

In this month's edition:

- [Joint statement by museum and heritage bodies on Covid 19](#)
- [Tell a sector body if your museum faces a 'significant threat'](#)
- [Culture helps out: museums and archives donate supplies to the NHS](#)
- [ACE offers £160m in emergency funding to support organisations and individuals](#)
- [NLHF launches £50m Heritage Emergency Fund, suspends existing grant schemes](#)
- [MGS launches £700k Urgent Respond Fund, plus other measures to support museums](#)
- [Welsh Government offers £18m support for culture and measures for business](#)
- [Removing paywalls: resources and memberships now being offered for free](#)
- [Natural History Museum receives £180m for new research centre in Budget](#)
- [Budget contributes to plans for a British Library North in Leeds](#)
- [NAO's investigation into museum estate reveals underfunding and deterioration](#)
- [Weston Loan Programme – open for applications](#)
- [BBC launches Culture in Quarantine festival addressing, art, experiences of isolation and good mental health](#)
- [Fish feeding and home museums: a snapshot of what museums are offering audiences](#)
- [What really works? early commentary on ways to stay connected to the public](#)
- [Mapping Museums: assessing sector resilience based on 60 years of data](#)
- [Happy Museum considers the coronavirus as a turning point for society](#)
- ['Therapeutic landscapes': gathering evidence to prescribe gardens, libraries and museums](#)
- [Museums acquire one third of objects declared as Treasure in 2019](#)
- [The sounds of silent cities: collecting in a time of coronavirus](#)

...and much more.

Section headings | [Museums together](#) | [Funding changes and emergency support](#) | [Resources](#) | [Budget](#) | [Employment and business support](#) | [Opportunities](#) | [Remain indoors, plan a few events](#) | [Appointments and resignations](#) | [Looking forward – weathering the lockdown](#) | [Digital: rocketing audiences and what can \(and can't\) be achieved virtually](#) | [Fragility, resilience, strength – prospects for the sector](#) | [International](#) | [Museums for wellbeing](#) | [Flotsam and jetsam: thefts, finds and collecting](#) | [Jobs](#)

Museums together



Wet Rainbow, oil on board by Patrick Hughes (b.1939), © the artist. Photo: Leeds Museums and Galleries. Images this month are from museum collections included on the Art UK website.

Joint statement by museum and heritage bodies on Covid 19

Following the closure of all museums and staffed heritage sites in the wake of Covid-19, NMDC, AIM, MA, the Heritage Alliance and National Trust made a public statement, immediately after the announcement of a first package of support for businesses and employees. The group said that the closure measures put in place by Government are necessary, but put jobs and livelihoods at serious risk, and that they therefore welcome the announced package of support. They will continue to work with DCMS to find the right solutions for museums and heritage and for the UK. The statement also highlighted some of the many practical risks to museum work: *“for the museums and independent heritage sectors, this has also placed irreplaceable indoor and outdoor collections at risk, as well as the highly valued work we do in engaging people in their history; in supporting social cohesion; in providing spaces for learning and encouraging a better understanding of everyone’s place in the world.”* [Museums Journal](#),

NMDC's response to Covid-19

NMDC is staying in touch with DCMS about the consequences of the shutdown, and the practical things the sector can do during and after the current closures. In a statement, it said *"DCMS and NMDC will be staying in constant engagement about the many financial implications both now and in the coming months. We both want to ensure that they can be a vibrant player in the future of our country's culture and prosperity. Decisions about eventual reopening will be made in accordance with the latest scientific guidance."* [NMDC](#)

Tell a sector body if your museum faces a 'significant threat'

AIM is urging museums that face serious problems in surviving the next couple of months to get in touch, or contact another sector body. It is in discussion with DCMS, NHLF and ACE to understand the needs of 'museums facing serious and imminent danger...in the next four to eight weeks'. It strongly encourages affected museums to email info@aim-museums.co.uk or use the most appropriate contact for its museum type. [AIM](#)

Culture helps out: museums and archives donate supplies to the NHS

Museums across the world have been sending hospitals gloves, masks and other items usually used by conservation and operations staff as protective gear to fight the coronavirus. In the UK, the National Archives has been encouraging people to donate to London Ambulance Service at StrategicIncidentRoom@lond-amb.nhs.uk, many national museums have given directly to large hospitals and NMDC has also been co-ordinating efforts to bring useful supplies out of museum storerooms and pass them to the NHS. If your museum has supplies and would like guidance about how to donate, do contact Bethany.Reynard@nationalmuseums.org.uk who will be glad to advise. The Ashmolean was among a group of Oxford museums which donated to London Ambulance Service. A spokeswoman for the museum said *"the London ambulance service were so desperate they were going to use a taxi or courier to collect them from Oxford, but could not arrange this before lock down so we volunteered to deliver them to London on behalf of all Oxford University Museums."* Meanwhile, Scottish Opera has repurposed trucks which it had originally intended to use for its tour of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' as backup for Tesco, which needs extra capacity to restock its supermarkets to keep up with demand. [Art Newspaper](#), [National Archives](#), [Scottish Opera](#), [Dallas Museum of Art](#), [Rijksmuseum](#), [Planet Radio](#) (Royal Children's Hospital), [Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#) (list of ways to help)

Funding changes and emergency support

ACE offers £160m in emergency funding to support organisations and individuals

Arts Council England has announced that it will be offering £160m in new financial support for individuals and organisations affected by closures and lack of work due to the coronavirus. The funding consists of:

- £90m for NPOs, which ACE hopes they will be able to use to 'reboot creative work' but which may also be used to alleviate financial pressures.
- NPOs will also continue to receive funding on 'relaxed conditions' for up to six months and the next NPO investment process will be postponed, so current support plans will continue until 31st March 2023.
- There will be £20m for individual artists, creative practitioners and freelancers including museum practitioners. Individuals can apply for grants up to £2.5k if they have a track record in publicly funded culture. There is enhanced support for disabled people who are often among the most impacted by the restrictions.
- There is also £50m for organisations that do not receive NPO funding. These can apply for a maximum of £35k.

