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Members' news: turn up the soundtrack, head for the holodeck



Bee collection from the University of Oxford Museum of Natural History

A million insects and their Pre-Raphaelite room gain support from HLF

HLF has given initial funding of £63.7k towards a bid by the Oxford University Museum of Natural History to preserve the future of a million insects in its collections. The museum plans to display many of the specimens in a Pre-Raphaelite room restored to its state in the 1860s, and to run an extensive outreach programme for schools. The collection covers almost the whole history of entomology, and documents how fauna has changed since the Industrial Revolution, with implications for studying biodiversity loss and climate change. The collection will be moved to higher quality storage with improved access, and insect discovery days will be developed for year 6 and 7 children. [Oxford University Museum of Natural History](https://www.mnh.ox.ac.uk/)

Holographic Attenborough leads new NHM interactive VR experience

A holographic David Attenborough will lead viewers through the Natural History Museum's first interactive VR experience – one in which they will be able to hold objects in the virtual world which are untouchable in the real museum. Over 20 minutes, 'Hold the World' will visit virtual versions of the Conservation Centre, Cryptogamic Herbarium and Earth Sciences Library, all museum areas which are closed to the public. Visitors will be able to 'pick up' objects within VR including a butterfly, stegosaurus and blue whale. Sir David said "*sharing my passion for the natural world is something which I have done for many years through different technologies, from the days of black-and-white TV to colour, HD, 3D, 4K and now virtual reality... It really is one of the most convincing and bewitching experiences that the world of technology has yet produced.*" [NHM](#), [Wired](#), [The Times](#), [Telegraph](#) (paywall)

The music of time: British Museum hosts its first music festival

The British Museum is hosting its first ever music festival, running from 16th – 29th April across the galleries and Reading Room of the museum. 'Europe and the World: a symphony of cultures' will explore European composers whose work was pushed in new directions by exposure to world music. The programme ranges from 7th century Japanese spiritual music, Byzantine choral music and Spanish flamenco to composers including Stockhausen and Richard Strauss. The British Museum's Director Hartwig Fischer said "*Europe and the world hopes to encourage listening – to others, to ourselves and to the great symphony of cultures represented by the British Museum. This programming is a new departure for the Museum, using music to find new ways to illuminate the objects and spaces that our visitors see each day.*" The work has been supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and programmed by Daniel Kühnel, Director of the Hamburg Symphony. [Rhinegold](#), [The British Museum](#)

The elephant in the room: collections and ethics

Government publishes details of 'tough' ivory ban, with exemptions for museums

The Government has published its plans for a ban on the sale of ivory, following a consultation. 88% of respondents (including many via petition platforms) supported the ban. Government intends the ban to be 'among the toughest in the world' and will prohibit the sale, hire import or export of most ivory items to or from the UK. There will be a small number of exemptions, including for pre-20th century portrait miniatures, musical instruments created prior to 1975 with less than 20% ivory, items which have less than 10% ivory made prior to 1947, and a handful of objects of outstanding artistic or historic value. Any owner wishing to sell an ivory object under one of these exemptions will need to register the object with a database. Accredited museums will also have an exemption, and sales and loans to and between these institutions will remain legal. The guidance states that museums "*will be permitted to purchase items that do not meet any of the listed exemptions, but are in line with their acquisitions and ethical policies.*" [Gov.uk](#)

Sunset clause removed from Act on returning cultural objects taken during the Holocaust

The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 removed the statutory restrictions preventing UK museums from returning objects found to have been taken during the Holocaust. Objects since returned to the families of owners include a Constable painting, 'Beaching a Boat, Brighton' from the Tate. A new Bill has now been introduced, removing the sunset clause, so that the Act will remain on the statute books after 11th November 2019. National Gallery Director and Chair of NMDC's Spoliation Working Group Dr Gabriele Finaldi said "*the museum community is committed to fair and just redress in the case of works taken wrongfully during the Holocaust and World War II. It is fully supportive of the proposal to amend the Act by removing the so-called sunset clause.*" [Hansard](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Telegraph](#)

Towards 2030: predicting and planning for the next decade

Horizon scan of experimental cultural work published as part of ACE's plans to 2030

As part of ACE's work towards a new ten-year strategy, Nesta has published 'Experimental Culture' a 'rapid horizon scan' of the future shape of the cultural sector. It contrasts the underlying stability of some cultural institutions, including those which have been adapting to changing times over centuries, with the 'underlying churn' of the new technologies and new demographic and political realities. For many issues, it is still hard to assess which will radically change the sector, and which will be subsumed into business as usual. The report highlights four areas: audiences and participation; workforce and skills; changing funding and business models; new technologies. The many shaping factors in the report include:

