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NMDC news



The National Army museum has reopened following major work. Images show visitors enjoying displays and interactives in the new galleries. This interactive allows visitors to make tactical battle decisions

NMDC at the Science Museum Group

Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum Group, formally took over as NMDC Chair from Diane Lees on 1st April, and the NMDC office has now moved to its new home at the Science Museum London. New contact details for the staff team can be found on the NMDC website (our email addresses remain unchanged). [NMDC](#)

Members' news

NHM and Cambridge University rewrite the dinosaur family tree

Collaborative work between Cambridge University and the Natural History Museum is behind recent news that the family tree of the dinosaurs has been extensively rewritten. The previous lineages had been in place for 130 years. In the new study, 35,000 anatomical features were examined, and processed using a computer programme to analyse how each was most likely to have evolved. The findings push back the origin of dinosaurs by 10 million years and place T Rex in a new group, closely related to stegosaurus. For the less scientific, the Barrett lab at NHM has also tweeted an ultra-succinct version of the findings using three plastic dinosaurs and some coffee stirrers. [NHM](#), [NHM](#) (one minute explainer film), [Barrett Lab Twitter](#)

Tate St Ives reopens

Tate St Ives is reopening after an 18-month refurbishment. A new extension will be opening in October, sunk into the cliffside to reduce the effect on the coastal landscape. For the first time, there will be semi-permanent displays, explaining why St Ives is significant in British art history. 200,000 people visit the gallery each year, 10% of whom are overseas tourists. The gallery now hopes to increase its audience by around 40,000 each year. [Art Newspaper](#)

Images this month: National Army Museum

The National Army Museum has reopened. Pictures this month show the first visitors enjoying the new galleries - from a chance to learn how to march, to experiencing what it is like in the interior of a tank or using digital screens to plan out strategy for a military campaign. [NAM](#)

National Museums Liverpool measures its social and economic impact

National Museums Liverpool has published a social and economic impact report, 'Making a Difference' which measures its effect on the city and across the North West. Based on research by Regeneris Consulting, it estimates that the museum generates £53m for the local economy. The report also found:

- The museum's eight sites have grown visitor figures by 360% since 2000 to 3 million each year. 1.5m of these come from outside the region and 400k from overseas. The growth has been achieved despite grant-in-aid per visitor falling in real terms by 44% since 2009 – 10.
- 163,000 schoolchildren visited in 2016, including pupils from 75% of the region's schools. This is a rise in school visits by 77% compared to 2004.
- The museum has an international reach and has worked with 36 countries over the last two years.
- The value of its work around health and wellbeing is £130m each year for regular visitors, using the national calculation on subjective wellbeing.

Liverpool contains some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country: 34 of the top 100 most deprived neighbourhoods in the country fall within the city region. Therefore the museum's work to increase wellbeing is particularly significant. It is estimated that the museum's House of Memories programme generated £13m in social value in the year following the programme. The museum also created the Happy Older People network, which has given micro grants to 28 member organisations to break down barriers to arts participation. It is funded by an NHS body: the Liverpool Clinical Commissioning group. The museum also actively seeks engagement with socially excluded groups, and became the first museum to become a third-party reporting centre for hate crime. [National Museums Liverpool](#), [M + H](#)

Museums with social purpose



Courtesy of the National Army Museum

Launch of new phase of Museums Change Lives

The MA's 'Museums Change Lives' enters a new phase, with a campaign for museums to develop their role as socially purposeful organisations, which engage in schemes to enhance wellbeing and improve the areas which surround them. An advocacy pamphlet accompanying the work gives examples of existing good practice. These include the boat building school at the Scottish Maritime Museum which teaches transferable woodwork skills to people including ex-offenders and those who have been long term unemployed; National Museums Northern Ireland's 'Urban Villages', a social inclusion project which has brought curators and objects to communities, and communities to museums, often for the first time; and the Foundling Museum's work with looked-after young people. There will be launch events in each of the four UK nations, running to September. [Museums Journal](#)

US art museum hires full time neuroscientist

The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts has appointed a full-time neuroscientist, and is working over a year with three more, to better understand museum visitors. Topics explored will include the nature of perception and information processing. The Peabody intends to publish recommendations for the wider museum sector. Director Dan Monroe said "*applying neuroscience research to museum experience design is an entirely new and tremendously exciting strategy, one that has already produced positive outcomes and new kinds of guidance for the presentation and interpretation of art and museum education*". Meanwhile in the UK, the Oxford University Museums Group has been able to draw on expertise from dozens of Oxford University's neuroscientists for the programming of its multi-site programme 'Brain Diaries: Modern Neuroscience in Action'. [M + H, Brain Diaries](#)

Surveys and calls for participation

Representing migration in museums

The Migration Museums Project has issued a survey to assess how much work on histories of migration is taking place in museums. The results will be turned into a report which will be published towards the end of 2017. It has also recently launched a new Migration Museums Network, supported by ACE and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, to develop this area of work and facilitate partnerships. Ideally, one person should fill in the survey per organisation. It will take not more than 20 minutes to complete. The deadline is 28th April. [Migration Museum project, Survey](#)

