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and much more...

NMDC update

‘There are few dinosaurs left in museums’ – Museum Directors blog about funding and the future of the sector

Iain Watson isn't referring to an alarming diplodocus shortage, but to the fact that museums are flourishing because they continually embrace innovative practice, resulting in a diversity of business models. Watson, who is Director of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, says he is convinced the sector will continue to flourish in 2018 despite cuts, but adds:

“The key question will relate to what services can be provided free at point of delivery. More and more, the only services that can be provided free at point of delivery may be those which are directly funded by specific grants or initiatives.”

In Tyne & Wear where 55% of visitors are in economic groups C2, D and E, many will be shut out of charged-for events, but, he says, there is a risk this will become a reality in the current economic climate. [Museums and Heritage](#)

As Dr Michael Dixon stands down after four years as NMDC Chair, he blogs on the changes that the sector has seen in the past few years. Five million more adults visit museums now compared to 2006/7. Museums are also an important part of the tourist draw to the UK, with many seeing large growth in overseas visitors in the past few years: for example, the Natural History Museum has seen an 139% increase since 2002.

He stresses the importance of continuing to support museums, which are already living with serious cuts. “Most national museums are managing 18% funding cuts over the life of this spending period, but some local authority-funded museums are facing much worse. This of course means painful choices and the curtailment of some ambitions. The health of the museum sector relies on maintaining support at every level.” [Museums and Heritage](#)

Working Internationally Conference

ICOM-UK, in partnership with the NMDC and the British Museum, will be presenting a one-day conference to explore how to start establishing international partnerships, develop an international strategy and build economically sustainable models of working on **4th March 2013 at the British Museum**.

The keynote speaker is Diane Lees, Director-General of Imperial War Museums. Other speakers, facilitators and panelists are drawn from national, regional and local museums who have developed successful international programmes and partnerships. This conference will interest people working in museums of all types who are engaged in or want to begin working on international projects.

Registration and refreshments from 10am; conference runs from 11am - 4pm. Tickets £10, includes lunch. For further information and to book, please click [here](#).

Supporting Collections

Collections Trust announces award for best practice

The Collections Trust will be giving two awards for best practice for collections at their OpenCulture event on 2nd July. The Best Collections Practice Award is open to museums, archives libraries and galleries. It looks for innovative ways to improve the sustainability and use of collections, and was last year won by the V&A. A prize is also offered for smaller venues – the Collections on a Budget Award - for those with a turnover of less than €500k per annum.

Details of how to apply are on the Awards' website at www.collectionslink.org.uk/ct-awards and the close date for nominations is 30 April 2013. The winners will be announced on Tuesday 2 July at a special reception at [OpenCulture 2013](#).

Making Natural History collections more accessible in Wales

National Museums Wales (NMW) is establishing a network of natural science collections across Wales.

The Linking Natural Science Collections project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, started in January 2013. The aim of the project is to make these collections more accessible, with opportunities for audiences to engage with and explore the material.

It is hoped that the project will lead to a better public understanding of natural science collections, which are currently under threat. An audit of natural science objects and collections will be undertaken across Welsh museums. They will then develop an online database of natural science collections and a touring exhibition. Training will be provided for curators to help them to use their collections beyond the project, leaving a sustainable legacy.

For more details about this project please get in touch with Christian Baars, christian.baars@museumwales.ac.uk (tel 029 2057 3113).

Also: The Esmée Fairbairn grant to the NMW was part of a whole raft of donations to museums in December 2012. They also supported natural history collections at the Horniman Museum, a seaweed collection at the Natural History Museum, and Norfolk Museums' Shine A Light project, which aims to increase access to larger objects in collections. [Full list on the Esmée Fairbairn website here](#)

Making collections more mobile

The Working Group on Mobility of Collections [in Europe] has produced a report and toolkit to help museums share collections more effectively and cheaply across the continent. The report focuses on four highly practical issues:

- improving and expanding indemnity schemes and shared liability agreements at EU Member State level
- improving valuation processes for works of art, particularly for the purposes of indemnity and shared liability
- simplifying the process of risk assessment for lending
- making transport procedures more reliable and cheaper.

