitment to museums. ACE is addressing the impact of digital technology on the public perception, understanding and engagement with the arts and its implications for content creation (McKinnon & Pearson, 2009: 11). Bakhshi & Throsby (2010b: 4) have explored the possibility of cultural organisations overcoming the traditional constraints imposed by physical sites; expanding their audience reach; opening new avenues for developing areas of activity; creating new sources of economic and cultural value, and prompting new business models through the prisms of the National Theatre and Tate in particular.

Much of what is being reported about digital consumption is quantitative. A major feature of the UK Film Council's research into the cultural impact of UK film included the scale of its 'extended impact' - DVD re-issues, restorations, and 'wider impact' - citations in other media, including YouTube clips (Narval Media et al, 2009). In terms of NMDC membership, the nearest approximation might be the potential offered by their multi-platform manifestations - websites, apps, publication sales and reviews, and their penetration into social networking sites – typically Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, StumbleUpon, Reddit, Digg, Delicious and so on.

There is only a limited amount of qualitative information. Bakhshi & Throsby (2010b: 35), for example, found that

> *… in almost all aspects the experience of the cinema audience was stronger and more intense than that of the audience in the theatre. Overall, we can conclude from this analysis that NT Live gave rise to positive cultural value across all the dimensions we have identified.*

The cultural values that they were looking for included aesthetic qualities, symbolic meanings, spiritual connections, social significance and the educational potential, which they associated with people's reported experiences of absorption, emotional responses, introduction to new ways of seeing, being transported, seeing in the company of others, wanting to talk about what they had

seen, being creativity stimulated and understanding art better (Throsby, 2001; Bakhshi & Throsby, 2010b: 35). Bakhshi & Throsby's concern was whether such values could be found in digital, as distinct from traditional manifestations, or whether these are generating new forms of cultural value (op cit: 34).

They identified museums' use of new technologies as having taken off during the 1990s. A major feature has been the transition from mass presentation of information to individually-tailored experiences.

> *In the physical museum, these functions include multimedia tours; interactive kiosks; simulation and virtual reality experiences; wireless connectivity enabling live feeds of information and tools; sound, laser and light shows; IMAX presentations and 'theme park-like' attractions.*
>
> *On the web, they include: online access to collections and databases; online exhibitions (text, image, audiovisual); virtual exhibitions (including 360-degree room views); virtual museums (including on Second Life), the use of real and imaginary exhibition and gallery spaces; downloadable and streamed multimedia content (audio, video, podcasts); interactive gallery maps; dedicated sites, games and play spaces for children and young people; personalised spaces – creating own favourites and tagging objects; use of social media networks (blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube); and shopping online (exhibition tickets, merchandise).* (op cit, 2010b: 21-22)

Amongst the 10 per cent per cent of NMDC members' projects, which involved digital dissemination were:

- The British Museum's current project, ***A History of the World in 100 Objects***. At the heart of this project is the BBC Radio 4 series which focuses on 100 objects from the BM's collection. Each has a programme dedicated to it which is written and narrated by the Museum Director. These are available on iPlayer and as podcasts. The website carries images of all objects: videos and blogs; learning programmes which include a facility to research students' or teacher's objects that tell 'a history of the world'; and upload these on to the website. Individuals are also invited to participate in the construction of a digital museum by adding objects that they own.

  Museums around the country have teamed up with the BBC in their area and have chosen objects from their own collections that reflect world history from each area's perspective. These will be featured on radio and TV across the UK.

  In addition to Radio 4, a number of BBC channels are involved. CBBC has commissioned a 13-part series, *Relic: Guardians of the Museum*, which follows a group of children visiting the Museum at night to unlock the mysteries behind 13 of the objects featured. BBC Nations & Local (Cymru Wales, BBC Scotland, BBC Northern Ireland and BBC English Regions) and the World Service are also broadcasting a range of programmes which tell their nation's history and their links with the rest of the world.

  While the conclusions of the second quarter's evaluation of the project was not available at the time of writing, the following data suggests the extent of the project's dissemination and of the considerable interest in it:

  - Although it is not possible assess exactly how many visitors have viewed the featured objects, the BM's visitor figures rose during the first quarter of 2010. Evaluation suggests that this is due to *A History of the World*.

- To date, 394,000 *A History of the World* guides have been issued.

- The first part of the series aired three times a day Monday to Friday, for six weeks. In the quarter during which the programme first aired on Radio 4, RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research) recorded that, on average, a total of 3.958m adults listened to the three slots each week. The series consistently outperformed other Radio 4 programmes over the same period in terms of audience appreciation.

- 500 museums are now participating in *A History of the World* and have uploaded objects on to the website.

- More than 5,000 objects have been uploaded onto the website – including the 100 objects from the BM, objects from museums throughout the UK and objects uploaded by the public.

- By the end of June, there were a total of 7,740,651 global podcast downloads (4,214,081 to the UK)[xliv].

The following extracts from the press coverage may be indicative of the cultural impact of the project:

- *Behind every object… there lies a story; or rather, several competing stories. And MacGregor understands that the most important single thing to be said about any history of the world is that it must own up to its own plurality of viewpoints.*
  This makes the Museum a cultural venue of outstanding importance. lt is not, ultimately, only a collection of objects. It is a place where rival narratives are able to cross each other in a civilised, and civilising, environment. It makes the museum as sacred a space as any religious temple and a template for any free-thinking society. (Peter Aspden, *Financial Times*, l5 Jan 2010)

- *Mr MacGreqor… [draws] together evidence of how connected seemingly disparate societies have always been and rebalancing the histories of the literate and the non-literate. 'Victors write history; the defeated make things,' he says. This is an especially important distinction when considering Africa. The great 'Encyclopedia Britannica' of 1911 assumed that Africa had no history because it had nowritten history. The statues of black pharaohs that Mr MacGregor discusses in an early programme, for example, are the best visual evidence that a Nubian tribe once seized control of ancient Egypt and that Africans ruled over the Nile for more than a century.* (*Economist*, 30 December 2009)[xlv].

- National Museums Scotland & Shetland Museum, ***Gunnister Man***, 2009. In 1951, two Shetlanders cutting peat near Gunnister, in Shetland, came across the remains of a body. Although little was left of Gunnister Man, his clothes and other items were well preserved. The finds included one of the few complete outfits found in Britain belonging to an 'ordinary' person from the period, a purse featuring the earliest physical evidence of two colour patterned knitting in Shetland and two tablets of wood with a unique design. These dated the Gunnister Man's death to around 1700. He is one of the most significant discoveries of its type in Europe.

  An exhibition offered people the opportunity to see the evidence and create their own theories about Gunnister Man. As well as the original artefacts, it contained a full set of replicas to show how these objects looked when he was alive. Gunnister Man was contextualised with an overview of what life was like in Shetland some 300 years ago.

At the time of writing (Spring 2010) Gunnister Man had 138 friends on Facebook, had attracted 158 tweets and 43 followers on Twitter (22.04.10)

But neither attendance and access figures, numbers of Google search results, catalogue sales nor estimated readership statistics are necessarily indicative of cultural impact. Projects may invite digital contributions that can be used as a basis for programmes and as contributions to their collections are more likely to be so.

- Imperial War Museum, ***War Story***. This is a new initiative intended to encourage servicemen and women to record their personal stories as part of the Museum's national collection relating to contemporary conflict.

  The IWM is initially working with those about to embark on tours of duty in Afghanistan. Using examples from the Museum's existing collections, personnel will be shown the importance of their own role in preserving the history of their own unit, and be encouraged to use film, art, photography, and the written word to record their own story.

  Working in co-operation with the Ministry of Defence, the IWM will support participants to add information to existing new media channels such as blogs and social networking sites, already used to record the military experience. Participants will be asked to share more details to place their stories in a broader context and to contribute physical materials relating to them.

  Material gathered from participant workshops and new media channels will be included in the IWM's collections and be available to public researchers from autumn 2010. Material will also be included in the Museum's displays to increase the wider public understanding of more recent conflicts from the perspective of those who were actually there.

- Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, ***Culture Shock.*** This is a two year project which is intended to collect 1,000 digital stories from people across the North East of England, inspired by museums and galleries collections.☐It will explore the diverse heritage of individuals, groups and communities living in the region and promote a greater awareness and understanding of each other and the wider North East community.☐

  The completed stories will be added to museum collections for future generations to enjoy and to help make collections more relevant to the North East community.☐They will also be used in future interpretation, exhibitions, loans boxes and reminiscence packs by museums.☐

  At the end of the project a touring exhibition featuring the digital stories will take place at museums and venues across the region. In addition a selection of digital stories will be showcased at a number of public broadcasts in the North East.

Elsewhere, museums are drawing on the collective collaboration of web users. *Make History* is one of several interactive projects focused on the the National September 11 Memorial & Museum[xlvi]. It is reported that between September 2009 and January 2010, about 1,000 users contributed more than 3,000 photos, videos and personal stories. Online submissions will play a central role in the exhibition space of the bricks-and-mortar museum at ground zero, which is projected to open in 2012 (Wright, 2010)

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, also scheduled to open in 2012, is developing along similar lines. More than 800 web users from all over the world are said to have registered with

the museum's Virtual Shtetl project to help build a collection of more than 30,000 photographs, videos and audio recordings related to life in 1,300 towns with Jewish populations before and after World War II[xlvii]. The museum has recently started gathering photos through Flickr and has opened up its collection through YouTube and Facebook as well (ibid).

Whereas this section has considered some of the ways in which museums are seeking to make a difference, Part 4 considers what kind of difference they are making.

Part 4: The kinds of impacts that museums exert

The impact of museums tends to be thought of, and reported, in broad terms. Their contribution to making places cultural is an obvious example: the opening of the Burrrell Collection in 1983 was arguably, the catalyst that made it possible for Glasgow to be 'Miles better' and to be thought of as a 'cultural capital' even before 1990 (Booth & Boyle, 993; Burton, 1990; Christmas, 1990). By the same token, the Queen's House, the Observatory and the National Maritime Museum, more generally, all contributed to Maritime Greenwich being accorded World Heritage status in 1997. The National Media Museum, similarly, played a major role in Bradford being named as the first-ever UNESCO City of Film in 2009.

The kinds of impacts that museums themselves report also tend to be general – not least because they comply with generic frameworks - although they may regard these outcomes as secondary.

This section explores what audiences, themselves, have said about how their museum experiences have impacted on them – what they have been prompted to think about, and why - ,rather than how institutions have sought to advocate for themselves. Their comments refer to the specific content of projects and programmes which NMDC members describe as 'making a difference'. The types of evidence cited include personal testimonies, media and online coverage (including the blogosphere and social networking sites).

Given the difficulties of obtaining the kind of evidence of impact sought after, current and ongoing projects are considered alongside past projects, and museums' own statements are referred to as necessary.

In considering the difference that NMDC members are exerting, this section focuses on users

- saying the unsaid – articulating and exploring sensitive and difficult issues within the context of national institutions;
- being better equipped to integrate themselves within local communities and society;
- opening themselves up to different attitudes and perceptions; and
- considering personal affiliations and associations.

It also considers examples of cultural change within the museum sector itself.

These headings are far from mutually exclusive, and the attribution of projects to them has been relatively subjective (see Appendix 4). Not only are the differences between these types of impacts often seamless: many of the projects used to illustrate one impact could just as easily exemplify others. *Gunnister Man*, which is cited as an example of museums' digital dissemination, could have been used to show museums' contribution to constructions of local associations and identity; *Culture Shock* and *A History of the World in 100 Objects* might have demonstrated communities' connectedness; *War Story and Hellmand* might have been used to show changes to museums' culture of collecting and making exhibitions. As David Fleming observed at the opening of the International Slavery Museum (2007), he expected it to

> *… provoke different responses, different emotions, in different people:*
>
> - *in those who believe that some races are superior to others, it will provoke doubt.*
> - *in those who believe that all men and women should have equality of opportunity, and rejoice in mutual respect, it will create hope.*
> - *in people of African descent and perhaps especially in those who are descended from those who were enslaved it will promote grief, but also pride, pride in the doggedness*

and strength of spirit of their ancestors, which enabled them to survive the horrors of slavery, and to pass on, down the centuries, that spirit which endures in many of the people in this room tonight.

Our hope and expectation is that our young people will, through studying the evils of transatlantic slavery and of other, contemporary systems of human rights abuse, come to reject racism as an iniquitous, pernicious and bankrupt ideology.

4.1 Saying the unsaid

A study of the bicentenary of the Abolition Act, 1807, noted an increasing willingness to deal with sensitive and traumatic issues such as oppression and genocide. But it also observed that institutional responses to past events often include some distancing of the past from the present, and a process of 'historical erasure rather than tackling the lingering social and political affects of a traumatic past' which may serve to create black holes in the contemporary, collective understanding (Cubitt, 2009).

The subject matter confronted by NMDC museums is often concerned with acutely sensitive issues, if not 'potent issues of collective guilt' - the marginalization and exclusion of particular social groups, manifestations of racism and victimization (Waterton et al, 2010). Amongst the most emotive are the personal stories and loss of those caught up in contemporary conflicts, and the legacies of slavery. A common theme of those projects described below is their challenging of unacceptably detached and remote behaviour.

The impact intended by the National Army Museum's work, for instance, 'assumes a "disconnect" between Army and society, which has been noted by many commentators and is part of the NAM's stated purpose to overcome' [xlviii]. Its two projects referred to in this essay (*Helmland* and *Conflicts of Interest)* encouraged the military to articulate matters that are usually left unsaid.

- ***Helmland: the Soldiers Story*** (2007-9) attempted to explain an unfolding conflict. It was conceived by the Parachute Regiment who approached the National Army Museum with the idea of mounting an exhibition that revealed the truth about their experiences. The exhibition was built by, written and contributed to by soldiers of 16 Air Assault Brigade who had just fought in Afghanistan, and would do so again. By using their written and oral accounts, photographs, footage, personal diaries, letters and emails and personal objects relating to the tour, it

    - *Allowed serving soldiers to speak directly to the public, unmediated and without censorship*
    - *'Brought the war home' – made the reality of the front line a part of reality for civilians (evidenced by the many comments received from members of the public)*
    - *Provided a space for civilians to write messages of support for the troops, to address politicians and talk about issues of conflict (evidenced as above)*
    - *Provided a space for soldiers' families to talk about their feelings of pride and anxiety (strongly evidenced as above)*
    - *A commemorative/memorial space where flowers were left and messages commemorating fallen comrades of family members were written (messages concerning the dead were a common occurrence and a bunch of flowers was left in memory of a specific soldier - both outcomes, unexpected at first, showed the need for a public memorial space to mark the ongoing fatalities of the Afghanistan conflict, and showed that the Museum was meeting a real and hitherto hidden public need)*
    - *Gave soldiers the opportunity to become involved in the process of exhibition creation (engagement with non-typical museum users) from start to finish, giving the subjects of the exhibition a chance to control how they were portrayed. This resulted in a large number of visits from their families and friends, with many comments on the realism and honesty of the exhibition*[xlix].

  Nearly 1,000 visitor comments were collected in response to the exhibition[l]. Some are included on the flyleaf to this report; other observations and press coverage are cited on the website. The following comments suggest that *Helmland* forced people to think about the implications of the political process; about combatants' own commitment to fight and the deeply affecting nature of the soldiers' own narratives.

