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NMDC news



Images this month are from York Art Gallery which reopened after extensive renovation in 2015 to very positive reviews. Images courtesy of York Museums Trust.

Fourth Working Internationally conference

The fourth Working Internationally Conference, organised by NMDC and ICOM UK in partnership with Manchester Museums and Galleries, will be taking place on Friday 4th March 2016 at The Whitworth at the University of Manchester. The theme of the conference is 'Working internationally in hard times' and speakers will outline how they have worked internationally to deliver activity which has an impact in four areas: health and well-being, knowledge and innovation, regional development, and developing good cultural and community relationships - all of which are key when museums need to vary their sources of income and funding. Maria Balshaw, Director of The Whitworth, is the keynote speaker.

For more information and to book tickets please see the [Eventbrite page](#). Tickets are £35.

Members' news

Ruscha gifts a copy of all his future prints to the Tate

American Pop artist and printmaker Ed Ruscha has agreed to give one impression of all his future prints to the Tate. The artist has previously made philanthropic use of his art: the work *Angel* (2014) was used to fund meals for those battling critical illness across Los Angeles. Tate Director Nicholas Serota said "*this is rare and generous commitment, not to mention a wonderful Christmas present to the whole nation. Ruscha's work has been much admired as it travelled the country in one of the ARTIST ROOMS exhibitions.*" [Tate](#)

Soane Museum wins Georgian Group award

The Sir John Soane's Museum has won joint first prize for restoration of a Georgian interior, awarded by the Georgian Group. The judges said that its recreation of Soane's private apartments would 'astonish' even those familiar with the Soane Museum, adding "*his private apartments, lost but now remade, give an acute psychological insight into Soane's bizarre mind. They are at once a shrine, a statement of architectural history and a kind of Pharaonic tomb.*" The prize is shared with Wootton House's Soane Tribune, meaning that by coincidence both winners are connected to the life of the same remarkable Georgian figure. [Georgian Group](#)

Boxes of Delights: Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums honour volunteers

TWAM has honoured volunteers for its museum service at its annual awards ceremony. Winners included the 47 volunteers who made the hugely popular Weeping Window Poppy Exhibition possible at the Woodhorn Museum, and Jack Walton who won in the volunteer under 25 category for his work on the Boxes of Delight scheme at the Discovery Museum. Councillor Ged Bell, Chair of TWAM's governing committee said: "*The contribution that volunteers of all ages make to the running of museums in the North East is incredibly valuable. Much of the work we do would not be possible without their dedication and enthusiasm.*" [TWAM](#)

Overseas visitors steadily rising at National Museum Wales

According to work commissioned from Beaufort Research, visits by overseas tourists to Welsh museums have been growing steadily over the past three years, rising from 121,000 in 2012 to 152,000 in 2015. 25% of visitors to National Museum Cardiff were from overseas in 2015, as were 20% of visitors to the National Roman Legion Museum, making them the biggest draw for international visits. David Anderson, Director-General of National Museum Wales, said "*Museums are a major draw for tourists and play an important role in promoting our country's heritage, encouraging spending and profiling Wales beyond its borders. We expect the redeveloped St Fagans National History Museum to attract even more visitors. Many of these will be from outside of Wales, giving a further boost to the Welsh economy.*" [National Museums Wales](#)

British Library's huge map on wheels to be digitised

The British Library is digitising the largest maps in its collection, which are bound into the Klencke Atlas, once owned by monarchs of Britain. The book measures 176 x 231 cm when open and has had wheels since the 1950s. Speaking to *The Art Newspaper* curator Tom Harper said "it is completely impractical, completely overblown, totally over the top". Nevertheless the atlas contains information not found anywhere else and the digitisation, funded by London rare books dealer Daniel Crouch, will make it widely available for the first time. Crouch said "*it doesn't sound important or life-saving, it actually is. It's the kind of resource that will be used in years to come and will make the holdings of the British Library accessible to all.*" The Library continues to fundraise for the final £500k for its wider project to digitise all the maps in George III's collection. [The Art Newspaper](#) (subscription only), [British Library](#) (collections page)

