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Members' news



The Horniman's award winning bee garden. c. Public Art UK.

IWM Institute opens to explore war and conflict

Imperial War Museums has launched the IWM Institute to bring together academic research with public engagement to gain a deeper understanding of war and conflict. Its offer will include debates and discussions, original research projects, animations and podcasts, with its first annual lecture to be given by former UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband, who is now CEO of the International Rescue Committee. Working with experts from the technology, policy, charity and arts and culture sectors, it hopes to 'redefine the boundaries of museum practice'. Its Executive Director Gill Webber said *"based on rigorous research into war and conflict past and present, the IWM Institute will offer new, accessible and engaging ways of making sense of the world today."* [Museums Journal](#), [IWM Institute](#)

British Museum receives £8.8m to continue its Endangered Material Knowledge Programme

The British Museum has received a £8.8m donation to continue its Endangered Material Knowledge Programme from 2021 – 28. The project, first launched in 2018, gives grants to document traditional practices – from cooking to rituals or craft skills, many of them centuries old - that might otherwise be lost. It also stewards the knowledge by preserving it in an open access digital repository. Bee-keeping and the creation of ostrich eggshell beads in Kenya and a survey of the skills of the Venerable Phuntsok Tsering, the Dalai Lama's personal tailor are among the traditions already captured. The new support comes from the charitable fund Arcadia, created by philanthropists Peter Baldwin and Lisbet Rausing, and is the largest single donation to the British Museum in a decade. In its statement, the BM said *"critically, nearly 60% of all applications have come from researchers based in, or from, the country of work, ensuring a truly global approach and outlook."* [Art Newspaper](#), [EMKP](#)

Images this month: award for the Horniman bee garden

The Horniman Museum's bee garden has won a Bees' Needs Champions Award, given by DEFRA in partnership with a number of farming groups. The garden was completed in May and includes two wildflower meadows, three bee hotels and 29 floral species that attract and provide food for bees. [Horniman Museum](#)

Government

Spending Review includes new Levelling Up fund

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced various measures in support of museums and culture as part of the latest Spending Review, against a backdrop where the UK economy is expected to shrink by 11.3%. These include:

- A £4.8bn 'Levelling Up' fund, open for bids from any local area and available for museum projects, although the detail is still to emerge. £600m will be available in 2021 – 22. In his speech, Sunak said *"projects must have real impact... they must be delivered within this parliament and they must command local support, including from their member of parliament. This is about funding the infrastructure of everyday life: a new bypass, upgraded railway stations, less traffic, more libraries, museums, and galleries; better high streets and town centres."*
- Museums will receive a 'flat- cash' settlement, with the same funding for 2021 – 22 as for the current year. In addition, the Spending Review confirmed £60m in Capital funding 'for essential maintenance of the nation's much loved museums and galleries'.
- The DCMS settlement provides a 2.3% average real terms increase per year in core Resource funding from 2019 - 20 to 2021 - 22. (NB these figures do not include the emergency Covid-19 funds handled by DCMS this year). However it is unclear whether this additional support will extend beyond the coming financial year.
- DCMS is also among the partners in a new £20m cross-departmental fund aimed at improving the social inclusion of people leaving prison.
- There will be £150m for major events including the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee, and Festival 2022.
- There is also a commitment to match EU funding with a new UK Shared Prosperity Fund for regional development after the transition period ends, at least matching £1.5bn structural funds.
- Sunak also reiterated that £150m in funding, first announced in April, would be available through the Cultural Investment Fund and Museums Infrastructure Fund to support projects

including British Library North.

- There will be increased core spending power for local authorities, estimated at 4.5% in cash terms, plus an additional £3bn in Covid-19 support.

NMDC said that it *“welcomes Government’s commitment to addressing the capital funding needs of national and regional museums, and we look forward to museums making a major contribution to levelling up through the £4bn Levelling Up Fund.”* Caroline Norbury, Director of the Creative Industries Federation said *“we look forward to seeing the long-awaited details on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and urge that government consults with industry as it pilots these new approaches.”* The Local Government Association welcomed the Levelling Up Fund, but was concerned that the competitive bidding process would be a distraction to authorities already under pressure. It also welcomed the increase in council spending power, but noted that it is dependent on raising council tax by 5%, unaffordable for many households. [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#) (overview), [Arts Professional](#), [Creative Industries Federation](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Times](#) (paywall), [The Stage](#) (paywall), [LGA](#)

Second meeting of the APPG for Museums discusses sector recovery, employment and digital exclusion

The second meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Museums took place on 11th November and minutes have now been published. The two speakers were Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister of State for Digital and Culture and Iain Watson, Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

- Summarising the current situation, with a particular focus on regional and civic museums, Iain Watson said that the Cultural Recovery Fund has been a lifeline in 2020 - 21, but there is concern over how museums will survive past that March 2021, especially given the decline of income-generating business.
- Caroline Dinenage said that she had visited incredible museums since taking up her role and that she is keen to support the sector. £300m remaining from the Cultural Recovery Fund gives some contingency for museums in trouble; discussions are ongoing about how this can best be targeted.
- Employment and the furlough scheme were discussed. Representatives of major unions have seats at the working group chaired by the Minister, adding to the maturity of discussions around employment.
- The group also discussed digital exclusion, how this became more visible during lockdown, and whether museums can contribute to improving digital inclusion. The Government is publishing a digital strategy next year, which will involve multiple departments and consider everything from education to work.

[NMDC](#)

Covid-19



A new collaboration between Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and the game Occupy White Walls has put BMAG collections in virtual space.

Complex picture of museums open and closed across the country

Following the end of lockdown in England earlier this month, a complex picture has emerged of museums open and closed by region. At a country level:

- New restrictions have been introduced in Wales from 4th December, with all museums required to close, while pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes must shut by 6pm each day. These rules will be reviewed on 17th December and then every three weeks. [Welsh Government](#) (scroll), [Museums Journal](#)
- In Scotland, 11 local authority areas, predominantly in the West of the country have entered tier 4 with lockdown since 20th November, planned to last for three weeks. Some museums in tiers 1 – 3 are open, but countrywide it is estimated that only 114 of 419 Scottish museums are currently open. [MGS](#) (tier 4 and other operating information), [MGS](#) (Google map – museums currently open in Scotland)
- Museums in England in tier 1 and 2 areas are permitted to reopen and many have done so in the past few days. [uk](#), [Museums Journal](#),
- In Northern Ireland, museums remain closed until at least 11th [NMNI](#)

Some museums in England are questioning the logic of a situation where gyms, hairdressers and even museum shops can open under tier 3 rules, but museums must remain closed. The tier system in England will next be reviewed on 16th December. [Museums Journal](#)

