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Members' news



Unknown Artist, The Galloway Hoard, 850-950, National Museums Scotland. Images this month show artworks touring in 2021 with support from the Weston Loan Programme.

BMAG closed for essential work this year, with 'We Are Birmingham' rehang planned for 2022

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery will remain closed for the rest of 2021 to allow for electrical rewiring work. It now plans to reopen in time for the 2022 Commonwealth Games with a rehang of its iconic Round Room near the entrance of the museum. The current hang will be replaced by 'We Are Birmingham', a celebration of what the city has become, mixing new artworks with historic collection items. There will also be a programme of exhibitions celebrating eclectic city treasures ranging from the Koh-i-Noor curry house booth to the Staffordshire Hoard. Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah, joint CEOs of BMT said they had hoped to reopen BMT to visitors before rewiring began, but this has been prevented by the latest lockdown. They said *"understanding our history and our national identity is now more relevant than ever and so we look forward to staying connected with all our audiences...on our journey towards 2022. At the same time we also feel that this is an ideal time for us to allow BMAG to embrace the city that Birmingham is now, as well as the city it was when the Birmingham collection was founded."* The museum has also launched an 'on demand' paid for digital service (see more in the commercial partnerships and income generation section below). [BMAG](#), [Midlands What's On](#), [BMT](#) (museum on demand) [M + H](#)

NHM reaches audience of millions in China through lockdown livestream

The Natural History Museum has broadcast a two-hour livestream to Chinese audiences, showcasing star objects such as the Blue Whale skeleton, taking audiences behind the scenes and answering questions. Part of an ongoing partnership with Alibaba's online travel platform 'Fliggy' the event attracted 200,000 visits within the first two minutes. David Lloyd, Alibaba Group's General Manager for the UK said *"livestreaming offers an entirely new perspective for Chinese consumers who are curious to explore what the UK has to offer"*. It is expected to encourage real world tourism once restrictions are lifted. [M + H](#), [DAO](#)

Canterbury Cathedral window at 'eye level with the public' for BM's Thomas Becket exhibition

A new British Museum exhibition about Thomas Becket, the archbishop famously hacked to death by knights in 1170, will feature an entire stained glass window taken from Canterbury Cathedral. The window, depicting miracle scenes from Becket's life - including curing leprosy and reversing castration - was found to have been put together in the wrong order for the past 350 years or so - this has now been corrected during conservation work. Around six foot high, the window has never previously left the cathedral, or been displayed at eye level with the public. 'Thomas Becket: Murder and the Making of a Saint' is now expected to open on 22nd April, having been delayed from October last year. [i-paper](#), [Guardian](#), [British Museum](#)

Museum of London acquires inflatable Trump blimp from 2018 protests

The Museum of London has acquired a 20ft high inflatable 'blimp' of Donald Trump, caricatured as an angry baby in a nappy. The effigy was created for protests against the former President's visit to London in 2018, and was subsequently flown to countries across the world, from France to the USA. Donating the blimp to the museum, its creators said *"we hope the baby's place in the museum will stand as a reminder of when London stood against Mr Trump - but will prompt those who see it to examine how they can continue the fight against the politics of hate."* Sharon Ament, Director of the Museum of London said that the Museum of London is apolitical, but that the blimp reflects the use of satire in Britain, adding *"we use humour a lot. And we poke fun at politicians. This is a big - literally - example of that."* The blimp will become part of the museum's extensive collection relating to London protest, from its archives of the suffragettes to placards contesting recent public spending cuts. Displaying the blimp may be a challenge, with curators reportedly considering hanging it from the rafters of the museum's new home in Smithfield Market. The museum has also been in touch with the people who now own the copycat blimp of London Mayor Sadiq Khan (sold on eBay for £16k in 2019) with a view to acquisition. [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Sky News](#)

NML plans to redevelop waterfront and expand International Slavery Museum

National Museums Liverpool has announced a redevelopment plan which will create shared exhibition spaces, community areas and facilities between the Merseyside Maritime Museum and an expanded International Slavery Museum, and also give ISM its own ground floor front door for the first time. ISM's Director Richard Benjamin said *"Liverpool became the epicentre of the transatlantic slave trade, hence the importance of the stories we tell and the work we do... This exciting and timely transformation project will allow the museum to grow, develop and be central to national and global discourses."* [Museums Journal](#), [NML](#)

Value of culture and heritage

DCMS launches new portal on Culture and Heritage Capital

DCMS has launched a new approach to measuring the value of culture and heritage to society, drawing on principles from the Treasury Green Book. This assigns economic value to assets that don't have a direct monetary result appearing in a balance sheet. It has previously been applied in several other sectors, including crime, environment, health and transport, and has been used to calculate value for assets such as clean drinking water and green space. Through a newly launched portal, DCMS will publish research, data, guidance and tools to help organisations understand this route to conveying value and make a stronger case for investment in culture and heritage. Development for the cultural sector has been supported by an advisory board, with representatives from NLHF, Historic England, NMDC, ACE, Nesta and various universities. There will also be sector-specific guidance (see synopsis of current advice for museums from ACE below). Three major resources have just been published with greater detail:

- A Rapid Evidence Assessment of existing culture and heritage capital valuation studies. [Gov.uk](#)
- A framework document explaining the thinking underpinning the Culture and Heritage Capital programme. [Gov.uk](#)
- Sector specific guidance, delivered through ACE, the British Film Institute and Historic England. [Gov.uk](#)

Arts Professional comments "the idea that an economic rationale could strengthen the case for arts funding has become more popular over the past decade, with many professional organisations now producing annual reports that trumpet their contributions to the economy." It points to a number of reports championing the approach, beginning in 2010 with Hasan Bakshi's 'Measuring intrinsic value - How to stop worrying and love economics'. [DCMS](#), [Gov.uk](#) (Rapid Evidence Assessment), [Gov.uk](#) (Culture and Heritage Capital Portal), [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Arts Professional](#)

ACE guidance: quantifying the public benefit of museums using Economic Value estimates

Arts Council England has published a guidance note for museums to help them capture their value to society in ways which are missed by existing and more obvious financial reporting such as ticket fees. Currently, when a museum makes a business case for its value, there is often a gap between how greatly it is valued by the local community, including those who do not visit, and direct amounts paid for access. The new approach calculates the missing value in economic terms, based around 'Willingness To Pay' or WTP (what people would pay for the amenity) and 'Willingness To Accept' or WTA (how much people would have to be compensated to accept it if a museum were to close). The Treasury accepts WTP as an economic indicator, and therefore the calculation makes it easier to make a case for museum investment.