British Museum launches Museum of the Citizen programme

The British Museum has been running a Museum of the Citizen programme of events across the country. These celebrate the many partnerships which underpin the museum's work. The museum lent 2,800 objects to UK institutions during 2015, and objects were seen by millions – for example 250,000 people saw the Sikh Fortress Turban at nine venues. Final events take place in London and Glasgow until March. [British Museum](#), [BM Citizen microsite](#)

Futurology

Nesta makes predictions for 2016

Nesta has produced a three minute podcast and a set of longer articles outlining its predictions for emerging trends and technologies during 2016. Many focus on the confluence of arts, digital, health and commerce to produce social goods. For instance, it envisages partnerships between shops and cultural organisations to create immersive experiences to draw people back to the high street. It also anticipates the increased use of video games in healthcare settings, such as helping people improve their breathing techniques. [Nesta](#) (broadcast), [Nesta](#)

The Long View: Future thinking for museums

Oxford Aspire is hosting a day at the Ashmolean with the Futures Foundation to help museums think more strategically about their future plans. The organisers comment that despite being used to thinking historically over long periods of time, museums “*ironically are often bogged down in short term issues that seem to threaten their ability to survive and flourish in the present - often around resources and funding*”. The programme has already been delivered to very positive reviews as part of the Oxford Cultural Leaders programme. Tickets are £150 and the course takes place on February 26th. [Oxford Aspire](#)

Government commits £5m to Centre for Music on current Museum of London site

The government has given £5.5m to the Arts Council to fund a detailed business plan for converting the current site of the Museum of London into a new Centre for Music, projected to open in 2023. It hopes the centre will do for music what Tate Modern has done for contemporary art. It is estimated that the rebuild would cost £278m, but deliver £890m to the UK economy. The next stage will take 18 months and include agreeing terms to acquire the site. Meanwhile the Museum of London has confirmed its move to the site of Smithfield Market. A spokesperson told Museums Journal “*the Museum of London welcomes the news that the City of London Corporation has purchased the Smithfield Quarter from TH Real Estate. This makes way for us to achieve our ambition to create a new museum for London and Londoners in West Smithfield by 2021.*” [Arts Professional](#)

Heads and hearts – the neurology of art

The *Wall Street Journal* summarises a growing body of research which tracks brains as they look at art. Most recently, researchers from the University of Houston have been running a large study in which 431 gallery visitors were tracked for electrical brain activity as they looked at work by conceptual artist Dario Robleto at the Menil Collection. Findings from various studies include:

- Shown a work of art for the first time, most people decide whether they like it within 200 – 330 milliseconds, or at the speed of a camera flash.
- Van Gogh’s ‘swirling brush strokes’ evoke a sense of movement and stimulate the brain’s motor cortex.
- Landscape painting usually activates a portion of the parahippocampal gyrus associated with places.
- People find abstract art more attractive if they are told it is from a museum rather than generated by computer.
- When someone is very engaged by a work of art it triggers brain activity related to introspection and the outside world simultaneously, a comparatively rare state.

[Wall Street Journal](#)

Cuts



Clare Twomey's Manifest 10,000 hours. Courtesy of York Museums Trust.

Scottish Government cuts culture budget

Scottish cultural organisations are planning to retrench as a number of funding bodies ultimately supported by the Scottish Government absorb cuts. Local government will be cut by 3.5% and Creative Scotland will have its discretionary grants cut by 3.6%. Meanwhile the Scottish government will be making £16m of cuts overall to its cultural budget, including a £7.3m cut to museums and galleries. National Museums Scotland has received a cut of 1%: a spokeswoman said “we recognise the challenges which the current financial climate creates for government, and we are pleased that the Scottish government clearly recognises the far-reaching contribution made by museums and galleries to our society.” [Museums Journal](#), [The Scotsman](#), [The Stage](#), [ALVA](#)

National Museum and Arts Council in Wales receive 4.7% cut

National Museum Wales and Arts Council of Wales have received cuts of 4.7% for 2016/17. National Museum Wales said the loss of £1m would ‘inevitably have an impact’. ACW Chair Dai Smith said it was ‘disappointing news’ but added “*the proposed funding next year of over £30 million is a substantial investment in the arts and we welcome the Welsh Government’s continuing commitment*”. Smith is more concerned that the settlement is only for one year and that the pressure on Welsh government funding will be ongoing. [The Stage](#), [BBC](#)