- Social mobility has stalled: only one in six of those in low paid work in 2006 had moved out of that classification ten years later. Arts audiences are significantly more likely to be from the upper socio-economic group and are a more committed but narrower audience. For example, 8% of the UK population form 44% of the live music audience. Creativity is happening elsewhere (for example, YouTube led broadcasting) beyond the gaze and knowledge of publicly-funded arts bodies.
- Teaching hours devoted to arts subjects dropped by 15% in 2010 – 2015, with the most recent figures for 2017 suggesting further decline. This may impact on future arts audiences and practitioners.
- Digital has not yet transformed arts and culture. There is potential to harness digital for much greater reach: for example, the largely older audiences for National Theatre Live broadcasts could experience far more culture from a distance in new ways through VR and AR. At the same time, the proliferation of channels (and the competition they bring) could mean more effort chasing audiences on ever more fragmented platforms. Since 18 – 24 year olds now spend an average of 35.2 hours online each week, it seems extremely likely that this will shape how the arts are offered and consumed.
- In the next decade millennials will become the main economic actors in the UK: currently poorer than previous generations, but also with '*heightened expectation of immediacy, participation and transparency*', they are also the first 'technologically immersed' generation.
- 87% of creative jobs in the UK are at low or no risk from automation compared to 43% in the workforce as a whole. However, Brexit risks lack of access to essential skills from EU staff and 55% of organisations say they lack the skills needed for a digital strategy. A 'persistent lack of diversity' and a lack of young people taking arts subjects are also risks. Pauline Tambling comments "*I fear that if we're not careful we will be the country that invented the creative industries and then let them go, rather than reinventing our creative industries for the next generation with the next big idea.*"
- Public funding for the arts continues to fall, although crowdfunding and dynamic pricing show some promise.
- Overseas visitors are expected to increase by 6.1% a year – however, this demographic is drawn to large institutions with a high public profile, leaving smaller organisations more vulnerable.
- There are also signs of a digital divide opening between large organisations able to invest in digital innovation and those who can't. Although there are more R&D funds available, Jonty Claypole, Director of Arts at the BBC comments: "*although it can result in outputs that captivate millions, R&D by nature isn't primarily audience facing. For that reason, it's the first thing that gets dropped when resource is stretched.*"
- Cultural organisations also need to leverage data and create a new generation of workers who can analyse it with confidence.

[Nesta](#)

MA launches Collections 2030 research project

The MA is launching a major piece of research into the uses and support of collections over the next decade. It will draw on recent reports on the museum sector including Why Collect? and the Mendoza Review, and centre around two themes:

- How collections are used and what we think they are for.
- What infrastructure is needed to make collections effective.

There will be a reference group of sector organisations, including ACE, NMDC, Museums Galleries Scotland, Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales, the Art Fund and AIM. The research will include one to one meetings and a wider consultation with the sector later in 2018. There will also be workshops; the first takes place at Ulster Museum in Belfast on 18th April. [Museums Journal](#)

Surveys

King's College survey on arts leadership

King's College has been commissioned by Arts Council England to carry out research on leadership in the arts, museums and libraries. It is beginning the work with a five-minute survey to get a snapshot of leadership development practices across the sector, from informal mentoring to formal programmes. It invites responses from people working at all levels in the cultural sector. [King's College](#)

Help shape a new National Heritage Science Strategy for the UK

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) has drafted proposals for a new National Heritage Science Strategy for the UK. These will respond to changes in the operating environment for heritage science, put the sector in a position to take advantage of new opportunities, and support the sector in communicating the benefits of heritage science more widely. The proposed framework focuses on four themes: excellent research and innovation, increased economic impact, development of skills, and improved quality of life. NHSF invited people to contribute their views by taking a 12 minute survey, which is open until 20th April. [NHSF \(survey\)](#), [NHSF \(background\)](#)

MA toolkit offers a variety of ways of evaluating social engagement

The MA has published 'Measuring socially engaged practice: a toolkit', which explores a variety of ways to evaluate social impact, which can often be difficult to quantify. It covers qualitative approaches from interviews to questionnaires and quantitative, drawing from closed questions to visual aids and personal data. The toolkit also helps museums to consider ethical aspects of how they approach evaluation. [Museums Journal](#)

Events



From the million-strong insect collection of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History

British Museum National Programmes Conference: call for papers

The British Museum is holding its annual conference focused on partnerships in the museum sector on 3rd September. It has issued a call for papers on the topic of 'museums and digital memory: from creation and curation to digital preservation'. Organisers want to explore good practice in how the sector creates, curates and preserves digital content - both the exciting outward-facing side of digital technology in museums, and the often overlooked

back-of-house digital preservation work. Submissions should be sent to Georgia Mallin, no later than 30th April at GMallin@britishmuseum.org. [The British Museum](#)

Register for Spring Museums at Night

The next Museums at Night festival takes place from 16th - 19th May. Museums wishing to take part are invited to add their events to the dedicated website [Museums at Night](#)

View from the Top

This annual event brings together leaders from the cultural sector and beyond to talk about their successes, problems and future plans. Speakers include V&A Director Tristram Hunt, Laura Wright, CEO of Tate Enterprises and Tim Ellison, Deputy Director of the Postal Museum. It takes place on 22nd May at the Wellcome Collection. Tickets are £90 for members and £180 for non-members.