This money to support this work is reallocated from National Lottery Project Grants, Developing Your Creative Practice and Development Funds for 2020 – 21 and will also use up almost all reserves. ACE said that it particularly regretted suspending national lottery grants, with ACE Chief Executive Darren Henley responding directly to cultural workers who have written about the impact of fund closures: *"I wholly understand your dismay. Such a blow would be hard at the best of times... But because of this crisis, because of its enormity and its calamitous impact on the people and organisations in which we invest, we've had to move fast, and respond decisively. I want to reassure*

you that we are still looking ahead. Over the coming weeks, we've committed to spending £160m to help England's cultural ecology survive - but we've nevertheless held back around £57m, more than half of our National Lottery Project Grants budget for 2020-21, in the hope that we can reinstate the programme at the earliest opportunity." [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Guardian](#), [ACE](#) (Covid-19 resources), [ACE](#) (further detail for NPOs), [Evening Standard](#), [M + H](#), [The Stage](#), [ACE blog](#) (Henley comment), [ACE](#) (support for disabled applicants)

NLHF launches £50m Heritage Emergency Fund, suspends existing grant schemes

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has launched a £50m fund to support the heritage sector through the Covid-19 crisis. This will offer short-term funding to those running sites or projects previously or currently funded by NLHF. The fund will be spent in two ways:

- As grants of £3k - £50k available over the next three to six months to stabilise operations or manage unforeseen risks.
- As strategic investments where heritage is at greatest risk. This could include increased funding to projects currently underway.
- However, to cover this, all committee-level grants (£250k - £5m) and single-stage grants (£3k - £250k) have been halted until at least October.
- The result of a survey of 1,253 grantees by NLHF showed that 82% reported high or moderate risk to their long term viability, with 37% saying they could not last for more than six months in this environment and 11% unable to survive for more than two.

NLHF is also offering a wider package of support, including flexibility in how current projects are delivered, bespoke advice and bringing forward the £1.2m Digital Skills for Heritage project. [NLHF](#), [NLHF](#) (survey results)

Accreditation for all museums to be extended for 12 months

ACE, MGS and other museum accreditation partners have agreed to extend current award status for an additional 12 months. Accreditation panel meetings are delayed to 2021, but the scheme will remain open so that museums with 'working towards' status will be able to continue to develop their applications. ACE has published FAQs in conjunction with other cultural support bodies which are applicable to museums and galleries across the UK. [ACE](#)

MGS launches £700k Urgent Respond Fund, plus other measures to support museums

Museums Galleries Scotland has announced that it will distribute a new £700k of Scottish Government funding to support museums and galleries. Sector feedback so far has suggested that independent museums are among the most affected, and the grants will reflect this. Awards will cover core costs, not project work. In addition:

- The Scottish Government has also announced a £55k Digital Resilience Fund open to museums to purchase home working equipment or the means to access digital collections remotely.
- MGS itself will offer flexibility around project timescales and how funding is used for its existing grants. It will honour costs already incurred on events that need to be postponed and work with organisations to cover additional costs when the event takes place at a later date. Grants will be processed as normal, and where they support salaries, will continue to be given even if the post holder cannot deliver the project as planned.

Details of the two new funds will be online shortly and will open on 8th. MGS says it will be offering regular updates from @MuseumsGalScot, plus details of how to stay connected through bi-weekly social zoom meetings for the sector. This work is the first strand of an 'emergency, recovery and resilience' plan for the sector in 2020 – 21, with further announcements planned as events unfold. [MGS](#) (overview)

In brief: further financial support in Scotland

MGS has also signposted The Third Sector Resilience Fund, which has opened with £20m for charities, community groups and social enterprises and may offer support to museums.

The Scottish Government's £350m package of support for Scottish businesses include relaxation of charges for water bills, and a range of other reliefs. [Scottish Government](#) (water bills), [Third Sector Resilience Fund](#), [Scottish Government](#) (overview of other business reliefs)

Welsh Government offers £18m support for culture and measures for business

Support available in Wales includes:

- £18m in support for culture from The Welsh Government including a £1m Cultural Resilience Fund to help museums, libraries and archives to respond to short term pressures and a £7m Arts Resilience Fund administered by the Arts Council of Wales.
- There is also a £750k Emergency Relief Fund to support the smallest and most vulnerable independent sector sport, museum and heritage organisations, helping with cash flow and other critical issues.
- A £325k Covid-19 Resilience grant scheme has opened through The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, offering a maximum of £10k per bid.
- A Tourism Barometer will track the impact of closures and revenue loss caused by Covid-19 on Welsh tourism businesses over time. The Welsh Government will use this impact data to 'support the industry through these challenging times'.
- There are also two levels of grant supporting Welsh businesses, including those in leisure, retail and tourism.

[Welsh Government](#) (Tourism Barometer), [Welsh Government](#) (support for business), [Business Wales](#), [Welsh Government](#) (support for culture), [Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales](#) (resilience grant scheme), [Arts Council Wales](#)

LGA and ACE collaborate to share good practice and avoid 'entrenching inequality'

The Local Government Association has announced that it will be working with ACE and a number of bodies in the leisure and culture trust sectors to better support culture. The partners will:

- Align support for organisations, with relaxed funding conditions, whether this is received through ACE or local government.
- Share good practice so interventions are as effective as possible.
- Make the case for the importance of culture to communities in the future.
- Stabilise the sector, including organisations of every size, and both the freelance and employed workforce, ensuring that the crisis does not entrench inequality.

[LGA](#), [ACE](#) (link to full statement)

Talking to donors and philanthropists during the Covid crisis

Michelle Wright of Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy has written about how to talk to donors during the coronavirus crisis. She says that even when requests for money are not appropriate, donors will appreciate contact. She adds that there may be a time lag effect on philanthropy: *"it's safe to assume many donors will honour their commitments in the year of a downturn but not the following year. If you're just starting a three-year campaign, have confidence. You may need to lower your fundraising target for now but could far exceed it when things recover, especially if you manage your relationships well."* [Arts Professional](#)

Resources



The Small Meadows in Spring (Les Petits Prés au printemps), 1880, oil on canvas by Alfred Sisley (1839–1899). Photo: Tate

Signposting

- ACE has published a round up of resources for individuals working in the cultural sector, in addition to its own funding support schemes [ACE](#) (individuals), [ACE](#) (organisations)
- The Museums Association has written answers to some common queries about what is available to workers and employers, and also highlights support available for different types of museums. [Museums Journal](#) (employment and organisational FAQs)
- The Creative Industries Federation has also brought together an overview of Government support in all four UK countries, ranging from income support for employed and self-employed people, to cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure and protection from eviction. [CIF](#)
- VisitBritain is offering a tourism business advice hub, and is also inviting organisations to get involved in its #LoveGreatBritain social media campaign, to encourage tourists to begin visiting again when restrictions are lifted. [VisitBritain](#) (#LoveGreatBritain), [VisitBritain](#) (resources hub)

AIM online consultancies for independent museums

AIM is offering an hour-long consultancy service for independent museums, from the pool of consultants who usually provide its Prospering Boards advice. They can offer help on topics including cashflow, leadership, HR and business planning. AIM plans to offer additional help over the next few months as the situation evolves. [AIM](#) (consultancy), [AIM](#) (general resources list)