Derby City Council considers removing nearly all funding from museums by 2018

Derby City Council, which must find savings of £45m, is contemplating removing virtually all of its funding for Derby Museums Trust within two years. The Trust will receive £1.05m towards running The Silk Mill, Derby Museum and Art Gallery and Pickford's House this financial year, but is facing a reduction to £170k by April 2018. Derby Museums Chief Executive Tony Butler said that if the plans went ahead, the museums would close, but he added: "*I'm hoping that over the next two years that we can work with the council, other organisations like the Art Council, and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, philanthropists, trusts and foundations, to keep these museums.*" The Trust has been innovative in its approach to supporting the museum service, increasing earned revenue from 2% in 2013 to 15% this year, with a target of 20% next. However Butler does not think that this trend alone will save the service, saying "*fundamentally you can't have the museums in Derby without some sort of public funding.*" [Museums Journal](#), [Derby Telegraph](#)

Birmingham announces third round of cuts

Birmingham City Council has announced its third round of cuts to arts and culture funding since 2010, this time reducing its annual spend from £6.425m to £4.85 million from March. Councillor Penny Holbrook said "*this is not something we want to do but the financial position of the council is clear to everybody. However, we are still investing almost £5 million in the cultural offer of the city.*" Affected bodies have been in conversation with the Council for the past 12 months. [Birmingham Post](#)

100 libraries close in 2015

100 libraries, or 2.6%, closed during 2015 according to figures from Cipfa (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy). The greatest loss was in Wales with a decline from 308 to 274 libraries. Chief Executive of Cipfa Rob Whiteman said the figures made 'grim reading'. Library visits continue to decline: down 3.9%, from 276m in 2013-14 to 265m in 2014-15. [BBC](#)

Lost and found

Museums affected by floods in Cumbria and York

A number of museums were affected by the floods in the North in early and late December. In Cumbria, the basement and gardens at the National Trust's Wordsworth House in Cockermouth were filled with water but the main house escaped. Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal suffered water damage to prints and oil paintings before they could be rescued. Tullie House Museum in Carlisle was briefly shut in early December because of problems with IT, phone lines and staff travel. Elsewhere Lancaster Maritime Museum remains closed, and Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills and Thwaite Mills are likely to remain closed for the rest of January.

In late December, the main heritage casualty in York was Jorvik Viking Centre, which was entirely flooded. A quick thinking member of staff removed a fire door and bitumened it at the top of descending entrance steps, thus buying a few hours to save valuable artefacts such as the Viking sock.

York Museums Trust's sites largely escaped, with only Raindale Mill suffering closure because of flooding around the back of the property. Meanwhile, the Archbishop of York's palace was protected, in part due to the forethought of its 13th century builders. The Archbishop wrote: "*as expected my home here at Bishopthorpe Palace is flooded again. We are fortunate however that back in the 13th century they built with flooding in mind, such that when the water subsides it soon washes through the original flood drains made for the purpose.*" The flooding has now retreated, and heritage attractions and shops are tweeting that York is once again open for business. [Museums Journal](#), [Twitter](#), [BBC](#) (Jorvik flooding short film), [Museums Journal](#) (update)

Export bar for rediscovered Renaissance portrait

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has placed an export bar on *Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap* by Pontormo. The picture, painted in 1529 and one of only 15 paintings by the artist to survive, was believed to be lost for more than 200 years until it was rediscovered in a private collection in 2008. The lay Chair of the Reviewing Committee Sir Hayden Philips said “*it bowled me over by its striking beauty. Let’s try to keep it so more people like me in the UK can be bowled over too.*” A serious intention to match the asking price of £30,618,987 is needed by 22nd April, with a possible extension to 22nd October. Gov.uk

Also: An export bar has been placed on Sir Hans Krebs' Nobel Prize medal, which sold for £275k. Culture Minister Ed Vaizey described Krebs as having an “*invaluable impact on British science after he was welcomed into the country during the rise of Nazism*”. The export bar runs to 17th March with a possible two month extension to May. ACE