Creatures of the night: Culture24 Lates survey

Culture24, is conducting research, funded by Arts Council England and supported by Airbnb, into UK after-hours events (Lates) and extended opening hours in culture and heritage venues in the UK. They are asking all venue professionals and volunteers responsible for after-hours events to fill out this short survey to canvas the opinions of the widest possible cross-section of the sector. The survey will take a maximum of ten minutes to fill out and there is an incentive of a big box of chocolates for one lucky contributor. Over the next few months Culture24 will be building on the data collected through further surveys, interviews and focus groups. You can take the survey [here](#). For any questions about the research or to suggest a way you can get more involved in the consultation process please contact [Nick Stockman](#), 01273 523983. [Culture24](#)

Call to take part in the Great Exhibition of the North

The organisers of the Great Exhibition of the North have put out a call for people with 'creative vision' to respond to the brief for the exhibition and come up with proposals for potential commission. These include 'performers, visual artists, architects, musicians, scientists, engineers, inventors, writers, creatives, thinkers, designers and digital makers'. There are three possible structures for the commissions:

- Maps have been created of routes through Newcastle-Gateshead with venues marked which will be platforms for work. Proposals can suggest content for one of these venues.
- Standalone digital ideas which link with the themes of the exhibition and can be experienced nationally and internationally.
- Ideas to animate journeys taken on the transport system as exhibition goes travel around the city.

Funding between £5k - £50k is available for each project. The closing date for applications is noon on 22nd May; successful applicants will hear by August. [Newcastle Gateshead Initiative](#)

Collections Trust seeks feedback on SPECTRUM 5.0

The Collections Trust is seeking responses to new updates to its UK collections management standard, SPECTRUM. It offers an [overview](#) of SPECTRUM 5.0 the [consultation landing page](#), and a [summary of the proposed changes](#) in the new iteration. The Collections Trust is hoping that as many people as possible will respond, using the feedback forms at the bottom of the relevant pages. The consultation runs to 8th May. [Collections Trust](#)

Planning for culture in post-Brexit UK

Cultural elements of the Spring budget

The Chancellor Philip Hammond included several elements relevant to the cultural sector in his Spring Budget. These include:

- There will be a £5m fund for projects to celebrate the centenary of women first gaining the right to vote in 1918. The Chancellor said "*it is important that we not only celebrate next year's centenary but also that we educate young people about its significance.*"
- The government will appoint someone to co-ordinate celebrations of 400 years since the Mayflower crossed the Atlantic.
- Various education and lifelong learning measures are likely to have implications for museums. These include a commitment to spend up to £40m by 2018–19 on pilot schemes to see how best to help people continue learning throughout their careers. There will also be 50% more training hours for 16–19 year olds studying to gain technical qualifications, following a report by Lord Sainsbury. The government will invest an additional £500m each year in this educational route when it is well established.

[Heritage Alliance](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

Arts Council plans for international collaboration and steering through Brexit

The Arts Council has published a two-page statement on its ongoing plans to help steer the arts and museum sector through Brexit. ACE surveyed 1,000 organisations and artists in the immediate aftermath of the vote for their views, and intends to keep taking soundings as the process evolves. Among its other priorities are:

- Maintaining dialogue with government on the effect of negotiations on cultural issues.
- Commissioning bespoke research into how current EU legislation, funding and policy affect the cultural sector and working with government to incorporate EU law into UK legislation where this is important to grow the sector.
- Ensuring international talent is able to work in the UK, through a fit for purpose visa and work permit system.
- Developing proposals for investment in cultural exchange, especially in Europe, North America and East Asia where English arts organisations are most active.
- Developing proposals aimed at maintaining tariff free access to the EU market for cultural exports.

[ACE](#)

Working Internationally as Brexit begins

M+H has published a summary of ICOM-UK's 'Working Internationally in a Post-Brexit World' conference which took place in March and included senior staff from many institutions assessing the likely affects.

- Natural History Museum Director Michael Dixon said the sector would have to look for new business models and possibly more partnership work 'and we may get funds from other nations in the process'. He added that the plummeting pound against the Euro has led to record numbers of visitor numbers to the UK, while at NHM, ■€5m in income from European sources had depreciated in value by 20% as the pound fell. Visa policies may also make it difficult for museums to recruit skills internationally (NHM has 125 staff members from EU states).
- Tony Butler, Director of Derby Museums' Trust said he was talking to major firms in Derby who were looking at the positives of Brexit: 'even if this is outside our understanding, we need to be riding their coat tails'. He added that the European Social Fund and similar schemes had funded museums indirectly, and would be missed by some museums – but the squeeze on local

government spending if the economy does not grow is more likely to be significant for Derby. Museums will continue to keep European cultural links alive.

- National Gallery Director Gabriel Finaldi said 'we have a cultural responsibility to keep the long historical cultural links blooming.'

[M+H](#)

Also: The Heritage Alliance has produced a briefing document on Brexit, highlighting eclectic issues for the sector, ranging from scientific equipment (nearly all is imported and likely to go up in price) to specialist skills (it cites an Alliance member whose six painting conservators are all Italian, because training in the area is much more prevalent in Italy). [Heritage Alliance](#)

Merger of heritage bodies still a possibility in Wales

The Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure has told the Welsh Assembly that merging major Welsh culture bodies Cadw and National Museum Wales, to create Historic Wales is still a possibility. A recent report and both existing bodies favour closer collaboration, but maintaining independence. The Welsh government has commissioned a separate review of the work of NMW which is ongoing. [Museums Journal](#)

