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Members' news



Cygan, a robot built in Italy in 1957. Part of the Science Museum's Robots exhibition.

Maria Balshaw becomes Tate Director

Maria Balshaw will succeed Sir Nicholas Serota as Director of Tate. Maria is presently the Director of The Whitworth and Manchester City Galleries, and the Director of Culture for Manchester City Council. She will take up the post on 1st June. Maria said, *"I look forward to developing Tate's reputation as the most artistically adventurous and culturally inclusive gallery in the world."* Writing for *The Art Newspaper* she added, *"what museums and galleries offer is more vital than ever. We have witnessed divisive politics at home and abroad; countering this and creating space for exploration of difference and intercultural understanding gets to the heart of the civic role of museums of all stripes."* [Tate](#), [The Whitworth](#), [The Economist](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Tristram Hunt appointed Director of the V&A

Tristram Hunt, historian and Labour MP for Stoke on Trent, has been appointed Director of the V&A. In his final speech as an MP, Hunt reflected on museums, globalisation and Brexit. He said, *"it seems to me that when there is this growing sense of disparity between the winners and losers of globalisation, museums and other cultural institutions need to help to lessen the division. In an age when art, design, the humanities and culture are so important for our competitiveness and quality of life, we cannot have London detaching itself from the rest of the UK."* [BBC](#), [Labourlist](#), [Guardian](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

National Army Museum reopens in March

The National Army Museum in Chelsea will re-open on 30th March following a three-year closure period, in which it has undergone a radical transformation. The £23.75m investment has included £11.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Museum will now have five new galleries and a temporary exhibition space. 2,500 objects will be displayed over four floors. There is also a shop, café and a PlayBase for children aged 0 – 7. The first gallery, 'Soldier', uses personal accounts to follow the story of soldiers through history from signing up to training, daily life, crime and punishment, and coming home. Other galleries include 'Army', which looks at the Army as an institution, and 'Battle', which explores what it has been like to be involved in combat since the 1640s. Objects on display include journalist Kate Adie's flak jacket and the taxidermied remains of Crimean Tom (a cat found during the Crimean War and taken back to Britain). Director Janice Murray said, *"the thematic galleries provide a space to explore and discuss the Army and its relevance to society in ways that we sometimes would not imagine from fashion and films to flood defences and, of course, conflict."* [HLF](#), [NAM](#), [M+H](#)

Museum of London raises £180m for Smithfield move

The Museum of London has been granted £180m of the £250m needed for its move to its new Smithfield site. £110m has come from the City of London Corporation and Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, has pledged a further £70m. He said, "*from the outset of my mayoralty, I pledged to make culture a core priority and I'm proud that this is the biggest ever cultural investment made by any Mayor of London to date. The world's greatest city deserves the world's greatest museum, which is why I'm delighted to announce £70m of funding for the new Museum of London.*" [ALVA](#), [Guardian](#)

Ashmolean acquires 9th century coin hoard representing Vikings and King Alfred

The Ashmolean has reached its fundraising target of £1.35m needed to buy a 9th century hoard which was found in Watlington, Oxfordshire in 2015. HLF provided £1.05m and the Art Fund granted £150k, with the rest coming from Friends and individual donors. The coins shed new light on the struggle between the Vikings and King Alfred's forces, and includes a rare 'two Emperors Penny' showing both King Alfred and the Mercian Ceolwulf II. Director Dr Xa Sturgis said, "*the Watlington Hoard is one of the most exciting and important acquisitions we have ever made, particularly significant because it was found in Oxfordshire. To be able to keep the hoard in the county and put it on display with the Ashmolean's Anglo-Saxon collections, which include the world-famous Alfred Jewel, was an opportunity we could not miss.*" The coins will now be part of an education programme, and also be central to the Festival of Archaeology in July. [Ashmolean](#), [Art Fund](#)

Birmingham Museums Trust contemplates closing venues

Birmingham Museums Trust has said that it may have to close some of its venues, if Birmingham City Council goes ahead with its proposals to add £500k to the £250k of anticipated cuts to the Trust, creating a total reduction of £750k in the next financial year. The reduction will mean that the Trust's council investment will have reduced from £7m to £2.4m in a decade. Director Ellen McAdam said, "*we understand that the city is in a difficult position, but with cuts as severe as these we have no option but to look at reductions in service across all of our sites.*" The Council's budget consultation closed on January 19th. [Birmingham Museums Trust](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Dancing with tears in my eyes: a soundtrack for the Cold War

The RAF Museum has extended its online presence to Spotify where it has brought together tracks written during decades of the Cold War, which also reflect ten years of its own exhibition about that period. Tracks range from the apocalyptic visions of Bob Dylan's 1976 *A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall* to Ultravox's *Dancing with Tears in My Eyes*, songs referencing the Berlin Wall from Lou Reed to Pink Floyd, and film scores from Cold War thrillers. The collection is a first step for the RAF Museum, which hopes to develop more playlists to 'reflect our collections, the work we do and the music we love'. [Spotify](#)

Scottish Government contributes £2m to Scottish National Gallery redevelopment

The Scottish Government will contribute £2m towards the £16.8m needed for the 'Celebrating Scotland's Art' project which it is hoped will transform parts of the Scottish National Gallery by 2019. Fewer than 20% of visitors currently venture into some spaces in the building, despite the fact that the Gallery is the busiest outside of London. It is hoped that an overhaul and expansion will attract an extra 400,000 visitors. HLF have granted £5m, and the Gallery is 'extremely confident' about raising the rest from private donors, trusts and foundations. It has a number of 'substantial pledges' in place and hopes work will begin within two months. [The Scotsman](#)