Missing in Action: Historic England seeks lost postwar public art

Historic England has launched a campaign to track down lost public art of the postwar period. Often created in a social spirit and placed in public spaces from parks to hospitals, much of this art has not been well protected. Historic England says the works may be “*stolen and melted down for their scrap value; neglected and vandalised beyond repair; sold and moved from their intended public spaces; destroyed by redevelopment, or just forgotten - location unknown.*” Works missing in action include William Mitchell's 1977 piece *The Pineapple* which was last seen in 2011 and vanished after being stored in 2012. Historic England is seeking ‘memories and stories’ from the public about lost or destroyed public art, and offers an initial list of missing sculpture. People are invited to send information to outthere@HistoricEngland.org.uk. [Historic England](http://HistoricEngland)

Cecil Rhodes, burning pianos and noseless kings

Oxford undergraduate Ntokozo Qwabe is leading a group calling for Oriel College to remove its statue of the Victorian imperialist figure, Cecil Rhodes. Qwabe is from South Africa where earlier in 2015 a large monument to Rhodes was removed after being extensively defaced. Marina Warner has written for *Frieze* magazine exploring the wider history of iconoclasm in the modern world and how we react to it very differently depending on the context – from the removal of statues of Saddam Hussain in Iraq, to the widespread destruction of history by IS, to destruction-based art pieces like Douglas Gordon's *Burning Piano*, in which the artist filmed the burning of a grand piano between Scotland and England before the referendum. She also describes how iconoclasm and restoration can come full circle: 13th century effigies of the Kings of Judah were removed from the façade of Notre Dame during the French Revolution, quasi destroyed and buried: they were rediscovered and preserved as museum objects in 1977. Warner ends by quoting South African writer Marlene van Niekerk who argues that societies should reframe now rejected ideologies of the past but resist the erasure of their monuments: “*Let’s put up two pink quotation marks around Rhodes and put him in a pair of jockey underpants painted in green glow-paint. And then let’s have an incredible satirical play about his inordinately conceited attempts to rule Africa.*” Frieze, Independent, Telegraph

Export of objects of cultural interest in 2014–15

DCMS has published an annual overview of the export of cultural objects. From May 2014 to April 2015 there were 12,852 applications for export licences, covering a total of 92,277 items. 17 cases were considered by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest of which 12, with a value of £48.2m were issued with an export bar. In five cases, objects to the value of £6.7m were retained in the UK – 13.9% of the total. The acquisitions were:

- Left wing of a diptych by Giovanni da Rimini (£5,682,500), which was acquired for the National Gallery by cosmetics heir Ronald S Lauder. The painting belongs to, and will be occasionally borrowed from the gallery by, Lauder, reverting to National Gallery ownership upon his death.
- *The Campbell Sisters Dancing a Waltz*, by Lorenzo Bartolini (£523,800) acquired jointly by the V&A and National Galleries Scotland.
- An English translation of Erasmus's *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (£242,500) which was discovered at Alnwick Castle.
- The Rejlander Album of mid 19th century photography (£82,600)
- A William Burges vase from the Summer Smoking Room, Cardiff Castle (£163,000)

Gov.uk, [British Photo History](http://BritishPhotoHistory), BBC, BBC (Lauder gift)

Museum Freecycle

The Museum Freecycle project continues to flourish and now has around 500 members finding homes for unwanted museum fittings which other museums may have a use for. Maidstone Borough Council put two Royalist and Parliamentary mannequins on offer, and say the phone was ringing 'within seconds'. The mannequins now have a new home at the Fenland Trust, a former Parliamentary stronghold. Hundreds of other items have been exchanged, and all museums are welcome to participate. [Museum Freecycle](#)

Statistics



Mark Heard's Lumber Room. Courtesy of York Museums Trust.

Taking Part

The biannual Taking Part cultural statistics have now been published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Headlines include:

- 51.6% of adults visited a museum between October 2014 and September 2015. This figure has remained steady since 2012.
- 30% visited once or twice, 18% visited three or four times.
- Attendance was highest in London where 58.9% had visited a museum or gallery, and lowest in the West Midlands where the figure was 42.7%
- Visits to museums remained the same as the previous year at 27.9%, but down from a peak of 31.3% during 2012. Since 2011/12 ticket booking is up by 5% online, but virtual tours are down by 3%.
- 72.5% visited a heritage site.
- 33.9% visited a library, a similar figure to the previous year, but down from 48.2% in 2005 - 06.

