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...and much more.

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NMDC staffing news



An early jigsaw map of Europe made by John Spilsbury in 1766. From the collections of York Castle Museum and part of its forthcoming exhibition from Croatia's 'Museum of Broken Relationships'. Courtesy of York Museums Trust

Staff change and NMDC vacancy

NMDC's Head of Strategy and Communications Suzie Tucker will be leaving at the end of February to take up the temporary post of Director, Cultural Property at Arts Council England. Suzie will be undertaking the role as a secondment, returning to NMDC in January 2020. Kathryn Simpson, NMDC Policy and Projects Manager, will be taking over as NMDC lead contact from March to December 2019.

NMDC is also recruiting a new temporary post of Public Affairs Officer to lead on NMDC's advocacy activity in 2019. This is an exciting opportunity to plan and deliver a persuasive advocacy campaign to make the case for museums in preparation for the anticipated 2019 Comprehensive Spending Review. A full job description and details of how to apply can be found on the [NMDC jobs website here](#).

Members' news

Tate launches new research centre, focused on Asian and North African art

Following major investment by the South Korean car maker Hyundai, Tate is creating a new research centre, based at Tate Modern, aimed at expanding its acquisition of Asian and North African art. Five curators will be attached to the centre and Hyundai will fund it for its first five years. Tate's Achim Borchardt-Hume told *Museums Journal* "Research has always been an integral part of the work of the museum. Historically, much of this effort was primarily focused on studying objects in an existing collection.. As our awareness of the limitations of traditional art history... has grown, so has our appetite to learn more and to go beyond the historic focus on western Europe and North America." [The Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#)

British Museum launches sophisticated database to spot looted Egyptian artefacts

The British Museum has launched a major new project to track and identify looted artefacts from Egypt and Sudan, backed by £1m from the UK Government's Cultural Protection Fund. Bringing together a sophisticated database with curatorial expertise and detective work, the Circulating Artefacts project will track items at auction in galleries or selling websites that raise suspicions. Marcel Marée, a curator in the BM's Egypt and Sudan department told *Art net* "we have become alarmed at widespread practices in the art market. The more you pay attention, the more you notice patterns of laxity, misconduct or obfuscation." He says there may be tens of thousands of looted objects with faked provenance, and that unrest in Egypt has led to looting which 'turns sites into lunar landscapes'. The project will initially examine around 80,000 objects sold since 1970 but eventually hopes to reach back to the dawn of Egyptology in the early 19th century. [Artnet](#)

Also: The British Museum is among a pan-European consortium helping to regenerate the Egyptian Museum in Tahir Square, Cairo using €3.1m in funds from the EU. The British Museum will be offering curatorial and audience engagement expertise. Most of the work takes place post 29th March and the museum says "we would certainly hope to continue to participate in joint initiatives post Brexit... The museum works in collaboration with museums in Europe and across the world, and will continue to do so." [Art Newspaper](#)

Visitors flock to V&A Dundee

V&A Dundee, which opened last September has been extremely popular and likely to comfortably exceed its target of drawing 500,000 visitors in its first year – having received 100,000 in the first month. Director Philip Long told *Attractions Management* that showing how design and creativity are important to everyone is at the heart of the institution. He said "it will be vital to make opportunities for people – especially the youth community – that might change their lives. People can excel in so many ways – that may not always be through the conventional education system." [ALVA](#)

National Portrait Gallery launches £8m fundraising campaign to transform its building

The National Portrait Gallery has already raised £27.4m towards the most significant transformation of its building since it opened in 1896. It is now seeking to raise the final £8.1m in a public fundraising campaign. Donors are being invited to fund a series of mosaics as part of the gallery's new design, or to adopt one of the 18 stone busts on the building's exterior. The design by architect Jamie Fobert will include a new, more welcoming entrance to open out the building as well as turning offices into gallery space and adding a shop, restaurant and learning centre with an outdoor area. The work is expected to begin in 2020 and be completed by 2023. [Evening Standard](#), [Art Daily](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Journal](#)

National Gallery's Sainsbury Wing wins award 25 years after completion

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has given its 25-year award to Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown for the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery. The award is given to buildings that have stood the test of time after 25 – 35 years and continue to set standards for excellence. *Dezeen* comments that "*the building takes the forms and columns of the 19th-century neoclassical National Gallery, but slowly reduces the elements*". [Dezeen](#)

Also: The National Gallery is lending Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' and sixty other pictures to Japan for a two-venue exhibition expected to reach one million people. It will be only the second time the painting has left the UK since 1924. Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright said the exhibition will 'promote the very best of Britain to the globe.' More expressively, Osaka Museum Director Tomio Yamanashi said "*my heart is brimming with joyful expectation for this rare opportunity to immerse myself in the rich stories told by the great paintings*". [Art Newspaper](#)

Images this month: Leonardo 500 and the Museum of Broken Relationships

It is 500 years since the death of Leonardo da Vinci and to mark the occasion, twelve museums are each displaying twelve drawings by Leonardo from the Royal Collection from 1st February - 5th May. Venues range from Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow, to Ulster Museum, Bristol Museum and Derby Museum.