Professor Paul Smith is awarded Polar Medal

Professor Paul Smith, Director of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History has been awarded the prestigious Polar medal by the Queen in recognition of 'outstanding achievement' in arctic research. Created in 1857, the Polar Medal was awarded to participants in Captain Scott's first successful expedition to the Arctic, and more recently to scientists who have spent decades working in harsh polar conditions to learn more about the region. Paul Smith's work has focused on well-preserved fossil fauna in Greenland from around the time of the Cambrian Explosion. He has also observed the effects of accelerating climate change. He said, "*it has been a huge privilege to work in this remote, entrancingly beautiful but fragile part of the world, and it is a great honour to be recognised for this work through the award of the Polar Medal. The landscape of the far north has changed dramatically over the course of my research career and that rate of change is accelerating. The need for ongoing scientific study and understanding of the Arctic region is therefore ever more important.*" [University of Oxford](#)

This month's images: Robots at the Science Museum

The Science Museum's 'Robots' exhibition will run until 3rd September and covers a 500 year quest to make machines human - from the clockwork intricacies of early orreries to an automaton swan, to the Kodomoroid Communication Android fresh from Osaka University. It also features a rebuild of Britain's first robot, Eric, who amazed crowds as long ago as the 1920s. [Science Museum](#)

'A question of atmosphere' – creative industries and the politics of change



Eric the Robot, a working copy of Britain's first robot. Courtesy of the Board of trustees of the Science Museum

Select Committee hearings open on the cultural industries and Brexit

The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has opened an inquiry into the impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism and the digital single market. At the first session on 31st January, Sir Peter Bazalgette was present to give evidence on his last day as Chair of the Arts Council, alongside John Kampfner of the Creative Industries Federation and Nicola Mendelson, also representing CIF, but with a day job as a senior manager at Facebook. Sir Peter Bazalgette began by saying "*some people have...regarded the referendum as being about Little England, and it isn't about Little England, and post leaving the EU we are going to have to be more open to the world than ever before, and more open to the world's culture. I think creative industries have an incredible role to play in that because of the way soft power helps our trade and political relationships across the world*". Issues raised include:

- A 'red line' for the sector is around flow of talent; 75% of the conversation at a recent CIF meeting on Brexit focused on this issue. Facebook is about to make 500 new hires in London this year, and is seeking reassurance that those already in post and those to come will be secure.
- The appropriate IP legislation is also vital
- Creative Europe brought £11m into the UK arts sector in 2014 – 15. This is a small amount of money in other sectors, but significant in the arts. Creative Europe has non-EU countries subscribing to it, and staying in would be desirable if possible. The same principle applies to other European funding streams.
- Current figures underestimate how much EU money has supported culture. For example, the Sage in Gateshead was built after £6m of European money was spent detoxifying the land. This won't have been counted as 'money for the arts'. John Kampfner suggested that the Government should commission a better analysis.
- Peter Bazalgette said that hiring staff from the EU is often essential to selling UK cultural product: they will know how to sell in markets they are familiar with.
- There is an opportunity to make the visa system simpler. 90% of organisations in the creative industries have less than 5 people, and will struggle with complex bureaucracy. Complex visas are a barrier to arts organisations of all sizes, with scenarios ranging from "*your lead soprano falls ill, up till now someone from France can hop on a plane*" to an orchestra tour which needs 50 visas.
- John Kampfner said that although the UK is not facing upheavals comparable to the US, there is a 'question of atmosphere'. The tone set by the Government will affect whether the UK appears attractive or uninviting. The tech sector is heavily populated by skilled, mobile young people who have a choice about where they live. Governments can't entirely control whether a country is having an 'up moment or down moment'. However, a 'warm, inviting, open meritocratic message' is working in Europe.
- DCMS' estimate that 6% of workers are non-UK nationals is a gross underestimate. CIF's incomplete evidence gathering suggests 10 – 40%, typically 25% in a creative business. There are positive and negative reasons for this. The positive is the need for international people to identify global markets and sell effectively.
- The negative reason for a large non-UK workforce in the creative industries is an education system which has deprioritised the arts skills needed in the sector. Design and technology qualifications have gone down by 41% in six years in the UK. Private schools are developing the right skillsets, but Ebacc-driven state schools are not. DCMS and DfE are now discussing this, prompted by Brexit, but it will still be five – ten years before the right skills become available, even if UK education policy shifts now.

MPs were receptive to the matters raised, but pointed out that the sector's desire for flexible movement 'doesn't sit easily with the political environment at the moment'. The Government will have to find a path which does not prevent the creative industries from thriving but which will be acceptable to people who voted for Brexit. [Parliament.tv](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Brexit White Paper published

The Heritage Alliance has written a brief synopsis of the Government's White Paper on exiting the European Union. Regarding migration, the White Paper notes that the UK '*will remain an open and tolerant country, and one that recognises the valuable contribution migrants make to our society and welcomes those with the skills and expertise to make our nation better still. But in future we must ensure we can control the number of people coming to the UK from the EU.*' It notes that the UK will in general retain the EU regulatory framework. [Heritage Alliance](#), [Gov.uk](#)

DCMS Ministers host Brexit roundtable for cultural leaders

NMDC's Chair Diane Lees was among those who attended a round table with DCMS ministers to discuss views on the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union and what it means for their members. Other organisations represented include HLF, ACE, Museums Association, British Council, AIM, the Science Museum Group and major performing arts organisations. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: The Museums Journal has assessed the percentage of EU nationals working at a number of UK museums. These include 20% (155) of Natural History Museum staff, 15% (150) at the British Museum, 7% (33) at National Museums Scotland. There are 3.5m EU citizens in the UK, of which Conservative sources estimate 84% already have the right to stay post-Brexit. A Commons vote has blocked an amendment allowing all EU citizens currently in the UK to remain, but this may be challenged in the House of Lords later in February. [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#), [Conservative Home](#)