ACE describes how WTP has been calculated in pilot work, surveying 200 visitors and 200 non-visitors to give a sufficiently large sample. However, it cautions that the WTP approach works for only some types of museums: it is inappropriate to those with under 200,000 visits per year, those in smaller towns or villages, or to nationals based in central London.

Previous work with the Great North Museum, World Museum, National Railway Museum and Ashmolean Museum has calculated that the WTP entry fee per visit for regional museums is currently £6.16, and the non-visitor WTP (for the knowledge that the museum and its collections will be maintained) is £3.17. ACE comments that this calculation 'can in principle be transferred to other comparable regional museums in England'. ACE describes the guidance as a 'first iteration' of advice in a complex field; it can give 'more robust rationales for using public money to invest in institutions', but won't be required as part of ACE funding applications. [ACE](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Collections

Weston Loan programme announces 2021 lending, from the Galloway Hoard to Lampedusa Cross

The Art Fund has announced the 18 exhibitions that will go ahead this year built around loans from larger to smaller museums made possible through the Weston Loan Fund. Supported by the Garfield Weston Foundation, the £320k support will enable star objects to travel to venues from Sunderland to Hastings. The loans include sending the Galloway Hoard, the richest collection of rare Viking-age objects ever found in the UK, to be exhibited near the site of its discovery at Kirkcudbright Galleries, on loan from National Museums Scotland. Meanwhile, the Lampedusa Cross, created from the wreck of two boats in the seas around Italy in 2013, will be loaned by the British Museum to Hastings Museum for an exhibition co-curated with migrants. The earliest of these exhibitions are scheduled for 'Spring 2021' extending the hope of remarkable exhibitions once lockdown is lifted. Art Fund Director Jenny Waldman said *"at a time when everyone is staying local, it's incredibly important for people to have access to great art and objects closer to home."* [Museums Journal](#), [Art Fund](#), [Art Fund](#) (Galloway Hoard)

Maps showing defeat of the Spanish Armada acquired by NMRN after export bar

Despite an 'exceptionally tough year' the National Museum of the Royal Navy has succeeded in acquiring several maps drawn in 1589, depicting the defeat of the Spanish Armada. With help from Art Fund, NHMF and the public, the museum raised £600k in eight weeks, allowing the maps, which had previously received an export bar to remain in the UK. [Evening Standard](#), [BBC](#)

Export bars in brief: George III's watch and Clive of India's Durbar set

Objects recently placed under temporary export bar include:

- A watch designed by Abraham-Louis Breguet and owned by George III has been valued at £2m + VAT and has an export bar until 28th April, with a possible extension to September. [gov.uk](#)
- A rare Durbar set, owned by Clive of India and 'of fundamental importance to the study of Indian silver' has been valued at £730k and has received an export bar until 14th April with a possible extension to September. [gov.uk](#)

Impatience on the monuments: debate continues on contested statues

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced new legislation which from Spring 2021 will compel local authorities to obtain planning permission before removing 'heritage assets', and require them to follow the Government's 'retain and explain' policy on contested statues, with Historic England overseeing the process. Announcing the changes in the *Sunday Telegraph* Jenrick said *"our view will be set out in law, that such monuments are almost always best explained and contextualised, not taken and hidden away."* The plans have been criticised by former Culture Minister Ed Vaizey who said that Government should not be afraid of emerging issues but instead 'lean into' them. He said that wokeness could be a positive force, and that the inauguration ceremony of President Joe Biden was an example of balance where *"we can celebrate our traditions, but recognise that we live in the 21st century"* – an approach which he said should be applied to the statue debate. Historian David Olusoga said that people should not be led to feel 'oppressed by the irrefutable facts of their own national histories', or to regard discussion of slavery or empire as a threat to the 'purity' of history imposed by external forces.

Meanwhile, some decisions to remove further statues have already been taken. The City of London corporation has voted to remove two historic statues of figures associated with the slave trade from the Guildhall building: William Beckford, twice Mayor of London in the late 1700s and Sir John Cass, a 17th century merchant and MP. Catherine McGuinness, City of London Corporation Policy Chair said *"the view of members was that removing and re-siting statues linked to slavery is an important milestone in our journey towards a more inclusive and diverse City."* *The Guardian* lists 70 memorials renamed or taken down since last summer. Sunder Katwala, Director of British Future, argues that Government needs to distinguish between unilateral action and the fact that most removals are the result of local democratic decision-making. He continues to argue for nuance: advocating engaging the public in decision-making, considering what statues should go up as well as down, and putting 'egregious and evil' examples of past public figures in museums. [Gov.uk](#), [Independent](#) (Ed Vaizey), [Guardian](#), [Apollo](#), [Times Radio](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (City of London statue

removals), [Guardian](#) (David Olusoga), [Arts Industry](#), [BBC](#), [Sunday Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#) (memorials removed and places renamed since 2020), [British Future](#), [Capx](#)

Funds open for applications



John Nash, Oppy Wood, 1918. Oil on Canvas. © Imperial War Museum. Touring to Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park this autumn.

MGS-administered funding for Scottish museums still open for applications

Museums Galleries Scotland is currently overseeing three strands of funding to support Scottish museums through the pandemic. These are:

- The Covid-19 Adaptation Fund, which has now reopened and runs to 22nd March. Museums can apply for £7.5k (or £10k for partnerships) to buy equipment that will enable safe reopening.
- The Museum Recovery and Resilience Fund has now received an additional £3.1m to support a second round of applications. To save museums time in reapplying MGS is in contact with applicants from the first round of the fund, and museums can submit an expression of interest for round two regardless of whether their first application was successful. Independent museums which did not apply in the first round should submit an EOI before applying so MGS can quickly assess eligibility.
- The Covid-19 Museum Development Fund remains open until this Friday 5th February for local authority museums, museums managed by ALEOs and university museums: eligible museums have been contacted by MGS.