[Association for Cultural Enterprises](#)

'Future Fest Forward' free events

In the run up to its annual Future Fest, an annual event which showcases new innovation and ideas, Nesta is running a series of free events, 'Future Fest Forward'. These will particularly focus on how AI will shape society, and how humans will operate alongside increasingly sophisticated technology. The first talk is AI and Future Society on 19th April (now open for booking). AI and Creativity Futures takes place on 14th June, and more events will be programmed shortly. All events begin promptly at 6pm and take place at Nesta on Millbank in London. [Nesta](#)

Webinar: Museums' environmental practice

Environment and art consultants Julie's Bicycle are holding a webinar on what environment and climate change mean for museums. It will explore how museums can do more pro-environmental work using the Museums' Environmental Framework. The webinar takes place from 11am on 30th April. [Julie's Bicycle](#)

Free talks at M + H show: from live streaming to terracotta warriors

Museums + Heritage has announced fifty free talks that will be taking place during its two-day annual show at Olympia, London. Topics covered include how to livestream, the Department for International Trade discussing breaking into the US museum market, Bristol Museums on youth engagement, Newark Castle staff on creating an exhibition with no budget about a hated king, and the World Museum, Liverpool on the huge popularity of its terracotta warriors exhibition. Education, online audiences, museums and wellbeing, understanding visitor statistics and commercial development are also covered. The event takes place on 16th – 17th May. Tickets are free, but please register on the M + H site. [M + H](#)

Mancunians flock for A Rubbish Night at the Museum

Manchester Museum is hosting 'A Rubbish Night at the Museum' on the evening of 19th April, in which locals are invited to mix talks, displays and good food with a discussion of Manchester's rubbish problem and how to leverage a solution. The event, which has already attracted nearly 200 bookings, aims to challenge and inspire universities, businesses, local people and authorities to make change. Displays will remain in place for several days after the event - provoking further discussion, and also acting as a paradigm of how a museum space can be used to dovetail education, history and the civic concerns of surrounding populations. [Manchester Museum](#)

AIM National Conference 2018

The Association of Independent Museums' annual conference takes place on 21st – 23rd June at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire. The theme is 'changing gear' – including attracting new visitors, designing with empathy, alternative income generation and financial leadership. The last day to book early bird tickets is 27th April; ticket prices begin at £155 for members. [AIM](#)

Call for Papers on memory and transformation for DCDC18

More details of the November 2018 Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference have been published on a dedicated website. The National Archives and Research Councils UK have issued a call for papers on the topic of memory and transformation; the closing date for proposals is 27th April. [DCDC18](#)

Touring Exhibitions Group marketplace and seminar

Touring Exhibitions Group is holding a marketplace event where organisations involved in the development of touring and partnership exhibitions can discuss projects and share ideas. There will also be a seminar 'The Why, What and When of Establishing Commercial and Private Sector Relationships to Support Touring', a 'five minute share' session where participants can outline ideas for new projects and tours of local cultural venues. There will also be ACE surgeries and a chance to discuss opportunities with The Art Fund. The event takes place from 3rd – 4th May at M Shed in Bristol. Tickets begin at £35 for one day. [TEG](#)

New opportunities and events from GEM

GEM has launched a new website, with a training and events section. It will include relevant listings from across the sector (not just those run by GEM) and adding a basic listing is free. GEM events coming up include:

- GEM Foundation course in Museum Learning ([details](#))
- GEM Conference on 4th - 6th September in Nottingham ([call for papers](#))
- GEM Special event for Mentors - 23rd April, Manchester Museum ([details](#))

Collaborating across digital technology, cultural heritage and learning design

The Hilal network is offering a one-day workshop bringing together people interested in the overlap between cultural heritage and digital technology, and exploring how this can be conveyed through good learning design. The event takes place on 4th May at EU House in Kensington, London. Academics, museum educators and heritage organisations are all welcome and lunch is included. Contact Anne Preston: a.preston@kingston.ac.uk for full details. [Hilal network](#)

EMYA closing date extended

The closing date to apply to become European Museum of the Year has been extended to 16th April. The award is for new museums, or museums which have undergone radical transformation over the past three years. [Museums Journal](#)

International

From refugees to craftspeople: the work of the Cultural Protection Fund

The Art Newspaper has been following some of the virtuous circles being created by the work of the Cultural Protection Fund, administered by the British Council. At the World Monument Fund's new training centre in Mafraq, Jordan, thirty people have trained intensively in stonemasonry, having never previously picked up a chisel. Most students are Syrian refugees who would otherwise be sitting in camps, waiting for the end of the conflict. It is hoped that, armed with new skills, they will eventually be able to return to Syria to restore the built heritage damaged by war. Meanwhile in Tello, South Iraq, locals are taking part in The British Museum's £3m training programme and learning how to look after some of the country's most important ancient monuments. This month, an all-female team of eight Iraqi heritage professionals will begin training at the British Museum so they can eventually stabilise the Tello Bridge, which was built in the third millennium BC and is the oldest known bridge in the world. [British Museum](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