Their conclusions include advice to museum professionals around which kinds of contract to support and avoid, and to European Institutions encouraging a greater awareness of museums. It advocates an exchange programme for museum registrars similar to the Erasmus programme. It also encourages Member States to set up state indemnity schemes to back the movement of cultural objects. [Full report](#) [Executive summary](#) [Toolkit](#)

Foreign Office counts up its cultural assets

The Foreign Office will be holding a valuation of all its antiques and works of art, at the request of the National Audit Office (NAO). The survey will include work held at embassies across the world, from furniture to architectural fittings, sculptures, decorative art and paintings. The valuation comes partly as a result of the government's 'resource accounting' policy covering all public spending. In 2010 the NAO suggested that such a valuation would 'identify surplus assets for potential sale'. At last count, the antiques were valued at £19,640,000. [Art Newspaper](#)

Flogging the family silver

The further adventures of Old Flo

The fate of the Henry Moore statue *Draped Seated Woman* – known locally as 'Old Flo' remains uncertain. Christies was due to sell the statue, which is worth between £5 – £20million on 6th February, on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council. It has now withdrawn it from sale until the row about ownership has been resolved. The Art Fund, the Tate and the Henry Moore Foundation are supporting the case that Tower Hamlets is not the owner, a position which the Council dismisses as a "desperate PR stunt".

Last month, the Museum of London, who have offered to display the statue if reprieved, dispatched artist Bob and Roberta Smith to the East End with a pop-up display to hear local opinions. They remind us that the statue represents a woman sheltering from an air raid.

Museum Director Sharon Ament said: "She was seen to be a symbol of the resilience of post-war London, a symbol that has great resonance today. But what do people living in the East End now really think? This project will help everyone get a true sense of what the East End community think about the sale of Old Flo."

It is possible that no-one owns the statue. No conclusive new documents were produced on the dissolution of the LCC or GLC. Moore's *Knife Edge Two Pieces* and Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais*, both outside the Palace of Westminster, are in the same position and are technically ownerless. [Museum of London](#)

Northampton Council to sell 4,000 year old Egyptian statue

Northampton Borough Council definitely does own a 4,000 year old statue of Sekhemka and is definitely planning to sell it, hoping to raise £2m. The money from the sale is intended to be reinvested in Northampton Museum, Abington Park or Delapre Abbey. A relatively small response to a local survey (173 people) indicated that local people would prefer the funds to go to Northampton Museum.

In September last year the Museum Association's Ethics committee had [cautioned the Council against the sale](#) and said that its plans for spending the money would need to be clearer to establish whether sale was justified. There have also been calls locally for the piece to remain in Northampton's collections.

Sekhemka was probably acquired by the second Marquis of Northampton in Egypt in 1850, and donated to the museum by his son twenty years later. [BBC News](#)

Other Council art sales

The Daily Telegraph gives a roundup of other recent council art sales while warning against a 'new philistinism'. It argues:

"One of New Labour's few tangible achievements was securing free entry to museums and galleries, which was, in turn, a restatement of its belief in access to art for all. This credo has animated the policies of all major parties, but particularly of Labour, ever since the idealistic post-war period.

Yet now the consensus that culture is a good thing and should be shared as widely as possible appears to be under threat – not least from those very Labour councils one would expect to defend it. Examples, both big and small, are there for all to see."

It cites Durham City Council which in January announced that it is poised to demolish the Civic Heart Arch in Chester-le-Street, rather than pay for its continued upkeep. It was created five years ago by artist Jo Fairfax at a cost of £300,000. Bolton Council has sold 36 works of art, including two Picassos. [Telegraph](#)

Cuts roundup

More detail of the Newcastle museum cuts: MPs intervene

More detail has emerged of Newcastle Council's plans to substantially reduce support for museums. The council's cabinet is meeting in late February and intends to make firm decisions in early March. Indications are that support for the Great North Museum may be cut completely, and that their funding of the Laing Museum and Discovery Art Gallery will decrease by 10% over the next two years and then 30% in 2015/16. Probable results include shorter opening hours, cuts in education programmes, more charged admission and less exhibitions coming to Newcastle from outside.

The three museums combined attract an average of 1.2 million people a year and are thought to bring £23m to the local economy. The leader of the city council, Nick Forbes has said that he 'shares the anger' of those who oppose the cuts, but that they are inevitable because of Newcastle's vastly decreased budget. [A short film here](#) outlines his dilemma.

Newcastle's three MPs have now become involved in the Council's budget crisis – the detail and full extent of which was discussed in an [adjournment debate](#) in the last week of January. In it, Catherine McKinnell MP said the council faced 'perhaps impossible decisions' in the light of a large population

of vulnerable elderly and children in care, and that it also faced closing its swimming pool, ten libraries and its Sure Start schemes. She said that for every £1 invested in culture in the region, there was a £4 return on investment, and that preserving the city's cultural offering was therefore vital economically. Further meetings between Ministers, MPs and Newcastle Council are planned. [Arts Newspaper](#), [Catherine McKinnel](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Guardian Professionals Network](#)

... and cuts in Sheffield and Westminster

Sheffield Council is also trying to save £50m from its budget and is therefore cutting its spend on culture by 20%. Museums Sheffield is projected to lose £200k per year.