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

3.4m get involved in Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days continue to attract a huge audience, with 3.4 million people attending over a four day period during 2015. The festival organisers collected data for the first time on self-reported wellbeing, with 84% saying it increased their wellbeing, and 64% saying they felt better about themselves. Half of all visitors said they attended heritage attractions rarely or not at all, but 85% said they felt inspired to visit more often by their experience. Heritage Open Days are also estimated to create a minimum of £15m of spend on food, accommodation and travel. [Heritage Open Days](#)

Also: The Heritage Alliance has announced its 2016 Heritage Hero, John Lambourne, who has restored a 19th century sailing vessel, Ripple. They have produced a short film which features a local rugby team, dwarfed by the huge vessel, pulling it along the road. [Youtube](#)

Events and courses

World Summit on Arts & Culture, Malta

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies has announced its seventh annual conference, which takes place in Valetta, Malta on 18th–21st October 2016. The subject will be cultural leadership in the 21st century, and include issues such as the impact of new technologies, threats to global security, new patterns of migration, austerity measures and continuous requests for reform, and the desire of cultural bodies to extend their impact to other sectors. IFACCA invites suggestions for speakers using [this survey](#) before 5th February 2016. [IFACCA](#)

Consultants, development officers and freelancers: a training course for you

AIM has developed an in-depth programme to support all people who help museums prosper, including freelance consultants, museum development officers and others whose role is to support museums. It will be funded by ACE and led by HBRL consulting. The course includes five overnight residential sessions and the opportunity to shadow consultants. The deadline for applications is 29th January. Contact Helen Wilkinson at helenw@aim-museums.co.uk if you wish to discuss whether the course is a good fit for you. [AIM](#)

What's In Store Commercial Enterprise course

Oxford Aspire is offering a course on museum shops and how to create a unique identity and be commercially viable. Among the speakers is Richard Clare from the John Lewis Partnership to discuss lessons from the commercial sector. There will also be case studies from the Ashmolean and Fitzwilliam museums. The event takes place at the Ashmolean on 22nd January from 10am and tickets are £50. [Oxford Aspire](#)

Free heritage education in East Midlands

The National Centre for Citizenship and Law is working with museums with collections which are under-used as education resources, and local schools in the East Midlands. Arts Council England is funding the work. There are currently three partner museums: Papplewick Pumping Station, Bassetlaw Museum and the Guildhall in Leicester. Education sessions will be free of charge for Key Stage 1 and 2, and the museums will use the experience to evolve their education offer. [NCCL](#), [ACE](#)

Welsh Museums Conference 2016

The Welsh Museums Conference 2016 will take place at the Cardiff Story Museum on March 3rd from 10.30am. Speakers include Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Richard Bellamy, Head of HLF Wales, and Bernard Donoghue, Director of ALVA. A booking form and further details are available from john@arenig.demon.co.uk.

Wales launches 2016 as Year of Adventure

The Welsh Government is launching a year long tourism project, the Year of Adventure, encouraging visitors to Wales. Museums, libraries and archives can get involved on a local level with programming ranging from geocache treasure hunts to sleepovers or a focus on explorers featured in your collections. If you are considering events as part of the scheme, please contact Bethan.Rogers@wrexham.gov.uk as your events can be used to inform a joint press and general promotion campaign for museums. [Welsh Government](#)

Grab an artist for your Museums At Night event 2016

Museums At Night has announced the names of six artists who will take part in museum events during the October festival. Any UK cultural or heritage organisations can apply to win them and a £3000 bursary. The artists are Marcus Coates, Susan Hiller, Aowen Jin, Peter Liversidge, Karen Mirza & Brad Butler and Bedwyr Williams. The artists have given an outline of their event ideas, and museums which apply to host them will go forward to a public vote in May. Large and small venues are both encouraged to apply. [Museums At Night](#) (application form), [Museums At Night](#) (artists event ideas)

Fully funded MAs in museum studies, world history and art

The University of East Anglia is once again offering a number of funded MAs. Applicants for 2016 are invited for an MA in cultural heritage and museum studies based at Sheringham Museum with £10k towards tuition and living expenses. Other MAs are available exploring the visual arts, historical and contemporary, of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. The deadline for applications is 1st March. [UEA](#)