First bids emerging for the Bayeux Tapestry

Battle Abbey, the British Museum and the Tower of London have all emerged as contenders to host the Bayeux Tapestry when it is displayed in the UK. Historic Royal Palaces said that the Tower is appropriate as one of the 'most visible remaining symbols of the Norman Conquest', while Battle Abbey, managed by English Heritage, would cope well with large queues. The British Museum, and other nationals can offer expert conservation teams in-house. [Museums Journal](#), [The Times](#)

Also: The Russian government has told the British Council to cease its operations in the country, following the diplomatic fallout from the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Salisbury. [Art Professional](#)

Heritage Alliance publishes first survey of its members' international work

The Heritage Alliance has published its first ever International Report, giving examples of the breadth of its members' work across all continents and at least 38 countries. These include the UK Antarctic Heritage Fund which concerns itself with the heritage of the whole continent, the Venice in Peril Fund and the Ragged School Museum which has attracted exceptional interest from Japanese researchers. The report ends with eight recommendations, which include persuading Trust Funds to support heritage-related overseas study, greater co-ordination between official UK overseas bodies and heritage NGOs, and better translation services – anecdotally, there is huge demand in China for translated conservation literature. [The Heritage Alliance](#)

Aesthete on the cheap: the cost of paid exhibitions in three world cities

As part of its statistics-crunching of global visits to art shows during 2017, *The Art Newspaper* has calculated how much it would cost a very committed art fan to visit all top ten shows in three world cities. In London, it comes to £166.50, including Hokusai at The British Museum (the cheapest exhibition, at £12), and the hugely popular Pink Floyd at the V&A (the most expensive at £24). This is virtually the same cost as New York's top ten at £168 (\$234). Paris, by contrast is around a third cheaper at £111 (€126). However, New York and Paris both bundle charging for general admission with special exhibitions. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Cultural artefacts as refugees? Easter Island and climate change

The *New York Times* has merged powerful photography, storytelling and drone filming to capture the cultural and economic quandary of Easter Island in the face of climate change. The island depends on 100,000 visitors generating \$70m each year, but the island's three major tourist sites are at risk from erosion due to rising seas, with graveyards and beaches washing away. Mr Rapu, the island's archaeologist says "can we take [petroglyphs] somewhere else? Yes, but you lose their context, you lose their history when doing that." [New York Times](#)

Appointments, resignations, obituary

Science Museum remembers the generosity of Stephen Hawking

The Science Museum was among the many institutions paying tribute to Professor Stephen Hawking following his death aged 76. Director Ian Blatchford said *"he was generous to a fault in supporting our work and in allowing us to join him in seeking to inspire the next generation to look up at the stars. Stephen was once kind enough to describe the Science Museum, where he was a Fellow, as one of his favourite places and the feeling was absolutely mutual."* You can watch Professor Hawking in conversation at the Science Museum here: [ALVA](#), [Guardian](#)

Baroness Stowell has been appointed new Chair of the Charity Commission, however in an unusual move, cross-party MPs on the DCMS committee have refused to endorse her appointment. Culture Minister Matt Hancock has confirmed her in post. [Guardian](#), [Parliament.uk](#), [Civil Society](#)

Helen Legg has been appointed as the new Director of Tate Liverpool. She has been Director at Spike Island in Bristol since 2010. She will take up her new post in the summer. [Tate](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Tourism



NMRN's Bell from HMS Hood, one of the many objects to be shown in its new Storyhouse 12: The Navy Unlocked

Scotland draws large audiences as ALVA publishes 2017 visitor figures

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions has published the 2017 visitor figures for its members, including many national museums. The data shows that:

- Overall, visits across the whole UK were up 7.3% on 2016 figures.
- Scotland outperformed the rest of the UK in terms of growth for the sixth year running, with an average growth of 13.9%. The National Museum of Scotland had an extremely successful year, becoming the most visited attraction outside London with an audience of 3,113,178, a 20% increase.
- Each of the top four attractions were London national museums, which nevertheless showed declines in visitors compared to 2016. These were The British Museum (-8%, 5,906,716), Tate Modern (-3%, 5,656,004), National Gallery (-16.5%, 5,229,192) and the Natural History Museum (- 4%, 4,434,520).

- The V&A, which was the fifth most visited showed a 26% rise to 3,789,748 driven by the hugely popular Pink Floyd exhibition. Tate Britain showed one of the largest visitor increases in the whole list, rising 64% to 1,777,877, in part due to its popular David Hockney show.
- Oxford University's gardens, libraries and museums saw a 13% rise in visitors and three sites (Ashmolean, Bodleian and Museum of Natural History) entered the top fifty for the first time. The university says that the increase was driven by a marketing campaign which promoted the venues collectively, and by the 'Brain Diaries' exhibition at the Museum of Natural History which drew 160,000 people.