Meanwhile Westminster Council has announced that it will reduce its £350,000 arts commissioning programme by £150,000 in April, and scrap it completely in 2014. The Serpentine Gallery is among those likely to be affected by the cuts.

Blackburn Council is also looking at reducing or withdrawing support from two museums. [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Association](#)

National Museums Wales plans large scale restructuring

National Museums Wales is beginning talks with 650 staff spread over seven museum sites about restructuring. The service has seen its funding cut by £5m over three years (beginning in 2011). Under the proposals, 35 posts are to go, with 160 more being affected. The main changes will be to collections, research and learning, new media provision and exhibitions. Union representatives expressed concern about the loss of expertise to the service. The consultation will continue for three months.

Last year NMW saw its best visitor figures since free entry was introduced in 2001, with 1.69 million visitors.

Also: National Museums Wales is creating its first national marketing strategy. Consultants will be approaching a number of museums, but if your museum has expertise or recent experience that you think would be of use to NMW, please contact brianm@creativecultures.co.uk for a brief phone interview. [BBC](#), [ALVA](#)

Eric Pickles' '50 ways to save' criticised by Museums Association

In the midst of huge budget cuts for many councils, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has produced a document listing '50 ways to save'. One proposal reads:

"Lease works of art not on display: Many councils own art galleries and museums and have extensive collections which never see the light of day, but merely gather dust in storage."

The Museums Association have responded that the suggestion is ill informed, and that there is no market for leasing art in this way. The Cultural Learning Alliance agree, but also point to some innovative learning activities that take place in museum stores including [Revisiting Collections](#) and [Stories of the World](#). [Cultural Learning Alliance](#), [Museums Association](#)

Good curators at risk? – Collections Trust Manifesto for good curatorship

The Collections Trust warns that with many curators heading for retirement, there is a general trend of curatorial knowledge being lost to collections. On the Collections Link blog they write:

"We are deeply concerned by the decrease in support of and provision for curatorial expertise in the museums sector. We believe that action needs to be taken now so that knowledge of objects and their relevance to the communities with whom the museums engage is not lost. Action is needed now as many museum employees with this knowledge are nearing retirement, and there is no adequate provision of continuity of this expertise.

Only through promoting and connecting the different sets of professional skills, from curatorship, outreach, education, collections management, marketing and leadership will we achieve this vision."

They invite museums and museum staff to [join their public campaign group](#) and sign their manifesto supporting good curation practice. [Collections Link](#)

Copyright

Latest stage of Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill

The Enterprise and Regulatory reform Bill has now passed through the Grand Committee stage in the House of Lords. Among the issues raised again in the meeting was the question of whether photographers would be fully protected by the orphan works scheme. Safeguards mean that those who use orphan works would have to pay into a holding fund in case a copyright owner emerged, and would also have to prove that they had also made sure there was not a copyright owner beyond the UK. If passed, the Bill provides the legislative framework for use of orphan works in museum collections in a way which does not infringe copyright law. The report stage of the Bill is yet to be scheduled. [House of Lords](#)

Government publishes proposals for copyright exceptions

The Government has published a further response to the Hargreaves Review of IP focusing on copyright exceptions, and this outlines proposals to go into draft legislation for implementation by October 2013. Some of the proposals going forward into the draft bill include:

- A new exception for museums for preservation and archival copying of works in their permanent collections which cannot be easily replaced
- A new exception for parody, caricature and pastiche (thus safeguarding museum ownership and display of artistic works which parody other works)
- A new exception for museums to make electronic copies of works in their collection on dedicated terminals on their premises
- Extending the current copying for non commercial research or private study to sounds recordings, broadcasts and films

[IPO](#), [IPO report](#), [NMDC website](#)

General news

Blue Plaques scheme to continue

Rumours that the Blue Plaques scheme is to close are unfounded say English Heritage. Blue plaques have been used to celebrate the homes and workplaces of notable figures since 1866, but a backlog of recipients and the news that it has cost £250,000 to administer annually led to suggestions that the programme might be shut down.

English Heritage are now not taking suggestions for further Blue Plaques until those already agreed have been completed. The Blue Plaques team will also be reduced from four to two people.

English Heritage said "English Heritage is proud to run this much loved Scheme and, over the next eighteen months, we will work up the details of a new and more cost-effective approach to its administration. We will announce the details in 2014." [English Heritage](#)

Government mid-term review points to continued free admission

The government's mid-term review has reaffirmed its commitment to cultural activity saying: 'As well as the vibrancy it contributes to our national life, it also contributes significantly to health, wealth creation and employment. Where appropriate, the Government has an important role to play in promoting arts, sport and culture'.