Covid guidance in brief

- NMDC continues to update its reopening guidance for museums in the light of changing circumstances, most recently on 2nd. Check at the bottom of the page to see amendments at a glance. [NMDC](#)
- There is also new advice on how to support safe and effective volunteering during Covid-19, covering topics including safeguarding, travel to volunteer, insurance, volunteers who claim benefits or are on furlough and how to keep especially vulnerable groups safe. [uk](#)
- Government guidance on face coverings has been updated to reflect the fact that visors can be worn in addition to a face covering, but not instead of one, as they do not adequately cover the nose and mouth. [uk](#)
- The Government has published a guide to the rules that must be followed in tiers 1 – 3. [uk](#),

- There is also guidance covering how the rules will change over Christmas from 23rd – 27th. There will be uniform rules across the four UK nations for this period, with the tier system largely, but not completely lifted. Up to three households can form a 'Christmas bubble', but rules overall for indoor public events will not change. However, 'Christmas bubble' groups can attend outdoor events together. [Gov.uk](#), [VisitBritain](#), [Welsh Government](#)

Sentiment trackers in brief

- Research among Scottish audiences for visual and performing arts found that there is likely to be a 'moderate ongoing contraction' in visits as venues reopen, with 19% expecting to attend less, and 6% more, with 50% the same and 25% unsure. The most popular method of supporting organisations post-covid was a suggested voluntary surcharge (which 78% definitely or might consider) – however 33% would 'definitely' consider memberships, showing that many are prepared to offer a depth of commitment. [Audience Agency](#)
- Wave 19 of the VisitBritain sentiment tracker covers 9th – 13th In this period the national mood somewhat lifted (from 6.4 to 6.6) and the perception that 'the worst has passed' jumped from 5% to 16%, and those believing the 'worst is still to come' declined from 61% to 40%. [VisitBritain](#)

Reshaping tourism – from locals reclaiming cities to 'working from beach'

Although it is anticipated that there will be a tourism bounce at some point in 2021 through pent-up demand, many destinations are rethinking their offer:

- *The Guardian* reports on how cities across the world are using the pause created by the coronavirus to challenge a pattern where huge numbers of rental properties are made available to tourists, squeezing out locals. Lisbon is planning to turn 20,000 tourist flats into affordable housing, offering landlords the security of tenants for a five year period, although at a lower rate than they would receive from holidaymakers. Venice has struck a deal that will see some flats let to university students, Vancouver has purchased two hotels to house vulnerable citizens and Amsterdam recently banned vacation rentals in its central old town. [Guardian](#)
- Meanwhile *The Economist* predicts that in the future, holidays will be 'fewer, longer and closer to home' – possibly combined with periods of remote working, as employers become more flexible about whether desk workers are present in an office. At a global level there are already signs of recovery in global tourism – with hotel occupancy rising from 22% in April to 47% in August. However, quarantine remains a factor, and Thailand is insisting tourists stay for 90 days, while Singapore is giving its citizens money to spend at local attractions, to make up for missing international tourists. *The Economist* predicts that even when a vaccine makes the 'old normal' possible, travel patterns developed in the pandemic aftermath will remain. [Economist](#)

End of year ONS statistics track footfall, working from home and impact on arts and recreation

November and December data sets from the Office for National Statistics show the impact of the coronavirus on the economy, society and wellbeing, many with implications for museums.

- 63% of arts, entertainment and recreation businesses have reported a decrease in profits, exceeded only by accommodation and food services at 73%. Averaged across sectors, 33% of businesses said turnover have been unaffected, but 49% reported a decline.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation have 34% of staff on full or partial furlough, the highest percentage in any sector, compared with an average of 9% across all industries.
- Retail footfall reached a peak in late August at a figure approaching 80% of 2019 levels, before declining through the autumn to circa 65%, then rising very briefly to 90% as people went shopping immediately before the second lockdown. In late November, footfall was at 43% of usual levels.
- Just prior to second lockdown, life satisfaction scores (at 6.5) were the lowest since ONS surveys on Covid-19 began at the end of March (however VisitBritain figures suggest a slight uptick since the announcement of a vaccine).
- Those travelling to work fell from 58% to 54% in the month from early November to early December, although this is up from the 37% reported during the first lockdown in May. Ability to work from home varies greatly by region: only 19% in London could not work from home, compared to 56% in Wales.

- 97% of the UK population have now worn a facemask at some point.
[ONS](#), [Gov.uk](#), [ONS](#) (business impact), [ONS](#) (stats as twitter thread), [ONS](#) (social impacts including life satisfaction), [ONS](#) (early December figures)

Public trust – and discussing vaccination

Museum curators in the top ten most trusted professions in the Veracity Index 2020

Museum curators have scored well in Ipsos MORI's annual Veracity Index which tracks how much the public trusts various professions. The research shows that:

- Nurses came top of the poll, trusted by 93% of people, followed by doctors, engineers, teachers, judges, professors, scientists – and then in eighth place museum curators at 82%. 10% of people do not trust museum curators to tell the truth, while 9% do not know.
- There is also a differential by education – a majority of professions are less trusted by those without university degrees. However, this trust gap is relatively large for museum curators, with 90% of those with a degree saying they feel trust, versus 70% with no degree. Judges, scientists and professors have a similar 20% trust gap between those with and without degrees.
- Politicians were towards the bottom of the table trusted by only 15% of people – in keeping with a trend stretching back to the early 1980s. Only advertising executives were less trusted at 13%. Journalists are also among the least trusted professions at 23%.

[IET](#), [Ipsos MORI](#), [Ipsos MORI](#) (trust by degree), [Ipsos MORI](#) (full report)

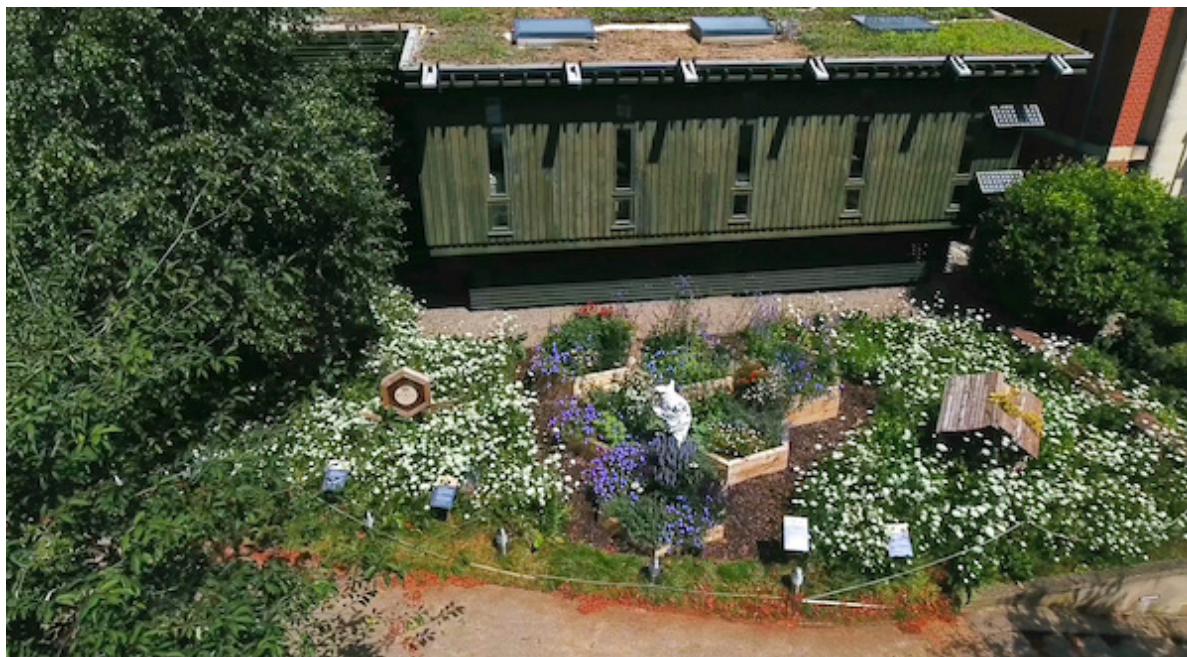
Dr Jenner's House offers 'initial sounding board' for museums as UK plans mass vaccination