- *….while it's a testament to the show that it fuels strong feedback, its biggest achievement may be that it compels people to ask questions not just about the exhibition, but the war itself.*
- *I knew something of the operations in Afghanistan, but had no feel for it until I had seen this exhibition. All members of Parliament should be invited (and if necessary made) to see it! I have huge admiration for the soldiers who have served or are serving now in Afghanistan.*
- *Has Tony Blair been to see this exhibition? Or Gordon Brown? Or Des Browne? lt should be mandatory for all politicians.*
- *I am glad I come here because it makes me feel proud to now I will be serving for the country and looking after everyone. But it has scared me a lot.*
- *Official war artists are appointed by the arts commission committee of the Imperial War Museum (IWM), which then relies on the military to help them. Now that McQueen's run is corning to an end they are considering whom to appoint next. The tradition has seen artists revel in the glory of battle, searching for the heroism in the sacrifice and valour, or else, like Goya, lay out the savagery for more sensitive - or voyeuristic - eyes, or, like Picasso, damn it in a quiet voice.*

  This all comes to mind because of a new exhibition at the National Army Museum in Chelsea. 'Helmand: The Soldiers' Story' lays out the experience of 16 Air Assault Brigade, in their equipment, recreated bunkers, video diaries and letters. The World Trade Centre is falling, with the sound turned down low, as you enter. Then, at the far end, and on the other side of the world, there is YouTube-style footage of combat, with soldiers firing machine guns and mortars and watching the bombs fall, to a soundtrack of Metallica's 'Enter Sandman', Razorlight's 'Somewhere Else' and Lostprophets' 'Rooftops'. I found it deeply affecting. lt asks the question whether war art is necessary any longer when the soldiers themselves can produce such images.

- The focus of Steve McQueen's project for the Imperial War Museum**, *Queen and Country*** (2006), is a petition to the Royal Mail for a series of stamps to be issued featuring images of soldiers killed in Iraq. He regarded the proposal as 'an intimate but distinguished way of highlighting the sacrifice of individuals in defence of our national ideals'. The portraits would 'focus on individual experience without euphemism' and ' form an intimate reflection of national loss that would involve the families of the dead and permeate the everyday – every household and every office'.

  While this would constitute a public gesture towards the young men and women who gave everything 'for Queen and country', the work might also cause considerable discomfort to many, and undermine some of the Royal Mail's conventions.

  The IWM has commissioned official war art since WW1. In 2003, the commission was awarded to Turner Prize winner, McQueen, to produce a work in response to the British military operations in Iraq. He spent six days there and was moved and inspired by the camaraderie of the servicemen and women that he met. In collaboration with 160 families who had lost loved ones, he created a cabinet containing a series of facsimile postage sheets, each dedicated to a deceased soldier, with details of their name, regiment, age and date of death printed in the margin. The families of the deceased chose the images. Until real stamps are issued, the work is considered incomplete.

  The Art Fund presented this cabinet to the IWM in 2007 and is currently touring the work around the UK[ii]. The artist described the work as

'*… the hardest thing I've ever done.* Queen and Country *is a particularly important and meaningful work for me in that it is a collaboration with the families of the deceased and potentially with the whole nation.'*

And, one of the parents whose son had been killed observed:

- *You see the cabinet and you see the closed panels and you know your son is there with well over a hundred others. Your heart beats and your body tightens and then you pull the panel and there he is: the multiple images of his smiling face, the absolute assuredness in that face that everything is as it should be. Then the full force of loss hits home.*

  We see and remember Matthew every day and the possibility that all those images could become postage stamps and be seen everywhere on envelopes; that other people as they go about their daily lives could see our wonderful son and all those other wonderful sons and daughters on the stamps and realise that the ultimate sacrifice had been made in the name of their country; that through the stamps they would become a permanent collective memory – all of that for us would provide a fitting memorial to our hero and all the other heroes. (Roger Bacon, father of Major Matthew James Bacon, Intelligence Corps, died 11 September 2005, aged 34)[lii]

Support for the campaign, is evidenced by an opinion survey run by the Art Fund in March 2008, which found that 69 per cent of the British public supported the proposal to the Royal Mail. Another survey found that 92 per cent of the armed forces were in support. By July 2010 over 26,000 people had signed the Art Fund's petition.[liii]

A number of museums, including NMDC members, addressed the issue of slavery in 2007. Their reviews of that history and their subsequent repositioning was considered groundbreaking for several reasons: because of the previous, relative absence of slavery as a subject in museums; its problematic and uncomfortable content; museums' combined effort to raise awareness of the transatlantic slave trade[liv]. The cultural impact of those combined efforts is likely to have been to been to contribute to a better understanding of British history; a more open debate about how its culture, politics and society have been shaped, and what the cost of that has been and to whom.

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- ***The International Slavery Museum*** was the most significant of all 1807 museum commemorations. It grew out of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, which opened in 1994, the first of its kind in the world. The museum itself opened on the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition during the bicentenary of the abolition of the British Slave Trade, 2007. As the Director made clear, its impact was intended to be 'visceral' - profound and elemental.

  Make no mistake, this is a museum with a mission. We wish to help counter the disease of racism, and at the heart of the museum is a rage which will not be quieted while racists walk the streets of our cities, and while many people in Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, continue to subsist in a state of chronic poverty.

  This is not a museum that could be described as a 'neutral space' - it is a place of commitment, controversy, honesty, and campaigning. (Fleming, 2007)

The ISM explores the historical and contemporary aspects of slavery, addressing the many legacies of the slave trade and telling stories of bravery and rebellion amongst the millions of enslaved people, which were previously largely untold. Its focuses on those who were part of the transatlantic slave trade between about 1500 and 1865 and Liverpool's role in that. The City was a major slaving port - about 1.5 million enslaved Africans were carried by its ships. Amongst other initiatives, the

Museum has established an international teacher training institute which promotes good practice in teaching the transatlantic slave trade addressing its history, legacy and future hopes.

A market research evaluation of the ISM found that some visitors expected to feel 'awkward' with potentially 'shame', 'guilt' and 'greed' on their behalf for the suffering of the slaves. In practice,

> *…no-one can say they are unmoved – to the point of 'Mum, I don't want to go in there I'll cry'; Some to the point of leaving immediately, some more willing to see it through, to feel it through - with images and noises 'coming at you from all sides'…As one pointed out – 'I felt claustrophobic even though I was the only one in there'….. many seem open to the suggestion that this might lead to them becoming part of something bigger – whether this leads to them being involved in campaigns of the future or becoming a 'member' in some form, so they get to hear how things develop* (Parklane Research, 2009)

4.2 Integration and belonging

A number of museums work with marginalised groups (BME groups, in particular) often with the intention of broadening their audiences, giving them a voice and contributing to their sense of belonging. According to Newman et al (2005: 41), the most significant contribution of museums in developing active citizens is to provide a context for constructing a sense of identity and so develop greater self-confidence'. As a result of its ***Refugee Heritage project***, the Museum of London, for example, noted a 'strong desire by participants to engage beyond their existing and cultural background. There is lots of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, that the projects were successful in providing opportunities for inter-cultural understanding to develop' [lv].

- The Museum of London's exhibition, ***Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees*** (2006-07), part of the Refugee Communities History Project[lvi], explored the lives of refugees in London and the contributions they make to the city through oral history interviews together with personal photographs, objects, art, and films. Its aim was to enable personal narratives and perspectives to come to the fore, reflecting the complexity and diversity of experiences of its subjects.

  The *Belonging* website shares the voices, memories and successes of people who have found refuge in the capital. All have experiences and concerns in common, but each offers a different perspective on being a refugee, on London, and on what it means to belong.

  > *We have no way of knowing what the audience's preconceptions were. It may well be that audiences who choose to attend these types of exhibitions and events are predisposed to have a positive view of refugee communities' heritage and culture. However we should not underestimate the validity of feedback from the participants, who have immediate experience of public perceptions of their communities. Many felt that the exposure that their stories gained from being displayed publicly in museums was very important, as a public symbol of acceptance by British society* [lvii].

Moreover, they often ' have a strong belief that presence in a museum validates their experience as part of mainstream culture':

- *The first thing I saw, I felt, was a refugee person can be something in this country - I felt proud of myself.* [lviii]

It also generated considerable empathy for refugees:

- *Thank you. Please consider making this exhibition a permanent part of your museum, just like refugees are a permanent part of London.*
-
- *Hard to put into words how deeply this exhibit has affected me, how grateful I am that such an amazing project has been undertaken. This collection of struggles, memories, triumphs, pain, joy… It makes one remember one's own privilege, recognise one's connection with the rest of humanity, renew one's own sense of solidarity in the fight for equality for all people.*
- *The main thing that I came away with was the section where achievements of refugees in London were celebrated… It left me feeling so heartened and so sad and frustrated at the same time… These people have done so much for us and achieved such amazing things… So why are we ignoring the potential of thousands who never get the opportunity? And why aren't the media telling these stories.* (Johnsson et al, 2007)

- ***Sh[out] Your Stories*** (2009-2010) was part of the social justice programme at the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. Since 2001 it has held three biennial exhibitions on human rights themes - asylum seekers and refugees (*Sanctuary,* 2003), violence against women (*Rule of Thumb*, 2005) and sectarianism (*Blind Faith*, 2007). All were accompanied by a citywide community engagement strategy, intended to be of international quality.