ALVA director Bernard Donoghue said: *"the fact that Scottish visitor attractions are outperforming the rest of the UK in visitor growth reflects years of strong investment by central and local government in Scotland, and by organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, in Scotland's visitor economy and cultural landscape."* Discussing often flatlining or falling figures in London, he pointed to the closure of London Waterloo in August, and the poor service of Southern Rail. Lower London museum audience figures are caused by lower domestic visits while overseas visitor figures have remained strong. Former national museum directors told *The Art Newspaper* they believe declining household budgets are a factor. The newspaper comments *"taking a family of four from Birmingham to London for the day and paying for food and other expenses could cost more than £200, even if there is free admission to the museums' permanent collections."* [ALVA](#) (Scotland), [STV](#), [ALVA](#) (whole UK), [ALVA](#) (top attractions), [ALVA](#) (table of figures), [BBC](#), [Horticultural Week](#), [Guardian](#), [GLAM](#) (Oxford), [Museums Journal](#) (overall UK figures), [Museums Journal](#) (London nationals), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Networks

Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance is formed including fifty cultural organisations

Two organisations, the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing and the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing are coalescing into a single body, representing more than fifty organisations with a shared belief that cultural engagement can be positive for health. The new Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance will be appointing a Director in April, in the meantime, those interested in its work can sign up to a newsletter. [Culture, Health and Wellbeing](#)

Awards

M + H Awards publish shortlist

Museums + Heritage has announced the shortlist for its annual awards, with prizes in 13 categories, with five or six projects shortlisted in each. Some of the projects include:

- The London Mithreum Bloomberg Space, and National Museums Liverpool's conservation of [Murillo's Virgin and Child in Glory](#) for Restoration and Conservation.
- National Museums Scotland's [Save the Galloway Hoard](#) campaign is on the shortlist for fundraising initiative of the year, alongside campaigns from Watts Gallery and Haslemere Education Museum.
- Educational initiatives include Leeds Museums and Galleries 'Exceed Expectations...with objects and artwork' and UCL Museums and Collections' 'Museums on Prescription'.
- Best permanent exhibition contenders include SMG's [Wonderlab](#) at the National Science and Media Museum, the National Army Museum permanent galleries, NHM's Hintze Hall, the new Postal Museum and Mail Rail and [The Ashmolean Story](#) at the eponymous museum.
- Temporary or Touring exhibitions include Salisbury Museum's celebration of [Terry Pratchett](#), the National Trust's [Prejudice and Pride](#) season which tells LGBTQ+ stories over several sites, the Science Museum's [Robots](#) and V&A's [You Say You Want a Revolution?](#) Records and Rebels 1966 – 1970.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony in London on 13th May. [M + H](#)

Kids in Museums Family Friendly Awards 2018

Kids in Museums has launched its annual search for the most child-friendly venues in the Britain. Nominations in the first round can be made by anyone, including children, parents and museum professionals: there is a brief form to complete. The deadline for suggestions is 31st May and a shortlist will be announced on 21st June. Tonia Collett, manager of Tudor House Museum, which was a previous nominee, said *"size isn't important, it's how you make the families visiting you feel, and here we've always prided ourselves on making everyone, regardless of age and ability, feel welcome and included."* [Kids in Museums](#), [Kids in Museums](#) (nomination form)

Memorials of the future: Historic England seeks new ideas

In a time where memorials of the past are increasingly contested, what should public memorials of the future look like, and who should they represent? Historic England has launched a design competition seeking creative proposals. The deadline for entries is 30th April; after this, ten ideas will be chosen for an 'Immortalised' display in London in September, each representing a different region of the UK. Simultaneously, members of the public are being invited to nominate lost and overlooked memorials that deserve attention. There is also an event 'Revere or Remove? The Battle Over Statues, Heritage and History' at the Emmanuel Centre, London, with speakers including historian and Civilisations presenter David Olusoga. [Historic England](#) (competition), [Historic England](#) (nominate lost memorials)

Also: Europa Nostra's annual list of the most endangered historic sites across Europe includes one UK location, an Ice Factory in Grimsby. [Europa Nostra](#)

Nesta seeks nominations for New Radicals

For the fourth year Nesta and the *Observer* are seeking nominations for the New Radical awards: 50 people and projects which are challenging the status quo and working for communities. Organisations of all sizes as well as individuals will be considered: projects must have been running for at least six months and have been launched after January 2015. The deadline for nominations is 29th April. You can follow the discussion on twitter at #50Radicals. [Nesta](#), [Guardian](#)

Creative Industries

Sadiq Khan publishes cultural strategy with £20m committed to London culture

Sadiq Khan has published his draft cultural strategy for London, committing more to culture than any previous London Mayor. The plans include:

- A £1m 'cultural seeds' programme which will give grants of £1 – 5k for small groups to develop an idea or buy necessary kit.
- Creative Enterprise Zones (see article below) to make sure that as London approaches a population of 10 million in 2030, creativity is not marginalised or pushed out.
- Plans for museums include support for the new Museum of London, a permanent home for the London Fire Brigade Museum by 2020, and a map, created with Historic England, of the many small and local museums in the capital, covering subjects from dentists and motorcycling to comedy.
- There will be an annual programme of community events and festivals.
- A 'Culture at Risk' office has been set up to prevent iconic buildings from the past from being lost.
- There are also plans for public art, street art walls, and a walkable city with a cleaner environment.
- Championing creative education, through projects such as the existing 'London Curriculum' which uses the city itself as a teaching aid, and which is supported by 80 cultural organisations including the National Portrait Gallery. There will also be schemes to support future musicians, fashion designers and digital workers through work placements and development for under-represented groups.
- A section on London as a World City also highlights the importance of tourism and support for creative production and export.