Meanwhile, from March York Castle Museum is showing a collection of 'stories and symbolic possessions' from the Museum of Broken Relationships in Zagreb, Croatia, mixed with objects from York's own collections relating to how we fall out of love. The jigsaw at the top of this newsletter is one of the first ever made to divide Europe along its borders, and was made as a teaching aid by John Spilsbury in 1766 who is thought to be the first commercial manufacturer of jigsaws. York Castle Museum curator Philip Newton said "*when looking through our archives it seemed fitting for inclusion in this exhibition at a time when division both culturally and geographically is so prominent in the news...but the exhibition will also include objects which offer a much more personal story which capture a key moment from when love falls apart.*" [Glasgow Life](#) (Leonardo 500), [Derby Museums Trust](#), [Museum of Broken Relationships](#), [York Castle Museum](#)

Dinowatch

Meanwhile, Dippy on Tour has reached Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow where NHM's diplodocus cast was greeted by 24,000 people on its first weekend – its largest crowd in a decade. Dippy will remain on show until May. [What's On Edinburgh](#), [Glasgow Live](#)

Brexit

ACE publishes a guide to No Deal Brexit for cultural organisations

ACE has published a seven-page summary document, drawing together Government advice in the event of a No Deal Brexit that is most likely to be of relevance to cultural organisations. ACE will continuously update the document if new aspects emerge. Guidance includes:

- Information for organisations which successfully bid into EU programmes such as Creative Europe and Horizon 2020 before the end of 2020. These will need to fill in a form to take up the UK Government's funding guarantee, which will underwrite EU funds if/when they are withdrawn.
- Information on freedom of movement, immigration and citizens' rights, including the registration scheme for EU nationals, which is now without a charge, with a deadline of 30th June 2021.
- Guidance about travelling abroad, particularly for those travelling to Europe with a UK passport.

- Movement of goods across customs and borders, including the advice that there could be reduced access across the straits at Dover and Folkestone for up to six months post-Brexit. There is also specific advice on fine art transportation.
- There are also technical notices on copyright, intellectual property and data protection, which may also be affected in the short or long term.

ACE's Laura Dyer said "*it is important arts and cultural organisations are prepared for the possibility of a no deal scenario. I hope [the guide] will help organisations decide what actions to take in preparation.*" [Arts Industry](#), [ACE](#), [Gov.uk](#) (EU funded programmes), [M + H](#)

Recent assessments of Brexit from the creative sector

The Creative Industries Federation has released a new statement (based on the political situation as of mid-January) calling on the Government to call a second referendum rather than crash out of the EU. Meanwhile MA policy officer Alistair Brown has written an assessment for the UK and EU website of the main issues for museums, arguing that many issues for the sector arise from freedom of movement – both whether EU museum staff will be available if a £30k salary bar for skilled workers is imposed, and how the new rules will shape tourism. He also points to the fear of further lost funding if the economy declines post-Brexit, especially for local authority museums which lost 31% in public funding from 2010 – 2016. The MA itself has just issued a strongly worded statement - pointing to the direct damage to the museum sector, but also referencing the effect of reduced food imports and wider economic and social damage. It says "*the prospect of a No Deal Brexit is a matter of concern for the UK's museum sector. We urge the UK government and politicians of all parties to take all necessary action to avoid this scenario.*" EU funding has also played a particularly large role in funding the Irish cultural sectors, with frequent cross-border partnerships between Northern Ireland and the Republic. [CIF](#), [Museums Journal](#), [UKandEU](#)

Events: leadership in a digital age



Star of Bethlehem by Leonardo da Vinci. Now showing at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow as part of the Leonardo 500 celebrations. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019

Working Internationally conference 2019 considers networks in a fragmenting world

ICOM's 2019 Working Internationally Conference seeks to emphasise the role of international networks and partnerships at a time when the world is fragmenting and nationalist agendas are on the rise. Organised in partnership with NMDC and the British Library, topics include 'Romantic Scotland in China', a Welsh-Japanese partnership at National Museum Wales, and transforming an old brewery into a visitor experience in Malta. Keynotes come from Lourdes Heredia of the BBC World Service and Gerd Elise Morland from the Munch Museum, Oslo. There will also be case studies from ICOM UK members, a session dedicated to international touring exhibitions and a panel on the imminent challenges and opportunities for the UK museum sector as the country approaches Brexit. The event takes place at the British Library on 11th March, tickets are £25 – 75. [ICOM](#)

Also: The Network of European Museums (NEMO) is continuing its programme of free webinars with 'Museums, Markets and Eudaimonia' which explores whether wellbeing can be measured. Participation is free, but you must register by 22nd February to take part on 25th February. There will be three further events in 2019. [NEMO](#)

AIM national conference 2019: how to be a great destination

Booking is now open for the Association of Independent Museums annual conference, on the broad theme of 'how to be a great destination.' Topics will include attracting visitors and how to make shops and cafes into desirable destinations. There will also be optional study tours to Cresswell Craggs Museum and the National Holocaust Centre. The speaker list will be updated in coming months. The event takes place at the National Civil War Centre, Newark from 20th – 22nd June. Tickets for different elements of the conference range from £35 - £342. [AIM](#)