As the UK heads for mass vaccination against Covid-19, there has been renewed interest in Dr Jenner's House, the small museum with two staff members which tells the story of the birth of vaccination. It is currently hosting a series of 'Jenner Conversations' including a recent event led by Dr Richard Horton, exploring how to celebrate vaccination and challenge digital misinformation. Museum manager Owen Gower offers to act as an 'initial sounding board' for museums working on the topic, and can be contacted at events@edwardjenner.co.uk. He adds *"while discussions often focus on the prevalence of misinformation, there is much to be said for the importance of positive vaccine information and, particularly, the way in which vaccination has brought about significant good throughout modern history. Museum collections can shine a light on the historical efficacy of vaccination, and public health interventions in general...museums can and should have a role to play in celebrating vaccination in coming weeks and months."* [Dr Jenner's House](#), [Dr Jenner's House](#) (event)

Nesta discusses vaccination, public trust - and avoiding polarisation

A recent Nesta podcast with expert Rachel Botsman discussed how to develop trust, focusing especially on how to encourage people to take part in the Covid-19 vaccine programme. She recommended activating already-trusted local voices and networks, considering the messenger as well as the message and not setting up polarising, adversarial situations when addressing vaccine hesitancy. [Nesta](#) (scroll to bottom)

Brexit



Horniman bee garden c. Public Art UK.

Brexit resources in brief

- Guidance on changes most relevant to DCMS sector policy areas has been published, with two sections amended within the last month: 'Exporting or importing objects of cultural interest', and 'Using personal data in your business or other organisation'. [uk](#),
- There is also more general advice for business from the Government, 'Check, Change, Go'. (Reportedly nearly half of SMEs who import or export from Europe have given no attention to Brexit preparations because of the impacts of Covid-19.) [uk](#) (general business advice), [Business New Wales](#)
- Creative Europe has published guidance on how the UK can participate in EU co-operation projects from January 2021 with Third Country status. [Creative Europe Desk UK](#)

Arts after Brexit report predicts 'two year hiatus' in cultural relationship with Europe

A study from the University of Manchester has assessed the likely impact of Brexit on cultural collaboration with Europe from January. It found that a lack of clarity on travel restrictions and visas, alongside the complications of Covid-19 make many collaborations too difficult to organise. In addition, EU cultural funding has supported the UK sector at a rate of around £40m each year, and there are to date no plans to replace these (although Chancellor Rishi Sunak pledged to replace EU Structural Funds in the recent Spending Review). In the interim, it seems most likely that medium sized organisations will be most affected by the gap, as these were most involved in Creative Europe. However, the report also said that goodwill in personal relationships means that institutions will continue to find ways to collaborate post-transition. [University of Manchester](#) (full report), [University of Manchester](#) (overview)

Surveys

National Covid-19 research project seeks experiences of museums, especially those excluded from emergency funding

The Centre for Cultural Value is leading a new research project on the impact of Covid-19 across creative industries, in particular addressing the “*urgent need for learning relating to supply/demand of cultural activity in the digital space and whether the crisis will replicate, exacerbate or temper existing inequalities*” The research is being developed in partnership with the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and The Audience Agency, and will run until September 2021. CCV is developing case studies and would particularly like to hear from independent or volunteer-led museums in the North, cultural organisations in rural Northern Ireland and also any cultural organisations that applied unsuccessfully to the Cultural Recovery Fund in England, plus those not eligible to apply for this support. Interested organisations should complete an Expression of Interest for by 14th December. [Centre for Cultural Value](#), [Centre for Cultural Value](#) (call for participation)

Future for transport – rural strategy

The Department for Transport is calling for evidence on the future of rural transport, especially as technology drives radical change. It aims to develop a strategy to increase low carbon transport options and create more integrated services. The consultation runs to 16th February 2021.

[Department for Transport](#)

Dogs in Museums

Development Partners is running a short survey to assess how many museums allow dogs on their sites, either indoors or outdoors. It seeks to understand both the positives and potential problems and limitations to admitting dogs. It may develop a website featuring museum and heritage sites where dogs are welcome. [Development Partners](#)

People

Iain Watson has announced that he will retire as Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums in March next year, after 20 years in post. [Museums Journal](#)

John Roles, former Head of Service at Leeds Museums and Galleries has died after a long illness. In its tribute, Leeds Museums said “*it’s difficult to put into words what John meant to Leeds and the sector. His passion for museums was demonstrated by his generosity as a leader, and his willingness to share his expertise and empower us all.*” [Museums Journal](#)

Events

MCG conference ‘Museums in a Crisis’

Museums Computer Group is holding its annual conference online this year, covering issues of ‘Museums in a Crisis’. Speakers include Alix Gedes from Ones Further describes ongoing research on material posted by museums during the crisis, especially around humour; Chris How of Clearleft on reimagining a physical exhibition as a digital destination and Shereen Hunte of the Jewish Museum London, on the digital aspects of addressing Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and the rise in anti-Semitism. There will also be a Keynote from new BMG leaders Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah. The event takes place on 9th – 10th December. Tickets are available on a pay what you can afford basis, from free to £10. [MCG](#) (booking), [MCG](#) (speakers), [MCG](#) (programme)

TEG webinar - practicalities of touring in the 'new normal'

The Touring Exhibitions Group is holding an event on how to continue tour in a rapidly changing environment. Rachel Kent, Head of International Touring Exhibitions at Tate Modern will be speaking alongside representatives of Nomad Exhibitions and Momart. There will also be plenty of time for practical questions. The event takes place on 16th December from 1.30pm. Tickets are free, but those who are not TEG members are asked to consider making a donation. [TEG](#)