#LondonTogether - Mayor announces cultural response for London

The Mayor of London's office has announced its resources for culture in response to the coronavirus. It has 'supersized' its Culture at Risk office, offering advice and signposting resources. Its London Borough of Culture timetable will also be pushed back a year. It is also sharing ideas with cities across the world, all at different stages in dealing with the virus, through the World Cities Culture Forum. London venues are also encouraged to share positive stories about good things they are doing through the hashtag #LondonTogether. [Mayor of London](#) (Culture at Risk Office), [Mayor of London](#) (London Borough of Culture), [World Cities Culture Forum](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Care of Collections – addressing access problems and additional risks during lockdown

- AIM has published useful guidance from the UK Heads of Conservation Group to help museums care as well as possible for collections during the lockdown, especially with site access necessarily restricted for collections staff. [AIM](#)
- ACE has published updated advice on the Government Indemnity Scheme including brief guidance from the National Security Adviser and GIS Environmental Adviser on how to proceed, depending on whether staff can gain access to the site. [ACE](#) (GIS)
- ICON has also published a brief practical guide with links to many further resources. [ICON](#)

The MA has also advised that *"clearly our paramount responsibility is the health of our staff and our communities and we would advise currently that all staff should be working from home apart from those dealing with critical security, estates and collections matters with careful social distancing and lone working practices in place."* [Museums Journal](#)

Overview of live and complete cultural sector surveys on the coronavirus

A huge number of surveys have been launched to get a snapshot of how the cultural sector is coping. The Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre is keeping a running note of open and completed surveys, with links, covering everything from business to museum funders. [PEC](#)

Removing paywalls: resources and memberships now being offered for free

A number of organisations are offering resources for free that usually attract a charge or require membership to access, during the coronavirus emergency. These include:

- GEM, the organisation for everyone interested in learning through museums and heritage, is offering free on year memberships to freelancers until 1st June. This will allow access to a supplier listing as well as access to publications and discounts on training programmes. [GEM](#)
- The Creative Industries Federation is offering membership free of charge for freelancers and microbusinesses for the next six months, including access to a membership directory, a jobs board and events (when they resume). Membership usually starts at £80. [CIF](#)
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has made its resources for members available to all, with materials on everything to governance and safeguarding to funding and covid-19 guidance. [NCVO](#)
- Arts Professional is inviting any arts organisation with a professional training event going ahead virtually in the next couple of months to promote it for free on its listings. (Fill in the form and skip the payment section). [Arts Professional](#)
- Crowdfunder is partnering with Creative England to give creative organisations a platform to sell goods and services in advance and raise funds. It will not charge a fee for the use of the platform. [Crowdfunder](#)
- Arts Professional has also removed its paywall for articles relating to the coronavirus, from employment support to health and wellbeing. [Arts Professional](#)

Budget

In an extraordinary month Chancellor Rishi Sunak's initial Budget has been supplemented by a number of further announcements to address the suspension of much of the economy by the coronavirus. However, the initial budget contained a variety of measures to support the cultural sector:

- £27m was announced for critical maintenance work on national museum estates, although a recent report from NAO (below) shows that this is only 7% of the sum requested to cover the extent of the works.
- A previously announced £250m for the Cultural Investment Fund has been confirmed.
- £180m towards a new research centre for the Natural History Museum (article below).
- The British Library receives £13m to extend its network of business and intellectual property centres, and support for a new site in Leeds (see article below).
- An increase in R&D investment to £22bn by 2024 – 25, or 0.8% of GDP.
- From 2021, every secondary school will receive £25k each year to invest in arts education, a total of £90m.
- DCMS's budget grows by £100m to £2.3bn
- There is a total of £320m to help communities repair damage and build flood resilience.
- There were a number of measures to support business and employment, some updated by further announcements. See the signposting and employment sections below for further details.

[CIF](#) (budget comment), [Arts Professional](#), NMDc (Cultural Investment Fund), [Heritage Alliance](#) (overview), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#) (view of school funding), [Nesta](#) (R&D comment)

Natural History Museum receives £180m for new research centre in Budget

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced that the Natural History Museum will receive £180m over six years towards its new science and digitisation centre at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. The site which is already home to many other research organisations, will house 40% of NHM's collections plus laboratories, digitisation suites, computing, conservation labs and research spaces. The funding is part of the Government's wider commitment to spend 2.4% of GDP on R&D projects. As well as allowing the museum to preserve its 80 million specimens spanning 4.5bn years, it will help the UK to address some of the biggest current global issues. NHM Director Sir Michael Dixon said *"the centre will allow our 300 scientists to further their research into the biggest challenges facing the planet and humanity – from global and national biodiversity loss and sustainable land use to food security, disease transmission and ensuring we have the right natural resources available for transition to a zero-carbon economy."* Angus Horner, Director at the Harwell campus said *"one of the first challenges we would welcome working with the Museum on is food production - to resolve the interconnected human and planetary health pressures. With the Museum here on Campus we can bolster the many organisations working in this area at Harwell"*. [M + H](#), [NHM](#)

Budget contributes to plans for a British Library North in Leeds

The British Library will receive up to £95m in funds to transform its work in the North of England from Government, following an announcement in the Budget. In addition, it will receive £25m as part of the Yorkshire Devolution deal to create a British Library North in Leeds City Centre. The plans include:

- The British Library's existing Boston Spa site, on a 44 acre campus holds around two thirds of the Library's 170 million items. New plans will ensure there is enough space for collections until mid-century, and will retire end-of-life buildings. There will also be more support for digitisation.
- The Library will also work with Leeds City Council to identify and establish a new site for a British Library in the city centre. The recently-saved Egyptian Mill in Leeds is being considered as a potential site.

[British Library](#), [Save Britain's Heritage](#), [Times](#),

NAO's investigation into museum estate reveals underfunding and deterioration

A National Audit Office investigation has laid out the extent of disrepair of the museum estate sponsored by DCMS, which it linked to a 20% real terms reduction in Government funding since 2010, coupled with years of underinvestment in buildings. The report found that although national museums received around £42m into a Maintenance Fund last year, it was time limited and a fraction of what is required to address the backlog: for example, National Museums Liverpool received £3.5m towards its £24m repair bill, which it struggled to spend optimally because of longer lead in times than the fund allowed for much of the work and the limits of staff capacity. Some maintenance issues are now so serious that they endanger collections and possibly staff and visitors. Examples given in the report include:

- The Wallace Collection shed masonry from the portico of its building in 2018 following a worsening condition accelerated by previous cosmetic fixes.
- The Power Hall at the Museum of Science and Industry will be closed until 2021 because of its poor condition.
- DCMS-sponsored museums attracted 49.7m people in 2018 – 19 and are attractive at front of house, but this often conceals dilapidation behind the scenes, demoralising staff.