Among its headline achievements it included the maintenance of free access to museums and galleries. They also note that: "National museums and galleries have been given access to £143 million of their historic reserves over the Spending Review period and have been given major exemptions from central expenditure controls". [Cabinet Office](#)

Sharing Evaluation: blog series published

London Museums Group and Audiences UK, with assistance from NMDC, have published a series of blogs looking at the challenges and benefits of sharing evaluation and audience research.

The conversation starts with a blog by Nicky Boyd, an evaluation and audience research consultant, who looks at the [barriers to better sharing of the results of evaluation](#). The Museum Association's

Maurice Davies responds by looking at the [Evaluating Evaluation](#) project (supported by the Wellcome Trust and Heritage Lottery Fund).

The remaining blogs are all provided by representatives of NMDC institutions: [Royal Museums Greenwich](#), [Science Museum](#), [Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service](#), [St Fagans: National History Museum](#), and [Tyne and Wear Archives and Museum Service](#). They look at case studies and museum practice about using and sharing evaluation, and how this has or could improve audiences' experiences.

All the blogs can be read on the London Museums Group website [here](#) and on the Audiences UK website [here](#), and other blogs by NMDC members (on a variety of subjects) can be read [here](#).

Museums for Health: evidence and good practice

Can museums make you healthy? A new journal paper supported by the Royal Society of Public Health suggests that they can: and there is hard evidence in particular around object handling sessions, which can be used as a starting point for 'assisting with counselling on issues of illness, death, loss and mourning and to help restore dignity, respect and a sense of identity'. There are also the well attested benefits of any activity which increases social interaction in increasing healthy lifespan.

RSPH is [holding an event](#) on Tuesday March 12th, 2013 to highlight the work of two museums which have been particularly active in this area, Dulwich Picture Gallery and UCL Museums. They focus on art galleries as an interactive place for older people, and the benefits of object handling. They are led by Dr Helen Chatterjee who is both a Deputy Director at UCL Museums and a Senior Lecturer in Biology, and Dr Paul M Camic, a professor of psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Full details available on request by emailing gmohajer@rsph.org.uk. Later in the year Arts Council England is also supporting a conference on Culture, Health and Wellbeing. [Museums and Art Galleries as partners in public health interventions](#) (whole paper), [Culture, Health and Wellbeing Conference](#), [RSPH](#)

Museums Galleries Scotland to charge non-subscribers for accreditation

Last year Museums Galleries Scotland became an independent charitable trust supported by the Scottish Government. Now as part of its transfer to a subscription model, it will be charging non-members for accreditation. National museums covered by the 1985 Heritage Act get their accreditation directly from Arts Council England and will not be affected. For those who are, the fees are likely to be in the region of £2,000. One unnamed museum professional expressed fears that museums may cut corners by deciding not to get accredited, risking a drop in standards. [Museums Association](#)

Members news

Supportive St Ives Council helps Tate and local economy

St Ives Town Council has put its support behind a £10.5m extension to Tate St Ives. The extension will make the gallery more than a third bigger – increasing in size from 500sq m to 800sq m. The restructured museum will be able to show a year-round display of St Ives modernists as well as showing more works from the wider Tate collection and three seasons of international contemporary art. In 2009, the gallery brought £12m to the Cornish economy. [ALVA](#)

Also: In further good news for the Tate, Tate Modern announced record-breaking attendance figures for 2012 of 5.3 million people – an increase of 9.5% on the previous year. Tate Britain also saw a 4.3million increase with 1.53 million visitors.

Alex Beard, deputy director, said "It has been an extraordinary year at Tate Modern, opening the world's first museum galleries permanently dedicated to exhibiting live art, performance, installation and film works alongside an outstanding exhibition programme which has undoubtedly fuelled the increase in visitors." [Arts Industry](#)

York Museum Trust among those receiving large capital grants funding from ACE

Arts Council England has announced the venues that have been successful in bids for large capital grants. York Art Gallery will be receiving £3.5m for refurbishment in a list just announced, and mostly otherwise consisting of arts venues. [Read the full list here.](#)

V&A Dundee, scaled back but with £4m new funding

[Last October](#) it was announced that the part of the V&A Dundee building, originally intended to hover over the River Tay, had been brought back inland to keep the work within its £45m budget. The new plans [went on public display](#) in December. The work is part of a 1bn transformation of Dundee's waterfront.

Now the project has received £4m in private donations, alongside £15m already pledged by the Scottish Government. The new donors are a mix of individuals, trusts and Foundations.