Creative economy 2019: Alternative Futures

Nesta is launching an inaugural creative economy symposium, aimed to bring people from policy makers to practitioners together to discuss a future economy with 'creativity at its heart'. It will address current issues in the sector from Brexit to diversity and the emergence of digital. This first gathering will be in Bristol, a city selected because it is a lively creative hub with an estimated 4,375 creative businesses. The event takes place on 26th March at MShed. There is no charge for tickets but you must sign up to register your interest in attending. [Nesta](#)

Learning by Design

Gallery education charity Engage is holding an intensive professional development event for mid-career to senior gallery and visual arts educators. Over three days, participants will learn about new developments in arts education, using three host venues: V&A, the Design Museum and the Crafts Council as examples. Participants are also invited to present an activity or workshop to their peers. Tickets range from £125 for Engage members to £275 for non-members, but there are also three bursaries. The deadline for applying to attend is 11th February – the event itself takes place on 4th – 6th March. [Engage](#)

Museum of London adds new dates to Digital Futures training including digital leadership

The Museum of London is hosting a major digital futures training programme, offering 12 courses each year until 2022 to develop the digital skills of London museums. Topics range from rights management to video making and understanding online audiences. 'Leading a digitally literate museum' will mix strategy and support with practical advice for senior museum staff. It takes place on 15th March at the Museum of London, Docklands. Tickets for all events are free to those working in museums in the South East of England and the boroughs of London – and are £50 subject to availability for the rest of the UK. [Museum of London](#)

Also: MoL is also offering a broader 'Skills Plus' training programme, with topics ranging from trusteeship to forward planning. [Museum of London](#)

Vanishing Point: the curation and preservation of virtual reality

Artworks created in virtual and augmented reality are increasingly being collected by museums. The University of the Arts is running an event that looks at how to collect and preserve such works with speakers from the V&A, BBC, DCMS, Tate and BFI. The event takes place on 19th March at Central St Martin's Granary Building, London. Tickets are £20. [UAL](#)

Hacking the Past: An Archives Games Jam

The National Archives are working with University College London and the Bentham Project to create a games jam focused on Games With a Social Purpose (GWAPs). The organisations have previous experience of crowdsourcing the transcription of historical documents from volunteers, but are now looking at how to gamify that experience to make transcription more accurate and enjoyable. The event takes place over a weekend on 23rd – 24th February at the UCL Hatchery in Camden. Everyone is invited to attend – artists and archive lovers as well as those with technology skills. The organisers will also be bribing attendees with pizza. [National Archives](#) (full event details), [Bentham Project](#)

Conference: Passing on our cultural traditions to future generations

The ICOMOS-UK Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee is holding an event on 'handing on our cultural traditions to future generations'. The event considers everything from storytelling to healing systems, rituals, food, craft, fishing and gathering practices and asks how and why living heritage should be preserved and how to create a framework for that. The event takes place at the Tara Theatre on 23rd March. [ICOMOS](#)

Surveys and consultations

Government consults on proposed changes to the Treasure Act

The Government is consulting on its plans to revise the Treasure Act, widening the definition of treasure so that more artefacts can be acquired by museums. Currently an object must be more than 300 years old and be made of gold or silver or found with precious metals. In these circumstances, if an owner cannot be found the object is then defined as treasure and belongs to the Crown. However, some significant objects are excluded by these rules, such as the 1,700 year old Crosby Garrett helmet, found by a metal detectorist in 2010 and sold privately for £2.3m because it is made of copper alloy. Arts Minister Michael Ellis is now consulting on broadening 'treasure' to cover all finds worth more than £10k. It would also become illegal to buy an undeclared item. The deadline for the consultation is 11.45pm on 30th April. [Gov.uk](#) (consultation), [Gov.uk](#) (press release)

Museums and Galleries Exhibitions Tax Relief

ACE is keen to hear the experiences of venues which have made use of the new Museums and Galleries Exhibitions Tax Relief, so it can work with Government to make the process as simple as possible and also show its impact on the sector. Please email Ross.Burnett@artscouncil.org.uk with your thoughts by 28th February. [ACE](#)

Heritage Alliance survey on EU staff and the potential £30m salary floor for skilled workers

The Heritage Alliance has launched a short survey to assess how the proposals in the Immigration White Paper will affect EU nationals working in museums and the heritage sector. In particular, it seeks data on the size of workforce, both seasonal and permanent and asks about the likely impact if the Government defines skilled workers as those earning more than £30k. The deadline is 15th February. [Heritage Alliance](#) (survey), [AIM](#), [Heritage Alliance](#) (Immigration White Paper summary)

Director changes

Kevin Fewster, Director of Royal Museums Greenwich has announced that he will be leaving the museum in mid-2019. The museum will shortly be advertising for his successor. [RMG](#)

Anna Brennand will be stepping down in April as Chief Executive of Ironbridge Gorge to take up a position in a rural regeneration charity in North East Scotland. An interim Chief Executive will shortly be appointed until the post can be filled.