Free collections care seminars for small and medium sized museums

The Arts Council is funding the Collections Trust to provide six free seminars on collections care during the spring. They are aimed at practitioners from small and medium-sized museums that are either accredited or working towards accreditation. Locations include Leeds, Leicester, London, Cambridge and Exeter, with a sixth seminar to be confirmed. [Collections Trust](#)

Funding

Royal College of Music museum seeks to quintuple visitors with makeover

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given a £3.6m grant to the museum of the Royal College of Music to transform the display of the collection and make it more accessible to visitors. The museum is little known despite being based near the national museums on Exhibition Road in South Kensington. Its collections included the oldest keyboard stringed instrument - a harpsichord from 1480 - and instruments played by Elgar and Holst. Plans include conservation of 500 instruments, digitisation of 45,000 items and increased access for education and temporary exhibitions. A volunteering, training and internship programme will run alongside the project, and there will be five new fixed term jobs. RCM hopes to increase its visitors from 8,000 each year to 40,000 once the work is complete. [Classical Music Magazine](#), [Today programme](#) (1 hour 08), [HLF](#), [M+H](#) (lovely images)

Also: Shakespeare's Schoolroom and Guildhall will open to the public in Stratford upon Avon following a £1.4m grant from HLF. The wattle and daub structure built in the 1420s was Shakespeare's school in the 1570s, at a time when it was also the town's only theatre space. [M+H Advisor](#)

£37.4m of artefacts donated through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme during 2015

The Arts Council has published a report on the success of the Acceptance in Lieu scheme for 2015. 29 groups of objects worth £37.4m were received (including Cultural Gifts) in settlement of tax bills amounting to £25.8m – meaning the scheme has tripled in size since 2005. Items acquired include the papers of Lady Thatcher and 37 paintings by Sir Winston Churchill as well as Sir Cedric Morris' *Cabbage* and Joan Eardley's *Seated Boy*, part of a series of portraits about working class Glasgow life in the 1950s. Pre 20th century works included the early 17th century Lumley Missal, a fan design *Mail arriving at Temple Bar*, and Sir Edward Landseer's *A Newfoundland with a Rabbit*.

In his introduction, Sir Peter Bazalgette also praised the growing Cultural Gifts scheme and its positive effect on donors, saying, "*I was particularly struck earlier this year by the remarks of John Entwistle at a seminar in London on Cultural Gifts. In 2014 he had donated Sam Walsh's The Dinner Party. John spoke quite spontaneously of his pleasure with the way the Scheme had worked and how he had the satisfaction of seeing the painting hanging locally in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and of sharing in the interest and delight that it gave to visitors.*" [ACE](#) (full report), [Museums Journal](#)

Awards and prizes

Museum of the Year 2016

The Art Fund has opened its annual Museum of the Year award for 2016. Won last year by the Whitworth Gallery, the 100k prize is the largest in the sector and is frequently given to a museum or gallery which has recently transformed itself and improved its attractiveness to the public. For the first time in 2016, the Art Fund will be giving bursaries to finalists with a turnover of less than £5m which want to build publicity around success but lack a budget. Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar said that as well as the sizeable prize "*winning can have an impact on how many people come to visit. Everyone wants to see the Museum of the Year*". Applications close on 10th February 2016 and the shortlist will be revealed on 29th April. [Art Fund](#), [ArtLyst](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Three new Scottish collections recognised

Three museums have been awarded Recognised Collections of National Significance status by Museum Galleries Scotland: the Highland Folk Museum collection, Glasgow Women's Library and the Kirkcudbright Artists' Collection. The three will be able to apply for additional funding streams offered by MGS. [MGS](#)

Creative and Cultural Skills Award 2016

Creative & Cultural Skills are offering awards for mentors and managers in the creative industries who have helped to nurture a new generation through creating training opportunities. This could be through direct training or by creating policies to open up career paths for young people. Following a record number of nominations last year, the number of awards has expanded and now includes those working in craft, design, cultural heritage, music, jewellery and theatre. The closing date for nominations is 2nd March. Nominations are also sought for the intern of the year and apprentice of the year categories. [CCSkills](#)