In a speech given to the Museums Association last November, V&A Director Martin Roth spoke about his ambitions for the new museum, emphasising the importance of partnership:

"V&A Dundee is a real pointer to the future. It's an independent institution which we contribute to with expertise and our collections. It's underpinned by Design Dundee Ltd, a partnership between the V&A, the universities of Dundee and Abertay Dundee, and with Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise. This is the kind of model I want to see the V&A expanding on in new partnerships with other cultural institutions around the globe." [BBC](#), [V&A](#)

Magnificent gold and silver collection worth £10m bequeathed to the Ashmolean

A remarkable collection of gold and silver ornaments from the 16th and 17th century, conservatively valued at £10m has been bequeathed to the Ashmolean Museum.

The previous owner, who died last year, was antiques dealer Michael Welby. He picked up many of the pieces in the middle of the last century when their ornateness was unfashionable. The bequest is a result of his friendship with Ashmolean curator Professor Tim Wilson.

Professor Wilson said "Michael believed we would do justice to it, and as far as I am concerned I intend to devote as much as possible of the rest of my career to doing just that."

Some of the highlights will go on display in the next few weeks: in the longer term the museum plans to knock down a wall to help create a new gallery where all the artefacts can be shown together. Museum Director Dr Christopher Brown described the bequest as "one of the most important acquisitions that has ever been made in the very long history of the Ashmolean museum".

[Guardian](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Sunderland Council withdraws its museums from TWAM

Sunderland Council has decided to directly run its museums through a new Sunderland Museums and Heritage Service – withdrawing the museums from [TWAM](#) (Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums). This means that TWAM will also have to renegotiate its £4.8m major partner funding with Arts Council England.

Currently 29 staff are involved in the changeover, whose conditions of employment will be taken over by Sunderland's service. [Museums Association](#)

DCMS to continue to support Horniman and Geffrye Museums

The Horniman and Geffrye museums are among a handful of non-national museums directly supported by DCMS. In 2010 talks began to explore whether both would be better funded by some other body. A range of options including the Arts Council England were considered, but it has now been announced that both will remain directly supported by DCMS.

The Geffrye, which was created from a row of almshouses, is currently undergoing a £16.3m new development, to create a new entrance, new galleries and relieve the congestion inherent in a very long, thin museum. The Horniman has grown tenfold since Victorian times and houses internationally important collections of anthropology and musical instruments. [Artlyst](#)

IWM's Wall of Remembrance launched

A year ahead of the major commemorations for the First World War, the Imperial War Museums has launched its 'Wall of Remembrance' online to engage hundreds of thousands of people in the major history events that will take place in 2014. [IWM](#)

National Museum of Costume to close

National Museums Scotland has announced that the National Museum of Costume at Shambellie House is to close.

The decision is partly the result of cuts, combined with low visitor numbers and operational costs of £220,000 per year. It had been open for only 7 months of the year attracting less than 1% of the total visitors to NMS over its five sites. The layout of the house also makes it difficult to use as a national museum.

A selection of NMS's collection of costume will go on display at the National Museum in 2016 in the new Art and Design Galleries. [National Museums Scotland](#)

Education

Liz Forgan criticises the abandonment of arts education as she steps down from the Arts Council

Liz Forgan has given a speech on her retirement as Chair of the Arts Council. She defended the continued spend of money on culture during lean times, pointing out that the £400m which the government contributes each year amounts to only 0.05% of the national budget. She argued that the 'mixed economy' of philanthropists, state funding and other sources served to keep the sector vibrant and 'at arms length' from overinfluence by any one group.

Much of the speech focused on Education Secretary Michael Gove's decision not to include arts subjects in the new EBacc. She said "that just as we collectively have forgotten how to cook in the course of a generation, we risk losing cultural skills if they are not a mandatory part of the curriculum". [Guardian](#), [Arts Council](#)

Welsh museums support WBQ

A partnership of museums, libraries and archives has been working with [WJEC](#) (previously known at the 'Welsh Joint Education Committee') to help Welsh cultural heritage organisations support teaching for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). WJEC is the awarding body for the WBQ.

This work covers most of the schools and colleges in Wales, with 70,000+ students aged 14-19, all of whom need to study Welsh cultural heritage as part of their courses.

WJEC's Good Practice Guide on what museums, libraries and archives can offer is [now online](#). There is also a 'useful organisations' for WBQ teachers – where museums can [submit their services](#). Organisations wishing to add this information to their own websites can contact the project organiser robin@whiterook.co.uk for pdfs. [WJEC](#)

Funded MA scholarships at UEA

The University of East Anglia is offered two funded MA scholarships with a £5,000 bursary for a variety of MAs in Cultural and Museum Studies, and four Museum Studies internships. Deadline for applications is 1st March. [UEA](#)

Where the Wild Things Are: ten years of Kids in Museums

Kids in Museums was founded in 2003 by journalist Dea Birkett, shortly after she and her children were thrown out of the Royal Academy exhibition *Aztecs*, because her two year old had been loudly and delightfully exclaiming 'Monster! Monster!' at one of the exhibits.