  Sh[out] Your Stories was the fourth programme promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex human rights. It included outreach projects, major exhibitions, educational arts workshops, arts events, acquisitions and residencies.

  The results of the evaluation, which is intended to cover how ranges of constituencies respond to, and engage with, the social justice programme, are not yet available. The following draws on visitors' contributions to 'Your Stories' in which individuals reveal how the exhibition both boosted their confidence and generated greater empathy and understanding for gay people.

  - *Empowering.*
  - *Who am I really?…*
    … I'm no longer afraid
    Thank you.
  - *I am-a teeny, tiny 18-year-old bisexual girl. Finally came to terms with it, and this exhibition helped as this is the first time I have actually written it down. Now I am SO EXCITED!!! Thank you!*
  - *This exhibition has completely opened my eyes to issues about homosexuality, etc.*

- National Museums Liverpool's project ***Engaging Refugees and Asylum Seekers***, based around a partnership with museum services in Leicester, Salford and Sunderland, builds bridges between communities to actively support community cohesion through the creation of accessible and socially inclusive programming for refugee families, children and young

people, and refugee organisations. By February 2010, the partners had reached well over 38,000 people.

One particular strand of the programme - The Freedom project – provides ESOL provision for 14-18 year olds from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, who are not in statutory education. The programme develops ESOL provision for them. According to NML

> *The project has helped reduce tensions in the community, as British participants have gained an understanding of issues facing refugee communities: the project challenges perceptions and encourages respect for other cultures:*
>
> *It's good for refugees and asylum seekers to see this in the gallery, but it's good for white communities too… I learned how to respect refugees.*

Other projects laid greater emphasis on integration.

- Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums' ***Mind the Gap*** exhibition (2008-9) used personal stories, objects and artwork from people living with mental health issues in local communities to create a display that aimed to inform, enlighten and to dispel myths around mental health, distress and illness. It challenged stigmas and encouraged visitors to explore society's attitude toward mental health and find out how we can all promote mental wellbeing in our own lives.☐Several participants remarked on how it had 'showed that we can all learn from each other's experience'. 'For me, a mental health user, the story to be found around the walls says quite simply, "Don't look at me, look beyond me".' (Tyne & Wear Museums 2009)

The evaluation of a project based at National Museums Liverpool for a mental health drop-in day centre, cited work by the new economics foundation (nef) for the UK Government Foresight's project. This identified five ways in which individuals could improve their wellbeing. Those were considered pertinent to that particular museum project, and could well apply to others:

> *1. Connect - developing string relationships and social networks*
> *2. Be active – more exercise and play improves wellbeing*
> *3. Take notice – self-awareness and the importance of developing social and emotional literacy*
> *4. Keep learning – social interaction, self-esteem and feelings of competency*
> *5. Give – studies show that co-operative behaviour activates the reward area of the brain* (Young Foundation, 2010, cited by Andrews, 2010: 9)

- A second TWAM project, ***Swans of the Tyne*** was inspired by an exhibition at the Discovery Museum (2009-10), which explored the history of one of the best known shipbuilding companies in the UK. It brought together a range of photographs, technical drawings, film and video footage of Swan Hunter, as well as recorded memories of people who either worked at, or were in some way connected to, the shipyard. The project involved Tyne & Wear's outreach team working with ESOL Learners from Tyne-Metropolitan College to explore the stories of the ships built at Swans.

> *We thought it was very important to see Swans in an international light as well as local….*
> *One area that we focused on throughout the project was the idea of 'life in the New World'. The ships that we looked at were Cunard vessels that carried a great proportion of European emigrants to the USA in the 19th and 2Oth Centuries. The learners looked at the stories of emigrants travelling aboard our Swans ships and museum objects in order to empathise with the characters that we had researched.*

Volunteer programmes also contribute substantially to the experiences of the communities involved.

- At the time of a report about it was completed in 2007, the **Learning Volunteer Programme** at the Natural History Museum (2005-) was highly visible. It involved a team of 73 volunteers: in 2006/2007, they gave 6,500 hours to the NHM and, in one year alone, were responsible for 76,400 interactions with visitors, 59,000 of whom were children. The impacts of the programme on the Learning volunteers included extending their knowledge of natural history and science, acquisition of team and leadership skills, gains in confidence and increased employability. By 2007, 10 volunteers had been appointed to paid posts in the Museum (NHM/ Institute for Volunteering Research, 2007)

Some encourage a sense of belonging by validating attitudes.

- The education outreach project, which accompanied the exhibition, ***Tracey Emin: 20 Years*****,** at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (2008), involved women from Streetwork UK's women's drop-in centre in Edinburgh who are at risk. The organisation's mission is to work with vulnerable people towards positive change, on their terms, at a pace that suits them, and in a way that achieves the highest possible standards of service[lix]. A film documentary of their exhibition visits and practical workshops shows that they identified with, were inspired and moved by their museum experience. The film is a powerful testament of the group's authentic and heartfelt response to Tracey Emin's work[lx].

4.3 Shifting attitudes and changing perceptions

Accounts suggest that many NMDC museums challenge participants' attitudes and perceptions. People, describe being prompted (deliberately, or inadvertently) to imagine new possibilities for their futures and re-evaluate past contributions they themselves have made to society and, on a completely different trajectory. They include a wide range of constituencies. Amongst those described in NMDC members projects are offenders, such as those participating in the National Gallery's project**,** ***Inside Art***, and the fathers involved in ***Family Man***, a project based around a partnership between the North East Museums Hub, Children North East and Fathers Plus.

4.3.1.Envisaging potential

- A letter to the Director, National Museums Liverpool from the Head of Early Years and Childcare Services, Sefton Council, describes how the Walker Art Gallery's exhibition*,* ***Shirley Hughes, Alfie, Dogger and friends****, 2003*, impacted on the parent of one child who had been on a gallery visit.

  Dear Dr Fleming

  I am writing to ask you whether or not we could have one of the models of Shirley Hughes' Alfie when the gallery has finished using them. I am sure you will have already had many requests like this and I would like to tell you about a little boy called Paul.
  Paul is a real little boy, aged 3, who lives in Bootle (one of the most deprived areas in the UK), a copy of his self-portrait is enclosed. Paul started at his nursery school in September 2003. During his first couple of weeks, his teachers took a group of children, including Paul, to the Walker Arts Gallery, As you can imagine they were all highly exited by the bus journey and especially the revolving doors. Paul's teacher gave him a postcard of the painting, And When Did You Last See Your Father? and he was asked if he could find it. Paul was completely entranced by the gallery, the building and the painting so much that the teacher related this to his mother when she came to pick him up later that day. The teacher noticed that Paul's mother did not react a great deal. However, three days later Paul's mother spoke to the teacher. She said, 'My friend's daughters are just

getting their 'caps and gowns'. Do you think that if I took Paul to places like the Art Gallery, one day he might get a cap and gown too?'

I am responsible for Sure Start in Sefton, which aims to make life better for children, parents and communities by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support. I have used Paul's story a number of times to paint the picture of what we are trying to do – and how by raising the aspirations of people like Paul and his mother we will achieve those aims.

Volunteering can also shift people's horizons.

- The lmperial War Museum is supported by over 1,000 volunteers, over 70 full time equivalents per year. Volunteers make a significant, diverse and complementary contribution to the operations of the Museum and the implementation of the volunteer programmes across the organisation has strengthened its community links. Their roles range from supporting conservation activity to information-related and front of house services

  - *Volunteering on HMS Belfast is one of the best things I've ever done.*
  - *The experience I have gained from this placement has been invaluable to my future career aspirations.*

  The ***in Touch Museum Volunteer Accreditation Programme*** at IWM North, was established at the inception of the Museum itself in 2002. A collaborative project undertaken with The Manchester Museum, it is rooted in the IWM's commitment to delivering social inclusion and access for all, reaching people in greatest need from local communities, building their confidence and providing them with relevant basic skills and job training. The project supports lifelong learning, providing a safe, flexible and empathetic learning environment for socially excluded individuals.