The NAO also notes that DCMS only received 7% of the funds that it requested for vital work in the last budget to cover 2020 - 2025. Meg Hillier MP, chair of the Committee of Public Accounts said *“failure to spend enough on repairs to the nation’s leading museums has put priceless art and the safety of staff and visitors at risk. The museums are telling DCMS that the backlog is getting worse. But the department does not yet know the full extent of the problem. The government has only offered sticking-plasters – small amounts of money, too late in the day to do anything more than a short-term fix.”* Museum representatives are hoping that admission charges do not become the only option to address the situation. Speaking to *The Telegraph* Science Museum Director and NMDC Chair Sir Ian Blatchford said *“to do so would be a foolish distraction when events have revealed how much museums are loved and valued. Once we are through the current crisis, we expect further capital and operational needs to be revisited at the next Spending Review.”* [NAO](#), [Times](#), [Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#), [NMDC](#) (investment in 2019), [Museums Journal](#)

Employment and business support



Dieppe, 14 July 1905: Night, 1935, oil on canvas by John Duncan Fergusson (1874–1961), © The Fergusson Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland. Photo: National Galleries of Scotland

Government offers business and employee support webinars

The Government is offering a number of webinars for businesses looking for advice and resources to help cope with the coronavirus closures: HMRC is hosting a series on its YouTube channel with a focus on employment – this link also includes resources and webinars from ACAS. BEIS is also encouraging businesses to contact their Local Growth Hubs for support. [LEP network](#), [HMRC](#)

Support for employed and self-employed people

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that self-employed people would receive a payment equal to 80% of income for those earning below £50k per annum (95% of self-employed workers earn less). However, he said that due to the complexity of the scheme, payments will not begin until June. A third of those working in the creative industries are self-employed compared to 15% in the wider population, and several museum, cultural and creative industries bodies had called for support for this section of the workforce, including AIM, NMDC and the Creative Industries Federation.

CIF said that it welcomed the Chancellor's measures which mean that 'Government is going to stand by the majority of the UK's self employed and freelance workers'. However, it said that many could not survive until June with no income – two months later than the employed, and said it was seeking clarity for creative workers not covered by the announcement, including those who did not have a tax return for 2018 – 19, short term contractors on PAYE and those paid in dividends. CEO Caroline Norbury added "*we now must ensure that this package is comprehensive and interim relief is immediately accessible*"

Those in employment, but unable to work due to the shutdown will receive 80% of salaries while furloughed. *Museums Journal* has published FAQs on much of the detail, including how museums can obtain support for staff. Meanwhile, *The Guardian* has captured some of the fallout in the arts sector as institutions close and project and seasonal works falls away. David, a freelance artist and gallery worker said "*most galleries and museums have cancelled work – I've lost work equivalent to two and a half months' pay, and from talking to friends, that seems quite light.*" [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Professional](#), [CIF](#) (response to Government measures), [Arts Industry](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#)

Opportunities

Weston Loan Programme – open for applications

The Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund is going ahead with the latest round of the Weston Loan Programme, which invites regional museums and galleries to seek support to secure major strategic loans. In this second phase, the pool of lenders has been widened to include non-nationals who lend under GIS conditions. Funding for the process will cover up to 100% of costs including security reviews, insurance, transportation, conservation, installation and invigilation. Funds of £5k - £25k will be available for each bid, and the deadline is 8th May. The Art Fund encourages those who had been thinking about applying to do so (even with reopening dates uncertain) – but will also be offering another round later this year, and twice a year in 2021 and 2022. [Art Fund](#)

National Academy for Social Prescribing aims to open £1m fund later this year

The National Academy for Social Prescribing has published its plans to 2023 which include a partnership with Arts Council England and a £1m Social Prescribing Development Fund to help local community groups spread its offer. [Social Prescribing Academy](#)

Remain indoors, plan a few events

BBC launches Culture in Quarantine festival addressing, art, experiences of isolation and good mental health

The BBC has announced that it will hold a virtual arts festival, Culture in Quarantine, working in collaboration across the cultural sector. It will take 'voluntary and involuntary isolation' as a broad theme and also look at the ways that culture can be helpful to mental health. Strands already in place include:

- a competition with ACE to find 25 artists making video and interactive works on the human aspects of isolation.
- Screenings of theatrical performances including from the RSC and Battersea Arts Centre.
- A film 'Titian Behind Closed Doors' at the National Gallery, which includes scenes of Director Gabriele Finaldi closing the major Titian exhibition days after it opened.
- A four part series exploring collections from Tate Modern, Tate Britain, The Ashmolean and British Museum.

Director Tony Hall said *"it's important during this period that we maintain access not just to news and information, but to the arts and culture. For many people they are a valuable part of their lives and a way of stimulating imagination, thought, and escapism. It's a vital part of who we are as individuals and part of our identity as a nation"* [Art Professional](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [BBC blog](#), [Evening Standard](#), [The Space](#) (art commissions)

Collections Trust launches survey and takes its events programme online

The Collections Trust is seeking data on how people are coping with remote collections management and is offering regular online events:

- It is running a brief survey until 13th April to discover how easily staff can access collections data from home
- From 8th April it will be offering a weekly online coffee morning to discuss museum topics (participants are equally welcome to leave their camera on or off).

[Collections Trust](#), [Collections Trust](#) (survey), [Collections Trust](#) (panel event)

Audience Agency offers core digital skills webinars

The Audience Agency is offering two free webinars on core digital skills, from reaching online audiences, measuring impact, supporting a new commercial model or engaging communities. The events take place on 22nd April from 11am and 29th April at 2pm. There are still some places on webinars on other topics, but these are filling up fast. [Audience Agency](#) (webinars), [Audience Agency](#) (wider resources)

Digital Cultural Network offers online digital training

ACE's Digital Cultural Network is offering various resources for learning online, including a number of Google Analytics webinars from April. [ACE](#)

M + H Awards delayed until at least the summer

The M + H Awards have been pushed back to a later date when people can 'enjoy the moment'. The shortlist is now likely to be announced on 1st July with an award ceremony in London on 22nd September. [Experience UK](#), [M + H](#)

Dealing with cancelled public events: audiences are generous, but may return slowly

