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Hull Maritime Museum exterior. © Tom Arran Photography. Due to open to the public on 8 August 2026.

Members' news

Natural History Museum wins business rates challenge

NHM has become the first national museum in the UK to win a landmark legal challenge to reduce its business rates. The Valuation Tribunal for England ruled that the museum's rateable value should be cut from £12.92m to a nominal value of £1, accepting the argument that the museum operates at a loss to preserve collections and remain open to the public free of admission fee, and should therefore not be valued as though it were a profitable commercial property. Helen Whitehouse, NHM's Chief Operating Officer, told Museums Journal that the judgment will result in significant backdated savings, and said: "This is another important business rates ruling for the museums sector which is already facing significant headwinds given the wider backdrop and long-term pressure on finances. This is a positive decision, which reflects the economic realities of a museum's accounts and the common-sense evaluation that we are the only realistic tenant for the building we occupy – this is the case for many, if not all, museums who are charities and/or public bodies like ours."

NMDC together with AIM and other sector bodies has long campaigned for changes in how the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) calculates business rates for museums. In 2020 the Royal Albert Memorial Museum won an appeal at the Tribunal and established a legal precedent that as non-profit institutions with high operating costs, museums should be valued using the Receipts and Expenditure (R&E) method, which considers whether the property makes a net surplus. However, despite this and subsequent successful appeals by others including North East Museums, the VOA has continued to seek higher valuations for museums using various alternative methodologies. It is therefore hoped that the NHM Tribunal decision will finally result in a change of approach by the VOA for all museums. [Museums Association](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Also: Rates bombshell worth millions to museums, [TaitMail](#)

UK collections come together in DiSSCo UK digitisation project

Over the next decade, DiSSCo UK (The Distributed System of Scientific Collections UK), a 10-year programme to digitise the natural science collections across the UK, will make around half of the UK's 140+ million natural science specimens digitally accessible. This includes creating millions of new digital specimen records, mobilising existing data, and bringing unpublished collections information into wider use. The DiSSCo UK Full Business Case has now been approved by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, unlocking £155.6 million of funding. Delivered by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in partnership with the Natural History Museum as part of the UKRI Infrastructure Fund, DiSSCo UK will transform UK natural science collections to create one of the world's largest natural history assets. It will operate through a hub and node model, where larger organisations with existing capacity digitise their own collections and support smaller 'nodal' collections with their digitisation.

National Museums Scotland and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh are co-hosting a national hub to digitise natural science collections in Scotland, while Amgueddfa Cymru and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery are partnering with National Museums NI, the National Botanic Garden of Wales, and Museum Development South West to unite expertise across the three nations, and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford have formed a partnership to establish a hub in Central England. NHM will act as the central coordinator for the programme, overseeing programme management, infrastructure and benefits realisation. [DiSSCo](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Bloolooop](#)

Also: Natural History Museum has appointed **Sarah Addezio** as Programme Delivery Director for DiSSCo UK, [M+H Advisor](#)

Neville Hall joins North East Museums

Neville Hall, formerly the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, opened in 1872, and its vast collection of mining and engineering records faced an uncertain future after the charity which runs the building The Common Room of the Great North experienced financial challenges caused in part by lockdown. Newcastle City Council will now take ownership of the building and North East Museums will run it as part of their estate of 12 museums, galleries and heritage sites across the region. Keith Merrin, Director of North East Museums, said: "We're looking forward to bringing this magnificent historic building into our portfolio. It also houses a huge archive about our region's industrial heritage, and we're excited about the potential for making connections to collections across our other museums including Discovery Museum and Woodhorn Museum."

[North East Museums](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)

National Galleries of Scotland awarded £8.5m for Art Works project

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has announced £8.5m funding for The Art Works, a new collections store that will house 130,000 artworks from National Galleries of Scotland's collection when it opens around 2030. The Art Works will be a hub for loans, touring exhibitions and research, making it easier for artworks to travel around Scotland, the UK and the world. It will also provide better long-term storage for the collections. [NGS](#), [NLHF](#), [Museums Association](#)

Jessica Morgan named as the new Director of Tate

British curator Jessica Morgan, currently Director of Dia Art Foundation in New York, has been appointed Director of Tate, taking up her new role on 1 January 2027. Morgan has been Director of Dia Art Foundation since 2015 and previously worked at Tate Modern as The Daskalopoulos Curator, International Art, from 2010 to 2014, and was Curator at Tate from 2002 to 2010. At Tate she curated numerous major exhibitions and organised new commissions for the Turbine Hall, as well as playing a key role in the growth of Tate's international collection. Before Tate, Morgan served as Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. [Tate](#), [Guardian](#), [Times](#) (£), [NYT](#) (£), [Gentlewoman](#) (profile, 2025)