[MGS](#) (Adaptation Fund), [MGS](#) (Emergency Fund), [MGS](#) (Recovery and Resilience Fund)

Small funds in brief

- The Natural Sciences Collection Association is inviting members to apply to its £3k Bill Petit Memorial Award, which offers support for projects for conservation, access and use of natural science collections. The deadline for applications is 26th [NatSCA](#)
- The newly founded Ulrike Michal Foundation for the Arts will offer small grants of £500 - £3k for projects promoting enjoyment of fine, decorative and applied arts through museums and galleries in Cheshire and surrounding areas. [Umffta](#)
- Manchester City Council has announced a £500k hardship fund for arts and culture freelancers working in the city, following a grant from the Savannah Wisdom Foundation. There is up to £1.5k available per person and is aimed at those unable to access the SEISS scheme. [Manchester Home](#)

£6m for cultural festival to accompany 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games

ACE and NLHF have jointly awarded £6m towards a cultural festival that will take place alongside the Birmingham Commonwealth Games from March to September 2022. £2m had previously been offered by the City Council, taking the cultural festival halfway to its fundraising target. 200 creative projects will be commissioned, mostly from people either from or living in the West Midlands. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery will also reopen with programming complementing the Games in 2022. [BBC](#), [NLHF](#)

London Community Response Fund open to applications from museums

London Community Response is a co-ordinated effort by London's funders to address community needs during Covid-19. Grants up to £50k are now available in the fifth round, with a deadline of noon on 15th February. Museum recipients in previous rounds have included the Foundling Museum and IWM for its work with children and young people. [London Community Response](#)

Funds awarded

Weston Culture Fund gives £30m to 100 UK cultural organisations

The Garfield Weston Foundation has announced 100 recipients who share £30m from the Weston Culture Fund, designed to provide support to cultural organisations through Covid-19. Museums and galleries who received support include Derby Museums (£203k), Wallace Collection (£205k), Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books (£160k), National Maritime Museum, Cornwall (£117k) and Birmingham Museums Trust (£590k). Garfield Weston increased the value of the fund from £25m to £30m, but was nevertheless able to support only 20% of applications which amounted to £128m. It praised the 'ingenuity and solidarity' of the sector, and encouraged unsuccessful applicants to explore its other funding streams. [Garfield Weston](#), [M + H](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Garfield Weston](#) (other funding streams)

Art Fund gives a further £750k, but warns that smaller museums face mothballing or closure

The Art Fund has given £750k in support to 23 museums to help them weather the coronavirus, bringing its emergency funding to £2.25m since the beginning of the pandemic. However, applications to three rounds of its Respond and Reimagine fund have totalled over £16m. Art Fund Director Jenny Waldman said *"the latest lockdown is a body blow and is leaving our museums and galleries fighting for survival. Smaller museums in particular, which are so vital to their communities, simply do not have the reserves to see them through this winter... Tragically we are now seeing well-known and much-loved museums facing mothballing or permanent closure."* Art Fund's 'Together for Museums' fundraiser also continues, and has now raised around £800k of its £1m target. [BBC](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Journal](#), [M + H](#), [Art Fund](#) (Together for Museums)

AHRC's Capability for Collections supports behind the scenes infrastructure

Further recipients of AHRC's £15m Capability for Collections funding have been announced, supporting museums to upgrade back of house facilities used in conservation and research. The V&A has received support to refurbish its East Bank Science Laboratory; other recipients include Tate, Durham University's Oriental Museum and National Museum Wales, which receives a new X-Ray. [ICON](#), [Museums Journal](#), [AHRC](#)

£1.9m from NLHF supports three cultural sites and rural tourism in the Highlands

NLHF has given £1.9m to three sites in the Scottish Highlands - Braemar Castle, Dundreggan Rewilding Centre and Strathnaver Museum – to help upgrade the offer to tourists once they return post-pandemic. Highland tourism has been badly hit by the pandemic, losing £564m in visitor spend and causing job losses. £650k of the new funding will be used to upgrade the 1750s former church where Strathnaver Museum is based, creating a modern annexe and new interpretation to better tell its story, which is centred around the Highland Clearances. [Museums Journal](#), [Strathnaver Museum](#)

Also: NLHF has also given £8.75m to turn Newport's Edwardian transporter bridge into a heritage attraction, complete with a new visitor centre. Visitors will be able to ride on a gondola and see views across South Wales. [NLHF](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Wisbech Museum's original mid-Victorian structure and fittings are saved – from roof to display cases

Historic England has granted Wisbech and Fenland Museum £616k for urgent repairs to its Grade II listed building and interior, which is on the Heritage at Risk register due to roof problems and leaks. Built in 1846-7, the museum still has many original features including cornices, doors, fireplaces and all of its display cases and bookcases. HE's East of England Director Tony Calladine said *"we're delighted to support the urgently needed repair of Wisbech and Fenland Museum with this grant. As one of the first purpose-built museum buildings in the country, it is of national significance and also hugely important to its local community."* [Historic England](#), [Wisbech Museum](#)

'Surviving to Thriving' – business training for 40 Scottish museums and heritage organisations

40 Scottish museums and heritage organisations have been chosen to take part in the 'Surviving to Thriving' programme, which teaches sustainable business models to create greater resilience. The programme has been co-organised by Museums Galleries Scotland, the Built Environment Forum Scotland and greenspace scotland. The 40 participants, which include Wanlockhead Museum Trust, The Museum Newton Stewart, Scottish Maritime Museum and Dundee Museum of Transport will initially take part digitally, with the hope of some real world activity as the pandemic passes. Business Support Project Manager Fiona Skiffington said *"now more than ever it is vital to support the heritage workforce and organisations to develop business models and skills... through investment in widespread workforce training we hope to support the sector to navigate the challenges of the pandemic and increase their resilience."* [MGS](#) (participants), [MGS](#) (press release)

Museums supporting education during lockdown

Art UK creates digital learning centre online for schools, searchable by key stage

Art UK, which showcases the UK's publicly owned art online, has brought all of its materials for schools together in one place to better support online learning during and after lockdown. Resources include lesson plans, articles, videos and creative activity ideas for use at school or at home, giving an insight into 50,000 artists with work in 3,000 public collections. The materials are matched to key stages across each UK nation's curriculum, making it easy for teachers to find relevant materials. Art UK will be building on these resources, including with its new visual literacy programme for primary school children 'The Superpower of Looking'. Director Andrew Ellis notes that although the resources focus on art, design and art history, they also have a strong cross-curricular application. [Art UK](#) (learning resources), [Art UK](#) (Superpower of Looking), [Art UK](#) (blog), [Art UK](#) (short survey to help with future plans)

From dining room science labs to a walk through the Palaeolithic: museums offer education during lockdown

Museums Journal and *Londonist* have both published roundups capturing the range and originality of education opportunities offered by museums during lockdown, for children and adults.