Planning for a new age



Kate Heard, Senior Curator of Prints & Drawings, Royal Collection Trust with *The throat, and the muscles of the leg* by Leonardo da Vinci, c.1510-11, Royal Collection Trust /© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019

ACE recruits 100 babies in Leicester for new 25 year research programme

ACE is working with De Montfort University over the next quarter century on an ambitious plan to track young people from very early childhood to 25 exploring the effects of regular involvement in creative activities. Talent25 seeks to gather academic evidence of the effects over time of everything from visiting libraries and museums to reading, cinema, theatre and children's festivals. The first 100 babies are being recruited in Leicester, with a core principle that their families will be heavily involved and will help to choose activities. After a three year pilot which will include adding two further cohorts of 100, the programme will expand nationally. Vice Chancellor of DMU Dominic Shellard said "*I firmly believe that the creative urge is in all of us from birth; but this has to be cultivated... Talent25 will be a game-changer. It will tell us much about opportunity and access, about the value we place on the arts and the difference which living a creative life can make.*" [ACE](#), [Guardian](#), [De Montfort University](#)

'Smell the dinosaur, feel its feet' museums to create new VR worlds with Audience of the Future fund

Last year, UKRI's Audience of the Future fund offered £33m to consortiums of creative businesses, researchers and technology experts to develop new products using virtual, augmented and mixed reality. The Natural History Museum and Science Museum are part of a successful bid led by Factory 42, which will create two 'multi-sensory interactive worlds filled with dinosaurs and robots'. These will tour shopping centres around the UK as well as being exhibited in museums. John Cassy, Chief Executive of Factory 42 said "*it will be multi-sensory: not only will you be able to explore an amazing physical environment, almost like being in a theatre set, but we will overlay it with digital assets so you will be able to see dinosaurs come to life, and you will be able to smell the dinosaur, discover what its feet feel like to the touch, and feel the wind.*" Other winners include the Royal Shakespeare Company which will be working with specialists across the cultural industries to stream performance into extended reality headsets. [UKRI](#), [Sifted](#), [The Stage](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Funding

More community decision making as HLF changes its name and announces new five-year plan

The Heritage Lottery Fund has been renamed the National Lottery Heritage Fund and has launched a new plan to 2024, making more explicit the link between communities across the UK who play the National Lottery and the benefits that they see from it in their local area. The new plan has emerged after extensive consultation with the public. Changes include:

- A new organisational structure that will be 'more devolved and better resourced.'
- A simplified application process and plan for outcomes, making the fund accessible to more people. This means that the majority of funds will be given through a programme called National Lottery Grants for Heritage, for sums as little as £3k or as much as £5m.
- All grants under £5m, amounting to 80% of the total fund will be granted by regional teams covering Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland plus three English areas – North, Midlands and East, London and South. 20% will be reserved for national and very large projects – the fund for this will open in 2020.
- Grant making will remain central to NLHF's work, but it will also offer some support based around loans and social investment models.
- There is also a particular emphasis on benefiting landscapes and nature – not only in parks and nature reserves, but also as part of support for museums, with NLHF giving examples such as creating roosts for bats, creating ponds, planting trees or integrating green roofs.
- It has published new good practice guidance on topics from inclusion to wellbeing, nature and volunteering. Additionally, all project staff must receive at least the Living Wage.
- It is also particularly committed to work in places which are deprived and have received the least funding in the past. It has identified 13 local authority areas that fulfil these criteria including Brent, Newham and Enfield in Greater London, North East Lincolnshire, Neath Port Talbot in Wales, Inverclyde and North Lanarkshire in Scotland and Knowsley in Merseyside.
- It will build on previous work around resilience and fundraising capacity building in the sector, and is launching a new two year programme to support this.

In his introduction NLHF Chair Sir Peter Luff said "*our approach is probably best summed up by the phrase 'it's not enough to save something, you've got to make it live'. That's because a living heritage is most likely to be sustainable and bring greater benefits to people and communities.*"

[NLHF](#) (overview), [NLHF](#) (short film and funding framework document), [Museums Journal](#), [M + H](#), [NLHF](#) (good practice guidance)

John Ellerman Foundation reviews its £2.7m in grants to fund curators

Since 2014, the John Ellerman Foundation has been providing funding for curatorial skills in museums and galleries outside London, allowing new curators to enter the sector as well as developing incumbents. It has been unusual in offering multi-year funding shaped by institutions' own priorities rather than seeking to apply one uniform approach. To date it has invested £2.7m across 31 projects, which have now been reviewed in a new report. It found that:

- Museum funding is particularly under stress in museums outside London reliant on local authority support, and relatively few independent grant-giving bodies offer revenue funding – where offered, it is often with quite specific criteria.
- Investing in curators builds organisational resilience as it helps to leverage further money for capital developments as well as increasing loan and acquisition programmes.
- The benefits of training a curator also extend beyond individual museums into regional and thematic networks.
- However, the huge enthusiasm for this programme means supply has outstripped demand, with a success rate for applicants of just 11%, compared with 30% in other Foundation programmes.
- 30 new curatorial posts have been created since 2014 as a result of the project, including £89k given over three years to the Bowes Museum towards an early career curator of Fine Art and £112k over three years to Leeds Museums towards the salary of an assistant geology curator.