The Royal Academy had a rapid policy rethink, and now welcomes children of all ages to its exhibitions. It has gone further with a raft of programmes for children from deprived backgrounds, including [Kids Company](#). In January it hosted a reception to mark the tenth anniversary of Kids in Museums, and it has just announced [free entry for all children under twelve](#).

Kids in Museums has also produced an anniversary manifesto, compiled entirely from museum visitors comments. It ranges from the importance of providing healthy café food, to ways of managing over-excitement or helping out shy parents. [Read the manifesto here.](#) [Kids in Museums, Guardian, Museums Association](#)

All-Party Parliamentary Group on History and Archives report published

The report of the All-Party group focuses on the teaching of history in schools and how it should be addressed as an exam subject. The report affirms that all students should study history to age 16. The Historical Association, who are frequently quoted in the report welcomed its publication, but said it did not address questions of schools who no longer follow the National Curriculum, and the risk of oversimplifying history for pupils studying for an exam covering five years worth of historical study. [Historical Association](#)

Funding

Arts Council confirms it will pass on cuts to Major Partner Museums

The Arts Council says that it will cut funding to all Major Partner Museums by 3% over the next two years – by 1% in 2013/14 and 2% in 2014/15. In a letter to affected museums, chief executive Alan Davey wrote: “Although these cuts are relatively small, we recognise that even a modest reduction in our funding can be challenging to organisations in the current economic climate. [Museums Association](#)

Bodleian Libraries’ seeks to raise £1m by the end of February for Fox Talbot Collection

The Bodleian Libraries has the chance to acquire one of the last collections of pioneering photographer Fox Talbot remaining in private hands. In December, the National Heritage Memorial Fund offered the library £1.2m towards the acquisition, but they now have to find a further £1m by the end of February to buy the collection.

The material includes the first ever photograph taken by a woman, unpublished diaries, notebooks, scientific work and some of the earliest family photographs. If acquired, they are keen to make the whole collection available to all, making it easier for researchers to get a rounded picture of Fox Talbot’s life and career. [Campaign for Oxford](#)

Artangel £1m scheme open for ideas that will “make them sweat a bit”.

Artangel and BBC Radio 4 have announced a new scheme, Open, which will create innovative art pieces across the UK. Work previously supported by Artangel include Jeremy Deller’s *Battle of Orgreave* which recreated a key confrontation from the 1984 miner’s strike with a cast of hundreds; and Michael Landy’s *Break Down* in which he destroyed all his possessions in an empty department store on London’s Oxford Street.

Artangel is seeking similarly original works for its new commissions. Deller, now one of the judges, says ideas should “make Artangel sweat a bit. People should suggest something that no one else would touch”. The closing date for submissions is 29th April. For those who want to talk to the organisers in more detail about the initiative, there will be [platforms in several UK cities](#) before the end of February. [Artangel, Guardian](#)

EU funds for research into preservation and re-use of ‘tangible heritage’

JPI Cultural Heritage has opened a call for proposals for research into:

- Tools to understand damage and decay mechanisms, including the effects of weather and climate change
- Methods of conserving tangible heritage
- Re-use of historical buildings in the light of costs, public policy and added value
- Increasing the understanding of values around cultural heritage (including intangible and digital heritage).

The call is open until April 5th. There is a total of €3 million available, and all research projects are expected to last for at least 3 years and have multiple European partners. [Full details here](#)

NCVO reports learning points from its Crowdfunding challenge

Crowdfunding is still relatively new outside the film sector, and in 2012 NCVO supported a number of charity organisations, including [Newlyn Art Gallery](#) in a 'crowdfunding challenge' to see if they could fund specific projects using this approach. The findings from the project have now been [published here](#).

Funding for culture announced by the Scottish Government

Scottish Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop has announced £2m for maintenance and refurbishment of the National Museums Scotland's estate, £1.5 million to top up Creative Scotland's oversubscribed capital programme, and £1.4 million for work on Historic Scotland properties. The work is part of a £200m package which will create jobs across Scotland. [IFACCA](#)

Also: Paid apprenticeships for young people in the arts, cultural and creative industries across Scotland have just been announced, supported by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Scottish Government. 80 paid graduate internships and 23 modern apprenticeships are available. [Creative & Cultural Skills](#)

ICOM bursaries available

Two bursaries of up to £1,500 are available to International Council of Museum members who wish to attend ICOM 2013 in Rio, supported by ICOM and the British Council. The closing date is 13th February. [Museums Association](#)