  Recruits include over 200 individuals from the local community. A testimonial from one reflects the impact that the scheme has on peoples' lives:

  - *I can honestly say that volunteering at IWM North has changed my life! I love meeting and helping visitors to the Museum, and expanding my own knowledge of the Museum. I have also made many new friends and now have a social life. But the biggest change has to be my return to work. As a direct result of the help and support I received I hove found a part-time job. My experience as a volunteer has given me back the skills and confidence which years of depression took away, and I would recommend it to anyone!* [lxi]

4.3.2. Personal histories

Several projects recount, celebrate and share the experiences of older people – particularly those who lived and worked through WW2, and who are now a disappearing generation.

- National Museums Liverpool's ***Spirit of the Blitz*** (2003-4), for example, gave an account of the experiences of those in Liverpool, in particular during 1941. The profound effects that this had on the community were examined through individuals' accounts. The exhibition is reported to have had a particularly powerful reminiscence effect with different family generations visiting together and using it as a backdrop for their own, personal stories.

Visitors described what they saw as 'personal', how they thought about their family's part in it and remembered those that they had lost. The evaluation observed

- *People could be seen nodding their heads in acknowledgement and agreement, as some aspect of the talk struck a chord; some shaking their heads in surprise or disbelief at the reality of the privation faced during the war on a daily basis.*

- *Children visiting the exhibition were encouraged to engage directly – getting a chance to handle a gas mask. But, above all parents and grand parents seemed anxious to reinforce the messages about what rationing had actually meant, and about how people had coped. 'No sugar for your tea, can you imagine _____?' 'You queued first then asked why later____,' 'You just never saw bananas_____' and so on.*

- *Visitors found both humour and tragedy in the video clips. They laughed, were shocked and were clearly moved by the experience. Above all, from the comments they shared, they emerged very proud. One visitor told her friend 'it makes you swell up with tears and pride to hear these stories.' Another explained to a young child 'I hope it makes it clear what a part people like your granny played in fighting the war.'* (Taylor et al, 2005)

- Royal Air Force Museum, ***Women of the Air Force*** (2009-10) marked the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. It was intended to recognise the significance of women's contribution throughout the history of the Air Force, which is often ignored [lxii]; address the perception of the RAF as a male bastion; to reveal the Museum's understanding and appreciation of the lack of awareness of women's place in the Force, and involve veterans and current service personnel - thereby, potentially increasing its holdings of relevant material and testimony.

  The website carries an online version of the exhibition, a pod cast (featuring recordings made at the launch event and archive material) and an interactive forum for people to add their own stories. The Museum hopes to inspire the next generation of young women to recognize that 'when it comes to their own futures for them the sky is, quite literally, their only limit.'☐ The Museum now plans to make the display permanent.

  There were 161,000 visits to the Museum's London site for June to December 2009 (the exhibition's duration). Over 200 comments were recorded in the exhibition's visitor book. By the end of May 2010, there had been over 3,965 online visitors to the Women of the Air Force on-line exhibition, and a total of 32,000 pages of information having been read. The pod cast has been listened to a total of 290 times with 16 ex-service members narrating their stories through the exhibition's online forum.

  The exhibition not only generated goodwill amongst veterans and servicewomen, but also revealed the importance of what they did. Many have reassessed their contributions to the Air Force and to society as a whole in the light of it; others have given permission for the Museum to use material already in the collection. Several more candidates have come forward to be recorded for an oral history recording. The comments board and the visitors' book testify to the wider impacts of the exhibition, which has fostered pride and remembrance in veterans' families[lxiii].

4.4 Affiliations and associations

People have been enabled, if not encouraged, to acknowledge and establish associations and connections through museums.

4.4.1 Influences

Although impossible to quantify, the influence of museum collections on creatives has always been acknowledged. The indebtedness of a number of contemporary architects and artists to Sir

John Soane is acknowledged in three of the Sir John Soane's Museum recent exhibitions***:*** ***Inspired by Soane: MacCormac Meier Moneo Navarro*** (2000a) and ***Retrace your Steps: Remember Tomorrow□at the Soane Museum*** (2000b) featuring Gilbert & George, Gordon, Kapoor, McQueen, Hamilton, Trockel, Evans, Wentworth, Koolhaas and Herzog & de Meuron; and ***Will Alsop at the Soane: Beauty, Joy & The Real*** (2002). ***150*** designers, architects, photographers, fashion designers and artists each contributed a page to the V&A's 150th anniversary album, conveying in words and images what they find most inspiring about the Museum and its collections (V&A, 2007).

4.4.2 National identity

Gordon Brown's interest in identifying British values from the mid-2000s[lxiv] conceivably informed the Film Council's focus in relation to the cultural impact of UK film - its representation of national and regional cultures, in particular. While the sector may have rejected the proposal for a British history museum (MLA, 2008), any number of NMDC members' projects consciously, or unconsciously, promote British culture and an appreciation of British history. The National Library of Scotland, for instance, sees its key roles as 'providing a record of Scotland for the benefit of the world, and providing knowledge from the world for Scottish researchers' [as] 'underpinning' every aspect of cultural life in the country (science, art, history, professional and commercial…' [lxv].

The National Portrait Gallery/BBC ***Great Britons*** project (2002) explored national identity through biography. Following a vote to determine whom the public considered to be the greatest Britons in history, the televison series, *Great Britons,* included individual programmes on the top ten, with viewers having further opportunities to vote after each broadcast. It concluded with a debate. The NPG's book, *Great Britons. The great debate,* analysed the life and iconography of the top ten nominees and explored their centrality to the nation's self-image. The winner was Sir Winston Churchill.

The Churchill Museum itself opened in 2005. Its impact on national and international audiences has been to contribute to the understanding of Churchill – the man, his political life and achievements. Visitors reported being deeply moved and reflective through a new appreciation of the complexity and uniqueness of the period. Their visits to the Museum have prompted them to reassess their previous assumptions about 'right' and 'wrong' : '[It] forced one to reconsider what one thought'. Many reported acquiring a sense of pride in Churchill and Britain's achievements during WW2:

- *It is part of our heritage and it is good that you can come and see it;*
- *I was very proud about Churchill and the way he was ...something in the bottom of my stomach really turned. I now have a deep appreciation for Churchill* (Morris Hargreaves Macintyre, 2005: 31-4)

Other projects that have contributed to people's constructions of national identity included The Veterans Reunited programme, launched at the beginning of 2004 by the Big Lottery Fund, brought generations of people in the UK together to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of WW2. It comprised three strands: Heroes' Return, Home Front Recall and Their Past Your Future.

- ***Their Past Your Future*** (2004-10) was a £10m UK-wide education project led by a partnership of the Imperial War Museum, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, National Library of Wales, Northern Ireland Museum Council and Scottish Museums Council. Its aim was to increase young people's understanding and appreciation of history, national identity

and civic participation/responsibility through learning programmes engaging with veterans of conflict, and with primary sources from UK museums, libraries and archives.

The first phase of the programme (2004-6) explored themes of remembrance and commemoration, citizenship and history and the impact of the conflict on people and places across the UK. The second phase, TPYF 2 (from 2007) was extended to explore the impact of all conflict since the WW1 involving British and Commonwealth forces including personal and national identity, remembrance and commemoration, global impact of C20th conflict, citizenship, commonwealth, conflict resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation, asylum / refugees, peacekeeping and human rights. The programme took over 700 young people on 28 trips to 17 different countries across the world. Between 2004 and 2009, they participated in an immersive, experiential programme to learn about the history and experience of 20C conflict and its legacy on people and places. They visited countries as far afield as Japan, Thailand, Australia, Canada and Russia, but also travelled within the UK and Europe. For most of those who participated, it was a profound experience, which had a deep personal as well as educational impact.