Industrial strategy and culture

Government Industrial Strategy Green Paper includes creative industries strand

The Government has opened its Industrial Strategy consultation, and has named the creative industries as one of five essential sectors which will be reviewed. These will receive a 'sector deal' to address its particular challenges and opportunities. The Creative Industries Federation described this inclusion as "a radical departure, secured only in the last few months, and is potentially the sign of a new, bold and imaginative understanding of business in the 21st century." The other four sectors are life sciences, ultra-low emissions vehicles, industrial digitisation and nuclear power. Sir Peter Bazalgette has been asked to lead the creative industries review and will focus on "how the UK's creative industries, like our world-leading music and video-games industries, can help underpin our future prosperity by utilising and developing new technology, capitalising on intellectual property rights and growing talent pipelines". The Industrial Strategy aims to create "major new investments in infrastructure and research to drive prosperity – creating more high-skilled, high paid jobs and opportunities." [Citymetric](#), [Creative Industries Federation](#), [IQ mag](#), [Gov.uk](#)

Scottish Government says single market better for creative industries

In a speech on 9th January Scottish Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said that remaining in the single market was essential for Scotland's creative industries, and that the SNP is seeking a soft Brexit. Creative industries employ 74,000 in Scotland and are worth £4bn to the economy. She said, "the Scottish Government's paper 'Scotland's Place in Europe', recently put forward to the UK Government, sets out clearly what we consider to be the best options going forward - that the UK must retain membership of the single market in all its aspects. ■ Access to the ideas, talent, experiences and creative exchanges which the freedom of movement aspect of the single market provides is especially important to the cultural sector." [Scotland.gov](#)

Welsh cultural infrastructure

The Welsh Government is continuing work on how to reconfigure its major cultural bodies, following a report last year from PwC which suggested merging them all into one. A Steering Group subsequently convened, and including representatives from Cadw, National Museum Wales and others rejected the idea for a merger and has recommended collaboration rather than a merger between institutions with the 'independence and core purposes' of NMW protected. The Government has now announced a review of National Museum Wales, led by former English Heritage Chief Executive, Simon Thurley. He has been asked to consider the views of the cultural bodies steering group. [Welsh Museums Federation](#), [BBC](#), [Welsh government](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Themes and ancestors: new approaches to tourism

Wales' 2016 'Year of Adventure' has spectacularly paid off, with tourism up by 33.1% and spending increased to 44.1%. Although tourism has generally increased across the UK, the average 13% growth is just over a third of that in Wales. In 2017, Wales is continuing with a themed approach with a 'Year of Legends' marketing campaign. Meanwhile, the University of Strathclyde Business School has been exploring how ancestral tourism can be encouraged in Scotland, and how ancestral enquiries can benefit museums rather than imposing a burden of free research. The new website [MyancestralScotland](#) offers support for those interested in Scottish forebears on a more commercial footing. [Welsh Government](#), [MGS](#), [MyAncestralScotland](#)

Culture and diplomacy



"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking..." Bowing elaborately, Eric, a
The original Eric features in Popular Science Monthly in 1928, shown to enthusiastic crowds.

Cultural diplomacy training: an overview

The importance of cultural diplomacy has become increasingly acknowledged across Europe, and academic courses in the subject are growing. A new study from the University of Siena 'Mapping the Training for Cultural Diplomacy' draws together 40 institutions in ten countries which offer courses. It also explores what academics in the field think are the main characteristics of cultural diplomacy and what skills, training and knowledge will be essential in the future. [Circap](#)

British Council seeks members for the Cultural Protection Fund

The Cultural Protection Fund is managed by the British Council in partnership with DCMS. The £30m Fund supports projects that help create sustainable opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage in conflict-affected regions overseas. The Cultural Protection Advisory Group is being set up to provide advice to the Cultural Protection Fund's Programme Board and the management of the Fund. It will be a forum for advice on matters related to the work of the Fund and will have no decision-making or executive powers. Applications are sought from heritage professionals with significant recent experience in cultural heritage protection and a broad network of contacts within the UK and the Middle East. The deadline for applications is February 26th at 23:59pm. [British Council](#), [British Council](#) (more about the Cultural Protection Fund)

US arts organisations make the case for federal funding

Amid reports that the new Trump administration is contemplating removing funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and other cultural bodies, US arts figures are making the case for the importance of arts funding. The NEA is the single largest funder of non-profit arts in the US, and leverages a 9 to 1 match in private charitable gifts. Meanwhile, the Museum of Modern Art in Los Angeles has rehung part of its permanent collection with artists from Muslim majority nations in response to the ban on arrivals from seven countries signed by President Trump, but now contested by the US legislature. Work by Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid is among MoMA's new choices. [Americans for the Arts](#), [Americans for the Arts](#) (fact checking), [New York Times](#), [M+H](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Washington Post](#)

Also: The Art Newspaper has assessed the initial effects of the US travel ban to seven Muslim countries on artists and museum and gallery exhibitions. [The Art Newspaper](#)

MA publishes tolerance manifesto

The Museums Association has published a manifesto championing tolerance and inclusion in response to a changing political climate. It says that as a campaigning membership body it has added explicit values including 'being passionate about diversity and equality' and 'having the courage to say what we believe'. [Museums Journal](#)

Education

ImagineNation: report on the value of cultural learning

The Cultural Learning Alliance has published its updated report *ImagineNation: the value of cultural learning* which it describes as a 'call to arms for everyone in education and the arts'. It builds on material first gathered in 2011, and combines evidence of the importance of arts education with comment from figures including the leader of Manchester City Council, CEO of special effects studio Framestore, Rugby School's Headteacher and the Governor of the Bank of England. Its key research findings include:

- Participating in structured arts activity can increase cognitive ability by 17%.
- Students from low income families are three times more likely to get a degree if they participate in arts activities.
- They are also twice as likely to volunteer, and 20% more likely to vote.
- Employability of students who have studied arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment.