Recommendations include Science Museum experiments to try at home, from fizzy fountains to 'gravity defying water', while the Horniman offers bespoke online sessions for KS1 and 2. The Museum of London's many resources include a 'prehistoric explorer interactive map' giving a view into the city's deep past and Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books is continuing a 'digital authors in schools' project. Mindful of those most isolated by the epidemic, the People's History Museum says it is scaling back its social media work and is instead "*doing more work behind the scenes, reaching out to the most isolated groups and offering free sessions*", including moving its monthly sewing club 'the Fabric of Protest' to an online format. Meanwhile *Apollo Magazine* gives a parent's view of the best child-distracting activities suggested by art museums, including turning your knife and fork drawer into an artwork as recommended by Firstsite Gallery, Colchester. [Museums Journal](#), [Londonist](#), [People's History Museum](#) (lockdown programme) [Museum of London](#) (prehistoric explorer interactive map), [Apollo magazine](#), [NLHF](#)

Surveys and networks



Unknown Artist, The Galloway Hoard, 850-950, National Museums Scotland, Art Funded 2017. Touring to Kirkcudbright Galleries from this August.

Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief survey

Arts Council England is collating evidence on the impact of the exhibition tax relief, to support advocacy by ACE and other sector bodies including NMDC for the removal of the sunset clause on the relief, which is currently due to expire in April 2022. Museums are urged to respond with details of their experience of claiming the relief and any barriers they have experienced. [Arts Council survey](#)

Google Arts and Culture usage survey

2000 galleries, libraries, archives and museums from 80 countries now display their work on Google Arts & Culture; however there has been little or no published research on the experience. Professor Melissa Terras of the University of Edinburgh is now conducting a survey of experiences, benefits and issues in using the platform, including copyright, labour and sustainability. The survey is anonymous, takes around 20 minutes to complete and will result in an academic article. [University of Edinburgh](#), [Melissa Terras](#) (previous research into GA&C)

Land Transport Archives Network

A new network has been set up for all creators, custodians and users of archives relating to any aspect of any form of land transport. There is also an accompanying Jiscmail list. [LTAN](#), [Jiscmail](#)

Appointments and resignations

Emma Chaplin will step down from her role as Director of the Association of Independent Museums and will return to consultancy work later in the year. [AIM](#), [AIM](#) (vacancy)

Keith Merrin has been appointed as new Director for Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. He is currently Chief Executive of Sunderland Culture and a previous Chief Executive of Woodhorn Charitable Trust. [TWAM](#)

Dr John Scally will retire as National Librarian at the National Library of Scotland this October, a post he has held since 2014. [NLS](#)

Helen Bonser-Wilton is leaving the Mary Rose Trust, where she is Chief Executive, to become Chief Executive at Leeds Castle at the end of March. [M + H](#)

Louisa Burden (ACR FIIC) has been appointed as Head of Conservation at the British Museum. She was previously Group Head of Conservation at the Science Museum Group. She will take up the post in mid-April.

Awards

Whitworth and Museum of Homelessness shortlisted for £150k Gulbenkian Civic Arts Award

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has announced ten cultural organisations shortlisted for its Civic Arts Award, drawn from 260 applications. The winner will receive £100k, with two runners up receiving £25k each. The new prize celebrates organisations that have made particular contributions to their communities since lockdown began. The shortlist includes The Museum of Homelessness which helped create the Covid-19 Homelessness Taskforce, uniting arts, grassroots and frontline organisations to bring 29,000 homeless people to safety in hotel rooms. The Whitworth Art Gallery has attracted 300,000 people during the pandemic with a programme built around making and care, and Eden Court Highlands, Scotland's largest combined arts organisation, re-purposed its centre into a humanitarian aid centre for the region. Arts writer Simon Tate comments *"it's a big money prize that will make a lot of difference, and it's worth noting that it was the Gulbenkian that introduced the then £100k Museum of the Year Award in 2003, now run by the Art Fund, which has lifted the public perception of museums to a higher plane; perhaps the £150,000 Civic Arts Awards will have the same effect for community arts projects."* The winners will be announced in March. [Gulbenkian](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance open 2021 Awards for entries

The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance has opened its 2021 Awards, with three categories: collective power, practitioner wellbeing and climate. It is seeking projects and people who have 'led the way' through lockdown or are learning from it to build a better future. The deadline for entries is 5pm on 12th February. [CHWA](#)

M + H Awards open for 2021, with new categories including Pandemic Pivot Award

Museums + Heritage has opened its awards for 2021, with categories chosen to reflect the extraordinary circumstances of last year, and the ongoing pandemic situation. The options this year include a Covid Special Recognition Award for special effort from any employee or volunteer, Pandemic Pivot Award for agile and creative responses, and Best Use of Digital. Other awards cover suppliers, volunteers, community and learning outreach. In addition, for a second time NLHF is sponsoring Sustainable Project of the Year, for teams which have considered issues such as green visitor travel planning, energy efficiency or recycling and reuse. The deadline for applications in all categories is 31st March. Shortlisting takes place in May, and winners will be announced in an online ceremony on 1st July. [M + H](#), [M + H](#) (categories), [NLHF](#) (sustainability award)

Hearts for the Arts shortlist celebrates culture in Swindon and Dippy in Rochdale

The National Campaign for the Arts has announced the shortlist for its annual Hearts for the Arts Awards. These celebrate the individuals and projects which have shown how local authorities can support the arts – and the civic benefits of doing so. There are three categories this year:

- Best Art Project, with shortlisted projects including the Create & Learn Playkits distributed by the London Borough of Wandsworth to children who were without art materials or an internet connection during lockdown. Dippy on Tour in Rochdale is also recommended, for putting the town on the map, and encouraging arts activity which became part of the exhibition, including 2000 bees knitted and donated by the public.
- Best Arts Champion, Councillor. The shortlist of four includes Councillor John Simpson whose Camden Alive! Arts project is being captured in augmented reality as Camden People's Museum. Councillor Dale Heenan has put culture at the heart of the regeneration of Swindon, and is working on a 10 year £80m plan to create a cultural quarter, including moving the theatre and museum, to generate £35m benefit. His 'Art on Tour' project brought Swindon Museum's collection of modern British art to people across the city.
- Best Arts Champion, local authority or cultural trust worker has a shortlist including Art Development Officer Claudia Cartwright, who took the work of Mole Valley District online this year.