Reframing Museums – a global look at changes ahead in museum practice

Films from the recent international conference 'Reframing Museums' are now available online. Topics discussed include the fate of 'large loan' exhibitions and how sustainable digital output can be if it not monetised further. Others talked about how museums are moving away from Eurocentric perspective and how there is radical change on the ground as this plays out. [Art Newspaper](#), [Reframing Museums](#) (all sessions)

Rebuilding Heritage programme opens new round of tailored support for individuals and organisations

Rebuilding Heritage is opening a new round of its one to one and group support for individuals and organisations to upskill and deal with significant change in the heritage sector. Training covers topics including leadership, business planning, fundraising, communications, and wellbeing. The deadline for applications is 11pm, 16th December 2020. [Rebuilding Heritage](#)

Oxford Cultural Leaders: online and residential programmes planned for 2021

The Oxford Cultural Leaders programme for 2021 is running with online and residential alternatives for greater flexibility. Aimed at senior staff who want to redefine their identity as leaders and also reimagine their institutional vision, it is run by Oxford University's Gardens, Libraries & Museums in partnership with the Saïd Business School. The two options are:

- Online programme from 11th – 19th April 2021, with a deadline of 1st February for applications. Fees range from £950 - £3.8k, depending on the size of your organisation.
- The residential option runs from 26th September – 1st October 2021, with applications opening in April.

[Oxford Gardens, Libraries & Museums](#)

Museums and Galleries Responding to the Climate and Ecological Crisis

Films from NMDC's recent conference are now online, offering practical examples of how cultural organisations are addressing the climate crisis. Sessions range from a detailed look at capital projects and building management from the National Theatre and The Whitworth, and an overview of international work with Julie's Bicycle. Leeds Museums and Galleries describes how it developed more sustainable exhibitions – supported by a commitment to environmental work from the City Council and encouraged by an increasingly receptive public, keen for the museum to go further. Case studies include its recent 'Fast x Slow Fashion: Shopping for clothes in Leeds 1720 – 2020'. [NMDC](#) (watch all sessions), [Leeds City Museum](#) (Fast x Slow Fashion)

Covid Culture Shock offers insights from the South Kensington cultural district

The Covid pandemic has sent shock waves around the world, and left cultural venues fighting for survival. But it has also delivered new partnerships, digital innovations and unforeseen connections with audiences and communities. Covid Culture Shock will bring together voices from across South Kensington, featuring the Royal Albert Hall, V&A, Natural History Museum, Science Museum, Serpentine Galleries, Ismaili Centre and Goethe-Institut London, in an event presented by the Ismaili Centre and chaired by former UK Culture Minister Lord Vaizey. The panelists will explore the legacy of 2020, and how the crucible of Covid can be used to forge a new, inclusive future for global culture, as well as the vital role of culture in creating hope and change in a post-Covid world. The event takes place online at 6pm, on 8th December. Tickets are free. [Discover South Kensington](#)

Creative Engagement with Dinosaurs and Nature – learning from Dippy

The Natural History Museum's Dippy on Tour drew huge crowds and substantial press across the country. Now an event from SMILE (Science in Museums Inspiring Learning and Engagement) explores the impact of the partnership between regional museums and NHM, and explores how the touring exhibition helped involve the public in science and environment projects. The event takes place on 9th December online and is free. [SMILE](#)

AIM events – from applying to trusts to tackling inequalities

AIM has published its upcoming online training, including events on tackling inequalities, applying to trusts and practical governance, running through to early February. [AIM](#)

M + H Autumn Series of online talks – from escape rooms in Norway to job hunting

Museums + Heritage has launched a free online series of talks and crash courses for the autumn, covering practical learning and sector issues. The extensive programme includes:

- A crash course in podcasting for museums and heritage organisations
- From rooms to zooms: a journey into digital engagement
- Creating sustainable exhibitions
- Securing a new job in difficult times
- Crisis management: what have we learned so far?
- 'Be Brave, Go Immersive' describes how the Telemark Museum in Norway has developed an escape room programme, drawing in new audiences in a museum where 'visitor numbers hadn't changed in 100 years'. While its first attempt kept it simple with props and basic mechanics, the second escape room, themed around Henrik Ibsen 'went high tech' in partnership with a theatre, recreating scenes from Peer Gynt including the hall of the mountain king in a dedicated structure.

[M + H](#) (full programme), [Telemark Museum](#)

Let's Get Real 10 years on – long term course evaluates online success

Culture24 is seeking participants for the 2021 version of its collaborative action research programme, Let's Get Real. The seven-month online project will run from 22nd February – around 13th September 2021, and will aim to take museums from the reactive programmes that many established in response to Covid-19 to a more strategic approach. It will ask what success looks like online during a pandemic, and how organisations can continue to be relevant to their audiences. 60 cultural and heritage organisations are expected to take part this year, with expert digital analyst Chris Unitt as the programme partner. There will be two participants per organisation, with costs dramatically reduced since last year – at most, £750 for large museums, and decreasing on a sliding scale with five subsidised places at £150. The deadline for applications is 1st February 2021.

[Culture24](#)

Culture in Crisis webinar series: Heritage Protection in a post-Covid landscape

The V&A has published recordings of its interactive Culture in Crisis workshops, produced in partnership with the British Council and DCMS. These look at the role cultural protection has to play in 'building back better' – and look at the dangers to cultural heritage both of Covid-19 disruption, but also from returning to suboptimal old practices as the virus recedes – from over-tourism to excluding local communities. The five workshops cover topics including digital strategies and environmental sustainability. [V&A](#)

Culture in Crisis podcast: Fighting the Illicit Trade

The second season of the V&A's Culture in Crisis podcast addresses 'Fighting the Illicit Trade' and considers issues including looting at archaeological sites and auctioning stolen goods. It brings together specialists on heritage crime from across the world, including Vijay Kumar at the India Pride Project and Leila Amineddoleh, Art & Cultural Heritage Lawyer. All six episodes are now available.

[V&A](#)

Museums and digital memory: preserving digital assets

The British Museum has published recordings from its 2018 conference 'Museums and digital memory: from creation and curation to digital preservation'. These discuss how to preserve both digitised and born-digital assets for the future. [British Museum](#) (YouTube)

Fantastic for Families – add your event (and potentially reach millions through its partners)

The Family Arts Campaign is inviting museums, galleries, freelancers and artists to virtual events to its Fantastic for Families website. These might include virtual events, online resources and home activities for families to enjoy at home. Its partners, including Netmums, The List and In Your Area have an estimated reach of around nine million people, offering a very large potential audience.

[Fantastic for Families](#), [Fantastic for Families](#) (twitter), [Family Arts Campaign](#) (newsletter signup in footer)

Novel routes into collections



An imagined gallery space in the collaboration between Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and Occupy White Walls.