The report says that despite a difficult climate, excellent work is taking place across the country which can serve as a model and encourage more schools to embrace arts subjects. It adds: "arts and culture are not an add-on, or a nice-to-have, but are part of the fabric of our society, and that young people have a right to experience the best, and to be given the opportunity to make their own contribution to the continual reshaping of our civilization." [Cultural Learning Alliance](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Study calls for ACE to collect more data on children and young people

A new study says that data currently collected on children and young people for Arts Council England tends to treat them as a homogeneous group, and does not reliably track how far children with protected characteristics engage with culture. Existing evidence suggests that disabled children are half as likely to be taken to cultural venues with their school, and that girls are more likely to engage in the arts than boys. The report recommends rolling out a simplified new set of questions in April 2018 during the next round of NPO funding. [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Council](#), [ACE blog](#)

Civilisation versus scapegoating: Peter Bazalgette on empathy and the arts

As Peter Bazalgette steps down as Chair of Arts Council England, he has published a book, *The Empathy Instinct*. He writes that in his four years in post, ACE tried to cut through the sterile personal vs instrumental arguments about culture – arguing that ‘it’s both, stupid’ and needed equally for economic and personal development. Instead, he pursues the idea of humans as ‘storytelling animals’ and points to the findings of neuroscience about mirror neurons. By exercising our capacity for empathy on the fictional or the not really present – a picture, a play, an exhibition – we sharpen up the mental connections which help us to believe that others exist and to sympathise with them. This is a glue which reaches well beyond the walls of the theatre or museum to bind together society and create civilisation, repelling the failure of sympathy which is at the heart of scapegoating and at its extreme, psychopathy. Among many examples of cultural work, he cites Jeremy Deller’s *We’re Here Because We’re Here* which sent hundreds of people dressed as First World War soldiers out among modern commuters to commemorate the Battle of the Somme. “*When asked by commuters why they were there, they simply presented a card to them. On it was the individual name of a Tommy killed that day in the battle. Many of those reading the cards burst into tears as the full import of the performance dawned on them. Fear for the soldiers, pity for their fate.*”

Bazalgette returns to the inextricable economic argument for supporting culture: “*there’s now a slew of local authorities announcing painful reductions in arts and cultural funding. This is particularly threatening to museums, some of which face closure. Arts Council England can’t fund the gap. This is our single greatest challenge.*” [Guardian](#), [Evening Standard](#)

Holocaust memorial shortlist unveiled

On 27th January, National Holocaust Memorial Day, the Government unveiled ten designs for the Holocaust memorial planned for the Victoria Tower Gardens adjacent to parliament. The judges are now seeking public feedback on all ten schemes. Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, gave two speeches in the same week about remembering the Holocaust and the importance of a memorial as first-hand memories of the events fade. [Gov.uk](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#), [ALVA](#) (illustrations of all ten designs)

Awards

Hearts for the Arts Awards reward local authority leaders who champion culture

The What Next? campaign has created new awards for local authorities and individual workers who understand the importance of arts to the wellbeing of local communities, and overcome financial challenges to continue to provide support. Categories include:

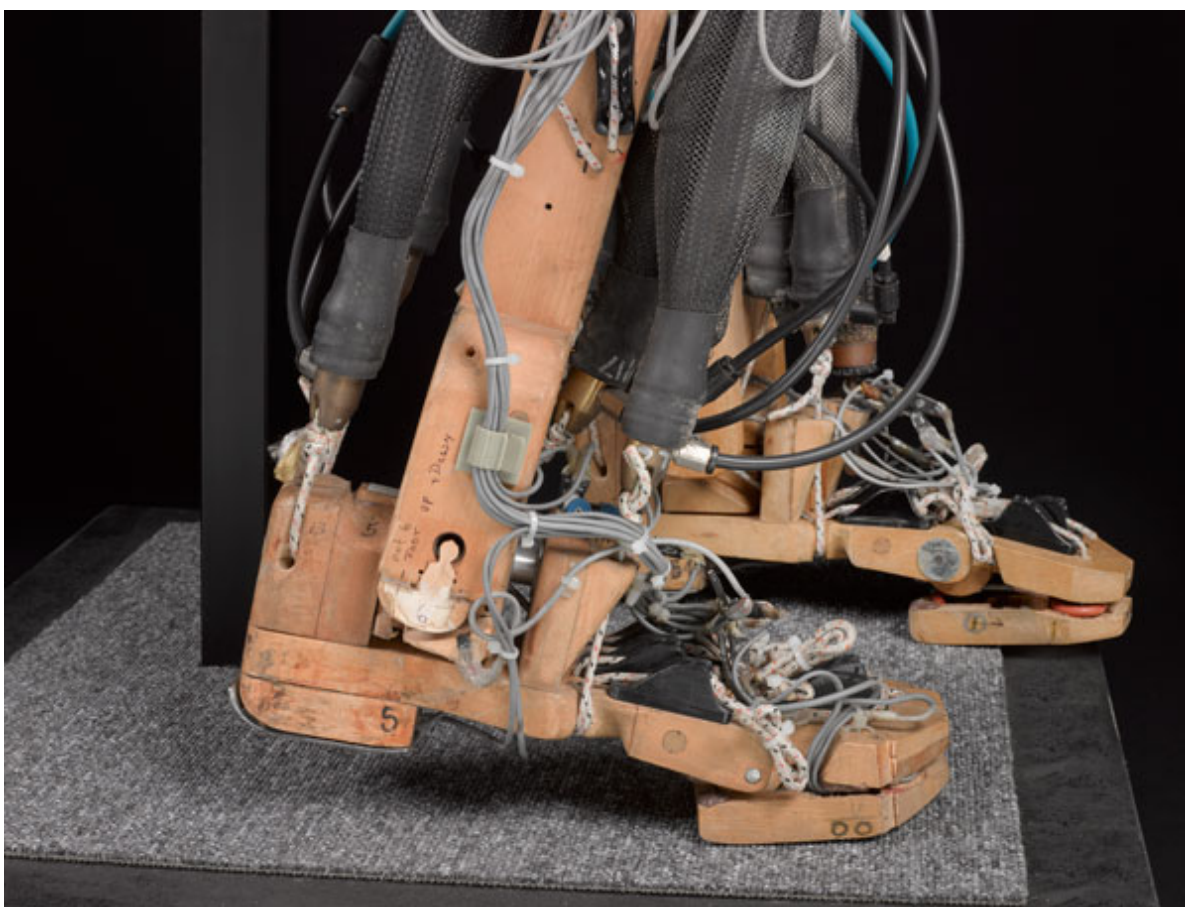
- Best local authority arts initiative
- Best local authority arts champion (councillor and officer)
- Best local authority arts project encouraging community cohesion