- *I visited the Cenotaph on the 11 November, which was good. I'd always contemplated going, but never actually went, and probably wouldn't have done but I thought I've got to go this year because of what I've seen in the museums and in Japan.*
- *Getting to know people from the other side of the world…learning about different cultures…when society becomes more kind of human to another society, they're less likely to bomb it.*
- *We could connect with them quite easily so I think that has affected all of us with how we look at older generations and what we can learn from them.*
- *It made me appreciate how hard it must be, us being completely different, like how people from China or Japan…who come to live in England, how hard it must be for them to adapt, because of how hard it was for us to adapt.*
- *I have now learned to question things…I now ask myself, when, where, how and why?*
- *I had this really fantastic time doing important things…They found a way to make teaching people about…war and moral issues that really need to be brought to the forefront – they made it probably the most exciting thing – and the most entertaining thing that I've ever done and… the fun and the learning kind of go together* (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2010).

4.5 Changing the culture of museums

A number of projects demonstrate the changing culture of museums themselves, partly shaped by their responses to government initiatives (such as Investors in People[lxvi]), local communities and partly by the development of their own expertise.

Although museums are often reluctant to discuss the impact that projects have had on them, the Natural History Museum referred to two such projects:

- The ***Slavery and Nature*** project, for instance, raised many challenges for the Museum including: the provision of different interpretations of evidence; public access to the volume of evidence and information available; awareness of the bias inherent in European accounts of the history; platforms for debate and dialogue; staff knowledge and training; ongoing engagement to explore hidden histories and alternative perspectives. However, the collaborative way of working, using an audience-led approach to slavery and the natural world, is planned to continue at the Museum.

- An evaluation of its ***Learning Volunteer Programme*** (2005-) found that as many as 73 per cent of visitors said their behaviour in the Museum would change as a result of interacting with the volunteers. Many said it would influence what they did during their present and future visits.

Other projects suggest changes in how museums think about themselves.

- Tate Encounters, for example, is reported to be having 'a strong cultural impact in terms of bringing Tate into contact with a whole new constituency of visitors, and informing museum practice and engagement in the future'. A book *Critical Audiences: Locating the Public in the Art Museum*, is due to be published in 2011. It considers

  > *…the experience of the visitor and non-visitor, framing the account of contemporary viewing positions in terms of cultural difference and the emergent authority of cosmopolitanism, with its stress upon narrative, memory and identity. This section of the report will locate the specific discussion of viewing in the larger context of understandings about the experience of the work of art in terms of both aesthetics and social and cultural history. It will seek to demonstrate how such understandings become present in curatorial and museological practice and how they position the viewer and define audience interest* [lxvii].

Other projects are focused on museums' relationships with their local communities.

- ***Armouries' Square***, which opened in 2007, involved the Royal Armouries' artist in residence talking to many, diverse individuals and groups – from veterans to peace students; from refugees of museum staff. Observations and ideas from these conversations were engraved into the paving stones of the piazza which most visitors cross on entering or leaving the Royal Armouries' building. These don't offer a single or coherent message, so much as a series of starting points which might encourage any passer by to reflect on (with a companion, or even in their own heads) what a museum of arts and armoury means in Britain today. This project led to hundreds of people contributing ideas and labels that were transformed into the exhibition***, Converse*** (2007).

  - *Horrifying to see the guns collected by West Yorkshire Police – to think that's going on around us.*
  - *My dad was in the trenches in the 1st World War. Gassed – terrible – never talked about it… except one Christmas he got drunk and was there again in the trenches reliving it.*
  - *We will never learn from the past. The past will always be repeated. HISTORY ALWAYS REPEATS ITSELF.*
  - *It never ceases to amaze me what men can do to each other. When will the ever learn?*
  - *I didn't realise that so much mediaeval armour had survived. It looks amazing but then you realise its just about power and greed.*
  - *[As a] Woman – I'm very uncomfortable here. Hard to put my finger on what it is. Don't like the idea of killing. If it was my choice, I wouldn't come again.*
  - *I have one memory from the war, a clear memory of men lying on the floor with rifles… 1945. Looking at the museum objects helps me to remember.*

Still other projects manifest a profound shift in museums' sensibilities and culture.

- The National Army Museum project, ***Conflicts of Interest*** (2009-) explores over four decades of action on the world stage by the modern British army. It looks beyond the media

headlines and explores the conflicting interests of enforcing peace through violent means, balancing global security with the needs of vulnerable communities and the demands of the job on the personal lives of our troops and the impact on service personnel's home life.

The gallery examines the role of the army in such conflicts as Afghanistan, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone and Kosovo, as well as pressing issues facing the military today. Objects from the Museum's collection are interwoven with media coverage and evocative images of the conflicts as well as personal accounts from the civilians and servicemen and women involved.

The exhibition captures history as it happens, and is updated regularly by the Museum to reflect the current nature of some of the conflicts. A 2009 survey revealed the UK's differing attitudes towards the British Army's involvement in recent conflicts (NAM, 2010), and the exhibition provides space for visitors to feedback on their thoughts and opinions. Visitors will also be invited to help shape the exhibition when it is updated in November[lxviii].

- *Sets the impact of the Army as a whole within the context of the individual soldier - examining how the nature of the job places demands on the soldier, his/her family and the nation*
- *Again, allows free communication (though OH and video clips) between Army personnel and the public*
- *Gives space for visitors to examine, analyse and take a vote on whether British troops should have been sent by the Government to specific conflicts.*
- *Given that it opened in September last year, evidence for the outcomes of Conflicts of Interest are at an early stage but it is not too early to say*
- *Interest in voting on whether British troops should have been sent into conflicts is very high and almost 4000 visitors have so far cast a vote. Unsurprisingly the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have provoked the greatest response, and the exhibition seems to us one of the few spaces where such opinions can be expressed and analysed over time[lxix].*

- The Science Museum's, ***Who am I?*** gallery (2010-) explores the challenging area of biomedical science, covering major themes such as human identity, language, consciousness, genetics, sexuality and brain science.

In advocating for disabled audiences, the Museum aims to go beyond physical access to develop displays that include images, stories and viewpoints of disabled people. Its Audience Research and Advocacy unit works with disabled groups from the start of a project and uses a disability advocate to ensure that their views are reflected in real changes to the content, interpretation and design of the gallery.

> *Working on the advice of a disability consultant, we identified that the content of the bio-medical gallery dealt with topics that directly impacted the lives of people with disabilities - for example a case about 'rebuilding the body' looks at the issues surrounding cochlear implants and artificial vision systems, while the subject of 'memory and ability' include reference to Autism. Moreover, the exhibition team were concentrating on the medical/science stories, and it was clear that the 'people's stories of real users of the medical advances would add an extra dimension. To incorporate these perspectives we arranged for a training programme for the exhibition team in which disability organisations, carers, and key workers communicated the real experiences of people with dementia, facial disfigurement, mental health conditions and Autism. They also provided access to individuals who could tell us their stories, and advised us on the best approach, language, messages to convey.*

The impact of our audiences has yet to be determined as summative evaluation will take place by the end of 2010. However an immediate impact has been the positive reaction of the organisations involved and the raising of the Museum's reputation within these groups as an organisation that positively supports disabled visitors. [lxx]

Museums also described how their own work is impacting on other museums:

- The impact of the Imperial War Museum's ***Holocaust Exhibition*** in establishing the IWM as a source of specialist advice on dealing with difficult subjects in Museums can be demonstrated by the example of the Srebrenica Memorial Room in Bosnia Herzegovina. The Holocaust Exhibition Project Director provided consultancy support to the project that sought to create a memorial space, alongside advice on content and visitor services. Established in 2007 with funding from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Dutch Government, the Memorial Room takes two elements from the IWM's approach - a half hour film to narrate what happened and a series of 20 personal stories in showcases to stand for the 8,000 men and boys who were victims ofthe Srebrenica massacre.

  The Holocaust Exhibition Project Director has also served on advisory panels for the creation of Jasenovacs, a new museum in Croatia and the Museum of Deportation at Mechelen. The IWM has also been involved in establishing the international *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour* conference, a major, international and multidisciplinary conference held at the Museum in 2003, 2006 and 2009. The conference continues to build on areas previously investigated as well as opening up new fields of academic enquiry. The aim is to bring together scholars from a variety of disciplines who are engaged in research on all groups of survivors of Nazi persecution.