Arts audiences reacted generously to the universal closure of cultural venues in mid-March, with two-thirds agreeing to either donate the cost of tickets or opt to be given new tickets once reopening is possible. However, there has inevitably been a 90% drop in the future purchase of tickets. Writing directly after cultural venue closures, Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy described how to encourage audiences to donate and help venues survive, while encouraging sensitivity towards audience members with their own financial difficulties. Meanwhile, a survey of 1,000 people in the US suggested that, although 46% of audiences say that will value events more post-pandemic, two-thirds may be more concerned about cleanliness and the proximity of strangers, and may take some months to return. [Arts Industry](#) (advance ticket sales), [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#), [Variety](#)

Edinburgh Fringe is cancelled – but with the hope that some events will take place

Scotland's largest cultural event, the Edinburgh Fringe, has become one of the casualties of the coronavirus lockdown. Although live events may be tenable by August, *The Guardian* reports that "it was becoming increasingly clear that the huge, expensive operation going on at the moment to prepare for the fringe could no longer continue." In a joint statement some leading Fringe venues have said that they "might rekindle a spark of festival fringe in our venues in August 2020" if the situation improves. However, this is unlikely to help more than a little with the economic impact, as the festival generates £300m and supports 5000 jobs. Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce said that businesses 'hanging on and hoping' for later in the summer now face closure. [Guardian](#), [The Scotsman](#)

Appointments and resignations

Labour's new leader Sir Keir Starmer has announced his Shadow Cabinet, including Jo Stevens, MP for Cardiff Central who will be Shadow for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. [Labour Party](#), [Jo Stevens MP](#)

Philip Long, Director of V&A Dundee has resigned to become Director of National Trust Scotland. [Arts Industry](#)

Professor Mary Beard has now been confirmed as a Trustee of the British Museum, after having her candidacy rejected by the May Government last year. Beard said "I have been a huge beneficiary of this and other museums in the country over the last 60 years, and I am delighted to be able to give something back. There are many ways in which these are challenging times for all museums, and I look forward to bringing my pennyworth to the table in facing those challenges." [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#)

Looking forward – weathering the lockdown



Cliffs at Beer, Devon, 1922, oil & pencil on panel by Winifred Knights (1899–1947). Photo: UCL Art Museum

V&A Director: shutdown makes us see the place of museums in society more clearly

Writing for *The Art Newspaper*, V&A Director Tristram Hunt considers the situation of museums as closures now cover most of the world. Even during the Blitz, The National Gallery was able to remain open, showing Londoners 'an Old Master a month' – but the nature of the coronavirus has blocked some of the most essential strands that museums offer: 'human contact, reflection, human space, hope'. He argues that just as the virus has shown how interconnected the world is, it also has the capacity to feed nationalist narratives of 'ethnic scapegoats, sealed borders, chauvinism and authoritarianism'. He argues that museums are a natural counter to these, but are more at risk because of the financial model they have been shaped by in the West: with the New York Met predicting a \$100m loss, and most major museums contemplating losses from the collapse of retail, licensing, parties, filming, exhibition touring and membership. He says that when museums finally begin to reopen, politicians should give a clear account of 'why museums fit in the public sphere and why they should be supported by public funds' – and that the heart of museums' work is to safeguard artefacts that are central to a citizen's sense of self. He adds: *"that role needs vocal support and financial assistance from the state if we are going to rebuild, after the pandemic, the social ties that museums and galleries help to bind."* [The Art Newspaper](#)

Also: Museum directors have commented to artnet with their reaction to the coronavirus shutdown. Tate Director Maria Balshaw said that museums and galleries should 'keep people's creative spirits up' with virtual exhibitions and resources for children. She said *"we've seen it already with Italians singing on balconies or children singing to their mum outside houses on Mothers' Day. We need to be amplifying our human capacity to respond to adversity creatively."* The Serpentine's Artistic Director Hans-Ulrich Obrist called for a large public commission, similar in scale to President Roosevelt's Public Works of Art Project in Depression, which employed 3,700 artists to produce 15,000 works. He said *"when the situation is under control, they need to go into communities with art which don't usually have access to it. In this time of crisis, it's important that museums think about how they can go beyond their walls and reach everyone."* [Guardian](#), [artnet](#),

Digital: rocketing audiences and what can (and can't) be achieved virtually

Fish feeding and home museums: a snapshot of what museums are offering audiences

Museums have been highlighting and reworking their digital offer for audiences, and for many online visitors have grown dramatically since the UK shutdown. ALVA reports that the British Museum has doubled its visitors over two and a half weeks, and the National Gallery's virtual tours are up 796% over a week. The Science Museum has doubled take up for its learning resources and has tripled those playing its games. Here is a representative sample of the refreshed digital offer from museums:

- National Museums Liverpool has launched 'My Home is My Museum', a project aimed at 4 – 11 year olds which encourages them to make an art gallery or collection in their own homes to film and share. [NML](#)
- Manchester Museum has published a quarantine microsite, featuring a Cultural First Aid Kit of 30 fun activities that can be enjoyed at home or in hospital. Manchester Art Gallery also continues to offer its mindful art audioguide 'And Breathe' [MMinQuarantine](#), [Manchester Art Gallery](#)
- Bolton Library and Museum Service has made an assured start, offering daily themed activities and an ebook among other things. Crucially, the service has asked its audience what they want via Facebook – requests have included Egypt school sessions, recorded fish feeding and songs from its Toddler Tales series. [Bolton LMS](#)
- The Science Museum's offer includes 22 scientific experiments to run at home, as well as films and online games. SMG's Science Director Roger Highfield has also written a blog on the science of the coronavirus, which considers the various scientific approaches that might help end the pandemic. [SMG](#) (home science), [SMG](#) (other activities), [SMG blog](#) (coronavirus)
- Royal Museums Greenwich reminds audiences that they can still look up and explore the night sky, offering a guide to the month including a supermoon, Venus and the Lyrids meteor shower. It adds 'April is a fantastic month for stargazers'. [RMG](#)

- Birmingham Museum and Art Galleries is offering a 3D tour using ScanTech Digital, beginning with Jacob Epstein's Lucifer in the museum's Round Room. This has also attracted much larger audiences since the lockdown. [BMAG](#)
- The British Museum has blogged some advice on the range of its online options, from podcasts to learning and visiting the museum in Google Street View. [British Museum](#)
- There are also some attempts at huge comprehensive listings, including MCN's global 'Ultimate Guide to Virtual Museum Resources', and selections including the Guardian's choice of ten virtual museum tours, from the National Gallery to Vatican Museums and the Natural History Museum. [MCN](#), [Guardian](#)

[ALVA](#)