V&A staff vote on strike

Staff at V&A Storehouse have voted to strike over conditions at the accessible storage site which opened in May 2025. They are joining Prospect Union staff across the V&A sites in London who are striking over pay and conditions. Prospect members at Royal Museums Greenwich have also voted in favour of industrial action over pay and conditions. Both museums staff are seeking London Living Wage Accreditation from their employers. [Prospect](#) (V&A), [Prospect](#) (RMG), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

Members in the news:

- Profile of **Helen Hartstein, RAMM**: 'I don't have a typical museum background – I'm really proud of getting to where I have' [Museums Association](#)
- **Oxford Museum of Natural History** finishes largest redisplay in its history, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Bayeux Tapestry arrives in UK for first time in 900 years under police guard, **British Museum**, [BBC](#)
- **Birmingham museums** extend opening hours after council funding, [M+H Advisor](#)

Images this month

Images this month look ahead to the reopening of **Hull Maritime Museum** on Saturday 8th August 2026, following a landmark £20.4m transformation that reimagines one of the UK's most important maritime museums for the 21st century. Opening in the restored former Dock Offices in Hull's historic city centre, the transformed museum doubles its public space and will display 50% more objects from the collection, with around 1,300 objects accessible across the galleries and open storage spaces, many on public display for the first time. The transformation has been supported through a combination of local and national public and charitable funding. Hull City Council has contributed £11.8m demonstrating its strong commitment to the city's cultural regeneration and heritage. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has contributed £7.7m reflecting the project's national importance in preserving and celebrating maritime heritage and £0.9m has been secured through private donations. [Hull Maritime Museum](#)

Government news

New Prime Minister and continuity for the cultural sector

On 20 July Andy Burnham, previously Culture Secretary from 2008-09, became the UK's Prime Minister and appointed a new team to support his administration at No 10. Lisa Nandy will continue in her role as Secretary of State at DCMS, to which she was initially appointed in June 2024, with the department's remit now expanded to include digital. Baroness Twycross, former Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling has been reappointed jointly as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in DCMS and Parliamentary Secretary in the Cabinet Office, although new ministerial portfolios are still to be confirmed. Ruth Mackenzie has been appointed as a new minister for the arts and joins an expanded ministerial team, with Ian Murray and Stephanie Peacock also both reappointed. Mackenzie was appointed Director of Arts at the British Council in June 2025 and began her career with Arts Council England, and has been appointed as a life peer to facilitate her new role. [Gov.uk](#) (Burnham profile), [BBC](#) (new cabinet), [Arts Industry](#) (DCMS appointments), [Gov.uk](#) (PM first speech)

Another major change is the removal of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). Most of its responsibilities will now be folded into the newly-named Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade under returning Secretary of State Jonathan Reynolds. This shift aims to strengthen links between innovation, commercialisation and creative content. [Gov.uk](#) (fact sheet on departmental changes), [BBC](#) (DSIT), [Guardian](#) (DSIT)

Also:

- The National Campaign for the Arts has launched a petition urging the new Prime Minister to make the arts and culture an integral part of his forthcoming '10-year plan' for the UK. [NCFA petition](#)
- What Andy Burnham's First Cabinet Means for the Cultural and Creative Industries, [Creative UK](#)
- As Andy Burnham becomes the new UK prime minister, here are five key challenges facing his culture ministry, [Art Newspaper](#) (£)
- Andy Burnham's devolution announcement is a strong start on his priority agenda, [Institute for Government](#)

£5.28million funding boost for Welsh culture

Thirty-one local museums, libraries and archive projects across Wales are set to receive part of a £5.28million funding boost, helping to improve access to culture, protect collections and modernise facilities for communities. They range from Holyhead Maritime Museum on Anglesey and Penmaenmawr Museum on the north Wales coast, to Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre in the south-west and the Egypt Centre and Swansea Museum in the south. Heledd Fychan, the Cabinet Minister for Culture and Sport said: "Museums, libraries and archives are at the heart of our communities across Wales. These are places where people connect with our culture and history, where children discover a love of reading, and where older people share their memories. They are places everyone should feel welcome. This investment will make a real difference, protecting vital collections, improving access and ensuring our cultural spaces are fit for the future." [Gov.Wales](#), [Museums Association](#)

Also: Exclusive: New Welsh Culture Secretary on inheriting a 'crisis situation', [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Martyn's Law resources

Martyn's Law, The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, is expected to come into force in Spring 2027 to reduce the risk of harm at public premises and events in the case of a terrorist attack. The Security Industry Authority, the regulator of Martyn's Law, have produced resources to support organisations preparing for implementation. They have produced a Communications Toolkit to help share information about the Act and the legal requirements. The toolkit is a Powerpoint download but can be requested in another format; there is also a new newsletter as well as a Frequently Asked Questions page for anyone unsure about what Martyn's Law means for them. [Martyn's Law](#), [Communications Toolkit](#), [Newsletter](#) (sign up), [FAQs](#)

Historic England are also running a free webinar to provide greater clarity on Martyn's Law and the terrorist threat to public premises on Tuesday 8 September 1-2pm. [Historic England](#)



The inside of Hull Maritime Museum. Credit Purcell Architects.