The report adds that "*perhaps the most significant finding is the case for the importance of that 'under the bonnet' work of curatorship – often quiet, unfashionable and eschewed as academic or arcane – which both keeps collections alive and makes them accessible and engaging to the wider public.*" [Arts Industry](#), [John Ellerman Foundation](#)

Art Fund launches three funds for 2019 offering £500k to support curators

The Art Fund is offering three funds in 2019 to support curatorial development, two of which are new, with a collective pot of £500k. They are:

- The new Art Fund and Association of Art Museum Curators Foundation will be offering £55k for eight travel fellowships to allow curators from the UK to attend the AAMC conference in New York, plus further funds for research and development grants for collaborative working. The deadline is 12th February and the conference takes place in May.
- There is £150k available in Curatorial Network Grants which are open to Subject Specialist and other curatorial networks in the UK. This is in response to the declining number of subject specialists in museums over the past decade. Applications open on 25th February and close on 24th April for larger grants – grants under £5k can be submitted on a rolling basis.
- The popular New Collecting Awards return for a fifth year, offering early career curators £50k - £80k to develop collections for their museum and in doing so develop new skills. Applications open on 25th February and close on 24th

[Art Fund](#)

Funders collaborate to reduce 'bureaucratic, time-consuming' reporting

A group of cultural and charity funders have worked alongside funded organisations to help develop simpler reporting mechanisms. Research by the group which includes NLHF, The Paul Hamlyn and Esmée Fairbairn Foundations found that grant recipients frequently had to package up the same information in slightly different ways to satisfy different grant bodies and often found it bureaucratic and time-consuming. As a result, the group has drawn up six principles to shape reporting requests. These include funders only asking for the data that they need, give feedback on progress and being able to describe what they will do with the data collected. [Arts Professional](#), [IVAR](#)

ACE launches new £6m fund to transform cultural sector leadership

ACE has launched a new Transforming Leadership fund, offering £6m to run the scheme to 2026. It will trial new approaches to create a more diverse leadership with more eclectic skills to steer museums and libraries. The fund is open to organisations including universities, business schools and trade bodies as well as NPOs to attract the widest possible range of approaches. The types of work it will support will range from academic programmes, residential courses and structured placements to online learning and initiatives that create networks. ACE is particularly looking for proposals that increase diversity and offer leadership skills learning early in careers or at executive level. Grants of £150k - £1m are available. The deadline for expressions of interest is noon on 7th February, with a deadline for final submissions of noon on 25th April. [ACE](#) (application pack), [ACE](#) (blog) [Museums Journal](#), [ACE](#) (leadership review)

Local councils cut an average of £50m a year from culture budgets since 2010

Analysis by the County Councils Network has shown that local authorities have jointly cut £400m from their cultural spending over an eight year period from 2010 – 11 onwards. The findings include:

- Shire counties and rural areas have been the most likely to impose cuts, averaging at 30% or £169m in total since 2011.
- Libraries have been the worst affected with overall cuts across all types of authorities at £298m.
- Museums have been cut by £40.8m across all types of authority. For example, Lincolnshire County Council cut its budget for heritage services by £500k last year, and is now contemplating hiring out the Usher Gallery, opened in 1927 and moving its collection to other venues.
- Essex County Council intends to close a third of its libraries and Birmingham is likely to decrease funding to cultural organisations by 50%.

Philip Atkins, Conservative leader of Staffordshire County Council told the *Independent* "increasing demand for care, at a time when councils are experiencing significant funding reductions, leaves local authorities between a rock and a hard place on these hugely important but non-care services." Shadow Culture Secretary Tom Watson said "eight years of austerity have badly hit our arts and culture. Each library, museum, gallery and creative space closed is a chunk taken out of the heart of a community. Altogether cuts like this can take the soul of a town." [The Stage](#), [County Councils Network](#), [Independent](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Nick Serota and leading philanthropists call for a stronger culture of giving among the UK's wealthiest people

Arts Council Chair Nick Serota and leading philanthropists have called for a stronger culture of civic philanthropy among the wealthy in the UK, similar to that in the US where wealthy people are 'embarrassed by not giving'. Sir Lloyd Dorfman, founder of Travelex, cited recent findings that of 18,000 people in Britain with assets over £10m, only 10% give to charity. Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation Paul Ramsbottom said that it is 'slightly worrying' that leading foundations are of 'a certain vintage' and that there are no new ones being set up. He added "*once you move beyond London it does become very challenging...it is really hard for superb organisations in other part of the UK.*" [Times](#) (paywall after two articles)

Conservation grants available to AIM member museums

AIM is offering three conservation awards to smaller member museums, covering remedial conservation, collections care and collections care audits, with awards between £1k - £10k. The deadline for applications to all three funds is 31st March. [AIM](#)