International



Learning to drill. Courtesy of the National Army Museum

UN Security Council passes resolution saying cultural desecration is a war crime

The UN Security Council has passed a new resolution that those who desecrate cultural sites can be prosecuted as war criminals. Selling looted antiquities on the international market has generated funds for groups such as ISIS, but is also a form of 'cultural cleansing'. UNESCO Director Irina Bokova said that the resolution was historic in its "recognition of the importance of cultural heritage for peace and security." Meanwhile journalists have gained access to the burned out remains of Mosul Museum, still scattered with fragments of Sumerian pottery and Assyrian statues. [Deutsche Welle](#), [BBC](#) (short film) [Middle Eastern Eye](#)

US cultural groups fight for the survival of the NEA

The National Endowment for the Arts, the US state-funded arts support body, is on President Donald Trump's list for proposed abolition, alongside other cultural bodies such as the Public Broadcasting Service and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Museum umbrella groups and cultural sector bodies have argued that its \$148m budget is tiny compared to the \$3.5tn spent by the US government annually, so its abolition will have virtually no effect in terms of savings. Each \$1 of seed money from the NEA attracts \$9 in philanthropy, and its involvement is a mark of high quality work. Much of the NEA's work supports art in rural areas – typically the disaffected and 'left behind' communities which voted for Trump. Cosmologist and science populariser Neil DeGrasse Tyson has been emphasising how small the vital grant is in a series of tweets: *"The annual combined Federal budgets of the NEA & NEH equals 4hrs & 23min of spending on the US Military."* *"Cutting the NEA & NEH to save money on a \$3-trillion budget is like thinking 1/4-mile is far relative to the width of the USA"*. Meanwhile the *New York Times* suggests that projects which support army veterans, including through art therapy, may have won the NEA enough support among Republicans to help save the body.

In a statement, the NEA said it was forbidden by law to lobby for its own survival, but has published a series of facts about what it does and demonstrating that its grants are not elitist. The NEA adds that the President's budget is part of a long process and it is still open for business. [The Art Newspaper](#) (subscription only, pg 16 +17), [Huffington Post](#), [Arts.gov](#), [Museums Journal](#), [The Atlantic](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)

Measuring museums

MA report shows museum cuts most frequent in Wales

The MA has published its annual survey of museums, based on responses from 453 museums during 2015/16. Director Sharon Heal said it 'pointed to a mixed picture' for museums – on one hand, being more popular than ever, reaching under-represented groups and finding ingenious new income streams. On the other, some are having staff and expertise hollowed out by cuts, while others have closed. The survey also notes factors in play beyond financial issues – broadening skillsets in the workforce, shifting relationships between museums and audiences, digital and socially engaged practice. Trends from the report include:

- Military and university museums showed the strongest visitor growth with 59% and 54% respectively saying their visitors had increased; of local authority museums 45% reported growth and 33% decline; among national museums 36% reported more visitors and 45% a decrease.
- 7% of museums reduced opening hours in 2015–16 and 2% introduced admissions charging.
- Overall, 25% of museums said their funds had decreased in 2015–16 while 35% saw an increase, but these affects were unevenly distributed by museum type: university museums and long term independents were more likely to be doing well: recently independent ex-local authority museums were facing the strongest challenges. Nationals are divided, both on 45% between those who saw income decreasing and those who saw it rise.
- 75% of national museums saw decreased public funding in 2015–16, as did 75% of independent former local authority museums. Only 19% of independent museums reported the same effect (though the report does not measure how many independents were in receipt of public money).
- Welsh museums were much more likely to report a decline in funding (64%) compared to only 21% in England. Declining income was also common in Scotland (50%) and Northern Ireland (43%). Only 15% of museums across all countries saw an increase in funding.
- 55% of national museums increased their self-generated income this year, as did 43% of independents and 33% of university museums. Only 15% of museums overall saw a decline in self-generated income. Newly independent ex-local authority museums (25%) and those in Wales (36%) were most likely to see self-generated funds go down.
- There is a largely positive picture of grants, donations and philanthropy, with 37% of museums increasing funds, and only 15% seeing a decline. Local authority and university museums did particularly well in this area. There were also above-average increases in regions which have struggled to attract philanthropy including Wales, North East England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Most museums (64%) saw their workforce stay the same, with relatively equal numbers showing decrease (15%) and increase (14%) in numbers.

MA President David Fleming said “*no one can be in any doubt that the UK museum sector has pockets of deep crisis... I have never believed that no museum should ever close, but there are many factors to be taken into account, not least the value of a museum to its local community.*” He called for a national plan to deal with the issues where museums face difficulties. [Museums Journal](#)

7% increase to leading visitor attractions in 2016

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions has reported a 7% increase in visits to its members' attractions during 2016, with particularly strong results from Scotland. Figures include:

- 67m people visited an attraction in London last year, which accounted for the top ten spots in ALVA's figures.
- The British Museum remains the most visited attraction for the tenth year, despite a 6% decrease in visits to 6.42m. The National Gallery was second most visited with a 6% visitor increase to 6.26m. Tate Modern was third, with attendance up 24%, helped by the opening of its new extension in summer 2016.
- Some other large London attractions saw declines including the Natural History Museum (12%), V&A (12%) and National Portrait Gallery (9%). ALVA's Director Bernard Donoghue said some such as the V&A had returned to normal figures after a blockbuster year; he also pointed to the 'dysfunctional service' of Southern Rail and terrorist threats as contributing factors.
- Scottish ALVA attractions achieved 15m visitors, an increase of 15.6%. Double figure increases include the Riverside Museum, Glasgow (up 11%), National War Museum, Edinburgh (up 13%), National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (29%) and Glasgow Cathedral (62%).
- There was a mixed picture for museums elsewhere in England: some saw rises including Museum of Liverpool (6%), Titanic Belfast (9.4%) and Merseyside Maritime Museum (27%) but there were falls for Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (-17%), National Museum of the Royal Navy (-7%) and the National Football Museum (-26%).