Climate Change

Heatwave impact and survey

Arts Council England have launched a UK Heatwaves survey to understand the impact of the UK's recent heatwaves (May-July) on organisations in the cultural sector. The short 5 minute survey asks questions on: Operational Impacts, Financial Impacts, Adaption methods and Communication, and Future Preparedness. **The survey closes on Friday 7 August.** [ACE](#) (survey)

The [Museums Association](#) have also reported back on their 'Visitor Voices: Understanding Your Audiences' event where 55% of attendees said visitor numbers at their institution fall when it's hot outside, and quoted ALVA's Chief Executive Bernard Donoghue who warned that museums and the wider visitor attraction sector would have to rethink their business models and adjust their seasonal programming cycle due to more-frequent heatwaves, storms and flooding.

The latest [Heritage Pulse survey](#) looked at the impact of June's high temperatures with 75% of respondents saying their site was directly affected by the recent extreme heat (55 of 73), with a quarter of those describing the impact as significant. 46% reported increased energy use for cooling and climate control. Difficulty maintaining stable environmental conditions (37%) and higher water consumption (35%) followed, with a quarter noting stress to natural or outdoor environments from scorching and drought. Respondents also reported that:

- The largest and most-visited organisations felt the impacts most
- Energy and welfare costs went up
- Visitor numbers went down,
- A slim majority still feel ready for the next one.

The [Association for Cultural Enterprises](#) have published findings from their latest Commercial Performance Barometer which suggests June was a difficult month for admissions, particularly in areas of the country worst hit by heatwaves. Based on 182 submissions, key findings are:

- June admissions down 5% on 2025 with year-to-date visits down 3%
- Admissions correlate strongly with heatwaves – London and South East admissions down 10%, compared to Scotland down 2%
- Indoor venues did slightly better, although gains were only marginal
- Retail and catering continue to offset low admissions – SPV (retail and catering spend per head) above inflation for both
- Strong commercial programming drives up visits for some

BBC Front Row also looked at the impact of the heatwaves on the cultural sector in their Radio 4 show including interviews with Doug Gurr, Director of the Natural History Museum and Ben Melham, Director of Mortice Consulting. [BBC Front Row](#) (from 13.30mins)

Sector news

Departing ACE Chairman outlines priorities for funding public culture

Nicholas Serota finished his ten year tenure as Chairman of Arts Council England on 31 July. Speaking at his last public engagement role to coincide with the publication of 'Made in England: Art and Culture in Changing Times' he outlined five priorities that he believes must guide funding for public culture in the future. They are:

- Consistent, long-term public investment.
- Funding targeted to deliver measurable social and economic returns.
- Multi-year support that gives organisations the confidence to plan and build excellence across all forms of art.
- Greater investment in individual artists and emerging talent, backed by specialist knowledge and mentorship.
- A renewed commitment to teaching for creativity across the full school curriculum – not only in arts subjects, but across the humanities, sciences and maths.

The 'Made in England' publication is a collection of essays by artists, writers, academics and cultural leaders reflecting on the 80th anniversary of the Arts Council, which was founded in 1946. It explores the role art and culture play in England today, and looks ahead to how creativity might shape the next 80 years. A pdf of the publication can be accessed via the Arts Council website. [ACE](#) (Made in England), [Museums Association](#) (Serota priorities)