Resources for children – printable mammoths and Treasure Jam

A number of organisations have produced or are publishing lists of materials to help with educating children at home, with an emphasis on creative projects. Kids in Museums has listed ten favourites, including creating pixel art with the National Videogame Museum, a cut out castle with English Heritage or a National Museums Scotland mammoth from its printable guide. The Treasure Jam invites young people to make a work of art inspired by a museum object and upload it to the project's website. GEM's resources list also points to links with advice to help talk to children about the virus itself without making them feel frightened. [GEM](#), [Kids in Museums](#), [Treasure Jam](#)

Culture Fix: a path through digital cultural content

With an enormous amount of digital cultural content launching at the moment, Substrakt has created a site to signpost audiences through what is out there, with 200 contributions added so far, called Culture Fix. Creator Ash Mann writes "*with such torrential and competing content being broadcast through online channels, as well as the global noise and stress, there is a danger that much of this is rapidly becoming difficult to navigate, with useful information likely to be lost.*" Museums are invited to flag up their resources through the submissions page. [CultureFix](#), [Culture Fix](#) (submissions), [Substrakt](#)

Art UK offers quizzes, curation (and a route to retaining some revenue)

Andrew Ellis, Director of Art UK has been discussing how it has been adapting its operations to the current situation. He says: "this is when a [virtual national art collection](#) can come into its own – keeping the nation's art open for viewing. We have been listening to museum needs and thinking strategically about our offer for the next six months. Against a frenzy of virtual offerings to audiences, we have focused on a small number of big ideas:

- First, in collaboration with the [Guardian](#) we are doing a daily art quiz with each one set by a different collection, in order to showcase the nation's art and offer diversion.
- Secondly, next month we will launch [Curations](#) which will allow the public to curate digital art exhibitions from over 3,000 UK collections whilst allowing museums and galleries to create their own digital exhibitions of cancelled shows or digitally freeze historic ones.
- We are also telling more stories about the nation's art (many written by curators), helping museums move to using our online shop for art prints sales and much needed revenue, and increasing our online learning offer.
- On social media we have started an [online art exchange](#) between collections."

He adds "*all in all, at this uniquely challenging time, we believe our role is to support the UK's museums and galleries keep their art accessible and, through this extraordinary national collection of art we all own, provide some comfort and enjoyment.*" [Art UK](#), [Guardian](#) (quizzes), [Guardian](#) (DIY curation)



Sailors on the HMS Prince George, Malta, 1917 - 18. Courtesy of National Archives which is launching a project inviting volunteers to transcribe First World War Navy records.

What really works? early commentary on ways to stay connected to the public

The heavy reliance on digital has also been discussion by bloggers and museum digital staff of the strengths – and limits - of what can be achieved at a distance:

- Interviewed by the *New York Times*, The Royal Academy's Adam Kozary (previously famous for his work popularising rural agriculture for MERL) said that the RA's social media team are trying to respond to 'this weird mixture of scared and bored' that many people will be feeling. He argues that posting highlights from collections is not enough: *"a lot of people are going to fall into the trap of just trying to give people what they'd come to see in person on the screen, but social media doesn't work like that. It's meant to be collaborative, democratic."* [New York Times](#), [Royal Academy](#) (twitter)
- Nina Simon, author of *The Participatory Museum* has blogged about resisting the urge to leap to action, advising *"move fast when there's an obvious best way to contribute... move slow when the path is not obvious and creativity could lead to better results"*. She adds that with a big online following and skills in leading change, she hopes to contribute, but believes it will take a month to fully work out what is needed. [Medium/Nina Simon](#)
- Peak Experience Lab has been thinking about how audience segments now look completely different following lockdown, suggesting programming that works for those who feel 'bored, adrift and stir-crazy' or 'in control and wanting to volunteer', as well as those processing grief for the loss of normal or seeking stress relief through humour and novelty. [Peak Experience Lab](#)
- US based *Atlas Obscura* reports that several institutions have seen an increase in online research and transcription volunteering since the beginning of the coronavirus, with Newberry, a research library in Chicago reporting that *"in two weeks we've seen 62% of the traffic we typically see over the course of an entire year"*. The National Archives are among those launching online collaboration, seeking volunteers to transcribe First World War Royal Navy records. [Atlas Obscura](#), [National Archives](#)
- Jim Richardson of MuseumNext makes the case that museums should consider 'slow' long form content, showing off a depth of knowledge from collections. He looks at a range of museums that have taken this approach, including the Wellcome Collection. [MuseumNext](#)

Millions flock to use Zoom, but there are some privacy and hacking concerns

One effect of the widespread lockdown is that the webinar and meeting platform Zoom has grown from a fairly well-regarded business platform with 10 million users in December to acquiring 200 million adopters by March. However, this has also highlighted privacy and security issues, such as sharing data with Facebook and 'zoombombing' – bad actors hacking into meetings and then broadcasting shocking content. There is guidance for Zoom use that makes it much harder for meetings to be gatecrashed, but tech commentators suggest that other problems may be harder to fix. It has been recently banned in New York City schools, where child protection makes it a more pressing issue than for many businesses. CEO Eric S Yuan says the firm will now put all its resources into fixing these shortcomings for the next 90 days. He added *"our platform was built primarily for enterprise customers. We did not design the product with the foresight that, in a matter of weeks, every person in the world would suddenly be working, studying, and socializing from home. We now have a much broader set of users who are utilizing our product in a myriad of unexpected ways, presenting us with challenges we did not anticipate when the platform was conceived."* [The Verge](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC](#), [Zoom](#) (how to prevent zoombombing), [Fast Company](#),

Smithsonian suggests 'use our artworks to hide your home on Zoom'

Meanwhile the Smithsonian American Art Museum addresses the more aesthetic issues of homeworking. Having recently given open access to thousands of its artworks, it advises that Zoom users can sit surrounded by a SAAM artwork through the virtual backgrounds feature, which 'also conveniently hides any untidy corners of your home'. [Smithsonian](#)

Fragility, resilience, strength – prospects for the sector



Spring in the Valley, Belper, Derbyshire, c.1885, oil on canvas by James Henry Crossland (1852–1939). Photo: Derby Museums Trust

Mapping Museums: assessing sector resilience based on 60 years of data

The recently launched Mapping Museums website shows the results of a research project tracking the history and geography of the independent museum sector from 1960 – 2020. As researcher Fiona Candlin comments in her first post-launch blog, the findings may have relevance in assessing how resilient different kinds of museums will be to the fallout from the coronavirus. The statistics show that:

- Of all museums that existed in 1960, 18% have closed, but this varies significantly by museum type. 34% of privately owned and 21% of local authority museums have closed compared to just 9.5% of nationals and 8.5% of not for profits. (Closure rates for nationals are also somewhat inflated, as these figures include branch museum closures, not whole institutions.)
- Private museums, which are most likely to close, may also be the most flexible to opening and closing, and may not face the same costs.
- Not for profit museums can depend heavily on visitors and tend not to have significant reserves. The Mary Rose Museum has flagged that it generates 90% of its funding from visitors. Such museums are also at risk from a long recovery time for the tourist economy and decline in donations.
- Local authority museum closures tend to happen when councils take drastic action to cut expenditure. 59 local museums closed in the years after the financial crisis from 2009 – 2017. Government has announced a £500m package for local authorities in the wake of Covid-19, but there are likely to be many pressures on these funds.
- Historically, national museums have been the most resilient due to grant-in-aid, but an increase in self-generated income in recent years leaves many more exposed. For example, V&A currently self-generates 61% of its annual income and Director Tristram Hunt says that every month it remains shut because of the current crisis will cost it around £1m.