[ALVA](#), [Museums Journal](#), [M + H](#)

London, culture, visitors and Brexit

Arts Industry's Simon Tait highlights how crucial the arts scene is to London: four out of five of its 17.4m visitors each year say they visit for the culture. Together London visitors spend £7.3bn and generate £3.2bn for the cultural economy, employing 80,000 many of whom are EU nationals bringing specialist skills. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has visited Jean-Claude Juncker to discuss priorities during Brexit, and maintaining the flow of cultural sector goods and people is among the issues. Khan is among those calling for the 3.3m EU nationals to be allowed to remain in the UK.

[Taitmail](#), [Guardian](#), [Evening Standard](#)

Playing hard to get: how easy is it to reach England's museums?

New research by Nesta assesses how easy or difficult it is to reach England's 1,300 accredited museums – for the local population and for those from further afield. Nesta has produced an online interactive map measuring three aspects:

- How far on average the UK population is from museums.
- Size of the population in the vicinity of a museum. For example, Tate St Ives has 31,689 people living within 10km with a deprived communities rate of 10%.
- Number of museums in a local authority area relative to its population.

The report found that:

- Those with access to means of transport are generally well served, with 90% of the population having 25 accredited museums within 40km of their home.
- Many of the most deprived areas of the UK are in cities and close to accredited museums – meaning that programming which appeals to these groups rather than physical inaccessibility is in many cases the major factor.
- London has the third lowest number of museums of all English regions, but some of these are among the largest in the country, and it has the highest density of museums per sq km.
- The South East has the largest number of museums (233), the South West has the highest number of museums per head, at 3.3 per 100,000 people.
- Cornwall, Westminster and Camden have the highest number of museums by local authority at 31, 23 and 22 respectively.

- The local authorities with most museums per head of population are the City of London, Ryedale and the Isles of Scilly.

The extent of public transport by area is not included in the calculations: a museum 5km away may be easy to reach in a city, but take much more determination to reach for rural populations with no car. In areas like Ryedale, historical sites are often outside major towns, with infrequent, relatively expensive bus services. [Nesta](#), [Nesta](#) (the map)

New ways of measuring museum visitors using social media and other data

Measuring the number of museums visitors can be difficult, particularly for museums with no entry fee. Nesta is running a pilot project which brings together ACE average data for different kinds of museum with FourSquare data to calculate the likely average footfall for museums where no figures are available. Calculations took into account the fact that FourSquare users are more likely to visit some kinds of museums than others. Nesta found that the calculations allowed the data to predict with better-than-chance accuracy whether a museum is small, medium or large. The pilot model is simple, but Nesta believes that there is strong potential for greater accuracy through adding more geolocation data sets being generated in the digital sphere. [Nesta](#)

A global view: visits to art museums in 2016

The Art Newspaper has published its annual detailed look at the most popular art museums and galleries and footfall at major exhibitions across the world. Headline findings include:

- The most visited art museum globally is the Louvre with 7.4m visitors last year. The Met in New York (7m) came second, and the British Museum (6.42m) third. The National Gallery (6.26m) and Tate Modern (5.83m) were also in the top ten, making London the most represented city at the top of the list. Tate Modern is the 'most popular modern and contemporary art museum in the world'.
- The most popular exhibitions were 'Salvador Dali' at the National Art Center Tokyo and 'Edgar Degas, A Strange Beauty' at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The UK exhibitions with the highest footfall were at the Saatchi Gallery in London.
- Research by the Art Newspaper shows that, at least in the US, museums are putting on more exhibitions than a decade ago, to suit the tastes of more diverse audiences. It calculates that the number of shows has increased by 7.4%.
- There is a noticeable trend for the rise in VR in museums. The Städel Museum in Frankfurt has received five figure sums from Samsung for VR showing reconstructions of collections as they appeared in the 19th century - illustrating that the new technology can be a 'scholarly tool', not just a way of generating excitement among younger audiences.
- The most popular 'big ticket' exhibition (where audiences paid for access to several venues or other attractions) was Christo and Jean-Claude's 'Floating Piers' which used nylon walkways to allow 1.2m people to 'walk on water' between islands on Lake Iseo in Northern Italy.
- The contemporary art top ten list again has many entries from the Saatchi Gallery, including Henri Barande and 'Emerging Artists from the UK and Ukraine'. However the top spot was taken by Patricia Piccinini's 'Consciousness' at the Central Cultural Banco do Brazil, which featured 'grotesque-cum-cute, hyper real genetics fantasies in silicone'. *The Art Newspaper* argues that many inclusions on this list point to the popularity of free exhibitions, rather than being a role call of the best contemporary art.
- The top two London paid exhibitions were both at the Royal Academy of Arts: 'The Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse' and its Summer Exhibition 2016. Tate Modern's Georgia O'Keefe was the third most popular, with the National Gallery's 'Goya, the Portraits' fourth and the British Museum's 'Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds' fifth. Free exhibitions in the capital were dominated by the Saatchi Gallery in the top six spots: the National Portrait Gallery's 'BP Portrait Award' takes the eighth slot.
- The top antiquities exhibitions list is not dominated by any one country or continent, and features museums from London to Tokyo, Hong Kong and Israel. Tokyo National Museum's 'Hidden Treasures from the Kabul Museum' was the most visited (154k).
- The 19th century art top ten is dominated by French impressionists, with museums from Tokyo to New York and Seattle offering popular shows of Renoir, Degas and Monet.