M+H Awards 2016 launched

M+H has launched its 2016 awards, seeking examples of excellence in the museums and heritage sector in a wide range of categories: customer service, temporary or touring exhibition, educational initiative, project on a limited budget, marketing campaign, innovation award, trading and enterprise, international award, permanent exhibition and restoration or conservation. There are also new awards for volunteer of the year and fundraiser of the year. The organisers say they are seeking 'cost effectiveness, creativity and resourcefulness' regardless of the size of the project, and that they encourage institutions of all kinds to take part. The deadline for nominations is 1st February, and 29th February for the volunteer prize. [M+H](#), [M+H](#) (volunteers)

Appointments, resignations and honours

Out of the Borgesian labyrinth: Neil MacGregor leaves the BM

The *Guardian* has written a short opinion piece about Neil MacGregor, following his departure just before Christmas from the British Museum after 13 years as Director. It points to his diplomacy and influence, including the conversations he and Nick Serota had with the Chancellor ahead of the recent Spending Review. It also summarises MacGregor leaving speech in which he described the 'impossibly rambling epic' quality of a museum as vast as the BM: "*[the epic] began in east Africa 2m years ago, and is still going on. As a new director, he found that seemingly simple questions to his colleagues, such as 'How many objects are in the collection?' were essentially unanswerable: is a cuneiform tablet in eight pieces one object, or eight objects? The British Museum has a Borgesian quality – it is an endless labyrinth, representing and containing all the world in all its absurd, bewildering and fascinating taxonomies.*" Hartwig Fischer now inherits the labyrinth. [Guardian](#)

New Shadow Culture Secretary

Following a Shadow Cabinet reshuffle Michael Dugher MP has lost the post he briefly held as Shadow Culture Secretary. The role has now passed to Maria Eagle MP. Eagle is MP for Garston and Halewood in Merseyside and was Shadow Defence Secretary in Jeremy Corbyn's first Shadow Cabinet, and has previously held a variety of Shadow Cabinet and Ministerial roles. [Guardian](#), [The Stage](#)

New Year's Honours

Pim Baxter, Deputy Director of the National Portrait Gallery, has received an OBE for services to the arts. OBEs also went to Gerry McQuillan, formerly Senior Adviser in the Acquisitions, Exports, Loans and Collections at Arts Council England, for services to public arts collections, and Godfrey Worsdale, formerly director of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, for services to visual arts in the north east. [Museums Association](#), [Guardian](#) (full list)

Science Museum Director wins Pushkin Medal

Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded the Pushkin Medal to Science Museum Director Ian Blatchford following the successful Cosmonauts exhibition. One of Russia's top honours, it is rarely awarded to a UK citizen. It reflects the five years of work and diplomacy that went into forging the relationships which made Cosmonauts possible. Blatchford says *"we started travelling to all these space-related research institutes, located in the middle of large Russian forests - mysterious places. We saw objects and we wanted to collect them but we were dealing with people who had been trained to be secretive. It was like: 'Well, who are you?'"* Some objects such as the lunar lander had to be declassified as state secrets before they could be displayed. [ICOM](#)

Also: Arts Council England Deputy Chief Executive Althea Efunshile has announced she will step down in October. She intends to pursue a portfolio career. [ACE](#)

The Museums Association is inviting people to apply to join its Board. [Museums Journal](#)

Diversity in the cultural sector

ACE announces £8.5m to increase diversity in the sector

At an event in early December Arts Council England announced £8.5m of funding spread between four schemes to increase the diversity of the cultural sector, with more details to be announced next year. One stream is the £2.6m Change Makers fund, open to Major Partner Museums. Awards of £100-150k are available with the MPM to provide match funding to 20% of costs. MPMs should write expressing interest before 28th April in conjunction with a named BME or disabled leader.