HLF £30m historic church fund – from loos to rood screens

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced a new £30m fund for 2013 to cover urgent repairs to historic churches. The new fund replaces the old 'Repair Grants for Places of Worship' scheme. The new fund will continue to support historic churches in need of repair, but the criteria have slightly widened, so it's now possible to seek funds to make community use of buildings easier. Applications relating to toilets, kitchens and heating will be accepted for the first time. [Heritage Lottery Fund](#)

Also: 'Heating without the Hot Air' - a conference aimed at historic churches has looked at how to warm large, old spaces while saving on electricity and reducing carbon footprint. It particularly focused on balancing conservation and community needs. [St Michael's Withington](#) has become the first church to be zero carbon, with the help of solar panels and a biomass boiler. [Church care](#)

€125 available from EU's ICT Policy Support Programme – and a chance to join Collections Trust consortia

€125.7m have just been made available for European digitisation projects. Of this, €36m is allocated to a strand which directly addresses the digital work of museums, archives, libraries and creative media organisations.

Previous calls in this programme have allowed hundreds of organisations to digitise their collections. The Collections Trust leads on €15m of digital projects under this and related programmes. It is planning to lead two consortia: one focusing on food, drink and domestic history and another on data, metrics and web statistics. They welcome approaches from potential partners in these areas.

It is of course also possible to lead and partner with other consortia, and other subjects under this call include:

- Europeana and creativity
- Open data
- ICT for learning
- Digital content technologies for a better internet for kids
- eArchiving services

[Collections Trust](#)

Tourism: Romance special

Museum promotion opportunities around Visit England's Tourism week

Museums have various opportunities to promote their work as part of English Tourism week (16th–24th March):

- Visit England has launched a new Facebook app '101 things to do (before you go abroad)' seeking to find the most popular tourist attractions, including museums. The app will be live until 10 March and a selection of nominations will be announced during English Tourism Week, with the full 101 favourites announced on St George's Day (23 April). Until then, people are encouraged to vote for their favourite venues on Facebook. [Facebook app](#)
- Museums and art galleries can submit events taking place during English Tourism week [online here](#).

[Visit England](#)

'Romantic escapes'

Both Visit England and English Heritage are promoting history venues this month which they say will be ideal for a romantic Valentine's Day. English Heritage's [Ten Romantic Escapes](#) include Stonehenge and Tintagel. Visit England's promotion is city based and participating destinations are Bath, Chester, London, Oxford, Salisbury, Stratford-upon-Avon and York. The marketing is part of a three year campaign to grow local tourism, and its [historical segment is here](#).

Also: For those preferring romance in the shadows of the demi-monde, the Museum of London's popular Valentine Late is back, with a heady mix of absinthe tasting, swing dancing, cabaret delinquents and optional 20s dressing up in darkened galleries on February 14th. [Museum of London](#)

Ironbridge Gorge voted top UK World heritage site by TripAdvisor and UNESCO

Following information collected from more than 1.1 million traveller feedback forms by TripAdvisor, Ironbridge Gorge has been declared the most popular World Heritage Site in the UK by UNESCO.

It also takes second place in the world behind the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, China and ahead of the Egyptian Pyramids and the Taj Mahal.

Barrie Williams, Chairman of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust said "The Trustees, staff and volunteers at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum are thrilled that the New Year has brought with it great news for the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. The Gorge was one of the first locations in the UK to be designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 and since then the Museum has worked carefully with many partners in the Gorge to protect and interpret the remarkable heritage of this unique part of the world."

[Ironbridge Gorge](#)

City of Culture 2017 competition announced by Culture Minister

As [Derry-Londonderry](#) began its stint as first ever UK City of Culture, a competition was launched by Culture Minister Ed Vaizey to choose a City of Culture for 2017. Those considering a bid must register their interest with DCMS by the end of February.

Phil Redmond, Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel to the project said "We want to see bids that are distinctive, ambitious, and represent their local area. As well as demonstrating cultural excellence, the panel and I want to see partnerships with innovation that will engage a huge range of audiences. And above all we need to see plans that are realistic and deliverable." [DCMS](#)

Heritage Crime

Landmark conviction for metal detectorists

As we reported last month, English Heritage has been very concerned about the prevalence of heritage crime and the low sentences received by many offenders. Now there are signs of greater legal protection for historical sites and buildings.

For the first time in England, two metal detector users have been given a suspended custodial sentence and ASBOs by a court for carrying out illegal metal detecting activities on a protected site. Two men received a year's suspended sentence after joint work by the British Museum, English Heritage and Northamptonshire Police. They pleaded guilty to serious damage to a scheduled monument at Chester Farm, Irchester.