BMAG invites users to curate gallery space in virtual reality – with AI that learns your taste

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery is the first museum to collaborate with the game Occupy White Walls (OWW), which allows users to create a fantasy gallery space. 200 assets from BMAG's collection have been uploaded to the site, with the full collection of its public domain images to follow eventually. As players develop their gallery, AI learns about their taste and is able to suggest images that they might like to add. London based digital start-up Stiki Pixels created Occupy White Walls, which currently has 75,000 players. It is seeking more museums to collaborate and extend its existing art collection. Some public domain pictures from the National Gallery and The Met are already part of the OWW, but not through formal partnership. Linda Spurdle, BMAG's Head of Digital said *"to see gamers from across the world discover and interact with our artworks is exactly the kind of engagement we hoped for when we made our out-of-copyright images available online. We look forward to seeing what the players create."* [BMAG, Occupy White Walls, OWW](#) (press release), [Museums Journal](#)

Also: Museum Next's Jim Richardson has taken a look at the presence of museums in Massive Multiplayer Games, from Animal Crossing to Roblox. [Museum Next](#)

From rosemary to sewage: 'Odeuropa' project wins €2.8m grant to curate centuries of smell

The pan-European Odeuropa project has been awarded €2.8m by the Horizon 2020 programme to explore which scents were predominant in European society from the 16th to 20th centuries, and how to use AI to extract knowledge about these smells from digital collections. Scents now lost in history include the burning of rosemary and hot tar in attempts to ward off plague, and the reek of sewage once ubiquitous in cities. The project, which begins in January, plans to publish its findings in an 'Encyclopaedia of Smell Heritage' as well as reconstructing a selection of smells using heritage science techniques, some of which may be available for museum exhibitions. The project has a team working across Europe, including William Tullett at Anglia Ruskin University. He said *"for me, tobacco is a central smell in European history and heritage. It is a hot, smoky, pungent smell...[and] it links to histories of sociability, trade and colonisation, and also health."* [Odeuropa, Guardian, New York Times, Independent, Forbes, NOSE network](#)

First exhibition curated by schoolchildren in the history of the Arts Council Collection

'Go On Being So' at Newlyn Art Gallery is the first exhibition drawn from the Art Council's Collection to be curated by schoolchildren in its 74 year history. Created by 12 – 16 year olds, it opened in February and had to close six weeks later due to lockdown, but can be viewed online in the gallery setting. The exhibition includes short films of the young curators describing why they chose particular pieces around the topic of what it means to be a global citizen. The group commented *"we chose works that said something about big issues for us personally, and are universal to people of our age, such as mental health and equality."* Gallery Director James Green said *"This wasn't a show that a seasoned curator would have put together (and it's all the better for that), and its title is not one the gallery team would have selected, and yet both resonated with our audience in ways we couldn't have imagined."* [Arts Professional](#), [Newlyn Art Gallery](#)

Collections

30,000 strong collection to be moved after disagreement on the future of the Usher Gallery

Since a quid pro quo agreement in 1974, the Usher Gallery in Lincoln and its 30,000 piece collection have been owned by Nottingham County Council but loaned to Lincoln City Council for free in return for care of the objects. However, this arrangement began to break down in 2019 when Nottingham cut its culture budget by £750k and proposed to turn the Usher Gallery into a coroner's court and wedding venue. An arbitration, led by Historic Lincoln Trust is still underway, but in the meantime the artefacts will be transferred to a purpose-built facility in Nottingham from 2021 for an initial period of two years. [Museums Journal](#)

Royal Opera House Hockney remains in the UK – after it is purchased by its Chair of Trustees

It has emerged that the portrait of Sir David Webster, sold last month for £12.8m by the Royal Opera House was purchased by the Chair of its board of Trustees, David Ross. Ross, who was not in post when the Royal Opera house made the decision to sell the painting, purchased it in a last-minute bid by phone, when it became clear that it would otherwise leave the country. Ross is also Chair of the National Portrait Gallery and will lend it to the gallery when it reopens in 2023. In the interim, it will go back on display at the Royal Opera House. [Art Newspaper](#)

Making digital financially viable

National Gallery and London Transport Museum find paying audiences for virtual tours

The National Gallery is charging £8 for a virtual tour of its Artemisia Gentileschi exhibition, as it experiments with new digital revenue streams for lockdown periods and beyond. The exhibition's curator Letizia Treves gives a 30 minute tour of the blockbuster show, which includes 30 works, half from Italian lenders. Treves says *"although this film cannot replace the experience of seeing the exhibition in person at the National Gallery, it will allow us to share Artemisia's story and paintings with as many people as possible, in particular those who cannot make it to Trafalgar Square right now."* After some experimenting with price points, London Transport Museum has found that it can charge £20 for its 90 minute long live 'hidden London' tours, which take audiences to otherwise inaccessible and closed parts of the Underground network. [Art Newspaper](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (film excerpt and podcast), [London Transport Museum](#)

Also: The National Theatre has announced a paid-for streaming service for its catalogue of plays, with a variety of payment options including £100 for an annual subscription. [BBC](#)

Oxford Museum of Natural History offers online escape room event as museum fundraiser

The Oxford Museum of Natural History is experimenting with the format of a live online escape room in an evening event on 4th December. Wildlife presenter and explorer Steve Backshall will take audiences behind the scenes at the museum while inviting them to solve clues to find a missing exhibit. Free to attend, audiences will be encouraged to donate to the HOPE for the future fund, which aims to preserve the museum's 200 year old entomology collection. [M + H](#)

'Try these things, see what sticks, don't spend too much money': new experiments in digital

Sadler's Wells' Head of Content & Audiences, Ankur Bahl has been talking to the Digital Works podcast about its shifting approach to content, which he says will remain after the Covid-19 crisis has passed. Its marketing team has shifted from a paradigm primarily aimed at selling high volumes of tickets for shows, to considering online audiences who for reasons of distance, price or even limited interest will rarely or never visit in person. He says Sadler's Wells has carried out a series of relatively cheap experiments with forms – including workshop series, Facebook premieres, 'pay to play' on vimeo, artists talks and digital film commissions, adding "*try these things, see what sticks, don't spend too much money...*" Audiences will not pay for 'second best' versions of a live experience, but will pay for events with added value. In terms of dance this included 'The Company of Elders' workshops, which drew people in their 30s as well as the anticipated older audience. These also drew huge international audiences (including 800,000 in India for one event) almost by accident. [Digital Works](#), [Sadler's Wells](#) (digital stage), [Sadler's Wells](#) (Company of Elders)

Bejewelled moths and Warhol skateboards: museum shops raise their game

Museums innovate to draw more Christmas revenue online

The Bank of England reports that average household spending increases by £800 in December, and many museums are hoping to support a difficult financial situation by attracting some of that spending to their online shops. Some, like the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, have opened an online shop for the first time – others like the Garden Museum in London and BMAG (see below) are opening short-term 'craft markets' through their websites and social media. 15 museums have also worked together on the #ShopMuseums campaign to encourage people to buy from museums in the run up to Christmas, including Tate, which is also pitching different gift ideas at its audience in a '12 days of Christmas' daily event. Museums + Heritage has browsed dozens of museum shops and has picked out twenty gifts and decorations available in museums – ranging from a Charles Darwin embroidered decoration from NHM, to a suffragette umbrella from the Museum of London and bejewelled moth stud earrings from the Wallace Collection. [M + H](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Kettle's Yard](#), Garden Museum, [RAMM](#), [M + H](#), [Tate](#) (12 days of Christmas daily offers)