Awards



Anatomy of a bear's foot by Leonardo da Vinci. Currently on show at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum as part of the Leonardo 500 celebrations. Royal Collection Trust/ © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019

Recipients of £4m grants from the DCMS Wolfson Fund announced

The DCMS Wolfson Fund has shared £4m among 35 museums and galleries which will each receive up to £300k this year for projects which increase access and improve displays and public spaces. 80% of awards go to museums outside London. The recipients include:

- The Horniman Museum, which will receive £90k to redevelop its Music Gallery. This will in turn support a commission from musicians to create and perform works inspired by the collections in genres from classical to grime and R&B.
- Manchester Museum receives £190k for its 'hello future' exhibitions covering topics from zoology to earth sciences and archaeology.
- Tullie House will use £252k to create a fashion and costume gallery, displaying parts of its 7,000 strong costume collection in a dedicated space for the first time since 1992.
- The National Maritime Museum, Cornwall receives £96.5k towards infrastructure investment so that it can develop a major temporary exhibitions programme.
- Derby Silk Mill will use £90k to create a temporary exhibition space.
- The Science Museum will receive £70k for a new gallery that explores London's unique role in the evolution of scientific thinking between 1550 and 1800. It will open in autumn 2019, with the Linbury Trust as title funder.
- The Pitt Rivers Museum is using £70k for its 'Engaging the Senses' project which will add an audio-visual dimension to its galleries, using listening stations and interactive screens as a route into rarely-shown collections. Photography curator Dr Chris Morton said that newly accessible material would include "*the fabulous travel photographs of Sir Wilfred Thesiger... as well as sound recordings of polyphonic singing made by Louis Samo among the Bayaka of Central Africa.*"

[Gov.uk](#), [Pitt Rivers](#), [Arts Industry](#) (Tullie House), [Museums Journal](#), [Horniman](#), [M + H](#)

New Cultural Development Fund invests £20m to first five cities and regions

Five English regions have received a share of £20m to be invested in cultural projects which are also planned to create 1,300 jobs and give skills training to 2,000 people. The money will be extended by a further £17.5m raised by match funding. The five recipients are:

- Wakefield, which is home to the Hepworth Wakefield and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, which are partners in the project. It receives £4.4m to make it a cultural industries hub.
- Grimsby's £3.2m will be used on events and public art to revive the town centre.
- Plymouth will use £3.5m on digital and immersive technologies to support the Mayflower 400 programme.
- Worcester receives £3m to restore its railway arches and develop festivals.
- £4.3m will be spent in the Thames Estuary region on a creative production corridor.

The funding is part of Government's Industrial Strategy, which seeks to combine cultural investment with strengthening local economies and attracting new visitors to the regions. However, commenting in *Apollo*, the MA's Alistair Brown argues that museums have been so far underserved by the fund – being only firmly involved in Wakefield. It is also currently unclear whether there will be further funding in future rounds. However, answering a question in Parliament about a failed bid for a Cultural Enterprise Zone around South coast galleries, the Culture Secretary implied that the success of the first round would bolster the case for further rounds of the fund. [Guardian](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Mayflower 400](#), [Apollo](#), [Hansard](#) (scroll, Huw Merriman question), [M + H](#)

International

France and Germany plan joint cultural institutes, including one in Manchester

Last year, the British Council published a report surveying the number of cultural centres created by different nations, and showing a significant growth in Russian and Chinese international institutions, while the number of institutes from European countries has stood still or slightly declined. The picture was also one of each nation state promoting its own cultural offer, broadly in competition with others. Now however, France and Germany are taking a different approach and planning a number of joint institutes with bilingual staff. Ten will be created by 2020 in locations from Iran to Sicily, with Manchester earmarked as part of the second wave. Germany has previously been part of shared institutes in Turkey, alongside Dutch and Swedish partners as well as the French. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, president of the Goethe Institute said "*Europe is a cultural project too. These joint institutes are shared spaces for freedom, creativity and understanding that will encourage common responsibility for a European cultural area that can give life to a global dialogue.*" [The Art Newspaper](#), [British Council](#)

National Museum of Damascus reopens after six years

Writing for *Apollo*, former Australian ambassador to Syria Ross Burns discusses the current state of heritage in Syria. Last October, the National Museum of Damascus reopened after six years, with collections that include smaller finds from Palmyra museum which were removed before the museum and nearby Roman complex were taken over and destroyed by 'Islamic State'. Apart from high profile casualties like Palmyra, in general fewer heritage sites have been damaged than houses, hospital and schools. However, a lack of political settlement means that few experts (let alone refugees) can re-enter the country and Burns comments this leaves reopenings such as the one in Damascus as "essentially symbolic and regrettably isolated [but] important in combatting assumptions...that Syria should be written off." [Apollo](#), [BBC](#), [Smithsonian](#)

Tourism

Tourism statistics suggest fall in international visits to the UK, but a rise in Scotland

The latest tourism figures from the Office of National Statistics show the number of international visitors to the UK falling overall in the year to September 2018, but with growth in Scotland. It estimates that:

- There was a decline of 5.4% in overnight visits to the UK over 12 months to September and a 7.9% decrease in expenditure.
- Visits to Scotland have risen in the period from 3.1m to 3.4m (14.3%) with a 3.3% increase in expenditure to £2.25bn.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Fiona Hyslop said that 'all scenarios' pointed to Brexit having a damaging effect on retaining EU staff in the tourism industry. She said that the Scottish government would do 'all we can to ensure European visitors can continue to travel to Scotland freely.' [Scottish government](#)

Edinburgh City Council considers charging tourists for museum entry

Edinburgh City Council is exploring a new funding model for the city's museums, with a charge for tourists but free entry for local people. It is also considering outsourcing management to Edinburgh Leisure, currently running sports centres and swimming pools for the city. The aim is to make savings of £500k by 2023 towards Council plans to cut £150m from city budgets overall. Individual Green and Tory councillors have expressed openness to the plans. Conservative councillor Joanna Mowat said "a lot of tourists are perfectly used to paying for museums. I have to pay when I go to Paris." [Scotsman](#)

Reviving towns

MPs support plans to create a 'Town of Culture' programme

A group of MPs led by Yvette Cooper have written an open letter to Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright to urge him to establish a 'Town of Culture' scheme – based on the model which has been so successful in promoting and improving cities. The MPs write "*while towns are not exempt from applying for the city of culture title... small towns are simply not equipped to contend against major cities in a bidding process that is resource-intensive. That disqualifies huge parts of the country that are rich with cultural history and heritage.*" They also argue that towns are losing out in terms of cultural investment and job growth compared with cities. Meanwhile, recent research by the *Yorkshire Post* shows that chain stores are many times more likely to close branches in towns than cities, with footfall decreasing in towns by 17% in the last decade. However, the MP's letter points to Margate, Stratford upon Avon and Glastonbury as examples of how smaller urban spaces can generate huge visitor numbers through culture. There was also a related debate in the House of Commons, at which Culture Minister Michael Ellis said that he would 'keep under careful consideration' the needs of towns in future cultural competitions and that he is prepared to have further meetings on the topic. [Guardian](#) (full text of open letter), [Yorkshire Post](#), [Hansard](#)

Opportunities for museums and heritage bodies to be part of bids to the £675m High Street fund

The Government has launched a new £675m Future High Streets fund to support local business and cultural leaders in transforming town centres. As more retail moves online, there is a recognition that people are drawn to high streets for 'experiences' as much as buying goods – promising ground for proposals involving museum and heritage sites. £55m of the fund has been allocated to DCMS specifically for heritage regeneration of high streets, with more details of this strand to come. The rest of the fund is open to bids led by local authorities. To apply, areas must be facing significant challenges rather than seeking to build on relative prosperity. The first deadline for expressions of interest is 22nd March, with a selection process continuing through 2019. High Street Minister Jake Berry MP said

"we all know high streets are changing, we can't hide from this reality. But we're determined to ensure they continue to sit at the heart of our communities for generations to come. To do this we have to support investment in infrastructure, boosting local economies and ensuring people are able to get the most out of their local high streets." [Gov.uk](#), [Guardian](#) (comment), [MDEM](#) (Market town museums network)

Temples of serenity

Calm and Collected - or 'what happens if you take a bunch of stressed adults to a museum once a week'

The Art Fund's new 'Calm and Collected' report is an attempt to delve more deeply into the wellbeing effects of visiting a museum, particularly among time poor adults who struggle to relax. It commissioned a questionnaire with a sample of 2,521 people representative of the population, but also set up a small qualitative study. For the latter, seven adults were taken on a museum visit once a week for a month and recorded their reactions in diaries and interviews. The research found:

- 34% of people describe their anxiety as at a 'high level' and 40% said they feel anxiety 'at least some of the time'. It's particularly high among working age populations, those with young children and those in urban settings – with Londoners reporting the most anxiety at 45% (the lowest average was in Wales at 33%).
- 51% of those surveyed said they wanted to visit museums and galleries more regularly and 63% have done so to 'de-stress', yet only 6% visit once a month or more.
- Free time can get swallowed in an 'always on' culture in not always constructive ways, with people on average spending nearly two hours a day on social media and three watching TV or (more anecdotally) juggling household tasks and childcare with answering emails.
- Most popular leisure activities occur close to home (walking, reading, socialising, listening to music). Museums can viably fit in this pattern, with 55% of the population living within walking distance according to the Mendoza Review.