American Alliance of Museums warn on President Trump's interference

The American Alliance of Museums, the US museum membership body representing the entire American museum field from art and history museums to science centres and zoos, has published a statement backing the Smithsonian Institution and warning that the US government's ongoing campaign against the largest museum organisation in the world, with 17 museums and nearly 15m annual visits, threatens the integrity of US museums. The statements says: "As our nation's flagship museum system and an AAM-accredited institution, the Smithsonian reflects the highest standards of scholarship, stewardship, and public service. Efforts to politicise how museums present history, art, science, culture, and the natural world – and personal attacks on the museum professionals who carry out that work – threaten the integrity and independence of museums across the country." The statement follows President Trump's decision to place signs outside the Smithsonian National Museum of American History to caution visitors about exhibits his administration views as "inaccurate". The White House also published a 162 page report on the Smithsonian on the 4 July titled 'Saving America's History', which asserts that the "Museum leadership has explicitly adopted an ideological framework that no longer treats the American story as a shared national inheritance to be taught or celebrated, but as a political instrument to divide, dispirit, and discourage our citizens." [AAM, Museums Association](#) (statement), [BBC](#) (Smithsonian National Museum of American History), [White House](#) (Executive Order - Restoring Trust in the Smithsonian Institution), [Guardian](#), [ABC News](#), [White House](#) (report, pdf, 162 pgs)

Two thirds of parents feel "too worried or embarrassed" to take their children to museums or galleries this summer

Art Fund research which surveyed 1,000 UK parents, found that two thirds of parents of children under the age of 11 (65%) are too worried or embarrassed to take their children to museums or galleries this summer – despite nine out of ten believing that visiting is beneficial. Concerns around noise (33%) and damaging items (32%) top the list, while a quarter (25%) say worries about their children disturbing others would stop them from going. A further fifth (18%) feel they'd be judged by others. Parents feeling that museums and galleries are 'not for people like me' (33%) could be impacting children's exposure to art and culture. The research was published to coincide with Art Fund's Kids Aloud initiative which currently has over 60 museums that are programming special kid-focused activities this summer. [Art Fund](#) (research), [Art Fund](#) (Kids Aloud)

ALVA Research highlights cost implications of accessing culture

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions have published an in-depth study of the 7.6 million adults in the UK aged 35 to 54 with no dependent children at home. They are the fastest-growing household type in the country, on course to overtake households with children by 2030, and they spend around £5 billion a year on discretionary leisure. It finds that most of them would visit more attractions if they could afford to, and that what they are looking for from a visit is connection and rest, with the attraction as the setting for that experience. The study also shows that transport, good food and clear pricing are the reasons people most often give for wanting to visit more. Google search and word of mouth were the key drivers for finding something to do. The report also breaks down the demographic into four groups with defined insight for each visitor type. [ALVA](#) (research, pdf, 71 pgs)

ICOM Code of Ethics approved

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has officially adopted a revised Code of Ethics for Museums following four years of consultation with its members and the wider sector. The Code was approved by 85.90% of members during the 41st ICOM Ordinary General Assembly and is structured around five core principles:

- Society: Museums serve society.
- Professionalism: Museums operate and communicate with professional expertise, knowledge and standards.
- Education: Museums offer diverse experiences for knowledge-sharing and reflection.
- Collections: Museums research, collect and conserve.
- Governance: Museums are not-for-profit, permanent institutions. [ICOM](#), [Museums Association](#)

Sector research and toolkits

Major new research project to explore Museums and Money

A new research project commissioned by ACE and AIM will examine museum finances over the last fifteen years and what they reveal about sector resilience. The project aims to build an evidence base and a data-driven understanding of the health of the museum sector, to inform future policy development and ACE's strategic role as the national development agency for museums. AIM Director Lisa Ollerhead said "We're excited to commission this game-changing piece of research. As well as providing the evidence base for understanding the financial pressures facing museums, it will identify new approaches and practical ways to support their resilience and sustainability in the years ahead." Emmie Kell, Director, Museums and Cultural Property at ACE said: "The last fifteen years has been a time of considerable challenge for the museum sector. The shifts in public funding and rises in expenditure are placing unprecedented pressure on traditional museum operating models. This comprehensive research will allow us to assess the shift that has occurred, understand its impact across the sector and explore how the sector can be best supported in the years to come."

An invitation to tender for the research is on the AIM website and **closes on 12 August**. [AIM](#) (press release) [AIM](#) (invitation to tender)

DCMS research onto Cultural Property Crime (CPC)

The current working definition of Cultural Property Crime (CPC) is any offence that harms or involves movable cultural heritage, including but not limited to: theft, looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects; damage and destruction both to objects, and to immovable heritage assets such as archaeological sites or historic buildings caused in the process of obtaining objects; unlicensed excavation and exploration; dealing in unlawfully obtained cultural objects; falsifying documents and dealing in fakes and forgeries; money laundering, terrorist financing and sanctions breaches using cultural objects; and also attempting, aiding or abetting in any relevant crimes. The research commissioned by DCMS and carried out by Fortia Insight looked at how police forces in England record, identify, extract and share data relating to CPC. It concluded that in England CPC is under-recognised, under-recorded, and poorly understood within current policing structures. CPC visibility depends largely on individual officers rather than system design, leading to significant undercounting and an incomplete national picture. The absence of a shared definition, mandatory markers, system prompts, standardised recording practices and national analytical capability means CPC cannot currently be measured reliably, either locally or nationally. [Gov.uk](#)