  The IWM also plays a role in major archival decisions and is the principal authority in the UK on Holocaust-related artefacts.

Part 5: Observations

Museums provide vital space in which knowledge is transferred, and in which cultural impacts are effected. But little is known about how they impinge on people's sensibilities, or contribute to broader cultural change.

The nature and substance of museums' cultural impacts have been neglected in relation to arguments constructed around their economic and social impacts. Indeed, the kinds of successes they report tend to be predictable, precisely because of the standard form in which they are described.

However, with the end of New Labour's cultural policy and funding regimes, it is timely to revisit the question of what difference museums make. Advocacy based on their economic impact may, or may not, be effective at a time when the government is dealing with aftermath of the recession and the possibility of a double dip is still current. This may be the very time for museums' particular contribution to culture, and the contemporary relevance of their collections and programmes to be trumpeted. Indeed, this might detract from such questions as 'why should the state fund museums' and 'how many museums should it support'.

This essay provides examples of the kinds of evidence that museums have collected about their cultural impact. Where possible, these are presented in people's own words. This simultaneously conveys a broader, more intimate and contextualised view of museums' impacts than we are used to.

The evidence of NMDC members suggests that the sheer force of museums' cultural impacts has been lost sight of. Sometimes, this is most visible in their press coverage. Take, for example, the *Observer*'s correspondent who not only found the *Helmand* exhibition at the National Army Museum 'deeply affecting' but wondered whether in 'war art is necessary any longer when the soldiers themselves can produce such images' (19 August, 2009). The message that emerged from one particular NMDC member's own experience is that

> *The public may play as large a part in determining the outcome as the institution – and perhaps this is as it should be in a publicly funded sector such as ours? If we aspire to cultural influence, we must be open to more influences too.*[lxxi]

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Notes

[i] The announcement of £73m savings, as part of the Department's further contribution to reducing the fiscal deficit, may be taken to be indicative of shifts in policy priorities (DCMS, 2010b)

[ii] http://www.impact.arts.gla.ac.uk/ (retrieved 04.05.2010)

[iii] http://research.mla.gov.uk/ (retrieved 04.05.2010)

[iv] Searched under 'museums' http://www.intute.ac.uk/ (retrieved 04.05.2010)

[v] A search of the CASE database for museum* AND impact* produced 187 references. This database only includes research published after 1997, the majority of which is post-2000. Beyond instrumental, economic and social impacts CASE's other categories of impact reports include schools, children and learning more generally; workforce development; toolkits; the effects of particular projects; communities, and national and personal identities.

[vi] It is outside the remit of this essay to explore the technical details of potential methodologies, their possible application to, and implications for, assessing cultural impact. It does not, for example, interrogate the details of inferring cause-effect relationships, or validity of self-reporting which would be require for robust reporting (as per, Cook & Campbell (1979), for instance, on inferring cause-effect relationships.

[vii] Derived from the framework adopted by Rand Europe (2009: iv).

[viii] These are very rare in the UK. Exceptions include a 10 year longitudinal project on the impact of Gateshead quayside and cultural change on Newcastle/Gateshead and the North East of England. Swedish examples include the work of Bygren et al (1996; 2009a; 2009b). I am grateful to Mark O\'Neill for alerting me to these.

[ix] http://newsroom.accenture.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=4360 (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[x]
http://www.culture.gov.uk/about_us/our_priorities_and_targets/953.aspxc (retrieved 04.05.2010)

[xi] The meaning of 'intrinsic value' is contested since cultural objects and symbols only take on value because people ascribe meaning to them. As Hamlet remarked; there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so (Clark, 2006: 72). See also Sharpe, 2010. 'Instrumental value' is usually associated with raising awareness and understanding of social issues, or changing behaviours. This might, for example, be manifest in contributions to regional identities, creating an understanding of national life and attitudes. 'Institutional value' is understood in terms of changes in museums themselves.

[xii] Rittel & Webber's 1973 description of the concept of wicked problems, characterised them thus:

- There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
- Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
- Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but better or worse.
- There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
- Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly.
- Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
- Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
- Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
- The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.

- The planner has no right to be wrong (planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate).

[xiii] This is described by HM Treasury as

> *…the central point for access to guidance on the economic assessment of spending and investment and to related guidance including the preparation of business cases for the public sector… The Green Book methodology should be used to make an economic assessment of the social costs and benefits of all new policies projects and programmes including the economic assessment of regulations under regulatory impact analysis* (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_greenbook_index.htm (retrieved 21.06.2010).

[xiv] An example of this was described by Hunter (2009):

> *The Government national outcomes are expressed in very high-level terms as can be seen above. Therefore, even if we can demonstrate that (for example) there is an increase in perception of Scotland having a "fair and strong national identity", it is very challenging to demonstrate that such an increase can be attributed to action taken by the National Library. By their nature, these outcomes depend on a wide range of influences and actions by a number of agencies; providing evidence to attribute outcomes to any one organisation is inherently difficult.*
>
> *One way to try and manage this process is to look for what might be called intermediate outcomes. With respect to national identity, for example, NLS already has some KPIs which measure outcomes - 'public awareness of NLS' and 'positive media profile of NLS'. These are both measured externally, using an annual national market survey and a media monitoring agency respectively, providing relatively hard, objective data. We can suggest that these outcomes make a contribution to the overall perception of national identity, given that enhanced awareness of NLS and a positive critical reputation contribute, in their own small way, to positive perceptions on national identity. We might therefore suggest that the NLS journey in developing our KPIs involves moving from more traditional output measures, to intermediate outcome measures, to inferred contributions to national outcomes:*

Output ⇨	*Intermediate outcome ⇨*	*Inferred outcome*
Press releases issued	*Increased public awareness of NLS*	*Strong national identity*
Customer numbers	*Positive media profile*	

(Hunter 2009: 6)

[xv] Fiona Davison, personal correspondence, 18.02.2010

[xvi] Those involved included the British Museum, the International Slavery Museum (part of the National Museums Liverpool) and the National Maritime Museum, as well as the Museum in Docklands, the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Wilberforce House Museum working alongside the Institute of Historical Research, University of London and the Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past, University of York

[xvii] http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/about.html (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xviii] Mark O Neill, personal correspondence, 05.07.2010

[xix] Mark O Neill, personal correspondence, 05.07.2010

[xx] The Work Foundation describes itself as a not-for-profit organisation which describes itself as aiming ' to improve the quality of working life and the effectiveness of organisations by equipping leaders, policymakers and opinion-formers with evidence, advice, new thinking and networks' http://www.theworkfoundation.com/aboutus.aspx (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[xxi] The relative importance of this can be assessed by the results of other web searches undertaken at the same time: 1,570 results for cultural+value; 932 for Olympics and 2,880 for museums.

[xxii] Sandy Nairne, personal correspondence, 12.04.2010

[xxiii] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, personal correspondence, 05.11.2008.

[xxiv] In terms of motivation, CASE found that those of higher social economic status are more likely to visit a museum; men are less likely than women to visit; those individuals who visited museums as children are more likely to do so as adults; young people from BME and non-BME groups have a similar probability of visiting museums, whereas older people from a BME group are less likely to do so (DCMS, 2010d: 16-17).

[xxv] McCarthy et al (2005), however, consider the imprint of arts experience in relation to personal development, human interaction, communal measuring and civic discourse, economic and macro-social benefits. Central to this is a process of social cohesion, informal social control and cohesive efficiency, which results in community sentiment (pp84-85).

[xxvi] It has been suggested that analyses of self-reported emotional experiences (characterised as joy, awe, sadness, dissatisfaction; appreciation, social acceptance; anger; thoughtfulness; fear and inspiration) are often related to exploration of audiences' motivation rather than their experiences (see Gilbride & Orzechowicz, 2005).

[xxvii] An NMDC member proposed that one way of measuring impacts in a tangible and relevant way may be through automatically generating hard, bibliometric data showing the number of publications produced using its resources. Such publications may be a good proxy for 'knowledge and creativity generated' which is close to the heart of its purpose (Hunter, 2009:7). However, the use of proxies derived from metrics are generally regarded as of limited value (Rand Europe, 2009: 9).