A shortlist has been published and the winners will be announced just before Valentine’s Day. [Hearts for the Arts](#)

Competition to find next UK City of Culture announced

Culture Minister Matt Hancock has launched the competition to find the next UK City of Culture. The winning city will hold the title in 2021, and be the third City of Culture after Derry/Londonderry and Hull (who hold this title for 2017). Councillor Daren Hale, Deputy Leader of Hull City Council, said, *“winning UK City of Culture has generated an enormous sense of local pride among local people and a renewed sense of confidence and self-belief in what the city can achieve. This started during the bidding process and is why I would encourage other councils to consider bidding to be the next UK City of Culture.”* Gov.uk

Accreditation and collections



Feet of a biped robot. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Science Museum.

Light touch review for Museums Accreditation Scheme

The Museums Accreditation Scheme will be 30 years old in 2018, and, while largely still working well, will undergo a ‘light touch’ review during 2017 to make some improvements. Museums whose accreditation is up for renewal during 2017 will receive a one year extension while changes to the framework are being established. New applicants to the scheme and museums experiencing significant change will be processed as usual. [M+H](#)

Museums collect from worldwide Women’s marches

The Women’s march which took place in the US on the day after Donald Trump’s inauguration as President was the largest recorded protest in the country’s history, and was accompanied by similar marches in many other cities across the world. A number of museums are collecting artefacts from the marches because of their significance – including the pink hats worn by many protestors, banners, stories and photographs. Glasgow Women’s Library is collecting from local marches; National Museums Liverpool, the People’s History Museum in Manchester, York Museums Trust and the Peace Museum in Bradford have also put out a call for objects. The V&A is collecting from the Washington DC march as part of its Rapid Response collecting programme. [Museums Journal](#), [Twitter](#) (V&A), [Twitter](#) (People’s History Museum)

MA defends IWM disposals

The Museums Association has defended IWM's disposals of some items in its collections, a process which has been ongoing since a collections review programme began in 2010. An article in *The Times* was critical of the process. IWM said that its disposals are either copies, duplicates or beyond the remit of its collection. [Museums Journal](#), [MA blog](#)

Export bar for Mughal treasures connected to Clive of India

An emerald and ruby flask and a sapphire and ruby huqqa set which once belonged to Clive of India have received an export bar until 17th May with a possible extension to 17th November. A UK buyer would need to match the £6m asking price for the flask and £240k for the huqqa set. The flask is so rare that a similar object is unknown anywhere in the world, and the huqqa set is an example so lavish that similar objects were often broken down for their component parts, so it is a rare survivor. [Gov.uk](#)

Events

Working Internationally Conference

Some tickets remain for the 2017 Working Internationally Conference on 2nd March at the Natural History Museum. The conference will consider the issues and practicalities that leaving the European Union will open up to UK's museums and their international partnerships, as well as looking more broadly at how museums develop and maintain international projects and strategies. Speakers include: Sir Michael Dixon, Director of the Natural History Museum; Richard Evans, Director of Beamish; and Gabrielle Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery. It will feature case studies from, amongst others, the Horniman Museum and Brighton Museums.

Tickets are £45 including lunch. [Tickets and programme](#)

Working Internationally Regional Project workshop: initiating and maintaining international contacts

In this workshop Working Internationally Regional Project International Travel Grant recipients will share their experience and tips from their international visits in 2016. These visits were undertaken by museum professionals who were making international contacts and visits for the first time, visiting challenging parts of the world, or travelling on small budgets. The workshop will offer delegates an opportunity to work together collectively to find solutions and strategies to help their organisations and the wider sector. It is aimed at staff from non-national museums and galleries who are developing their plans for working internationally, or who have identified barriers in making international contacts. It is organised by ICOM UK in partnership with NMDC and the British Council. It takes place on 1st March at the British Library. Tickets are £20. [ICOM UK](#)

Museums for the under 5s: Playful Museum Festival launched

The Northern Ireland Museums Council has launched a new, month-long Playful Museums Festival aimed at the under 5s. Events range from *Wellies, stories, songs* at Ulster American Folk Park, to baby yoga, and a music and instrument-making workshop at a town hall. HLF has contributed £99k to the scheme. Paul Mullan, Head of HLF in Northern Ireland said, "*museums and young children are the perfect combination. One group has a treasure trove of material and the other has creative, inquisitive, open minds ready to explore.*" [Playful Museums Festival](#), [Culture Northern Ireland](#)

Future of Museum Audiences

The Museums Association is holding a one-day conference on the Future of Museum Audiences. Chaired by Head of UCL museums, Tonya Nelson, it looks at the demographic, technological and other trends which will impact on audiences including families, older audiences and people with disabilities. Speakers include: Becki Morris, an expert in inclusion and representation of disabled people; Laura Philips who leads on the Age Friendly Museums Network for the British Museum; and Mark Miller, a convenor of young people's programmes at Tate. The event takes place at the Wellcome Collection on 29th March and tickets range from £55 - £195. [Museums Journal](#)