Toolkit for touring exhibition partnerships

MAGNET, the Museums and Galleries Network for Exhibition Touring, have published a new toolkit to support venues across the sector to create and tour partnership exhibitions of their own. The 12 partner organisations that make up MAGNET have shared their knowledge in a guide that covers everything involved in the creation of joint exhibitions – from partnership agreements to collaborative work content planning and interpretation, and shared approaches to community engagement and environmental responsibility. Published in seven sections, the free-to-use toolkit is available to download. A second toolkit focused on the logistics of touring will also be published by the end of the year. [Horniman](#)



John Vincent's boots from Shackleton's Endurance expedition in the Antarctic, 1914-16. © Hull Maritime Museum.

Cultural Sector Funding

Round-up of sector pressures and cost saving initiatives

Following the appointment of a new Prime Minister, Sadiq Kahn, Mayor of London, returned to the issue of free museums encouraging tourists and Londoners to make the most of free access to great art and culture this summer. [LBC](#) The widely reported cuts at **Jodrell Bank**, in Cheshire, will not affect the museum housed in the visitor centre according to the [Museums Association](#). The University of Manchester, which owns and manages the entire site, has emphasised that the museum is funded separately to the scientific research programme at the observatory. It currently welcomes around 100,000 people to the visitor attraction every year.

- Glass museum calls for financial support, the museum which opened in 2022 stated energy bills and other running costs are putting pressure on the attraction, despite efforts to reduce spending. **Stourbridge**, [BBC](#)
- Following the decision to introduce an entrance fee at the **Museum of Oxford**, the [BBC](#) has reported on a 'catastrophic' drop in visitor numbers. Campaign group Save Our Museum found footfall at the Museum of Oxford was down 70 – 80% compared to 2024/25 after a £4 entry fee was introduced.
- **Dundee Heritage Trust**, a charity responsible for the day-to-day running of Discovery Point and Verdant Works, has launched a redundancy consultation process with staff. [The National](#) reported that jobs are set to be cut due to declining visitor numbers and rising costs. Verdant Works is housed inside a historic old mill and tells the story of how Dundee became an economic powerhouse in the 19th and early 20th centuries due to its world-leading textile trade.
- **Glasgow's Centre for Contemporary Arts** closed in January 2026 with all 39 staff at the venue made redundant. The [Museums Association](#) published a story on calls for the site to be preserved as a public cultural asset rather than be sold off. The building at 350 Sauchiehall Street is owned by the Scottish Government's arm's-length funding body, Creative Scotland. Before becoming home to the CCA in 1992, it housed Glasgow's legendary Third Eye Centre, the arts and music venue credited with transforming the city's culture scene from the 1970s onwards.
- The **Glasgow School of Art** looks unlikely to be rebuilt following fires in 2014 and 2018 after costs to reinstate the 1909 landmark would cost £265m, four times previous estimates and five times the GSA's annual turnover. [Guardian](#)

- Museum with Wham! memorabilia opposes move, **Bushey Museum and Art Gallery, Hertfordshire**. [BBC](#)
- Could long awaited museum and library be scrapped in city centre revamp? **Wakefield**. [Wakefield Express](#)

and in more positive news...

- The [Guardian](#) looked at a new community membership free entry scheme at **Chatsworth House**. The pilot scheme designed to widen access to one of Britain's best-known country houses is an initiative with Derbyshire Libraries that allows groups of up to eight people to visit the house, gardens and grounds at no cost. The community membership passes have been borrowed a total of 110 times from the 10 libraries in the scheme since it launched last month, quickly becoming the most borrowed item.

Creative education and careers

Cuts to funding for performing and creative arts teaching support

The Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, has written to the Office for Students (OfS) recommending that performing and creative arts courses no longer receive support from the Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG) as part of wider spending decisions. The Strategic Priorities Grant is used to fund teaching activity in universities in England. Under the proposed changes, a number of subjects, including performing and creative arts, archaeology, geography, nursing, computing and history, will lose SPG funding altogether, with resources instead being focused on priority areas such as medicine, chemistry, engineering, healthcare and laboratory-based STEM subjects. [Research Professional News](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Get involved with Creative Careers