[xxviii] The same applies to academic research (see AHRC, 2009).

[xxix] IFF describes itself as a 'non-profit organisation established to support a transformative response to complex and confounding challenges and to restore the capacity for effective action in today's powerful times' http://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/home.php (retrieved 20.07.2010).

[xxx] http://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/projects.php?id=31 (retrieved 20.07.2010). IFF's thinking about the cultural sector has been focused, in particular, on Watershed, Bristol (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010).

[xxxi] Will Vaughn's 1999 essay on the appreciation of late Turner highlights how the impact of cultural artefacts objects can change according to intellectual fashions and perceptions of meaning. I'm grateful to Ian Christie for pointing me to this.

[xxxii] *Parallel Lives 2* (2008) http://www.nationalgalleries.org/education/project/ and *Making It* (2008)□ http://www.nationalgalleries.org/education/project/6:221/6249/ (retrieved 24.07.2010)

[xxxiii] Alongside the commonalities, there are also differences in how academic research and cultural activities are assessed. These include the relative emphasis on excellence in universities, as distinct from effectiveness in the delivery of strategic interventions in the cultural sector. It has been argued that in the publicly-funded arts, excellence has been treated as secondary to strategy (Selwood, 1999). By contrast, in higher education, judgment of excellence is a primary requisite of academic assessment and peer review, and impact is a sub-set of that.

HEFCE consider research excellence to reside in:

a. … work which is world-leading in moving the discipline forward, innovative work pursuing new lines of enquiry, and activity effectively building on this to achieve impact beyond the discipline, benefiting the economy or society.
b. Effective sharing of its research findings with a range of audiences.
c. Building effectively on excellent research through a range of activity leading to benefits to the economy and society, including engagement with a range of stakeholders in developing and conducting its research and applying findings….(HEFCE, 2009: 6-7)

[xxxiv] The poet, Robert Frost often said that a poem was a 'momentary stay against confusion': The poem *…begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a* clarification *of life - not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against* confusion. http://www.frostfriends.org/FFL/Periodicals/Interview-lewis.html (retrieved 21.07.2010).

[xxxv] Adrian Budge, 'The Royal Armouries: What are its cultural impacts?' Personal correspondence, 04.02.2010

[xxxvi] http://www.ucm.es/info/cliwoc/ (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xxxvii] http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/consulting/expert-witness-services/index.html (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xxxviii] Details of museums benefiting under AHRC's Knowledge Transfer schemes, 2008-9, are provided at http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundedResearch/Pages/ResearchStatistics.aspx (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xxxix] These include:

- Kathrin Pieren, *Migration and identity constructions in an imperial metropolis: the representation of Jewish heritage in London between 1887 and 1956*
  Partner: Institute of Historical Research
- Mary Lester, *London on display: Suburban identity and the idea of London: Dalston and West Ham 1886–1923*
  Partner: Institute of Historical Research
- Jo Marchant, *How did London's museums influence civic identities through the shaping of their urban cultural environments (1851-1891)?*
  Partner: Institute of Historical Research
- Elena Miles, *Curating the Global City*
  This study addresses the relationship between major world cities and their display in museums of city or urban history. It will provide a critical evaluation of the Galleries of Modern London project and its public reception, interpreting it in the context of wider developments in urban theory and curatorial approaches to the display of cities and city life. The main international comparison for the study is the Museum of the City of New York. The researcher is embedded in the Galleries of Modern London project as a participant observer and part of the project team
  Partner: Royal Holloway, University of London
- Carry Van Liesholt, *Water in 18th century London*
  This study aims to explore the impact of the growing city on the water features. Issues of competition over limited resources and water management will be addressed. The prime research resource is the PLA Archive.
  Partner: King's College London, University of London
- Victoria Mueller, *The end of the world? Famine, plague and climate change in 14th century*
  This research analyses the human skeletons excavated from the Royal Mint site at East Smithfield in London, a 'Black Death' cemetery, established around 1349. The site represents a unique opportunity for research since all individuals died during a defined period of time. The study aims to reconstruct individual "life histories" through high-resolution incremental stable isotope analysis of teeth and bone, revealing how periods of dietary stress and climatic shifts affected those who lived through these traumas.
  Partner: University of Bradford
- Caroline Juby, *Reconstructing the Paleolithic Landscape*
  The aim of this research is to reconstruct London's Palaeolithic landscapes, through re-evaluating the thousands of stone age artefacts amassed by antiquarian collectors. This project aims to integrate these neglected artefacts into more recently gathered geological and environmental data.
  Partner: Royal Holloway, University of London.
- Jack Lohman, personal correspondence (16.05.2010)

[xl] http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/ssns (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xli] http://www.tate.org.uk/about/ourpriorities/audiences/tatenational/tateconnects/ (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xlii] http://www.museumnetworkuk.org/other-network-projects/ (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xliii] For the range of events that took place see http://www.Darwin200.org/events/index.asp; for those organisations involved see http://www.darwin200.org/utils/who-is-involved.jsp (retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xliv] Emma Hayes, personal correspondence 09.08.2010

[xlv] Emma Hayes, personal correspondence 12.02.2010

[xlvi] The 9/11 Memorial Museum website is at http://www.national911memorial.org/site/PageServer?pagename=New_Museum_Page; and the Make History project, http://makehistory.national911memorial.org/ (both retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xlvii] The Museum of the History of Polish Jews website is at http://www.jewishmuseum.org.pl/index.php?lang=en; the Virtual Shtetl project, http://www.sztetl.org.pl/?lang=en_GB) (both retrieved 20.07.2010)

[xlviii] Alan Guy, personal correspondence, 27.01.2010

[xlix] Ibid

[l] http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/pages/helmand/quotes.shtml (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[li] Venues have included Manchester Central Library as part of the Manchester International Festival, St George's Hall as part of the Liverpool Biennial, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

[lii] http://www.artfund.org/queenandcountry/The_Families.html (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[liii] http://www.artfund.org/queenandcountry/Support_the_Project.html (retrieved 21.07.2010). For a listing of key articles see http://www.artfund.org/queenandcountry/Queen_and_Country.html (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[liv] http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/about.html (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[lv] Fiona Davison, personal correspondence, 18.02. 2010.

[lvi] A partnership between the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, Museum of London, London Metropolitan University and more than fifteen refugee community organizations.

[lvii] Ibid. See also Renaissance London (2007)

[lviii] Fiona Davison, personal correspondence, 18.02. 2010

[lix] http://www.streetwork.org.uk/whoweare/index.htm (retrieved 24.07.2010)

[lx] http://www.nationalgalleries.org/education/project/6:221/6249 (retrieved 24.07.2010)

[lxi] Vanessa Rayner, personal correspondence, 15.02.2010

[lxii] The website cites examples of sexism ('That's a lot of widows you'll be responsible for', Clerk c1918: 'I cannot believe that, with our present critical shortage of trained aircrews... we are justified in spending a penny or a man-hour in training WRAF officers to fly', MRAF Sir John Slessor c1950).

[lxiii] http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/online-exhibitions/women-of-the-air-force/comments.cfm (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[lxiv] At base, he regarded these as including tolerance for minorities, the freedom of the individual, the liberty of the common people, the call to civic duty and to public service; and tradition of fair play (Brown, 2004). See also Brown (2009).

[lxv] David Hunter, personal correspondence 26.02.2010. These intentions are underlined by the Scottish Government's 2007 outcomes-based policy framework, *Scotland Performs.* Key outcomes for NLS include 'We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity' and 'We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation' http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[lxvi] Launched in 1991, Investors in People offers a business improvement tool designed to help organisations develop performance through their people.

[lxvii] http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/majorprojects/tate-encounters/programme.shtm

[lxviii] http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/pages/coi2/ (retrieved 21.07.2010)

[lxix] Alan Guy, personal correspondence, 27.01.2010

[lxx] Personal correspondence, 08.02.2010

[lxxi] Adrian Budge, 'The Royal Armouries: What are its cultural impacts?', personal correspondence, 02.02. 2010