Challenging Times: the world turned upside down

East Midlands Regional Heritage Consortia is holding a two-day conference *Challenging Times: The World Turned Upside Down*. It will look at how museums can provide continuity and anchor people to communities, as well as looking at external influences on museums, such as reduced public funding and visitors' desires for new experiences. Speakers are from ACE, Save the Children, NMDC, AIM and other organisations. It takes place at Newark Museum on 26th – 27th April. Tickets are £18 – 45. [MDEM](#)

AIM National conference bookings open

AIM has opened bookings for its National Conference which takes place at the Historic Dockyard Chatham on June 22nd – 24th. Subjects include innovations in ticket pricing, new approaches to volunteering, partnering with universities, and claiming the new tax relief. Tickets are from £228. [AIM](#)

Everyday Muslim symposium

Everyday Muslim's third annual symposium, *An exploration of Black Muslims in British history and heritage*, will this year be dedicated to the exploration and construction of Black Muslim identity and heritage in the UK and how the stories of Black British Muslims intersect within the wider British Muslim society and beyond. It will bring together those working in academic, heritage, arts and media to ask how the process of constructing a Black Muslim heritage has changed over the years and looks forward to possible forms that this might take in the future. There will be opportunities to share views and promote heritage work. It takes place on 18th March at Rich Mix. Tickets are £8. [Rich Mix](#)

Workshop: Write better international touring exhibition contracts

The British Council is offering a workshop for those drawing up an international touring exhibition agreement for the first time, or who don't have access to specialist legal advice. Using the new template international touring exhibitions contract commissioned by the British Council and ICOM UK, this workshop will explore the issues around contracts for international touring exhibitions. Speakers include Tony Doubleday, Head of Legal, British Museum and Bernard Horrocks, Intellectual Property Manager, Tate. It takes place on 15th March at Tate Modern. Tickets are £30. A limited number of free places are available; please contact Jane Weeks, Museums and Heritage Adviser, British Council jane.weeks@britishcouncil.org. [British Council](#)

Touring Exhibitions Group Marketplace two-day event

The Touring Exhibitions Group is holding a two-day marketplace event to network among organisations interested in offering and receiving touring exhibitions. It begins with a seminar on the benefits of borrowing, which is also a launch event for TEG's new year-long mentoring and training programme *Preparing to Borrow* (which will be delivered in partnership with NMDC). This in turn supports ACE's *Ready to Borrow* capital grants. At the marketplace itself, attendees can book a stall or freely circulate. The event takes place at the Museum of London from April 20th – 21st and delegates can book one or two days. Tickets range from £35 for the seminar only, up to £360 for two non-members with a corporate stand. Sixteen travel bursaries are available. [TEG](#)

Relevance 2017

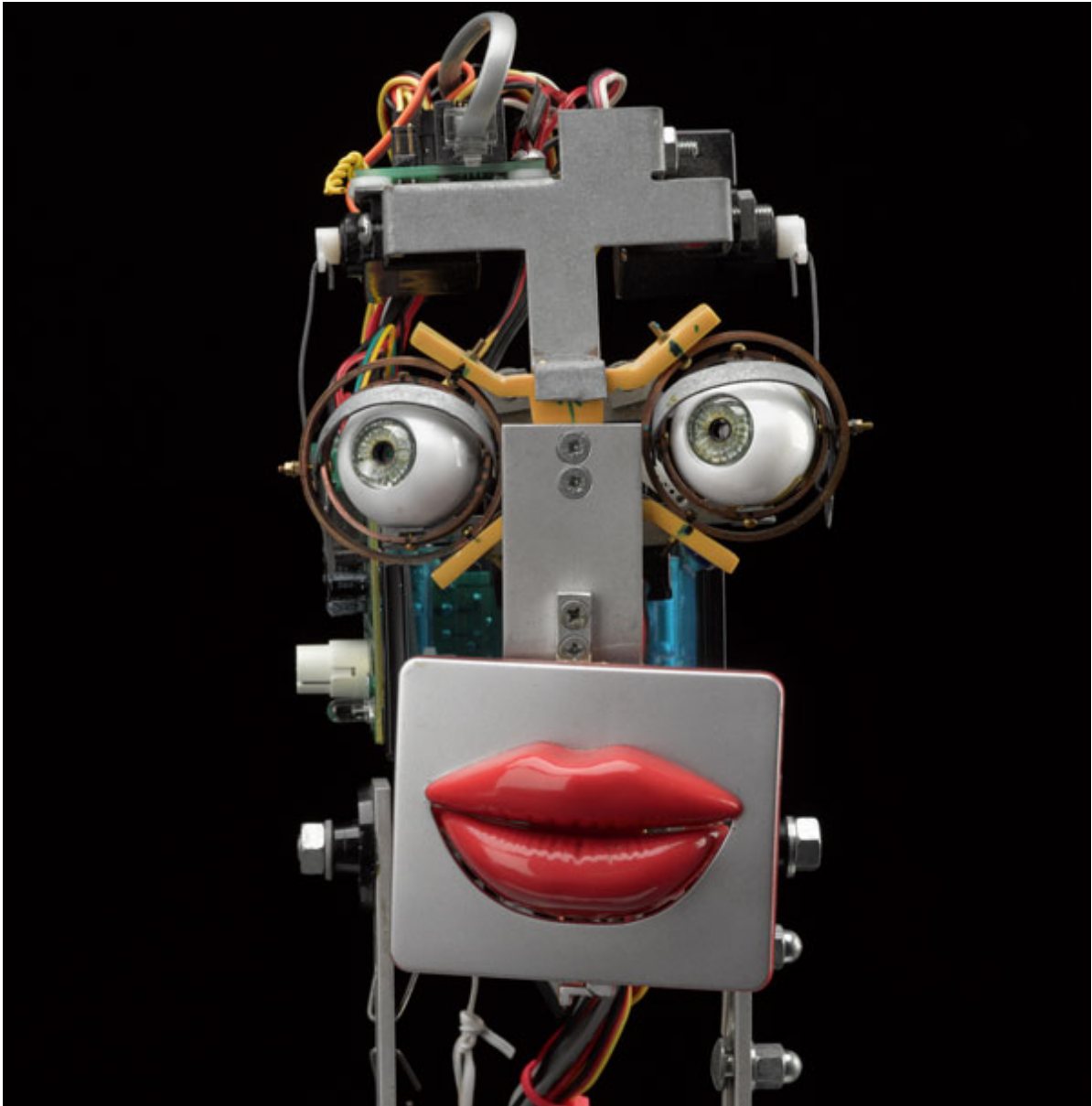
Historic Royal Palaces has announced a call for papers for Relevance 2017, an ICOM conference from DEMHIST and CECA to be held on the 14-18 October 2017 at the Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace.