Discover Creative Careers is back and will continue the vital work of delivering careers support for young people considering a job in the creative industries. The programme is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and delivered by the Creative Careers Collective - Futures for All (lead partner), Creative UK and Creative Access. It is aimed at young people aged 11-24 across the UK, with a particular focus on those from underrepresented backgrounds and underserved regions. It is designed to equip the next generation with the ambition, skills and knowledge to build lasting careers across the UK's world-leading cultural and creative industries. Whether you can spare one hour, one day or one year, there are many ways for creative organisations, practitioners and businesses to shape tomorrow's creative workforce. [Discover Creative Careers](#)

House of Lords debate and briefing on post-16 education

The government is introducing new V-levels and expanding T-levels as part of post-16 qualification reforms. The government has said the changes will simplify routes into employment and higher education and enable vocational study to sit alongside A-levels. However, stakeholders have questioned whether the new qualifications will meet the needs of the creative sector and students looking to enter the creative industries. There is a really useful overview of the issue on the House of Lords website. [Parliament.UK](#) (overview), [Hansard](#) (debate)

Youth Jobs Grant

The Youth Jobs Grant helps employers create job opportunities for young people aged 18 to 24 who have been on Universal Credit for 6 months or more and are looking for work. As part of the wider Youth Guarantee, the scheme provides financial support to employers who recruit eligible young people into suitable roles that are registered with the scheme. Employers may receive up to £3,000 per job, paid in stages if the scheme conditions are met. Jobs must provide a genuine opportunity for a young person. The role must:

- be at least 25 hours per week and last at least 4 months
- pay at least the applicable minimum wage
- be a real job that does not replace an existing worker
- be lawful, safe, suitable and comparable to roles offered outside the scheme.

The scheme will close to new vacancies in October 2028. [Gov.uk](#)

CPD and workforce opportunities

New Prospect Heritage Freelancers Union

A new branch of Prospect for museums and heritage freelancers is open for members. If you work freelance in the UK heritage sector this branch is for you. You don't need to be a full-time freelancer. If you do any freelance work in the sector, you're welcome. Freelance means sole traders and people working through their own limited company as the sole employee. Heritage includes museums, galleries, archives, historic houses, heritage charities, archaeological organisations, or adjacent cultural institutions. Fees are based on your income. There is a discount if you are unemployed, on unpaid leave or between contracts. [Prospect](#)

Latest from Clore Leadership

The Connect Reflect programme from Clore is now open for applications with a 2-week schedule of peer learning groups and one-to-one coaching. The group sessions will have up to 10 people and will support you with new approaches, inspiration and ideas as well as facilitating new professional connections and potential collaborations. The programme is open to leaders working for organisations in the arts and culture sector in England. A minimum of 60% of places are allocated for leaders from National Portfolio Organisations or Investment Principles Support Organisations. Applications for the Autumn/Winter Peer Learning Groups are now open and close at 10am on Friday 28 August 2026. [Clore](#)

Tickets are available for Governance Now: Purpose & Place presented by Clore Leadership on behalf of the Cultural Governance Alliance at Middlesbrough Town Hall, Middlesbrough, 2 - 3 November 2026. Attendees will explore practical approaches to today's biggest governance challenges, exchange ideas and experiences with fellow Chairs, Trustees, CEOs and executive leaders from across the UK, and take away new tools, questions and approaches to strengthen your board's effectiveness and resilience. Online tickets cost £84.13, Individual in-person tickets £77.71 and there is a range of prices for small, medium and large organisations. [Clore](#)

AIM Trustee induction

The Association of Independent Museums run an online Trustee Induction which is open to members and non-members aimed at new trustees or a refresher for existing trustees. The two part session will run on 7 and 21 October from 4-6pm. These sessions will be interactive, engaging and will provide tools for you and your board to use in improving the governance of your museum. They are also an invaluable opportunity to network with other trustees and exchange ideas. The cost is £165 for members and £220 for non-members. There are a limited number of bursary places for trustees from Welsh museums. [AIM](#)



Right whale plaque. © Hull Maritime Museum.

Funding opportunities

National Archives Engagement grants closing soon

The National Archives annual programme of engagement grants aim to connect archives with their communities and the wider public, often aligning with key moments of national importance. They offer up to £3,000 for organisations to conduct outreach and engagement projects. Engagement Grants are open to archivists and heritage professionals working with archival collections in England or Wales. The programme is open to all public sector bodies, not-for-profit organisations including registered charities, and for-profit organisations including business archives. The deadline for applications is Friday 14 August 2026. [National Archives](#)

Chemistry Outreach Fund

The Royal Society of Chemistry fund a broad range of projects that connect communities from all backgrounds with the chemical sciences. They want their funding to connect communities and help bring different people and organisations together to share ideas, develop meaningful partnerships, inspire new ways of working, and encourage dialogue about the importance and role of chemistry for making the world a better place. They are interested in projects that engage school students, public audiences and under-represented audiences. They support Small Grants up to £5,000 and Large Grants from £5,001 to £10,000. The scheme is open to individuals and organisations and includes museums. The deadline for applications is Friday 2 October 2026 at 5pm. [RSC](#)