[Art Newspaper](#) (subscription only)

Collections



The newly acquired life jacket at Manchester Museum

Manchester Museums represent the Syrian refugee crisis through newly acquired life jacket

Last month we learned that a life jacket from the Lusitania was the first acquisition of the newly created Imperial War Museum in 1917. A century later, hundreds of abandoned life jackets are among the strongest symbols of the modern refugee crisis as people attempt to cross the Mediterranean in leaky vessels. Manchester Museum curator of archaeology Bryan Sitch travelled to the Greek island of Lesbos in December to acquire a life jacket worn by a refugee fleeing the conflict in Syria. It has now been accessioned and displayed by the museum, which has also recorded oral histories of Syrians in Greece and Manchester. Bryan comments that this is part of a wider plan to collect around current issues: *"It is particularly important that Manchester Museum collect objects and interviews about current issues such as migration because our mission is to promote understanding between different cultures and to work towards a more sustainable world."* The museum is inviting people to share their responses to the life jacket on social media using #MMLifeJacket [Manchester Museum](#), [Manchester Museum thematic collecting blog](#)

Also: The Millennium Gallery in Sheffield is installing a refugee shelter transported from the Lebanon into its galleries until 9th April. The space is filled with voices of displaced people describing how they try to bring normality to their lives. [Museums Sheffield](#)

'Never have I worked on anything as bad as this' – conservators bring map back from the brink

A sixteenth century map, which was 'scrunched up' beneath the floorboards of a house, encrusted by dirt, damaged by vermin, dumped in a skip, and finally rescued by builders has been restored and put on display at the National Library of Scotland until 17th April. After the map was handed in at NLS, conservator Clare Thomson was initially doubtful that it could be saved. She said "*never have I worked on anything as bad as this. It was so fragmented, some of it was just like confetti*". The map was drawn by Dutch engraver Gerard Valck, and is one of only three copies still in existence. Highly political, the map shows the colonial ambitions of the Dutch, with Australia marked as New Holland, and illustrations showing atrocities by the Spanish in the New World. [The Scotsman](#), [The Scotsman](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Archives Unlocked: plans launched for the digital transformation of the archive sector

The National Archives has published 'Archives Unlocked'. a vision and action plan for the sector. The report has been co-created by working with other archives, funders and the culture, heritage and information worlds. It focuses on digital transformation, investing in new workforce skills and innovation. Workforce development will be supported by HLF, which has given an initial £28.4k investment towards an expected £749.3k fund to create 24 digital traineeships across the country. Culture Minister Matt Hancock, who gave a speech at the launch of the plan, emphasised the importance of archives in promoting trust in public institutions, access and learning. He said that the Hillsborough Inquiry and its conclusions were 'only made possible by the release in 2012 of 450,000 archived documents relating to the tragedy'. He also described how archives are ever more relevant in the age of 'Google, Spotify, Youtube, Instagram and Wikipedia' where people are looking through vast banks of information and recycling knowledge into the culture. Chief Executive of the National Archives Jeff James said 'archives are a nation's collective memory' and that the plans would 'release their power'. [National Archives](#), [Gov.uk](#), [National Archives](#) (action plan brochure)

Space, staff and time squeezed for museums with archaeological collections

Historic England has published 'Museums Collecting Archaeology (England)' - the first in a series of reports assessing the challenges to museums holding collections in the area. It is based on the 200 museums which responded to a survey out of 493 contacted. The initial report shows that museums run by local authorities are particularly squeezed: of the 22.7% of respondents who used to collect archaeology but have now stopped, 60% are local authority museums. Space is also an issue: 71% of museums surveyed had 20m³ of available storage or less; 63.5% of those continuing to collect who gave space estimates think they will run out of space within five years. Loss of staff and expertise about collections was also a frequently cited issue. Historic England will be issuing a second survey this year. [Historic England](#)

Cultural gifts



'Take over a tank' in the Battle Gallery at the National Army Museum

Ashmolean receives disembodied foot

The Ashmolean has received a 16th century sculptural foot under the Cultural Gifts scheme from Danny Katz, to mark the retirement of Professor Timothy Wilson as Keeper of Western Art. The painted terracotta foot may have been used as an exotic drinking or pouring vessel, or as an object for contemplation in a cabinet of curiosities. [ACE](#)

V&A acquires most significant Fabergé collection in the UK through Cultural Gifts

There are very few items created by the goldsmith Fabergé in UK collections. Now, through the Cultural Gifts Scheme, the V&A has acquired nine pieces including animals from the collection of Queen Alexandra: a baboon, a kangaroo, a sturgeon and a chinchilla. The gifts were donated by Nicholas Snowman, OBE whose family have a long association with the museum. In 1977, his father Kenneth Snowman curated a major Fabergé exhibition at the V&A. The museum also receives a ring with a cameo of Elizabeth I, which had previously been on loan to the V&A from the Snowman family for 40 years. [Arts Council](#)