BMAG's online Christmas Gifts Market draws together businesses from across the city

Continuing its innovations which blend community with commerce, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has launched a new Virtual Birmingham Christmas Gifts Market. The public are invited to join the group and choose gifts from 80 Birmingham businesses, ranging from children's craft kits to handmade jewellery – thus supporting the local community. BMAG will also be selling gifts from its online shop on the site. The work is supported by Colmore BID and JQBID. [BMAG](#)

Research

CCV focuses on 'culture on referral' as it seeks to make research more accessible

A central aim of the Centre for Cultural Value, based at the University of Leeds, is to make research findings from academia more accessible and useful to the cultural sector. It has now published the first of a planned set of regular digests. The initial round up covers 'culture on referral' – also known as arts on prescription. It found that there are 'positive and meaningful' impacts on wellbeing – but also pointed out the limitations: large numbers of participants are 'white, female and over 50', with other demographics seemingly less likely to be reached – and the length of studies tends to be 10 weeks, with few longitudinal studies. Sign up to CCV's newsletter ([footer of any web page](#)) to receive notification of future digests. [Arts Professional](#), [Centre for Cultural Value](#) (digest)

Heritage and treasure

Delayed Historic England Tailored Review is published

The Government has published its Tailored Review of the work of Historic England, delayed from the spring. Points raised in the review include:

- It is unlikely that the English Heritage Trust, which is overseen by Historic England, will be financially independent by 31 March 2023 as originally planned, in part because of the pandemic. The review recommended that HE and EHT should rethink whether the current level of reserves is adequate and make the organisations better able to withstand adverse conditions.
- HE should work to improve the diversity of its workforce and provide more leadership in this area. Currently the declared ethnicity of 92% of staff is white (5% are BAME and 3% did not say) and 3.9% said they are disabled (compared to 20% of the whole working population). In a blog, Chief Executive Duncan Wilson said that part of the challenge is that HE draws from academic disciplines that themselves do not recruit a diverse student body - he pointed to work placements, apprenticeships, secondments and shadowing as routes to addressing the disparity.
- The report said that HE's overview of the sector in its 'Heritage Counts' series are widely used and appreciated in the sector, but not accessible to the general public. It recommended that HE creates additional, more digestible versions for wider circulation.

In its response, Historic England welcomed the 'positive and strong endorsement' of its work in the review. [Historic England](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Historic England blog](#) (staff diversity)

Planned change to the Treasure Act to protect more finds

The Government has announced that it plans to make changes to the Treasure Act to broaden the types of finds that can be defined as treasure. Under the current definition, treasure is over 300 years old, made of gold or silver or found with artefacts made from these precious metals. However this omits some objects of great historical interest, such as a recently-discovered bronze enamelled horse brooch from the 4th century AD. This is now on display at The Collection in Lincoln through the generosity of the finder, but which could have disappeared into private hands. There will be a public consultation and a specialist research project running through 2021 to refine the new legislation. [Gov.uk](#)

Climate and nature

SMG adopts TPI scheme, tracking how effectively funders are moving to decarbonisation

Science Museum Group has become the first cultural sector organisation to adopt the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI), to evaluate the progress of its potential sponsors towards a low-carbon future. TPI's independent research demonstrates how far a company's planned decarbonisation matches with the Paris Agreement. Established by the Church of England National Investing Bodies and the Environment Agency Pension Fund, it is 'the leading corporate climate action benchmark'. SMG is also seeking to further reduce its own carbon footprint. Director Sir Ian Blatchford said "*we have cut carbon emissions from our operations by 69% since 2011/12 despite a 24% increase in floor area of our estate but we have so much more to do. Over the next 12 months, we will set out how work to transform many of our buildings will lead to significant further reductions in our carbon footprint*". [Arts Professional](#), [SMG \(Sustainability Policy\)](#), [Transition Pathway Initiative](#)

Norwegian museum digitises collection – then buries it in an arctic 'mountain of permafrost'

The Norwegian National Museum has digitised its extensive collection of 400,000 objects and placed it in the Arctic World Archive – a coal mine in a mountain of permafrost on the arctic archipelago of Svalbard. The site was created in 2017 by technology company Piql AS as a 'safe repository for world memory' and already also contains material from UNICEF, Sweden's Moderna Museet and the Vatican Library. The data is claimed to be safe for 1,000 years in these conditions. [Art Newspaper](#)

British Council offers £50k grants for international collaborations addressing climate change

The British Council is seeking proposals for creative projects bringing together art, science and digital technology to offer innovative responses to climate change. Up to £50k each is available for 20 commissions, which must be delivered in an international partnership. The work will be produced in the run up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in Glasgow next November. The British Council says "*we want these commissions to stimulate truly global conversations, bringing people from different countries, cultures and communities together to understand each other's perspectives and to work together on creative responses and solutions to climate change.*" The deadline for applications is 13th December. [British Council](#)

Bristol Museum is the first in the UK to join the global biodiversity commission

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery has become the first museum in the UK and seventh globally to join the United for #Biodiversity campaign, launched by EU Commissioner for Environment, Virginijus Sinkevicius. The group encourages nature-related attractions – from parks to zoos and natural history museums to work together for the natural world. [European Commission](#), [Bristol City Council](#) (one city ecological emergency strategy), [Museums Journal](#)

DEFRA publishes responses to call for evidence on non-elephant ivory trade

Following the publication of the Ivory Act 2018, which banned the sale of elephant ivory apart from a handful of exemptions, DEFRA conducted a further call for evidence around the non-elephant ivory trade. 35 responses have been received – respondents are a mixture of music bodies, museums, art dealers and conservation NGOs. Evidence suggests that the UK market in non-elephant ivory is tiny compared to e.g. Tanzania, Hong Kong or China, however 1,631 items passed through UK auction houses in the period 2013 – 19. DEFRA is still considering the evidence and what, if any, action it should take. [DEFRA](#)

Funding

Funding doubles to £400k for MA-supported Digital Innovation and Engagement Fund

As we reported last month, the MA is partnering with UKRI and design agency Liminal Space to offer a Digital Innovation and Engagement Fund for its institutional member museums. Now the Arts and Humanities Research Council has also come on board, doubling available funds to £400k. This will provide a series of grants up to £50k to scale up and evaluate new ways of working evolved in the Covid-19 pandemic. The deadline for expressions of interest is 21st December. [Museums Journal](#)