NCA's Chair Samuel West said *"after such a difficult year for all those in local authorities and the arts – a year of loss, postponement and distance – to be able to celebrate these shortlists, full of people and projects that brought us together in new and life-saving ways, is a real joy."* [National Campaign for the Arts](#), [NCA](#) (Dippy in Rochdale), [Swindon Art on Tour](#)

Events

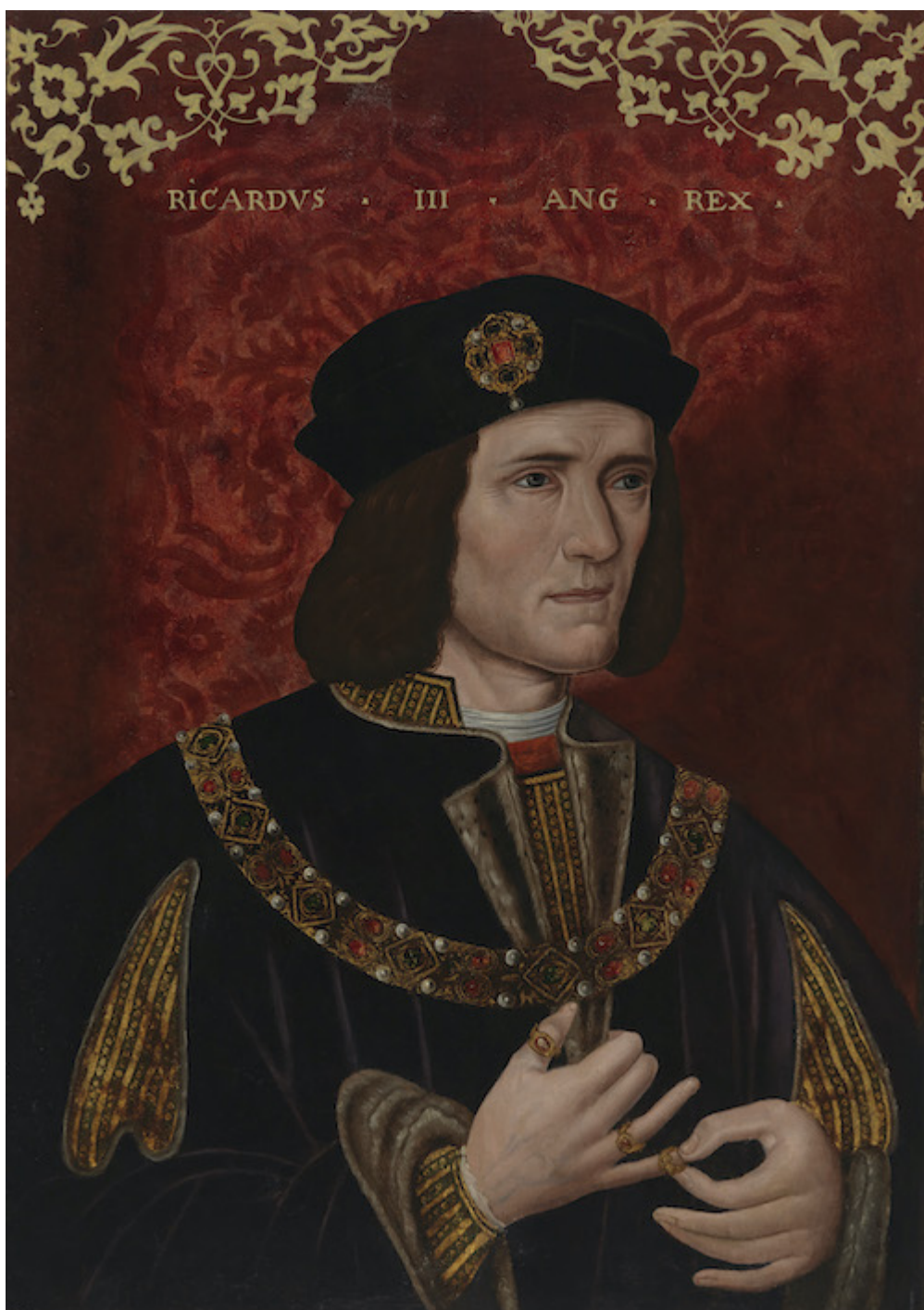
Nesta launches virtual platform for its annual FutureFest event

Nesta has created 'FuturePlayer' a free digital platform holding content from several years of its flagship event FutureFest. Material includes content from invited speakers to its 'festival that almost was' in March 2020, from Richard Ayoade to Elif Shafak and Louis Theroux, and footage of past festivals featuring Annie Mac, Edward Snowden and Ruby Wax. All share the theme of helping 'future-gazers to imagine a better, fairer and more innovative world'. [Future Player](#)

Urban Tree Festival online invites museums to submit events

The Urban Tree Festival is once again taking place online, and invites museums to submit potential events that fit with its ethos. Last year, the festival pivoted to an online format at the last minute, and picked up an award from the Forestry Commission and the Greater London Authority. The group's team will make a selection of events after the Open Call closing date of 28th February. There is also an advisory event on 13th February for those who would like to hear more before making a submission. The event itself will take place from 15th–23rd May. Each day is loosely themed around topics including ecology & nature, ancient trees, tree protection, and trees in culture, heritage and literature. [Urban Tree Festival](#) (open call), [UTF](#) (FAQs), [UTF](#) (advisory event signup), [UTF](#) (newsletter signup)

Covid-19 measures



King Richard III by Unknown artist, late 16th century, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Touring to the Yorkshire Museum with support from the Weston Loan Fund this summer.