The report is now open for consultation, and a final version will be published later this year. Khan said *"all good cities should have decent transport and housing, but a great city needs to have a soul, and that soul comes from culture."* [London.gov](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Guardian](#)

London boroughs shortlisted to become Creative Enterprise Zones

11 London boroughs will receive a grant of £50k from the Mayor of London to develop plans to become Creative Enterprise Zones. It is estimated that creative work accounts for one in six jobs in the capital and generates £47bn to London's economy. However, artists often become displaced from areas they have helped to regenerate through rising rents and property prices; the scheme will help creative individuals and businesses establish themselves in an area and develop skills in local people. The boroughs given seed money are Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Camden, Croydon, Harrow, Hounslow, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Hackney. Each now has to prove it can provide secure, affordable workspace, skills and support to build entrepreneurship among creatives, local pro-cultural planning and a sense of community which includes marginalised groups. [Mayor of London](#)

Creative Industries sector deal invests £150m

The Creative Industries Sector deal has been launched, including a joint pledge of £150m from government and industry to be invested in the sector. The package includes:

- £33m of government funding to develop the immersive and augmented reality sectors, in areas including tourism and creating interactive art shows. VR and video games are expected to grow exceptionally over the next few years and will be worth £5bn in 2020.
- Support for film including a new London Screen Academy for 1,000 students aged 16+.
- A new Creative Industries Trade & Investment Board to replace the current advisory group.
- New action on copyright infringement, beginning with a series of roundtables between rights holders and platforms. The government will also invest £2m in a 'Get It Right' copyright campaign.
- A previously announced Cultural Development Fund in partnership with AHRC will give cities and towns £20m to invest in Creative Industries.

[Gov.uk](#), [BPI](#) (copyright), [AHRC](#)

New 'Developing your creative practice' fund offers £2 – 10k for artists

ACE has opened a new fund worth £3.6m each year for the next four years for artists who want time and space to develop their practice, without needing to show work at the end of it. The fund may cover training, research, networking, mentoring, experimentation with new forms or working internationally. ACE Chair Nick Serota said *"every creative person needs time to breathe, to broaden their experience and to develop their ideas. We want all our arts organisations to continue to commission and present new work from a diverse range of artists but we also need to invest in the future. This fund will give creative talent ...the backing that they need to hone their work and explore new paths."* [ACE](#)

Brexit

Creative Industries Federation publishes highlights of its Brexit conference

The Creative Industries Federation has published highlights from its Brexit conference which took place at the National Gallery in mid-March. There were speakers from across the museums, culture and creative industries sectors as well as politicians. In a keynote speech, architect Amanda Levete, founder of AL_A described the pressure her business was under to set up a second office in Paris ('I would be derelict in my duty if I was not now exploring the potential for having a base in the EU') and how 'talented young professionals who want to contribute to the UK are starting to go elsewhere'. She also described how a pan-European approach to talent meant that British architects have designed two of the most important civic projects in post-unification Berlin: the Reichstag by Norman Foster and the Neues Museum by David Chipperfield, and conversely how the V&A had been able to use a Dutch tiling manufacturer with 400 years of experience, as the best source of porcelain tiles for its new courtyard. Post Brexit, there is a risk that tariffs and delays at customs will make goods more expensive and erode certainty. She asked politicians not to interfere with trans-European collaboration, adding that *"it's not just about trade and what we can extract, it's about culture and society. It's about the exchange of talent and knowledge and respect for each other's nations. It has taken decades to build this spirit of co-operation, but it could be dismantled in months. The rest of Europe is busy getting on with business as usual and looking on with bemusement at our anxiety. They will be fine without us."* [Creative Industries Federation](#)

Also: Heritage Alliance Chair Loyd Grossman has written to Caroline Noakes, Minister of State for Immigration about the impact post-Brexit policy changes may have on the sector. 22% of Heritage Alliance members have workforces with over 60% EU nationals, over 50% of whom are earning salaries of less than £30k and therefore might not be eligible to continue to work in the UK. [Heritage Alliance](#) (letter to minister), [Heritage Alliance](#) (immigration briefing)

'Getting nerdy about the single market' – the cultural world and Brexit

Arts commentator James Doeser has written for *The Stage* on the pragmatic response of the arts world to Brexit over the past two years. He argues that arts organisations have become 'armed with new knowledge' including understanding the single market, customs union and trade agreements, and have become vocal on freedom of movement and access to finance in particular. The sector has also added a body of research about likely futures, with reports from CIF, ACE and the Mayor of London. Now those involved in the sector are 'making contingency plans which anticipate a decline in business'. He concludes: *"the creative industries are successful but fragile. Any diminishing of freedom of movement, any reduction in funding, or any barriers to slow the import and export of goods and services puts the performance of our industry at huge risk."* In an opinion piece for *Museums Journal*, MA policy officer Alistair Brown describes the museum sector as finding few positives: concerned about its EU staff, loss of funding and lessening opportunities for cross-border collaboration, especially in Ireland. [Museums Journal](#), [The Stage](#)