Steps to Sustainability programme offers 14 month in depth business support

A new NLHF programme, Steps to Sustainability begins in February 2021, aimed at helping heritage organisations address financial challenges and increase resilience, through a 14 month support programme. Delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy, the course will consist of a five month programme of activities, followed by a nine month development and support stage. The programme will also give up to £10k for each participating organisation to develop a business idea. The programme is opening in two rounds, dependent on UK region, with applications for Scotland, Yorkshire and the North East, North West, Midlands and Wales open now – the second round opens in January 2021. [Social Enterprise Academy](#)

Garden Museum Director swimming to the Scilly Isles to raise funds

The Director of the Garden Museum, Christopher Woodward is swimming fifty miles from Newlyn in Cornwall to Tresco Abbey Gardens in the Scilly Isles to raise money for the Garden Museum. He is swimming the route in stages, and has reached the half way point of Wolf Rock Lighthouse despite 'ferocious tides' - however the next stage was delayed until December by the lockdown of Newlyn Harbour. In a more widely replicable fundraising effort, the museum is also opening its 'Beautiful and Useful' online craft fair today. [Garden Museum](#) (sponsored swim), [Garden Museum](#) ('Beautiful and Useful' craft fair)

AIM offers new Tackling Inequalities Grants in England, up to £10k per project

The Association of Independent Museums has created a new grant strand on Tackling Inequalities, offering up to £10k per project. Grants could be used on work including widening the range of Trustees or responding to workforce needs. Museums can also use and develop their collections to highlight discrimination and include missing perspectives. Participants must be in England, accredited or working towards it, and either join AIM or already be a member). The closing date for applications is 31 January 2021; awards will be made by the end of February. [AIM](#)

Art Fund launches £1m crowdfund in support of museums as 60% worry about survival

The Art Fund has launched a crowdfunding campaign 'Together for Museums', which aims to raise £1m to help institutions survive. Artists Michael Landy, Lubaina Himid and Anish Kapoor have contributed limited edition prints for donors giving £100, £500 and £4k respectively, and there is also a £25 David Shrigley tea towel. Art Fund released figures from a recent survey of museums as it launched the fundraiser, which showed that:

- On average during October, museums received 25% of footfall compared to the previous year, with income also down by 77%.
- 60% of museums and galleries worry about survival.
- 61% of museum and gallery workers fear for their jobs.
- Only 55% of all museums have so far received emergency support, with 56% of recipients saying they would have gone under without it.

Art Fund adds that of the museums that applied to its £2.25m emergency fund earlier in 2020, only 17% received support because it was so oversubscribed. Art Fund's Director Jenny Waldman said that many museums have reached a 'make or break point' where they need support to find creative solutions to survive. Previously unsuccessful applicants to the Art Fund's emergency funding schemes will be eligible for the fund when it opens in March 2021, after the fundraising effort is complete. [Art Newspaper](#), [Art Fund](#), [Art Fund](#) (press release), [M + H](#), [Guardian](#)

£1.4m Thriving Communities Fund offers up to £50 for creative social prescribing

A new £1.4m Thriving Communities Fund has been launched to help organisations create place-based, long-term partnerships that increase the reach of social prescribing activities, particularly among groups most affected by Covid-19 and health inequalities. The fund is open to local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise projects, including libraries, museums and heritage groups. Grants from £20k - £50k are available for projects with three core partners, who together provide 20% match funding. ACE is administering the fund and contributing £250, with the National Academy for Social Prescribing giving £1.15m. The deadline for applications is midday on 8th January 2021, with decisions by March. [ACE](#), [M + H](#), [Museums Journal](#)

NLHF resumes small and medium sized project funding

NLHF has resumed funding streams for small to medium sized projects seeking £3k - £100k. It says that this *'represents a return to our core business, but it is not a return to business as usual'*. This funding has the dual aims of continuing to support organisations through Covid-19 and supporting work led by or engaging with diverse groups. There is £10m available in this round, with decisions to be announced in January. [NLHF](#), [NLHF](#)

NLHF pilots recovery and resilience loans scheme with initial £1.2m

NLHF is piloting a new repayable finance scheme for not for profit organisations, with an initial budget of £1.2m. Loans will have a 0% interest fee and a 12 month payment holiday, and will range from £50k - £250k. NLHF hopes to maximise its effectiveness by recycling income through this approach – but also hopes to support organisations to diversify income and strengthen business models. Applicants must have previously received at least £10k through NLHF or the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The deadline for applications is 14th February 2021. [NLHF](#) (scroll), [NLHF](#) (detail)

£1m Shared History Fund opens to mark centenary of Northern Ireland

NLHF is distributing a £1m Shared History Fund on behalf of the Northern Ireland Office to mark the centenary of the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921. Events should facilitate local and national awareness of the centenary in a spirit of mutual respect. Applications are welcome from across the UK, with £3k - £100k available per project and a deadline of 15th January 2021. NLHF's Director of Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan said *"we recognise that dealing with contested heritage can be challenging, but it's also important that this significant period is marked the many communities and individuals it has impacted are acknowledged."* [NLHF](#), [NLHF](#) (detail)

Also: The recently updated Heritage Alliance funding directory now lists 400 sources of funding for heritage-related projects in the UK. [Heritage Alliance](#)

Make donation possible in three clicks – and other fundraising tips in brief

- ACE's Justin Hunt has given a short rundown of fundraising tips during the coronavirus – including basic questions such as "can someone donate in three clicks?" that make a significant difference to results. He also discusses the returns from converting one-time givers into monthly donors. [Digital Culture Network](#)
- Museums and galleries have been sustained by member schemes, with some offering member groups an extension to cover periods when closed, and others relying on the generosity of supporters who have often been happy to pay towards institutions that are unable to open. One philanthropy consultant commented *"at the moment, members feel they want to support cultural institutions during this difficult time. Renewal rates may dip a little this year but I think the real concern is next year when the recession really kicks in."* [Art Newspaper](#)

Festivals

Creative teams chosen to pilot work for Festival 2022 – as research points to a positive public reaction

30 teams, bringing together more than 500 creative organisations or individuals have been selected to receive funds to develop ideas for Festival 2022, an event that will bring together arts and STEM industries. Each group will receive up to £100k for the development phase, after which ten ideas will be chosen for the Festival. Participants range from scientists to choreographers, games developers to writers. Museums involved include Imperial War Museums, Science and Industry Museum, the Science Museum Group, British Library, V&A Dundee, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art and National Museums Northern Ireland. The press has repeatedly referred to the event as a 'Festival of Brexit' – a title repudiated by its Chief Creative Officer Martin Green who said it would be run by an 'independent company' bringing new opportunities for collaboration between STEAM subjects. Research by British Future shows that among the general public, the perception of the event as polarising is inaccurate – with 62% of Remainers and 67% of Leave voters welcoming the idea, with only 8% of Leavers and 11% of Remainers expressing disapproval. Its Director Sunder Katwala comments that the event is 'largely a blank piece of paper' with only one in 40 of those asked having previously heard of it. He added: *"in principle, our public groups were supportive of a festival to bring the country together, while having questions about the costs and especially whether this would be located in London and the big cities, or take place around the UK. The local presence of the First World War centenary cultural programme was strongly felt to have been its great strength."* [Gov.uk](#), [Festival UK* 2022](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Journal](#), [British Future](#)