The theme of the conference is relevance and the role of museums and historic houses to provide value and meaning for its audiences. The key questions that will be addressed by the conference are:

- Heritage and communities. How can museums and historic houses connect to audiences within their local communities? How can key narratives stay relevant to audiences as ideas of national identity change over time?
- Learning in the heritage environment. What is the value of museums and historic houses as a tool of education and learning? How can we stay relevant to teachers of formal and informal learning?
- Innovation and learning. How can we remain relevant in a rapidly changing technological society?

Proposals for research papers, lightening or express talks, theme papers, workshops or posters are requested, and the deadline for submissions is 8th March 2017. [Relevance 2017](#)

Environment



Inkha, a reactive robot head that tracks movement and speaks, built by Matthew Walker in 2003.

Survey and creative season

Culture and environment group Julie's Bicycle is repeating a survey which it first ran three years ago for leaders in the cultural sector. It seeks to assess how the creative community thinks about climate change, what it is doing, where there has been a cultural shift and where it is 'stuck'. All responses will be anonymised. The survey takes 10 – 15 minutes and the deadline is midnight on 9th February. [Julie's Bicycle](#)

Julie's Bicycle will also be leading on a creative season running from June – December 2018 celebrating the environment and work to tackle climate change. Museums and galleries are encouraged to take part and run exhibitions, events and performances. The aim is to put climate change higher on personal and political agendas, create spaces for people to engage with climate change, and unleash the creativity to design a new low-carbon world. [The Season](#)

Consultants and advisors for new programmes

AIM seeks consultants to help museums diversify core visitors

The Association of Independent Museums is launching a major new UK-wide programme to help museums to diversify their core visitors, and is seeking a consultant or consultants to carry out the work. The project will involve reviewing the existing literature and case studies, and producing guidance and toolkits. It is supported by bodies including ACE, MA, MGS, NMNI and the Welsh Government. AIM notes that while there have been previous studies aimed at increasing diversity, progress has typically been limited at many museums. The number of visitors to museums have increased significantly in a decade, but the diversity of audiences remains unchanged. Up to £25k is available, and the deadline for applications is 16th February. [AIM museums](#), [AIM blog](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Funding

From cabinets of curiosities to state of the art lighting: DCMS/Wolfson funding announced

The DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund has announced 39 recipients of its £4m funding for renovation and improvement projects to improve visitor experience. Projects include:

- £145m for Leicester Arts and Museum Service to renovate its Ancient Egyptian Gallery. It holds one of the most significant collections in the country and seeks to improve the experience for school visitors in particular.
- The Ashmolean will use £110k to create a 'dramatic and theatrical' display evoking a 17th century cabinet of curiosities and explaining how Elias Ashmole's collection created the world's first museum.
- £102k for the National Football Museum, which will enable it to expand two galleries and display the women's football collection and toys associated with the sport for the first time.
- Arbeia Roman Fort will embark on a redevelopment project which will include closer links with South Shields attractions, accessible routes around the site and a new audio-visual introduction.
- Royal Cornwall Museum is using £50k to improve its lighting and apply the best modern technology and techniques to existing architecture.
- RAMM has received £190k to redisplay its World Cultures Gallery to increase interactivity and look at central themes of diversity, society, faith, environment and identity.

[Gov.uk](#), [DCMS blog](#) (Arbeia Roman Fort), [DCMS blog](#) (Royal Cornwall Museum), [Exeter Daily](#), [University of Oxford](#), [Museums Journal](#)

HEFCE increases funding to university museums by £300k

Following a review, the Higher Education Funding Council for England has increased its funding to university museums, galleries and collections by £300k, bringing the annual total to £10.7m. The 33 recipients include some museums receiving funding for the first time, including Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Leeds University Art Collection and the Museum of Design in Plastics at Bournemouth University. Co-chair of the University Museums Group, Kate Arnold-Forster, said, "*of course it is difficult for those museums that have dropped out of the funding, but it is encouraging that at a time when the whole funding stream was at risk, the funding has been increased. It is great to have this recognition for the sector.*" [Museums Journal](#), [HECFE](#)

Statistics

Annual indicators show declines in visits and loans

DCMS has published visitor and loan statistics for the 13 national and two non-national museums which it sponsored in 2015/16. Since 2014/15 DCMS has ceased to sponsor Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, so the comparative statistics below are calculated excluding TWAM from the 14/15 figures. However, the TWAM exclusion was omitted from the overseas figures: with this correction overseas visits are down 2% since last year's reporting, and lower overseas visits account for nearly all the decline in figures for non-educational visits by the general public. Findings include:

- 47.6m people visited DCMS sponsored museums in 2015 – 16, a decline of 2.8%. The British Museum (6.9m) and Tate Gallery Group (6.7m) had the most visits.
- There was also a decline in child visits by 1.8% to 7.9m.
- There were 2.5m educational visits by children under 18, a 6.9% decrease. Science Museum Group's four sites had the highest number of educational visits (830k) followed by the Tate (254k).
- Overseas visitors were 47% of the total – a decline of 2%. Royal Armouries had the largest proportion of overseas visitors at 67.5%.
- Museum visitor satisfaction has fractionally increased from 95.7% in 2014 – 15 to 96.3% in 2015 – 16.
- Loans have declined 7.1% to 1,379 venues in 2015 – 16. However loans increased from the V&A, Science Museum Group and National Museums Liverpool, the first, second and fourth largest lenders for 2015 – 16.