Work and pay

Perception, flexible working and closing the gender pay gap at ACE and museums

Liz Bushell, Chief Financial Officer for ACE has blogged about the current gender pay gap at the arts body. 66% of ACE employees are women, but a larger proportion of men are in senior management positions, accounting for a mean pay gap of 6.7%, and a median difference of 2.6%. Bushell says ACE is now committed to closing the gap altogether. At a January event, two HR consultants described their experiences of *"seeing candidates unconsciously judged differently because of their gender, race or disability"*. ACE is also reviewing its processes, public perceptions of the organisation and its opportunities for flexible working, to identify aspects discouraging to female, disabled or BAME candidates. It has recently appointed women to senior positions and hopes for a reduced pay gap in 2017 – 18. The average pay gap between men and women across all sectors is around 18% in favour of men.

Some other cultural bodies have also published their gender pay gap figures:

- The National Archives have a mean pay gap of 1.09% in favour of men, and a median gap of 1.98% in favour of women. The archives credit blind recruitment and a commitment to agile

flexible working patterns including compressed hours and working from home for its strong figures.

- The government offers an online pay gap search engine, tracking businesses with more than 250 employees [here](#). A number of museums are listed. For example, at the National Gallery, women's mean hourly rate is 14.4% lower than men; the Natural History Museum, women's mean hourly rate is 9.8% lower than men. The Beamish Museum has near gender parity, with women earning 1% less than men as a mean average.
- The British Library has published a recent pay gap report, showing a 6.22% gap in favour of men. The Library aims for parity by 2023 with new policies including greater flexible working, childcare and career breaks.

[National Archives](#), [National Gallery](#), [Beamish](#), [ACE](#) (full figures), [British Library](#), [ACE blog](#)

The best year to be a woman in cinema? 1917

Nesta has blogged on how to use the arts and particularly film archives, to judge gender parity in ways more sophisticated than simply counting people. Research has found, for example, that there has been no meaningful improvement in gender balance in films since WW2, with the percentage of screen time for women hovering around 30% (the highest percentage of screen time was 41%, in 1917). Data crunching can also reveal the seniority of people of both genders on film sets, and (by looking at scripts) see the sorts of words associated with male and female characters. Nesta says that the studies offering these insights are still 'one offs' and that the cultural world has an opportunity to build information sets which give insight to how both society and the arts are (or are not) changing with the times. [Nesta](#)

European innovation prizes for ideas to help more young people join the workforce

The 2018 European Social Innovation Competition, called RE:THINKLOCAL, is offering three prizes of €50,000 for ideas that will help reduce youth unemployment across Europe, currently running at twice the level of adult worklessness. It is particularly interested in ideas which harness the digital revolution, new ways of working and local characteristics to help the young develop skills and find permanent, stable work. The deadline for applications is 27th April, after which 30 semi-finalists will receive business development support and three days of mentoring. [Nesta](#)

Focus groups on class and museum work

Sam Evans, a PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London is holding a number of focus groups as part of work to assess the effect of class on employment in the museum sector. The initial phase of his work found that class was 'important, yet difficult to define, see, or know how to measure'. Sessions will take place from March - June at venues including MShed, MA's offices, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, a venue tbc in Manchester and at Birkbeck. [Museums Journal](#)

Also: DCMS has hosted a diversity forum at Abbey Road Studios bringing together 100 organisations from across culture, media and sport. The forum will continue to share good practice across different sectors which can often work on the same issues in separate silos. [Gov.uk](#)

PCS campaigns against privatisation of services in museums following the collapse of Carillion

The British Museum is among the organisations which had outsourced some of its services to the contractor Carillion, which collapsed in January. Cleaners, porters and building officers are currently being paid by the official receiver, PriceWaterhouseCoopers. The PCS union demonstrated at the BM in mid-March, calling for the staff and services to be brought back in house. A spokeswoman for the BM said *"at the request of PwC, current Carillion employees have stayed in their roles, we are grateful to them for having done so, ensuring we can keep the museum open for the public. In the longer term we are reviewing options and will be in discussions with alternative service providers."* [Museums Journal](#)

Local museums: openings, saves and regeneration

Into the mind (and ear canal) of a great inventor: Being Brunel opens in Bristol

A new £7.2m museum 'Being Brunel' has opened in Bristol next to SS Great Britain, following a five year development. The museum features 150 personal objects belonging to the great Victorian engineer, whose creativity was often fuelled by little sleep and 48 cigars a day. The space also seeks to evoke the atmosphere of the 1851 Great Exhibition (Brunel was on the steering committee) and recreates Brunel's Drawing Office, using a sketch made by his niece. Visitors can also take a rather literal journey through Being Brunel (starting in his ear canal and progressing into his brain for an audio visual show). The museum charts Brunel's ambitious failures including the South Devon Atmospheric Railway, once planned to run from Exeter to Plymouth using atmospheric traction - as well as successes which are still landmarks today such as the Clifton Suspension Bridge. [DCMS blog](#), [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#)

Home of the Roman nipple protectors is saved: local museums discussed in parliament

Stephen Kerr, the Conservative MP for Stirling called a debate in the House of Commons about local museums, originally because the Stirling Smith Museum in his constituency was threatened with closure, although it had been saved by the time of the debate. Kerr mentioned that the Stirling Smith's hugely varied collection includes the world's oldest football and nipple protectors used by Roman soldiers to prevent chafing.