Candlin comments that the outcome of the virus trajectory and length of closure remain unclear: museums in China, South Korea and Japan which were instructed to close in January are now beginning to reopen, but this followed swift lockdowns of cities that have not been replicated anywhere in the West, where restrictions have been more gradually applied. In the meantime, the Mapping Museums website offers lectures, podcasts and interviews with museum founders. [Mapping Museums](#) (blog), [Mapping Museums](#) (data)

Art museum visitor figures show London had the busiest year this century in 2019

The Art Newspaper has published its annual calculation of the popularity of art galleries and museums across the world. The figures show that:

- The world's ten most popular art museums are led by the Louvre (9.6m visitors), National Museum of China (7.39m), Vatican Museums (6.88m) and Metropolitan Museum in New York (6.88m). Three UK museums, The British Museum (6.2m), Tate Modern (6.1m) and National Gallery (6m) hold the 5th – 7th
- London art museums had the busiest year since the turn of the century in 2019, with record figures for Tate Modern (6.1m) and Tate Britain (1.8m). Across seven major art museums the figure was 27m – beating the previous record of 26.3m visitors in 2014.

Tate Director Maria Balshaw called the figures 'heartening' adding that the ingredients of Tate's success include *"the impact of Tate Collective—our hugely successful free scheme for 16 to 25 year olds—as well as the appetite for ever more diverse events and exhibitions"*. She added *"for now, we look forward to welcoming these visitors back when we reopen the galleries."* [Art Newspaper](#) (overview), [Art Newspaper](#) (British Museum), [Art Newspaper](#) (London museums), [Art Newspaper](#) (museums with the largest social media followings)

Two independent museums at risk of permanent closure following the shut down

Creswell Crags Museum and National Videogame Museum are both at risk from permanent closure, after losing income following the national shutdown. Both were doing well in terms of visitors and income generation, but lack contingency funds to weather the crisis. Creswell Heritage Trust's Executive Director Paul Baker said *"we've had fantastic visitor numbers – it seemed like everything we touched turned to gold. But without a contingency fund you can't afford for one thing to go wrong. This is our first year of complete and utter independence [from the local council] so it couldn't have come at a worse time."* Both venues have launched fundraisers this week, with the National Videogame museum telling supporters *"our forthcoming exhibitions, our programmes to train children in the most disadvantaged communities and our huge collection of videogames heritage objects could be closed for good."* [Museums Journal](#), [Creswell Crags](#) (fundraiser), [National Videogame Museum](#)

Also: The Mary Rose Trust is also fundraising, as it faces a perfect storm of difficulties: 90% of its funds come from ticket sales, and its ongoing costs during closure are very high, due to the complex environmental control systems needed to preserve its 19,000 item Tudor collection. [Art Newspaper](#)

Happy Museum considers the coronavirus as a turning point for society

Happy Museum has blogged about the coronavirus as a social turning point, and discusses some of the commentators offering a long view. Some draw comparisons with plagues and pandemics of the past – others with the effects of economic reversals like the Wall Street Crash and how it led to change in economic thinking. Happy Museum argues that the outcome of such landmark upheaval remain uncertain and might include both non-environmentally friendly regulatory rollbacks and/or more flowering of mutual aid networks and digital development constructed to increase connection. It suggests questions museums should be asking in this moment, including how they can use their assets and agency, and what stories from the past should they be using to support just and sustainable future change. [Happy Museum](#)

New NMRN Coastal Forces Museum to open abandoned mine store in 2021

A new Coastal Forces Museum will open at Priddy's Hard, in Gosport by 2021, run by the National Museum of the Royal Navy. It will commemorate the 25,000 men with 2,000 boats who were part of the coastal forces, and will preserve some now-rare vessels that took part in action: most were not built to last and were turned into houseboats after the war. The museum is one part of an £18m redevelopment at the former arms depot at Priddy's Hard which already includes the Museum of Naval Firepower and residential blocks. [Experience UK](#), [Coastal Forces Museum](#), [Developing Gosport](#)

International

In brief: what museums and culture are facing from Brazil to Hong Kong

Museums across the world are closed, but with varying concerns and prospects depending on local politics and external events.

- In Brazil, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is calling for businesses to reopen, against World Health Organisation advice. Although museums remain closed, some federally funded museums may be forced to reopen if the President orders business to resume. [Art Newspaper](#)
- The German government had announced a €50 billion package of support for its cultural sector. Theatre critic Lyn Gardner contrasts this with the limited range of options open to culture sectors funders in the UK, adding *"the most moving thing about the German announcement was not just the amount of money involved, but also culture minister Monika Grütters' deep understanding that 'the creative courage of creative people can help to overcome the crisis. We should seize every opportunity to create good things for the future. That is why the following applies: artists are not only indispensable, but also vital, especially now'".* [The Stage](#), [artnet](#)
- The Metropolitan Museum in New York is expecting a shortfall of at least \$100m and is among the cultural bodies calling for government support with a #CongressSaveCulture campaign. [Art Newspaper](#)
- In Hong Kong, museums briefly reopened but then closed again following a rise in coronavirus cases.