[Gov.uk](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Taking Part statistics

By contrast the adult Taking Part statistics for an annual period, beginning six months later than the sponsored museum statistics (Oct 2015 – Sept 2016) showed small increases in museum visits and engagement nationally. Figures include:

- 53.6% of adults visited a museum in the period – the highest figure recorded. 31% visit once or twice per year, 18% 3 – 4 times per year.
- Visits are at or over 50% for 16 – 74 year olds, but drop off sharply to 37% for the over 75s. The gender split is equal.
- 31% of adults had donated to one of DCMS' sectors in the period, with 16.5% giving to museums and galleries – slightly more than to heritage (15%) and significantly more than to arts (5.4%) and libraries (0.5%). These proportions have remained roughly the same in all sectors since 2010 – 11, except arts where the proportion who said they had donated declined 1.9%

[Gov.uk](#) (overview), [Gov.uk](#) (museums graphic)

Varying fortunes of small museums

Ministry of Defence cuts to Regimental museums

The Ministry of Defence is planning to cut its funding to Regimental museums, eventually saving £520k each year by 2030. *The Telegraph* lists twelve regimental museums losing funding in 2017, with a second wave planned in 2022. Brigadier Allan Mallinson said the change risked cutting ties with 'traditional recruiting areas' for the Army adding, "*in other areas of the heritage industry, localism plays a strong role. There are any number of museums around the country to local industrial history and local art. It seems odd that we are prepared to see local military history slip away.*" Other forms of Ministry of Defence support, such as courses and training, will continue. An Ministry of Defence spokeswoman suggested the museums could still apply for 'funds from charities, local authorities and other grant-giving bodies'. [Telegraph](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Mama, don't take my autochrome away: Georgians in colour

The first commercial colour photography system was introduced in 1907 and called autochrome. Very few autochromes were taken and only a handful survive. However, one rural photographer, Stephen Pegler, was prolific. 650 autochromes of the Nottinghamshire market town of Retford are held in his former home, now run by the district council as Bassetlaw Museum. The images encompass British fashion 1910–30, a visit from the King in 1911, and all walks of life from dukes to children to shopkeepers. However, few people have seen the autochromes because they are fragile and stored in the dark, with only a few low-res images in circulation. Consequently, the museum has teamed up with the book crowdfunding site Unbound to make the images available in two formats: a book, and (very much in keeping with Pegler's love of new technology) in a 3D digital version viewable through Google Cardboard. The organisers believe that the effect will be as close to wandering around Georgian Britain as we are now likely to get. The museum is also using Unbound to fundraise to acquire more Pegler autochromes. [Unbound](#)

Dorset County Museum plans £13m extension

Dorset County Museum has submitted plans to extend its Victorian structure into a 'world class contemporary museum'. It is hoped the £13m transformation will be completed by 2020. HLF is providing £10m, with the museum raising the rest. An extension will allow more of the museum's collections to be shown, which include the archive of Thomas Hardy and Jurassic fossils. [BBC](#), [Tomorrow's Museum Dorset](#)

Networks

Happy Museum launches affiliate scheme

Happy Museum has announced the first thirteen participants in its affiliate scheme, which promotes wellbeing and sustainability throughout the sector. The Happy Museum's work draws on ideas from beyond the museum sector including ecology, psychology and economics - and from the diversity of practice to be found in social services, design, digital and the third sector. The first affiliates represent a very broad range of museums: from Major Partner Museums including Leeds Museums and Oxford University Museums, to independents like the People's History Museum and local authority museums such as Reading. More museums will have an opportunity to join the affiliate scheme in 2017. [Museums Journal](#), [Happy Museum](#)

Join the Museum University Partnership Initiative

Those interested in exploring the potential benefits of museum university partnerships are invited to get involved in the Arts Council England funded [Museum University Partnership Initiative](#). Highlights include:

- Nine regional (and two national) Match events to bring museum staff and academics together to develop partnership ideas, and to access funding to support idea development ([North West](#); [East of England](#); [Yorkshire](#); [London](#); [South East](#); [West Midlands](#); [South West](#); [North East](#); [East Midlands](#))
- MUPI symposia to showcase effective partnerships in practice, and inform the development of resources to support museum university collaborations. The next is on the [14th March in London](#)
- National MUPI network - to facilitate partnerships and ideas sharing – email claire6.wood@uwe.ac.uk to join
- Check out the [research](#) which describes how MUPI can support museum work.

Jobs

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

- [Creative Industries Producer - V&A Dundee](#)
- [Conservator, Adam Matthew Digitisation Project - British Library](#)
- [Curator \(Industry and Transport\) - Black Country Living Museum](#)
- [Designer - RAF museum](#)
- [Project Editor - Science Museum Group](#)

... and one from our friends at [Pallant House Gallery](#)

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

...and finally

Celebrities: outgunning politician since 1901

When exactly did we become regrettably trivial and start taking more interest in celebrities and actors than in serious subjects like politics? Scientists working on the University of Bristol's ThinkBIG project have used artificial intelligence to reveal that the answer is 'about 1901'. Analysing 35 million articles from 100 newspaper from 1800 - 1950 reveals turning points in UK culture. Singers overtake politicians in 1901; trains outstrip horses by 1902; and football becomes more popular than cricket by 1909. However, it is not until 1950 that references to singers and dancers are three times as frequent as mentions for political figures. [University of Bristol](#), [Daily Mail](#)

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