In his introduction, Paul Dolan, Professor of behavioural science at LSE says *"these findings, that leisure time is better for us but that we don't do a very good job of planning our down time, and that anxiety is a real problem – are obvious, but they are also overlooked"*. He argued that people need to build things that make them feel good into daily routines. Emily, a professional from Cambridgeshire who took part in the weekly museum visits says *"I've got so much more out of taking part in this study than I could have imagined. The trips have been really fun and I probably wouldn't have done them otherwise."* [Art Fund](#), [Guardian](#)

Jeremy Wright calls for young people to be encouraged to take up cultural careers

Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright echoed many of the findings of the Art Fund report (above) in a speech in Coventry. He said that an analysis of the Understanding Society survey *"showed how engagement with the arts is linked with higher happiness and self-esteem in young people [and] adults who make more frequent visits to libraries, arts events or cultural sites tend to have better health and well-being than those who visit infrequently"*. He highlighted how creative skills will be crucial in a changing job market giving *"skills of self-confidence, teamwork and dedication [which] are eminently transferable"*, as well as mentioning evolving links to NHS England and economic regeneration. He said that ahead of the next Spending Review DCMS would bring together academia and policy makers for a summit on cultural value to better make the case for its relevance to all areas of society. [Gov.uk](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

New resources for museums on access, events and exhibitions for deaf and disabled people

The History of Place project has produced two toolkits for museums to encourage better work with disabled people. The toolkits cover accessible exhibitions and engaging deaf and disabled young people with heritage. Although the project is now ending, its umbrella organisation Accentuate is hoping to create a career development project for disabled curators.

It is also Disabled Access Day on 16th March and AIM has highlighted a range of resources for museums wishing to take part, ranging from touch tours to sensory backpacks and advice for improving access. Meanwhile there is a growing campaign for museums to install a Changing Places toilet, with Manx Museum among recent adopters. [HOP](#) (toolkits), [HOP](#) (project overview), [AIM](#) (Disabled Access Day), [Manx Museum](#) (Changing Places toilet)

Also: Kids in Museums has refreshed its website with a new resources section, featuring reports, case studies and awards. [Kids in Museums](#)

Collections and disposals

Export bar for a unique harpsichord and a Bidriware tear shaped tray of 'unparalleled finesse'

A 17th century metal tray, originally from Bidar in South India has received an export bar. It is unusual both for its tear shape and its 'unparalleled finesse' as the whole outer body is covered in decorated silver inlay. The asking price is £75k plus VAT and the bar runs to 17th April with a possible extension to 17th July. A now-unique harpsichord made by Joseph Mahoon in 1738 has also received an export bar. Culture Minister Michael Ellis said "*surviving instruments from this period are crucial in helping us to understand musical and cultural life in 18th century Britain, particularly as there was no way of recording sound.*

There is so much we can learn from this instrument's history as well as the social context surrounding it." The asking price is £85.5k and the export bar runs to 10th April with the possibility of a three month extension. [Gov.uk](#) (Bidri tray), [Gov.uk](#) (harpsichord)

Hertfordshire County Council plans to auction 90% of its collection in March

Hertfordshire County Council plans to dispose of 90% of its art collection, beginning with the sale of 168 works at an auction in March. These include pieces by Barbara Hepworth, Joan Eardley and Edward Wadsworth. 268 other works worth less than £100 will be sold later and 112 other pieces have been gifted to Hertfordshire organisations. The whole sale is expected to raise £300k. The remaining collection is much more valuable at £26.2m, largely because of four statues by Henry Moore and Hepworth jointly valued at £21.8m. Councillor Terry Douris said that the sale is 'the sensible thing to do', not because of funding cuts but because so much of the collection is in storage. However, 1,500 works were previously part of the Schools Loan Collection, until the scheme was suspended in 2012 and then cancelled in 2017. A local petition is seeking to stop the sale. Elsewhere, FOI requests show that in the four years to 2017 Cambridgeshire Councils sold art worth £197k and Leicestershire £146.7k. [Telegraph](#), [Hertfordshire County Council](#), [Antiques Trade Gazette](#), [Hertfordshire Mercury](#)

New museums

£5m Biggin Hill Memorial Museum opens

A new £5m museum has opened on the site of the Biggin Hill Chapel of Remembrance in Kent to commemorate RAF Biggin Hill. It covers the period 1916 – 1951 but with a particular focus on its role in the Battle of Britain, in which 454 pilots were killed after setting out from the airfield. The museum has been gathering and digitising collections since 2015, many from people who served or their relatives. The museum would love to hear from people who are considering gifting relevant objects at hello@bhmm.org.uk. The new site includes fully accessible exhibitions, café, garden and chapel. [Biggin Hill Memorial Museum](#), [Arts Industry](#), [ALVA](#)

Jobs

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

- [Curator, Slavonic and East European Collections - British Library](#)
- [Community Access and Learning Manager - Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#)
- [Learning and Participation Manager - Museum of Science and Industry](#)
- [Youth Culture Curator \(Curating London\) - Museum of London](#)
- [Part Time Project Manager/Freelancer, SSN Islamic Art - Birmingham Museums](#)

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

And finally...

Norwich Cathedral is clearly taking the view that if you've got an enormous, soaring Norman building, it would be a shame not to put large and surprising things in it. In 2020 it will be home for several months to NHM's celebrated dinosaur cast for the last stage of Dippy On Tour. But first, this August, it will be installing a 40ft helter skelter in the nave, the first fairground ride set up inside the building in its history. The Cathedral hopes that the helter skelter will add to the building's heritage and religious uses too, as those climbing the structure will get a much better look at the medieval ceiling, which depicts stories from the Bible. [Norwich Cathedral](#)

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