Trees Outside Woodland Fund

The Tree Council and Defra are working in partnership to deliver the Trees Outside Woodland Fund for the 2026/27 planting season. The fund's purpose is to establish trees outside woodland to create or enhance green spaces using a range of tree sizes, species and planting types. Grants of between £10,000 and £40,000 for trees and supporting capital items are available, per application, for England only and are open to Local Authorities and charities with an annual income or turnover of more than £100,000. The fund will remain open until 31 October 2026, or until all funding has been allocated. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received; early applications are strongly encouraged. [Tree Council](#)

Garfield Weston Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation is a family founded grant-maker that gives money to support a wide range of charities across the UK. In total they donate around £100 million each year. They are open to applications all year round. They make grants for Capital Projects, Operating/Core Costs and Projects/Specific Activity. Grants range from £1,000 to several million pounds. There is a straight forward eligibility quiz on their website to see if your plans fit with their funding streams and lots more information on their website. [Garfield Weston](#)

Conferences and events

Social media and SEO

Join the Digital Culture Network for this 1-hour webinar on 12 September at 12pm. Social Media Tech Champions Katy Farrell and Nicola Barratt, will explain why social media SEO is vital in today's digital landscape and how to implement it. You'll also discover how to make your content visible across platforms, search engines, and AI tools while ensuring it directly answers your audience's needs. The session is free and will be hosted on Zoom. [DCN](#)

TEG Online sharing event

The Exhibitions Group's annual free Online Share Session will be happening on Tuesday 24 November from 12-1pm. If you're seeking to host a touring exhibition, or join a partnership project, join them for a series of 3-minute presentations from individuals and organisations working on innovative exhibitions and projects. The presentations will be followed by the opportunity to join the presenters in breakout rooms to continue the conversations. Registration to join opens in September but if you would like to present contact TEG by Friday 25 September 2026. Email Dana, TEG Professional Development Manager at seminars@theexhibitionsgroup.org.uk [TEG](#)

Museums Association Conference programme launched

The 2026 MA Conference - Connecting Communities, will be hosted in Birmingham from 2-4 November. The conference programme has now been published and includes sessions on AI and ethics, community-led curating approaches at the Migration Museum, tackling class inequality as well of a whole day of tours to Birmingham's cultural attractions. Digital access to the conference is from £60 with the full conference for student/unwaged/volunteer members costing £280 and non-members £580. [MA](#)

Museums+Tech 2026 tickets now available

The 2026 Museums Computer Group conference will be held in Bristol at M Shed on Friday 29 November. Tickets for the day which will be focussing on 'Using our spaces for authentic interactions' are now available. Student/unwaged members of MCG cost £20, Freelancers £40, and early bird MCG members cost £50. Non-members cost £80. [MCG](#)

Understanding the impact of AI

The Museums Association will be holding an online event on 9 December 2026 to take stock of what AI means for our sector. This is an opportunity to take the time to consider and discuss what it all means and how you can get ahead of the curve. Aimed at anyone interested in what AI means for their organisation, practice and sector, this event:

- explores the impact and opportunities on different aspects of museum practice including marketing, HR, collections management, learning and curatorial practice
- examines how AI might streamline operations
- shows how AI could unlock commercial opportunities
- explores how AI can widen access to previous excluded audiences
- discusses the ethical implications of AI, including environmental impactlooks at different models of AI that are being developed.

Tickets cost from £37 for concessionary members to £69 for non-members and it will be recorded for future access. [Museums Association](#)

Openings

Trent Park House of Secrets is a new museum in Enfield based in a historic country house that once belonged to Philip Sassoon. The museum tells the story of the WWII 'Secret Listeners' which has remained hidden for over 70 years. Senior German Prisoners stayed in the house following Sassoon's death in 1939 without knowing of the 'secret listeners' who were housed in the basement eavesdropping on their conversations. Open from Tuesday to Sunday 10-5pm the visit comprises of two floors of the House: the state rooms above, restored to their 1930s appearance, and the basement below, where the Secret Listeners carried out one of Britain's most remarkable wartime intelligence operations. Tickets for adults cost £14, young people 5-17 £12 and under 5s are free.