Kerr raised the difficulties of local museums in borrowing items which are difficult or expensive to insure and called for a single indemnity scheme across the UK. He also pointed to the difficulty of local museums acquiring treasure trove – such as torcs found at Blair Drummond, but now held in Edinburgh (Deidre Brock MP pointed to issues of conservation). Kerr also said that local museums must have the funds to continue making acquisitions reflecting the life of surrounding communities. Among many stories of how local museums enrich constituencies across the country, there was one startling story of the MacFarlane collection in Bridge of Allan, and its death by firing squad: *"that museum was unloved, and then the Army was billeted in the museum, during which time the soldiers used the large collection of stuffed animals for target practice."* Kevin Brennan MP, Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, brought the discussion around to funding and resources. He said that Labour's research into 250 local museums found that since 2010 40% of local museums had decreased their opening hours by an average of 30%. He said that although there was a cross-party shared pride in local museums, government must confront the damage caused by local authority cuts. [Hansard](#)

Also: The Museum of Lead Mining is among local museums facing further funding cuts in 2018 - 19. Dumfries and Galloway Council has removed all of its £25k annual grant, reducing revenue by a sixth, and pushing the museum into overdraft. Meanwhile Wisbech and Fenland museum is looking at new models of revenue generation, including corporate hire, catering and grants to make up a £25k shortfall. [Museums Journal](#)

Three cities share £15m Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Three Local Enterprise Partnerships representing cities and regions in the North have been awarded a share of £15m from the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund. Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District won the funding after eleven bids. The support includes:

- £4m to transform the now-vacant Bradford Odeon into a live music, entertainment and events venue.
- £3.3m to enhance the visitor experience across the Lake District, which has recently become a World Heritage Site. Beneficiaries include the Wordsworth Museum and Abbott Hall Art Gallery & Museum. The project aims to attract 150,000 additional visitors and create or maintain 150 new jobs.
- £4m towards creating Blackpool's first museum, the 'Amuseum', opening in 2020.

[Gov.uk](#), [Blackpool Museum](#), [Arts Professional](#),

Save the Surrealist Lobster telephone

Arts Minister Michael Ellis has placed an export bar Lobster Telephone (White Aphrodisiac), by Salvador Dalí and Edward James. The Surrealist telephone was one of eleven created by Dalí in 1938, in collaboration with James, who was his patron. James owned an extensive collection of Surrealist art at Monkton, his country house in West Sussex. The telephone is the last of the seven painted white remaining in the UK. The asking price is £853,047 plus VAT. The export bar runs to 21st June, with a possible extension to 21st September. [Gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

DCMS to investigate library closures as many councils contemplate culture and leisure disposals

Culture Secretary Matt Hancock has written to the acting leader of Northamptonshire Council, Matthew Golby to confirm that he will be investigating a complaint by the libraries body CILIP about the number of library closures in the county. Northamptonshire, which is on the verge of bankruptcy, plans to retain 15 libraries, but either close 21 more, or invite them to become independent. CILIP argues that this means NCC will fail in its statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. There is no fixed date for the findings of the investigation, which will be carried out by DCMS officials. A report by the National Audit Office indicates that 15 other councils may face bankruptcy in the next three years and *The Guardian* points to an increase in disposals of leisure and cultural assets. Currently the Isle of Wight wants to sell its Dinosaur Isle museum and Hertfordshire County Council has decided to sell 1,600 works of art. [Gov.uk](http://gov.uk), [The Guardian](http://theguardian.com), [CILIP](http://cilip.org.uk), [The Bookseller](http://thebookseller.com)

Tech

New possibilities in machine learning to catalogue and access collections

Google Arts & Culture has been demonstrating how three new programmes built on machine learning can give new access to museum collections and archives, allowing searches through uncatalogued material. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York holds installation photographs stretching back to 1929, but the archive terms do not identify the works themselves. Google's machine learning tool automatically identified and catalogued 27,000 works in the photographs. Another programme, Art Palette, allows users to search collections of paintings by groups of colours, rather than search words. [ALVA](http://alva.org)

Jobs

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

- [Project Officer, Living Knowledge Network - The British Library](#)
- [Senior Curator, York Art Gallery - York Museums Trust](#)
- [Project Conservator x 2 - The National Archives](#)
- [IT Engineer - Tate](#)
- [Hospitality and Events Officer - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Head of Development - Lakeland Arts](#)

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

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