Events

M+H Show programme announced

The Museums + Heritage trade show takes place on 17th and 18th May. It is free to attend, with more than 50 talks, and 150 suppliers and consultants with stalls. The talks cover a vast array of topics – from the themes emerging in the government Museums Review, which will be published in the summer; making data collected by museums practically useful; finding a balance between welcome and security against thieves and terrorists; museum design at sites where 'you can't even put a nail in a wall'; cross-generational projects, copyright, relocating a museum, education on a budget, and using virtual and mixed realities. The event takes place at Olympia, West London from 9.30am on both days. [M+H](#)

Contemporary meets historic through art installations in northern museums

Ten artists will be creating new works in response to ten museums across the north of England. The work is supported by Arts & Heritage, which is the main contact point for organisations wishing to bring contemporary art into heritage spaces (A&H is supported in turn by the Arts Council). The project, Meeting Point 2, is the second round of a project which began in 2016. As well as producing new art, the plan aims to build confidence in museums around commissioning art. The locations are very varied, and include:

- David Appleyard working on the 12th century site of Norton Priory in Cheshire
- Cartwright and Jordan at Experience Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre
- Lynn Settrington at the Brontë Parsonage Museum
- Martin Hylton at the Lion Salt Works in Cheshire

Timandra Nichols, a co-director of Arts & Heritage said *"the resulting works, when they are revealed later in the year, will not only be astounding pieces in their own right, but will also prompt audiences to think about the museums where the works are sited in a very different way."* [Museums Journal](#), [Arts & Heritage](#)

British Museum Conference 2017 'Get what you give?'

The British Museum is seeking proposals for this year's National Programmes conference 'Get what you give? The value and benefits of proactively lending collections'. The day will include a lively programme of workshops, discussion and debate, which the museum hopes will be shaped by contributions from colleagues across the UK. The deadline for submissions is 28th April, the conference itself takes place on 31st August. [British Museum](#) (full details and call for papers document)



Preparing to Borrow

TEG Preparing to Borrow Workshops

The Touring Exhibitions Group has planned more 'Preparing to Borrow' workshops across the country. Supported by ACE, NMDC and the Art Fund the workshops offer the knowledge and confidence to make a borrowing application. Topics include researching suitable objects, making the case to borrow, loan applications, fees and contracts, funding, transport, insurance, security and emergency planning. Workshops include advice from William Brown, the National Security Advisor at Arts Council England and will also introduce the Art Fund's Weston Loan programme. Dates are as follows:

- 10th May Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- 26th May Palace Green Library, Durham University
- 26th June People's History Museum, Manchester
- 7th July The Foundling Museum, London

Tickets are £25 for TEG members and £35 non-members. Travel bursaries up to £30 are available by contacting charlotte@teg.org.uk. Sign-language interpretation and induction loop facilities are available if requested 4 weeks in advance. Email seminars@teg.org.uk to receive information about similar events in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland when these are programmed. [TEG](#)

Future proof museums

The AMA is again running its intensive development programme for museums that wish to 'facilitate transformational change and improve resilience'. Aimed at museum directors, CEOs and their teams, the course lasts for ten months with a residential component in Cambridge on 11th-14th September. Places are £395 plus VAT. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 25th April. [AMA](#)

Education and training

Sir Nicholas Serota launches Creative Education commission

In his first speech as Chair of the Arts Council, Sir Nicholas Serota announced a new commission into creativity and education, led by Durham University and ACE. The Durham Commission will seek to come to a rounded view about what has worked or failed among pilot arts education projects in the UK and abroad, ask 'big questions' about what kind of cultural education is needed, what knowledge and skills young people need to acquire and what role cultural organisations can play. The Commission will report in 2019 and establish 'firm intellectual and practical foundations for future involvement of Arts Council England with education'. The speech also touched on uneven access to arts across the country and the fallout from Brexit. He said that many areas 'left behind' in the last thirty years were often those with low arts activity, such as rural areas and the margins of cities. ACE is moving towards being a 'proactive funder' in these areas and 'must become a greater catalyst for change'. [ACE](#), [ACE blog](#), [Guardian](#)

Also: The New Schools Network report, published last month, painted a picture of arts in schools which contradicted campaigners' narratives of declining arts uptake as a result of the Ebacc. Nicholas Serota was among those noting the confusion in his speech. The Cultural Learning Alliance has published a breakdown of the differing surveys to establish why they reached such different results. It concluded that the NSN took a baseline a year later (2011) than other studies, did not include 50,000 year 11 students in independent schools and excluded Design and Technology, where numbers have fallen steeply, as an arts subject. CLA adds that it supports the New Schools Network in calling on the government to do more to signal its support for the arts, and ensure that 'academic achievement in the EBacc does not come at the cost of the arts'. [CLA](#)

Primary schools in museums

The movement to create museum/primary school hybrids progressed with a conference last month. Deborah Bull of King's College London was among the speakers and said the creative learning opportunities in such a model would help children become employable despite technological advances. [A New Direction](#)

From serviceman to dry stone waller: HLF project invests in new heritage talent

HLF has invested a further £10.1m in its Skills for the Future programme, which helps train a new and more diverse generation of craftspeople, digital specialists and entrepreneurs to support the infrastructure and sustainability of heritage sites. HLF hopes to draw in people who may not have thought of pursuing a career in the sector: "*there will be opportunities for ex-servicemen training as dry stone wallers, young novices working on historic ships, women training as steam boiler engineers and people from areas of high unemployment working in museums and visitor attractions.*" The 18 projects include:

- 'Culture&' is working with 22 organisations across London including Brent Museum and the Geffrye Museum on the £727.4k project. 34 people under 25 from BAME or low socio-economic backgrounds will receive 12 months of training in conservation, collections management, digitisation and public engagement.
- £183.8k will be provided to train eight people with the Dry Stone Walling Association over two years, with ex-servicemen and ex-offenders with no previous experience being targeted to train.
- The British Museum is leading a £743.6k project to train 27 people from a range of backgrounds, based in museums across the UK, in digital data management, preservation and

access, so they can themselves become champions for digital training in the sector.