[Trent Park](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

Bristol Dockyards, home to Brunel's SS Great Britain, has reopened following a rebranding and redevelopment. The new name reflects the long-term ambition of the SS Great Britain Trust, the charity that runs the site, to transform the attraction into a broader cultural and learning campus encompassing the adjacent Great Western and Albion dockyards. The Museums Association spoke to CEO Andrew Edwards about the backlash following the decision to rename the site. The new museum on-site tells a more rounded story of the impact of SS Great Britain including its involvement in the Indian Rebellion of 1837. [Bristol Dockyards](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

Ripon Workhouse Museum has opened following a £2.8m redevelopment restoring one of the UK's most complete Victorian workhouses. Alexa Vernon, the director of Ripon Museums Trust, said: "We've transformed the workhouse into a powerful, immersive experience where visitors can step into the shoes of real people who lived through extraordinary hardship. Their stories challenge us to think about fairness, dignity and opportunity, both in Victorian Britain and today". [Ripon Workhouse Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)

Stori Brymbo, a new industrial heritage attraction, has opened in Wrexham. The restored steelworks and a 300-million-year-old fossil forest has been supported with £7.5m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £300,000 from the Welsh Government. The redevelopment has also involved the repair and refurbishment of historic structures, including the Grade II* listed Agent's House, the Blast Colliery and a series of ironworks buildings including the Foundry, Cast House and Blast Furnace. [Stori Brymbo](#), [Museums Association](#)



Whale ear bones. © Hull Maritime Museum.

Appointments

Ina Sarikhani Weston has been elected the new Chair of National Portrait Gallery, she is the co-founder, director and curator of *The Sarikhani Collection* of art from Iran, which supports loans, exhibitions, research projects, publications and philanthropy, including several academic posts. Her role will begin from October 2026. [NPG](#)

The British Library has appointed **Rachel Calderón** as Senior Director of Development. She will lead the Library's philanthropy team and help drive support for one of the world's leading cultural and research institutions. Calderón joins from Blood Cancer UK where she was Associate Director of Fundraising. [BL](#)

Manchester Museum's **Ciaron Wilkinson** has been appointed to the European Museum Forum board of trustees. Wilkinson is Head of Engagement and Partnerships at Manchester Museum and joined the museum in 2024. The European Museum Forum are organisers of the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA). Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, was the EMYA winner in 2025. [Manchester Museum](#)

Ben Pearce has joined The Exhibitions Group as Executive Director, taking up the organisation's first salaried Executive Director role as it moves into its next phase of growth. He was most recently Interim Executive Director of Outside In. [TEG](#)

Obituary

Beth McKillop - Curator and scholar with a special focus on Korean Art working at the V&A and British Library, [Guardian](#)

Catch up

For 100 years no-one noticed it, but this rebrand finally gives Gunnersbury Museum a reason to be found, 30 July 2026, [Creative Boom](#)

Nearly 20 Georgia O'Keeffe works to go on display in UK for first time, 27 July 2026, [Guardian](#)

Tower of London announces £70m facilities project, 17 July 2026, [BBC](#)

Humanities among degrees being 'extinguished' by hard-up universities, 14 July 2026, [Guardian](#)

Palace's gallery doubles number of paintings, 8 July 2026, [BBC](#)

International news

Whaling museum turns bad review into bestselling "worst aquarium ever" merch, 29 July 2026, [Blooloop](#)

Venice Biennale chief calls EU funding cut 'political', 23 July 2026, [Reuters](#)

The Met introduces generative AI to transform the guest experience, 17 July 2026, [Blooloop](#)

Bacteria linked to Legionnaires' disease detected at Metropolitan Museum of Art, 15 July 2026, [ARTnews](#)

National Museum of Ecuador recalls Alberto Campo Baeza design after public backlash, 15 July 2026, [Dezeen](#)

Jobs

Hasting Contemporary are looking for new trustees, in particular people who can help them deepen engagement with their communities, develop new income opportunities and ensure our gallery continues to thrive as a key part of the regional arts ecology. Deadline Monday 28 September 2026. [Hastings Contemporary](#)

Opportunity to join UK's **Spoliation Advisory Panel**: The Spoliation Advisory Panel plays a crucial role in resolving claims for cultural objects lost during the Nazi era, and reflects the UK government's commitment to addressing issues of spoliation. DCMS has recently undertaken a decision to refresh the Panel and develop it into a wider pool of experts, and are now seeking up to 6 potential applicants interested in joining this body. Deadline 5pm on Friday 4 September 2026. [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Posts being advertised on the [NMDC jobs board](#) this month include:

- [Chief Operating Officer - National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [Lead Conservator Collection Care North - British Library](#)
- [Development Officer, Collection Committees - Tate](#)
- [Project Delivery Manager \(12 months FTC\) - Science Museum](#)
- [Development Lead - Capital Campaigns - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Head of Interpretation and Collections - Black Country Living Museum](#)

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