A snapshot of festival adaptation and recovery – and why digital is likely to stay

In his latest newsletter, arts commentator Simon Tait gives a snapshot of how festivals have survived and changed over the past year, suffering considerable economic damage, but achieving a more geographically distributed audience online. The philosophy and music festival 'HowTheLightGetsIn', previous bi-annual at Hay-on-Wye, is among those that won't entirely go back to 'real world only' after achieving an audience of 3,000 in 50 countries for a four day event – while also booking a more diverse range of speakers. He argues that next year festivals will return in 'pale and interesting forms', with the opportunity to overhaul and update the format, including for Festival 2022. [Arts Industry](#)

Awards

Winners in brief – from green initiatives to new collecting

- Winners have been announced for the Art Fund's New Collecting Awards, which allow curators to develop their practice while collecting on a theme. Recipients include the National Trust's Catherine Troiano who will be collecting photography since the 70s representing experiences of British heritage and V&A's Xiaoxin Li who will research and collect contemporary Chinese studio craft. [M + H](#),
- Apollo magazine has announced its annual awards for the art world, including choosing Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Ibeju-Lekki, Nigeria as its new museum of the year. A teaching museum, it is focused on *"changing the way that young people in Nigeria understand themselves and their culture in relation to historical objects and artworks"* [Apollo](#), [Apollo](#) (full list)
- The Creative Green Awards given annually by Julie's Bicycle include a Pioneer Award for Tate Gallery, which has announced that it will reduce its carbon footprint by 10% by 2023 and is engaged in an assessment of its impacts to a degree *"almost unknown in an organisation of Tate's size, complexity and reach"*. [Julie's Bicycle](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Collections Trust Award – celebrating achievements in difficult circumstances

The Collections Trust Award for 2020 – 21 will be given for recent collections work achieved in difficult circumstances. The winning museum will receive £1k to spend on collections management activity. The deadline for entries is midnight on 22nd January. [Collections Trust](#)

NLS commissions essays on 2020 to add to its collections

The National Library of Scotland is seeking ten emerging writers to each receive a £1k bursary to write on the topic of 'my experience of 2020'. Their work will be accessioned to the collections of NLS. National Librarian John Scally said *"it's fair to say 2020 has been a year like no other, and we believe Scotland's writers will have much to say about it. We encourage writers from across the country, from all walks of life, and from a wide range of perspectives to apply for this initiative."* [NLS](#)

Contested heritage

Welsh Government report identifies statues linked to slavery

The Welsh Government has published an audit of 209 monuments, buildings and street names that are linked to slavery across the country. These range from references to those directly involved in the trade and those profiting from plantations and mines operating through slavery. The audit showed that there is often no interpretation accompanying the statues, so that they appear as role models rather than 'representatives of challenging aspects of the past'. Figures with 'contested' reputations are also listed to allow for further discussion. These include Winston Churchill, Christopher Columbus, Mahatma Gandhi and Iolo Morganwg – the latter inherited a plantation which had previously been profitable through slavery, though he was himself an anti-slavery campaigner. The audit found that few people of Black or Asian heritage are commemorated, and the only statue is of an anonymous group rather than a named individual. There is some commemoration of anti-slavery activists including a statue of Henry Richard in Tregaron and streets named after Samuel Romilly. First Minister Mark Drakeford said *"this is not about rewriting our past or naming and shaming. It is about learning from the events of the past. It is an opportunity for us to establish a mature relationship with our history and find a heritage which can be shared by us all. This is the first stage of a much bigger piece of work which will consider how we move forward with this information as we seek to honour and celebrate our diverse communities."* [Welsh Government](#) (press release), [Welsh Government](#) (full report)

National Trust report on colonialism and slavery continues to attract debate

The National Trust continues to face controversy over a report published in September on the links to colonialism and slavery of a number of its properties. At a Westminster Hall debate Conservative MP Andrew Murrison accused the organisation of a 'dramatic change of direction' and said it was at odds with its public and workforce. However Kevin Brennan (Lab) defended the National Trust saying *"what is wrong with the National Trust researching the history of the buildings it looks after? Historic Royal Palaces has just advertised for a curator to uncover its links to the slave trade."* Commentators have suggested that reactions to the report do not reflect the reality of a relatively dry, factual piece of work. Writing for the *New Statesman* Stephen Bush said *"what is wholly absent from the report is condemnation... anyone who talks about how the National Trust should not be judging the past by the standards of the present, or engaging in moral judgements about the properties, has clearly not read the report."* Heritage Minister Nigel Huddleston made it clear that the Government is unlikely to review the trust over the issue, but will remain interested in the practical application of the report. A National Trust spokesperson said *"we will take on board all the comments made by MPs at the debate, and continue to focus our efforts on welcoming members, visitors and families back to the places in our care."* [New Statesman](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Hansard](#)

The Space creates a toolkit for artists and cultural organisations dealing with abuse online

The Space, an organisation that helps arts organisations and artists to reach audiences online, has produced a new toolkit 'Online abuse in the arts: how to prepare and respond'. A small survey (126 people) in 2019 suggests that online abuse towards artists is easy to find, with 46% having experienced it, and 69% saying they had self-censored online to avoid harassment. Case studies include Yumna Al-Arashi, who says that 'death and rape threats started pouring in' after publishing a photography series of powerful women in Northern Yemen, with one online troll discovering her home address. Manchester Art Gallery curator Clare Gannaway also describes the gallery becoming part of a social media storm over #nymphgate – a dispute over the gallery's temporary removal of a picture from display during a collaborative art project with Sonia Boyce. She describes how the context of the programming was stripped away, and how online reaction spilled over into the gallery itself. The toolkit addresses how organisations can assess the risks and prepare for attacks in advance. Steps include:

- Creating an online audit, including considering who is initially likely to be at the receiving end of trolling in an organisation - from a junior staff member on social media, to a commissioned artist working alone at home. Addressing who holds passwords, checking cybersecurity and creating an out-of-hours emergency plan are also vital.
- A privacy check up on account settings – including whether individuals want to share their location.
- How to react when being attacked - including taking screenshots, not interacting with the attacker and considering whether a criminal offence has been committed.

There is also an extensive list of sources of support, from legal and psychological, to organisations and projects specifically created to deal with online bullying. [The Space](#), [The Space](#) (toolkit)

Jobs

Posts being advertised this month include:

- [Director - Tyne & Wear, Archives & Museums](#)
- [Head of Interpretation and Digital Engagement - Royal Armouries](#)
- [AV/IT Technician, Events - Royal Air Force museum](#)
- [Senior Bioinformatician - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Exhibition Technician - National Museums Scotland](#)

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

Also: The British Museum is seeking [three new Trustees](#)

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