- £679k will be used to train 34 people in Northumberland as shipwrights as part of the Blyth Tall Ship project.
- Museums Galleries Scotland will receive £570k for its Skills for Success programme which offers museum-based traineeships across Scotland for non-graduates.

The work fulfills the commitment to training made in the DCMS Culture White Paper. Heritage Minister Tracey Crouch said "*investing in new heritage talent will ensure we build a more sustainable sector, protect our treasured history and continue to attract visitors from across the globe.*" [HLF](#), [MGS](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Ipswich Star](#)

Mentoring for all scheme opens for museum workers

A new career and personal development scheme 'Mentoring for All' has opened for museum staff, volunteers and freelancers in England and Scotland. Eighteen places are available in England, supported by ACE and one in Scotland, supported by MGS. The scheme is being managed by the Museums Association, but applicants do not have to be members. The project was created in response to the findings in the 'Character Matters' report, which identified typical character traits of museum workers, as well as highlighting the need for more entrepreneurial working and more diversified job roles. [Museums Journal](#)

£3.9m fund develops library uses as educational and creative spaces

30 libraries across the UK have won a total of £3.9m support from the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund. The fund seeks to extend the role of libraries in communities beyond the core provision of books. Telford and Wrekin Council are using £50k to pilot learning for whole families, Hull Culture and Leisure are making spaces in the Central Library for people to explore their creativity in the arts, science and technology, Bournemouth Borough Council is using £136.8k to create cultural and creative events, improve digital skills and improve wellbeing for those who are socially isolated or have mental health problems. [Gov.uk](#)

Awards

New Collecting Awards winner 2017

The Art Fund has announced the six winners of its New Collecting Awards, which allow winners to develop their museums' collections and their own careers. Winners are based in Buxton, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London and Rochdale. They include Louise Stewart, Cross-Collections Curator at the National Portrait Gallery who received £40k to develop a collection of popular, global and ephemeral portraits, especially pre-1600 material and Martin Goldberg, a senior curator at National Museums Scotland who received £40k towards a research-driven collecting programme to deepen the museum's understanding of its medieval Pictish holdings. [Art Fund](#)

Funding



Army slang. Courtesy of the National Army Museum

£20m Great Places pilot is launched

The Great Places scheme, announced in the Culture White Paper, is now underway with 16 cities and regions across the UK receiving £20m in total to create projects which 'put culture at the heart of their residents' future prosperity'. ACE and HLF are each contributing £10m towards the pilot scheme. Aims include:

- To bring arts and culture into the provision of health and education services.
- Pilot new ways of funding cultural organisations.
- Develop strategies to maximise the community benefit of arts and culture.
- Help build the skills of people working in the arts.

Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft receive £737.9k in the first round for a 'cultural reimagining' of the two towns. Plans include increasing cultural education to instill a sense of pride in the local area in younger people, alongside work to help the local authority attract visitors through arts investment. [M + H](#), [Great Places Scheme](#), [HLF](#)

Fundraising regulator seeks feedback

The Fundraising Regulator is a body created in January 2016 in response to concerns about how some charities contact the public and seek donations. The problems it was set up to address are most prevalent among campaigning charities using third parties to call prospects, however Tate and the British Museum are among the bodies which eventually agreed to pay £1k each year to support the regulator. It is now consulting on its Code of Practice and responses are welcomed until 28th April. The WVCA is hosting an event to explore the issues on 7th April 10.30am – 12pm in Cardiff (with videoconference links to Rhyll and Aberystwyth). Email eventsadmin@wvca.org.uk for full details and to book. [Fundraising Regulator](#), [Civil Society](#)

Prosper: business support programme for arts and museums

Creative United has launched an ACE-backed business support programme for arts bodies, libraries and museums. The programme aims to strengthen business development knowledge, commercial skills and drive growth, income diversification and resilience. It will also carry out research and evaluate future business needs for the sector in England and Scotland. Around 70 businesses or individuals will be accepted onto the first round of the programme. Each participant will receive 12 'credits' which can then be used on diverse support, including masterclasses, workshops, individual tailored advice and webinars. The programme is free and lasts for nine months; the deadline for applications is 31st May. [Creative United](#)

Ironbridge Gorge plans to raise £15m in ten years

Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust has created a plan to raise £15m over the next decade to transform its 10 museums and 36 scheduled monuments. The first phase – a six month redevelopment of Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron – is already complete and the building reopens on 8th April. Future plans include the expansion and redesign of the science and technology centre, Enginuity, academic research facilities, an accessible collections store, and a new gallery for temporary exhibitions. [Museums Journal](#)

Restorations and summer palaces

Vindolanda to show off its loo seat and early British writing with £1.3m HLF grant