[Museums Journal](#) (international roundup)

Zagreb hit by earthquake causing structural damage to museums and collections

Two days into the coronavirus lockdown in Croatia, its capital Zagreb was also hit by an earthquake, its most serious for 140 years. Killing one person, it also snapped the top of a cathedral spire and causes structural damage across the city's oldest quarter. Writing from Zagreb for *News in Conservation*, Mirta Pavić, Head of Conservation at the Museum of Contemporary Art gives a long list of heritage sites housing museums that have suffered damage. She says *"in the Upper Town the damage was so severe that a number of museums are now off limits.. the building of the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) has been so badly compromised that sessions can no longer be held there."* Her assessment continues with several institutions which have suffered from smashed collections as well as architectural damage. Jerry Podany, author of *'When Galleries Shake: Earthquake Damage Mitigation for Museum Collections'* adds that despite the devastation – and the difficulty of addressing it during a public health emergency – institutions should also take an opportunity to learn and improve disaster preparedness, asking *"why, for example, seemingly similar objects that were next to each other responded very differently to the earthquake."* [IIC](#) (News in Conservation), [Museums Journal](#) (international roundup), [Smithsonian](#)

Museums for wellbeing

Arts & health researcher seeks participants for study on social effects of Covid 19

Arts and wellbeing researcher Dr Daisy Fancourt, Associate Professor Psychobiology & Epidemiology at UCL is seeking participants for a new online study on the social and psychological effects of Covid 19. Through it, she and colleagues hope to identify the effects of social isolation and look at ways to support mental health. [Twitter](#), [Covid19 study](#)

'Therapeutic landscapes': gathering evidence to prescribe gardens, libraries and museums

An interdisciplinary team at the University of Oxford has produced a new report 'In what ways can gardens, libraries and museums improve wellbeing through social prescribing?'. Led by the university's Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (CEBM) and Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), it draws from a literature review and workshops with the public. Case studies are also drawn from previous GLAM museum programming including the coffee and object handling sessions for older adults 'Meet Me at the Museum', 'Brain Diaries' which worked with those affected by brain injury and 'Story makers' which engaged with children in primary schools in deprived areas. The report identifies three factors which make natural and cultural sites helpful in social prescribing: the way that these places act as 'therapeutic landscapes', conducive to healing; how they allow activities which create a 'sense of flow' in which nothing else seems to matter; and that they draw on social capital – helping people to create friendships and networks. CEBM's Dr Kamal Mahtani said "*a social prescription is not necessarily a replacement for medication – where needed – but it allows us to acknowledge that health and wellbeing can be more complex than 'just' a biological illness*". CEBM and GLAM have also created a Social Prescribing Research Network to increase the evidence base, and encourage other interested parties to support this approach. [M + H](#), [University of Oxford](#) (Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences), [University of Oxford](#) (Social Prescribing Research Network contacts)

Flotsam and jetsam: thefts, finds and collecting



Copper alloy fitting from bucket, in the shape of a human face, from Lenham, Kent. Iron Age c. 50BC © The Trustees of the British Museum

Van Gogh painting stolen from Dutch museum closed by coronavirus

A £5m Van Gogh painting 'Parsonage Garden at Neunen in Spring' has been stolen from the Singer Laren Museum in the Netherlands. Although an alarm was triggered, the thieves had fled by the time police arrived. The painting had been on loan from the Groninger Museum. Director Jan Rudolph de Lorm said *"this is exactly what you don't want as a museum that has a painting on loan... A beautiful and moving painting by one of our greatest painters, stolen from the community."* National art robbery experts will now get involved in the attempted recovery and the painting has been added to Interpol's international list of stolen works of art. However, as *The Art Newspaper's* Martin Bailey comments, 28 Van Gogh's have been stolen since the 80s, but *"the fact that all 28 Van Gogh paintings, from six separate thefts, were eventually recovered should offer hope that 'The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring' will eventually return to its home in Groningen."* [Guardian](#), [Independent](#), [Art Newspaper](#)

Also: Three valuable pictures were also stolen from Christ Church Picture Gallery in Oxford in mid-March. [Guardian](#)

Museums acquire one third of objects declared as Treasure in 2019

The Portable Antiquities Scheme has recorded 81,602 finds in the UK during 2019, around 1,319 of which have been identified as treasure in preliminary figures. Finds included an 'incredibly well preserved' 9th century brooch with zoomorphic beasts and plant motifs; a coin struck in the reign of Carausius who declared himself emperor of Britain and northern Gaul between AD286-93 and Iron Age vessels from the first century BC, including a bucket decorated with hippocamps – mythical half-horse, half-fish creatures. Around a third of objects declared to be Treasure have been acquired by museums in the last year. [Guardian](#), [British Museum](#), [Portable Antiquities Scheme](#)

Also: The Government has placed an export bar on a 15th century Welsh scientific manuscript, completed by Lewis of Caerleon, personal physician to Henry VII. The asking price is £300k with a

bar until 12th June with a possible extension to September. [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The sounds of silent cities: collecting in a time of coronavirus

Artists, museums, photographers and cultural organisations have begun to think about how to capture life during the coronavirus. The Cities and Memory project – which has been recording the sound of cities for some time – is now inviting people to send it recordings of the silence that has fallen – and the new sounds that can be heard - with its #StayHomeSounds project. The Board of Deputies of British Jews is among the first to announce a formal collecting project and is beginning to compile an archive of how the community is living through this experience. Meanwhile *Museums Journal* has compiled advice from a variety of museums on how to act sensitively and make good collecting choices. Sam Jenkins, Collections Officer at the People's History Museum said *"I think it feels like we all need to be collecting now, but if I've learnt anything from collecting Brexit, it's that people know they're living through a historically significant moment, and will most likely still have this stuff when it comes to an end. Slowing down and thinking through things won't mean we miss out on collecting."* [New York Times](#), [Cities and Memory](#), [Cities and Memory](#) (Stay Home Sounds), [Museums Journal](#), [Board of Deputies](#)

Collecting the NHS at 70

Another collecting project that continues despite the lockdown is the NHS at 70 project. It will now be gathering oral histories by phone of people who have worked in, or have been cared for, by the NHS since 1948. As well as amassing a digital archive of a vital institution, the method of collecting itself combats the social isolation caused by the coronavirus. [NLHF](#)

Lego Lost at Sea project maps the junk of the Anthropocene

Beachcomber Tracey Williams has been collecting on the beach since she was a schoolchild in the 1960s, but says that '23 years ago everything changed' and she began to find increasing amounts of plastic on the beach, initially much of it coming from a single cargo ship hit by a freak wave in 1997. Her @LegoLostAtSea project has now turned photographs of thousands of these objects into an online 'museum of plastic' capturing the volume of materials in the ocean, some of it 70 years old. She says *"most people have no idea that their old possessions are washing up on the beach, whether from storm drains, or landfill sites washing into the sea. I'm finding lots of pieces of cut-up credit cards at the moment."* [Guardian](#), [Twitter](#)

Jobs

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

- [Website Content Editor - British Museum](#)
- [Client Project Manager x 2 posts - Museum of London](#)
- [External Communications Manager - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Head of National Partnerships - Tate](#)

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

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