ACE extends current museum accreditation awards to April 2022

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, ACE has again extended the current accreditation award status of all accredited museums in the UK to 1st April 2022. Whether museums hold full or provisional accredited status, they will be able to apply for funds where accredited status is essential for applicants. However, there may be some revisions to ACE's view in the light of Government advice and a fast changing situation, and there will be further advice in March 2021. ACE is also hoping to reopen the Accreditation scheme for new applications or those in progress by the end of April. [ACE, Museums Journal](#)

Also: ACE's Designation Scheme continues, highlighting collections of national and international significance. The Etches Collection of Marine Fossils at the Museum of Jurassic Marine Life and The Royal College of Music's Museum and Library Collections both received Designated status in late January. [ACE](#)

NEMO report assesses latest impact of Covid-19 on museums across Europe

The Network of European Museum Organisations has been publishing results of its surveys of the impact of Covid-19 across the continent since the early months of the pandemic. It has now released a final report based on responses from 600 museums in 48 countries, given in October and November 2020. Findings include:

- 70% of museums were closed during the period of the survey.
- When open over the summer, half of museums lost 25% - 75% of visitors, and two in ten lost more than 75%.
- Drop in visitors was most commonly attributed to loss of global tourism (73%), halt to school programming (64%), restrictions in visitor numbers (53%) and the end of community programming (50%).
- 75% of museums have lost between 1k and 30k euros per week, even when open during the summer. 55% have cancelled programmes and projects due to financial loss.
- 66% said they had received emergency government support.
- Only 7% hired new staff to help with digital work, but 40% redirected the work of existing staff to digital programmes.
- 81% of larger museums increased digital activity during the pandemic, compared to only 40% of smaller museums (the Rijksmuseum reflects this trend – although it had its lowest visitor footfall since 1964 in 2020, it also grew its online offering by 23%).
- Seven in 10 museums anticipate budget cuts in future.

Some European museums are also expressing unhappiness with closure decisions. Eckart Köhne, president of the German Museums Association said *"for months, museums have supported the necessary decisions to protect against the coronavirus, but the need is becoming greater and greater for many of [those] who have no financial cushion after months of closures."* In France, 100 leading figures in the art world are petitioning for reopening. NEMO is itself advocating for keeping museums open, arguing that nine in ten staff and visitors feel safe, and for the mental health benefits of opening. [Artnet](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [NEMO](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Artnet](#) (Rijksmuseum)

Also: A new report estimates that European cultural and creative economy lost 31% of its turnover in 2020 – slightly less than air transport, but more than tourism. [The Parliament Magazine](#)

Tourism – prospects for 2021

VisitBritain assesses the nation's mood, and future travel plans, as it enters third lockdown

VisitBritain has published the latest figures from its regular sentiment tracker, assessing how the public's plans for tourism are being shaped by the pandemic. The latest figures, covering the period from 11th – 15th January overall show a decline in mood, as a majority of the public put back the date when they expect 'near normal' to return. The figures show:

- Since late December, the number of people expecting normality by June has dropped by 12% from a third of those surveyed to a fifth. Cumulatively, 59% expect things to be 'close to normal' by the last quarter of 2021.
- Those feeling confident that they could plan an overnight trip for March or April has declined by an average of 13% since December, from 24% to 11%.
- However, 24% of the population are fairly or very confident in taking a UK overnight trip by May, rising to 54% for the period July to September.
- The national mood has dropped to 6.4 out of ten, the joint lowest result with October 2020.
- Although 60% cited Government restrictions as a reason for low confidence in taking UK trips, 48% also expressed fear about catching Covid-19, suggesting that a lifting of restrictions alone would not cause tourists to return.
- The South West is far the most popular planned destination for a future overnight trip at 22%, followed by Scotland (13%), the North West (12%) and London (11%). 60% intend to use their own car to reach a holiday destination.

Recent ONS figures on 'perceptions of the future' are broadly in line with VisitBritain's findings, with only 22% of adults now expecting normality 'within six months or less' - 25% expect it will take a year or more. [VisitBritain](#), [ONS](#)

'We're all going on a summer holiday?' - staycations and vaccination passports

The BBC reports that holiday cottage providers and hotel chains in the UK are seeing strong demand for accommodation over the summer, as the UK population chooses staycations over the greater risks of quarantine and cancellations if travelling abroad. Space for extended families is particularly popular. Sarah Jarvis of Independent Cottages says *"families are going to go away and they want to take their parents with them. It's a safe option for elderly relatives."* Meanwhile *The Economist* asks whether vaccination passports have become inevitable, whatever the social sensitivities and injustices. To date Health Secretary Matt Hancock is not keen on the idea, while President Biden is seeking an evaluation. The Seychelles is among the tourism-dependent countries that have already reopened to those who have been vaccinated, while the airline Qantas has been considering whether to make a Covid-19 vaccination mandatory before boarding its flights. In a recent survey, two-thirds of British people said they would accept vaccination passports. [Economist](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC](#)

Commercial partnerships and income generation



John Nash, 'Over the Top' 1st Artists Rifles at Marcoing, 30th December 1917, 1918. © Imperial War Museum. Touring to Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park this autumn.

Birmingham Museums Trust launches £20/month 'museums on demand' digital broadcast service

Birmingham Museums is launching a 'Museums on Demand' service, broadcasting talks from its museums online, packaged to be available on a month-long £20 ticket. Audiences are encouraged to attend both as a route to enjoying the museums during lockdown and as a way of offering financial support, with members and patrons receiving a 25% discount. The opening schedule for February offers two one-hour lectures on museum collections (one on the Bredon Hill Roman coin hoard, one on 'love, betrayal, poison and death' as a theme in art) and two more focused talks on the painting 'Work' by Ford Madox Brown and on the Ice House at Aston Hall. Commercial Director Alex Nicholson-Evans said *"when many people are still isolated at home and our museums remain closed, Birmingham Museums On Demand is a way of making people feel more connected to Birmingham's rich and vibrant collections and historic properties."* [Birmingham Museums](#) (February programme), [BMT](#) (press release)

John Lewis partners with the Natural History Museum to produce sustainable, dinosaur-rich children's wear

The Natural History Museum has created a range of children's wear with John Lewis, featuring dinosaurs, penguins and the natural world. The clothes are gender neutral and fit with the museum's commitment to climate action by including 'sustainable fabrics wherever possible' as well as messaging about saving the planet. The clothes are available online from John Lewis, and at 12 of its stores. Meanwhile The Louvre has partnered with Uniqlo to create t-shirts featuring its artworks. [M + H](#), [NHM](#), [Nikkei](#), [WWD](#)