The oxygen free soil near Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall has preserved objects from the Roman occupation which are usually rapidly destroyed by time. They include papers, textiles, thousands of shoes, potters' wheels and a wooden toilet seat, all of which are nearly 2,000 years old. There is also handwriting, which was the oldest ever found in Britain until some 2016 archaeological discoveries in Central London. Now the HLF has awarded £1.3m to create a new gallery to display these remarkable objects. Display cases will be carefully controlled for humidity and temperature so wooden objects can safely be taken out of storage for the first time. The new gallery will also tell the scientific story of how the objects survived – first in the ground, and then through the work of conservators. Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East said "*we're delighted to support this project which will secure the future of the site's wooden underworld and allow the public to discover its secrets for the very first time.*" [HLF](#), [Vindolanda Trust](#)

Pavilions, near and far

Dulwich Picture Gallery is following in the footsteps of the Serpentine Gallery by building a summer pavilion in its grounds. The structure will host events until September to celebrate its bicentenary. The Hatton Gallery in Newcastle, which is reopening in the autumn after a £3.8m redevelopment, is also using a pavilion structure next to the Baltic Gallery to act as an advert and a reminder to its visitors. [Dulwich Picture Gallery](#), [Newcastle Chronicle](#)

£12.3m allows Geffrye Museum to begin major transformation

The HLF has granted the Geffrye Museum £12.3m towards its £18.1m transformation project. The museum, which tells the story of domestic life and room design over 300 years, has already raised £4.3m. It is confident of finding the final £1.5m from trusts, foundations, donors and visitors. The work on one of Hackney's major cultural assets will allow 70% of the museum complex to be open to the public, compared to 30% now, and will include newly built learning and event spaces. The museum will bring more collections out of storage and hopes for 50% more visitors. Clare Wright of the architectural firm Wright & Wright which will be taking forward the project, said "*at a time when local authorities and schools are struggling financially, it is fantastic that the National Lottery has said yes to this project. It will provide facilities for children, isolated groups and the local community.*" [HLF](#), [Geffrye Museum](#)

Also: A debate in the Houses of Parliament has given a very thorough run down of the cultural assets of Stoke-on-Trent, from museums to pottery, Victorian physicist Sir Oliver Lodge to Robbie Williams. The city is one of eleven in the shortlist for City of Culture 2021, the winner of which will be announced in April. [They Work for You](#)

Tech



Exterior of newly transformed National Army Museum

DCMS launches 'Culture is digital'

Culture Minister Matt Hancock has launched a new 'Culture is Digital' project to encourage a conversation between government and the cultural and digital sectors, which have a natural synergy. The cultural sector needs to build its digital capacity, as described in the Culture White Paper - but the digital sector often needs the innovations and creativity of the cultural sector to drive audiences to digital platforms and learn new skills. The project will begin with more formal ideas sharing online around the topics of content infrastructure (e.g. the digitisation of collections), enabling new formats and mediums for cultural production, access and participation and digital skills, IP and business models in cultural organisations. Matt Hancock also hopes that the work will devise new ways to reach the one person in ten in the UK who has never used the internet. [DCMS blog](#)

Bulgarians lead the field in openness to new technologies

Nesta has run a survey in nine European countries to assess which nations are most open to adopting new technologies to solve problems – from letting a robot care for their family, to sitting in a driverless car, or using current digital options such as crowdfunding. Bulgarians emerge as the most open, whereas people in the UK are among the most sceptical. Within the UK population men under 35, graduates and Londoners are the most open to new tech approaches. 64% of UK adults agreed they felt 'excited about the future and the opportunities that new technology is bringing to society'. Although a clear majority, this is the second lowest percentage in the study, and noticeably less than Germany (72%) and Bulgaria (88%). However, the level of wariness may lie less in an antipathy to technology in itself, as a feeling that its benefits are not spread evenly across society. Only 33% of the UK workforce has access to digital training. UK adults are 7% less confident than the European average in building a website. Nesta warns that these issues must be addressed so that the UK can make use of digital without political backlash. [Nesta](#), [Nesta](#) (full report)

Also: The Tech Nation 2017 report says that tech jobs are growing twice as fast as any other UK sector. The worked is highly paid and highly skilled. 68% of investment in 2016 was outside London. [Tech Nation](#)

Jobs

A selection of jobs from across the NMDC membership this month:

- [Head of Capital Project Planning - IWM](#)
- [Conservator, Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics - British Museum](#)
- [Animal Assistant \(two posts\) - Horniman Museum](#)
- [Learning and participation manager - National Railway Museum](#)
- [Quantity Surveyor - Black Country Living Museum](#)

A complete list is available on our website [here](#).

Also: DCMS are seeking a museum or gallery professional to take a two-year secondment as Sponsorship Adviser at DCMS. Details at [Civil Service Jobs](#).

And finally... the gin in the gin-soaked boy

Archaeologists working on a site in Ramle in Israel have unexpectedly turned up hundreds of bottles which once contained alcoholic drinks. They were thrown away by the British army as it fought its way to Jerusalem in November 1917. Still-familiar brands like Gordon's Gin are among the finds, which also include other detritus and the remains of a swagger stick. Excavation Director Ron Toueg said "*it's an amazing discovery and it really gives you a sense of what these soldiers were doing and how they spent their spare time. It seems they were thirsty a lot of the time.*" Archaeologists hope the bottles will eventually go on display in Israel or the UK. [Times of Israel](#), [Telegraph](#)

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