Mike Harlow, Governance and Legal Director of English Heritage was careful to distinguish between the convicted men and amateur metal detectorists:

"These are not people enjoying a hobby or professionals carrying out a careful study. They are thieves using metal detectors like a burglar uses a jemmy.... This is a notoriously difficult crime to prosecute and convict. We are very grateful to the police and CPS in this case whose partnership working is an example we would wish to see elsewhere." [English Heritage](#)

New law closes the loophole for metal thieves

Meanwhile the number of lead thefts from church roofs have declined dramatically in the past year. According to the insurers Ecclesiastical, the cost of insurance claims dropped from £4.5m in 2011, the worst year on record, to £1.8m in 2012. The 2012 figures are still high compared to the 1990s when there were fewer than 10 claims for church lead theft per year.

The drop may partly be due to the fall in metal prices and increased police vigilance. A further deterrent is now in place: a new law was fast tracked through the House of Lords in January which makes cash payments for metal illegal, and enforces licenses for dealers. [Church of England newspaper](#), [Ecclesiastical](#), [House of Lords blog](#)

2013 Exhibitions Roundup: Part II

We are carrying a list of major 2013 exhibitions from NMDC members [on our website](#): here we bring together some of the events that particularly appealed to us.

A History before history

The exhibition with the longest historical reach this year is surely the British Museum's **Ice Age: arrival of the modern mind**. Bringing together artefacts from between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago, the exhibition appears to be an amplification of the ideas aired by the museum in the [Swimming Reindeer](#) episode of 'A History of the World'. Though we have no words or language from such a distant period, the detail and skill of the art tells us that we are dealing with minds like our own. Objects from across the world from this distant period are displayed side by side with work by Henry Moore, Mondrian and Matisse, demonstrating how much has stayed the same in our desire to communicate.

Culture in hard times

Prehistoric ice plains are not the only tricky environments from which culture has emerged. Great Yarmouth museum's exhibition **Frayed – Textiles on the Edge** includes two extraordinary samplers produced by Lorina Bulwer in Great Yarmouth workhouse. They are being displayed together for the first time. They are also showing **Alfred Wallis: Work from the Kettle's Yard Collection**. Wallis didn't take up painting until he was over 70 in 1925, as a hobby after the death of his wife. He eventually died in poverty in a workhouse himself, but his paintings capture the changes in the fishing industry after the First World War, and the alterations community and environment.

For the past 50 years the Koestler awards have celebrated art produced in prisons, secure hospital, secure childrens homes and by people on probation. The exhibition **Arrow in the Blue** celebrates the best art produced in the West Midlands by people in these conditions. It includes painting, drawing and creative writing and has been curated by young people on probation, with guidance from professional curators. It continues at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery until late March.

Tate Britain argues that 'without Lowry, Britain might lack an account in paint of the experiences of the 20th-century working class' and is mounting a major exhibition of his work. Around eighty pictures will be shown, hoping to demonstrate his major achievement in capturing the industrial city.

Some contemporary painters

Among the Tate's exhibitions this year is a first international retrospective of **Sylvia Sleigh** at Tate Liverpool. Born in Wales, she moved to New York in the early 1960s and lived in the midst of a cultural avant-garde, the subject of her realist paintings. In her practice, she attempted to redefine painting by questioning and reinterpreting pictorial conventions from a feminist perspective, such as depicting male nudes in traditionally feminine poses or scenes.

At Leeds Art Gallery **Contested Ground** looks at how the British landscape tradition has been revised by painters over the last century, and how artists today respond to the idea of landscape painting. Meanwhile a retrospective of Peter Doig in **No Foreign Land** at the Scottish National Gallery looks at the style and imagery which sets him apart from the conceptualism which dominates much modern art.

[Read the full listings on our website](#)

Museum jobs

[See a full list of jobs at NMDc member museums on our website here.](#)

- [Assistant Curator, Pacific Collections Review Project \(18 months\)](#)
- [Wikimedian in Residence](#)
- [Head of Events at the Wallace Collection](#)
- [Head of Department Earth Sciences](#)
- [Archive Cataloguer: Watts Collection](#)

And finally...

Classification will sometimes go awry when dealing with nebulous and ancient objects, and it now emerges that some flattened stone discs found at Fishbourne Palace are probably not after all 'gaming pieces' but an ancient form of loo paper.

The pieces, which have been in the collections of Fishbourne Palace for half a century had their more likely use revealed in the [British Medical Journal](#) last month. Curator Dr Rob Symmonds said "The pieces had always been catalogued as broken gaming pieces but I was never particularly happy with that explanation... I love the idea we've had these in the museum for 50 years being largely ignored and now they are suddenly engaging items you can relate to."

Not all BMJ readers are quite satisfied, with one claiming that they are [amphorae caps](#). [Telegraph](#)

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://nmdcgit.nmdc.webfactional.com/news/newsletters/>