Also: Tony Matharu, CEO of Blue Orchid Hotels and a member of London's Culture and Commerce Taskforce, has written for *Arts Professional* on how essential culture will be to tourism's recovery, urging businesses to seek partnerships with cultural bodies. He writes *"while various indices of world cities reveal London's success is attributable to several factors, London's unique breadth of high-quality cultural activities is an undeniably significant factor. This alone should help commercial businesses understand the positive impact of partnering with cultural initiatives, driving customers directly to their organisations and supporting an environment in which their businesses can flourish."* [Arts Professional](#)

Derby Museums plans fundraiser through virtual auction

Derby Museums is raising money towards its endowment fund through a virtual auction, hosted by Charles Hanson, star of 'Antiques Road Trip'. The event takes place on 11th February and will be livestreamed. The auction catalogue is now online. [M + H](#), [Hansons](#) (Derby catalogue)

Culture Case: making arts donation 'easy to do and easy to justify'

An in-depth study by academics from the universities of Birmingham and Liverpool interviewed 22 people to discover the 'reasons, emotions and habits' that make people donate to arts organisations – and reveal what drives the choice not to donate. Those interviewed were described as 'middle class' and having an existing affinity with the arts. The study concluded that donation paths must be obvious and make the act of giving 'easy and routine'. Arts organisations should also distinguish between 'where public funding goes versus where voluntary giving is invested' and debunk the idea that arts giving only serves elites. Other research summarised on Culture Case this month looks at how childhood arts exposure affects adult visits among graduates, and barriers to arts engagement for those with anxiety or depression. [Culture Case](#) (donation), [Culture Case](#) (effects of childhood arts experience), [Culture Case](#) (anxiety and depression)

Broadcast and digital

Treasure on film: museums reaching the public in fiction and fact

Although closed to the public, museums and their collections have featured heavily in broadcast this month. Both the V&A and Natural History Museum star in 'behind the scenes' programmes about their work. National Museum Cardiff is central to an S4C heritage thriller *Yr Amgueddfa* (The Museum) which will be broadcast in the spring, exploring the world of art crime. The museum's Neil Wicks said *"we're very pleased we've been able to continue the television and filming productions at our sites this year, working within the Covid-19 restrictions... We've lost a significant amount of commercial income so being able to attract productions such as Yr Amgueddfa is fantastic."*

Meanwhile, the new Netflix film 'The Dig' has drawn renewed interest in the transformative Anglo-Saxon finds made at Sutton Hoo just before the Second World War, now held at the British Museum. The museum has blogged about how closely the film matches reality, with several scenes from the film exactly matching photographs held by the museum of the original dig. [Museums Journal](#) (National Museum Cardiff), [British Museum](#) (original dig photography), [British Museum](#) (blog), [No country for old men](#) (blog, Basil Brown and Sutton Hoo)

Science Museum's 'Never Before Seen' project draws an audience to under-loved digital images

Making deft use of a very human compulsion to seek out the secret and hidden, in January the Science Museum invited audiences to visit a website showing only objects billed as 'Never Before Seen' – that is, the 105,715 objects that had not been looked at since first being digitised. Objects ranged from a video game cassette, to a coachbuilder's side axe, and – as one user observed – a lot of catheters and speculums. Now all the objects have been 'seen' the short project is over, but the museum is helpfully sharing the Github code for those who want to try something similar. It also continues to offer 'Museum in a Tab' – a Chrome extension which generates a museum object every time a new tab is opened. [MuseumNext](#), [Science Museum](#) (blog), [Twitter](#), [Museum in a tab](#)

One in six households 'struggle to afford broadband' under lockdown

A report from the Citizen's Advice Bureau points to the extent of data poverty under lockdown, with one in six households struggling to afford broadband, and some reliant on 'rationed' data on their phones, making everything from bill paying to social connection difficult. One interviewee, on universal credit since losing work, commented *"throughout the lockdown the only way I've been able to see my elderly parents, and most of my grandkids is on video calls...I don't have broadband as I can't afford it, so when my data has gone I can't see them any more."* This emphasises that even those with some digital access may be having to make hard choices between family contact, entertainment and learning. [BBC](#)

Three research projects analyse museums' online pandemic programmes

The pandemic 'pivot to digital' in museums was rapid, experimental and shaped by choices showing the most obvious benefits. Now three research projects, supported by the major Towards a National Collection programme, will be looking in more detail at what worked, and which audiences were reached, or left out, by digital work. The three projects are:

- 'Make it Fair', with partners including Museum of London Archaeology, Culture24 and the Collections Trust among others. This will look at the problems faced by smaller museums trying to engage audiences during lockdown, and will track the experiences of six to eight sample institutions operating with difficulties including shoestring budgets and lack of guidance about technical solutions. The group will be issuing a call for participants within the next couple of weeks (details in our March newsletter).
- The Liverpool Biennial used a machine learning algorithm to curate its 2020–21 event online. It will now research the effects of this, as well as asking how audiences react differently to online events compared to live ones and what changes when they are active participants in digital curation.
- A longitudinal study will look at search pathways through the collections of National Galleries Scotland and National Museums Scotland in a project partnered with the University of Edinburgh. It will ask whether lockdown changed people's search patterns, which objects were most popular, and whether users found paths through museum websites or via external links from YouTube, Google and others.

[Museums Journal](#), [Archaeology Data Service](#) (Make it Fair)

Statistics



The Lampedusa cross , Francesco Tuccio, 2015 © The Trustees of the British Museum. Loaned to appear in 'Crossings: community and refuge' at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery from September.

DCMS publishes audience and income figures for nationals in 2019-20

DCMS has published figures for the performance of nationals in the year 2019-20, running to the very beginning of the first lockdown on March 17th 2020. Excluding figures for March 2020, which plunged by 63.4% compared to the previous year, visits were up by 1% compared to the previous year. The total number of visits was 47.6m. Other figures show:

- There were 127.7 million visits to websites of DCMS sponsored museums, up 3.6% from 2018-19.
- There were around 7.9 million visits by children, down from 8.5 million the previous year, with about half of the decrease attributable to lockdown.
- Overseas visitors accounted for 51% of all visits, and rose 1.9% to 24.2m, despite the March closures. The average varies by museum, with over 58% of visits to the British Museum, National Gallery and Royal Museums Greenwich coming from overseas.
- There was a total of 6.9 million visits to DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries outside of London in 2019-20, a decrease of 17% from 8.3 million in 2018-19. The extent of the fall partly reflects a return to normal figures at National Museums Liverpool after the exceptionally popular 'China's First Emperor' exhibition the previous year, with the coronavirus also having some effect.
- Self-generated income rose 9% in the year to £315m, consisting of £60.9m from admissions (down 0.6%), £47.7m from trading net profit (down 1.3%) and £206.8m from fundraising and contributed income (up 14.8%).

[Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Work in DCMS sectors highly correlated with 'more advantaged' economic background

DCMS has published new figures drawn from the Labour Force Survey for July-September 2020, tracking the socio-economic background of those working across DCMS sectors. LFS asks respondents to state the job of the main earner in their household when they were aged 14, and then matches this to a socio-economic group. The DCMS average is 67% in the higher socio-economic group, compared to 57% across all sectors. Creative Industries has the most employees from an advantaged background at 71% with the culture sector at 69%, but no figures are available specific to the museum sector. Meanwhile, ONS figures reveal a 44% drop in BME women working in the performing arts between the third quarter of 2019 and the same period in 2020, suggesting that some demographics are more vulnerable to being driven out of cultural work by pandemic insecurity. [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), [The Stage](https://www.thestage.co.uk)

Brexit

Welsh and Scottish Government exploring options to remain part of Erasmus+ scheme

The Welsh and Scottish Governments have released a joint statement on the ending of the Erasmus+ education exchange scheme in the UK following Brexit, saying that both will seek ways to continue to participate. The statement criticises the replacement Turing scheme as having no funding for international partners and an annual pot of £100m, compared to the €26.2 billion over seven years just announced for Erasmus+ (the latter fund covers the whole of Europe, not just the UK, but is still relatively larger). The statement adds: *"we have been heartened by the outpouring of support from across Europe for our continued participation in Erasmus+.... We want the whole of the UK to stay, but we will now explore how Scotland and Wales can continue to enjoy the benefits offered by Erasmus+."* 150 European MEPs are supporting the continued participation of Scotland and Wales and have written an open letter to the European Commission President raising the issue.

Meanwhile, Labour MP Taiwo Owatemi argues in *The Times* that the Government's fledgling Turing programme, designed to replace Erasmus, will only succeed if it is a two-way exchange scheme. She also points to an estimated £243m per annum brought to the UK economy by incoming Erasmus students. She said *"moving forward, I, along with many of my cross-party colleagues, am committed to helping the Government create a truly global and socially inclusive initiative."* [Scottish Government](https://www.scottishgovernment.gov.uk), [Times](https://www.times.co.uk) (Taiwo Owatemi MP), [Times](https://www.times.co.uk) (Scottish talks), [The Parliament Magazine](https://www.theparliamentmagazine.co.uk) (EU MEPs' letter)

Heritage Alliance offers FAQ board for Brexit

The Heritage Alliance has created an FAQ Trello board for Brexit, covering common questions from the heritage sector, with subjects including immigration, travel, business planning, movement of goods and funding. It is also continuing to update its Brexit Hub pages with links to relevant Government and sector documents and advice. [Heritage Alliance](https://www.heritagealliance.org.uk), [Heritage Alliance](https://www.heritagealliance.org.uk) (Brexit Hub),

Employment

Sticks and stones: MA publishes findings and recommendations on bullying in museums

The Museums Association has published findings from a survey on bullying, based on responses from 500 people working in the museum sector. It offers insights into the form that workplace bullying takes and makes recommendations for preventing it. It describes the typical respondent to the survey as a mid-career '40-year-old white straight female able-bodied atheist, working in collections, for a national museum, in England'. Findings include:

- Targets were most likely to be bullied by a direct line manager (53%). However, 23% reported bullying by a colleague and 18% by subordinates or volunteers. Half said bullying continued for more than nine months.
- 25% felt bullied because of a protected characteristic, most commonly gender, followed by age and disability.
- Behaviours include minimising contribution, micromanagement, limiting essential information, and undermining behaviours such as spreading rumours. Half of respondents experienced

aggressive behaviour, and half also reported being ignored.

- Consequences included impact on physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as some leaving either the organisation (44%) or the sector (11%).
- Many pointed to a lack of awareness of formal policies and procedures for addressing bullying. Only 13% raised a formal grievance, and only 10% said they were satisfied with the eventual outcome, whether arrived at formally or informally.

The MA offers recommendations to deter and deal with bullying for organisations, trustees, leaders, colleagues, targets and perpetrators. It highlights the importance of not just creating a policy for bullying, but actively weaving it into museum life, for instance during recruitment and project kickstart meetings. Support in place should include trade unions, workplace mental health champions, relevant training and a way of reporting on grievance-related issues to trustees. [Museums Journal](#) (full report), [Museums Journal](#) (recommendations)

Kickstart scheme drops 30 person minimum, making it easier for smaller organisations to apply

The Government's Kickstart scheme has removed the 30 job minimum previously in place for direct applications, making it easier for small organisations to offer a post to 16–24 year olds for six months of work experience. All posts continue to be funded by the Government at either the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage for 25 hours per week. Employers also receive £1.5k to support setup costs. For less than 30 applications, employers should apply through a Kickstart gateway organisation, and will receive a response within one month. 120,000 young people have found work through the scheme so far. [Gov.uk](#), [Gov.uk](#) (30 or more jobs), [Gov.uk](#) (29 or less), [Gov.uk](#) (find a Kickstart gateway)

Museum of London is partner in 'The Pattern' a new approach to developing future arts leaders

The Pattern is a new approach to developing people from under-represented groups to become cultural leaders of the future. For the pilot, four groups of five people will receive a curatorial fee of £5k to respond to a brief from their mentor, while also receiving skills in four stages of research, ideation, creation and production. They will work alongside major cultural institutions of the City of London including the Barbican and Museum of London. [The Pattern](#)

Jobs

Posts being advertised this month include:

- [MAGNET Touring Exhibitions Co-ordinator - Horniman Museum & Gardens](#)
- [Head of Museums and Galleries - Leeds Museums & Galleries](#)
- [Senior Legal Editor - The National Archives](#)
- [Curator, Korean Collections - The British Museum](#)
- [Learning Producer \(Community Partnerships\) - Museum of Science and Industry](#)
- [Collection Support \(Stevenage\) - National Army Museum](#)

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

Also: The Association of Independent Museums is seeking a new [Director](#).

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