In his keynote speech Sir Peter Bazalgette praised examples of good practice which he had encountered in museums and galleries during the previous year, including the 'Faith in Birmingham' gallery at Birmingham Museum and Arts Gallery, the new gallery at the Attenborough Arts Centre, which launched with an exhibition on the politics of disability, and work by artists with profound intellectual impairment at Bexhill's de la Warr Pavilion. [ACE](#) (press release), [ACE](#) (fund details), [Museums Journal](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Saga highlights top UK accessible attractions

Saga magazine has highlighted visitor attractions across the country with a strong commitment to accessibility. Museums in Portsmouth feature strongly, including the Mary Rose Exhibition, Charles Dickens Birthplace and D-Day museum; St Fagans in Cardiff, Thinktank in Birmingham, the British Museum and the Discovery Museum in Newcastle are also listed. [Saga](#)

National Army Museum re-explores its collections through the lens of many cultures

Blogging for the HLF Tristan Langlois, Head of Learning at the National Army Museum, describes how the museum, currently closed for redevelopment, is re-exploring its collections through the lens of multiple cultures. He writes: "*The Museum's Collection tells the story of all British Land Forces in the UK and overseas from the 1600s to the present day, including the British Indian Army and colonial forces raised in Africa and the Caribbean. This drives our commitment to engage new, diverse audiences with that story. Our military heritage is sometimes controversial, and we all live with its impact today. The Museum's Collection includes material taken in battle or during military campaigns all over the world.*"

Since 2011 the Museum has worked with 20 organisations representing groups with origins from Germany to Ghana. A recent workshop with Sudanese groups looked at a nihas, a jibbeh and a hippopotamus hide shield, all taken in battle by British and Anglo-Egyptian soldiers in Sudan in the 1880s. Langlois says "*the participants knew more about some of our collection than we did – so with their help we chose different and better objects for display*". They also suggested avenues of interest and research that had not occurred to the museum and will continue to work on displays for the new Discovery gallery. The Museum will reopen later in 2016. [HLF](#)

Inclusive Museum Heritage Project takes off in Glasgow

Glasgow Museums are participating in the Inclusive Museum Heritage Project, an HLF funded scheme to help more people from African and minority ethnic backgrounds to work in the Scottish museum sector. The scheme was conceived after consulting with BME groups about what is needed to better represent their stories. Four trainees have begun work on 12 month placements, during which they will gain level 3 SVQs in Museums and Galleries practice. Sali Dirar, one of the trainees, said "*I am so pleased I grabbed this opportunity with both hands. It represented an excellent chance to develop my skills and get some solid work experience on a new career path.*" [Next Step Initiative](#), [Herald Scotland](#)

Arts structures

Tourism Alliance criticises VisitEngland merger

The Tourism Alliance has criticised DCMS' decision to merge VisitEngland and VisitBritain, calling it a u-turn and suggesting it will reduce the VisitEngland board to an advisory capacity. It also argues that it will allow representatives from 'tourism rivals' Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to make decisions on its behalf. DCMS said the alignment makes sense as it sponsors both bodies adding "*The government is fully committed to English tourism; that's why we have protected VisitEngland's budget to 2020 and given an extra £40m specifically to boost English tourism.*" [ALVA](#)

ACE creates first MoU with city council

Bristol City Council and ACE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on arts and cultural work, replacing a more informal relationship between the two bodies. It is the first such MoU between ACE and a local council and will not involve joint arts funding arrangements, but will prevent unnecessary duplication. Louise Mitchell of the Bristol Music Trust said it gave ACE "a deeper understanding of the issues we face as a city". Phil Gibby for ACE said the body appreciates that local councils may have less money for culture in the next few years, but that working with shared protocols might help resources to go further. [Arts Professional](#)

World Cities Culture Report 2015

The World Cities Culture Report 2015m an international survey of opinion leaders on thirty leading global cities from Seoul to San Francisco to London, has been published. The report says that culture is essential to these cities retaining their world status - for example, four out of five people say that culture is the main reason they come to London. However, there is anxiety that these cities may become too expensive for the artists and creative industries professionals who help fuel their success. Some are responding by embedding cultural venues and workshops in city planning. 16.3% of Londoners are employed in the creative industries in some way, compared to 8.6% in New York and 9% in Paris. [World Cities](#)

Tech

Latest report on culture and digital from Nesta

Nesta and AHRC have published this year's results from their ongoing digital culture research. Of 984 organisations surveyed:

- 90% of organisations think digital is essential to marketing and 80% to preserving and archiving.
- Organisations have struggled to achieve their aspirations: in 2014 20% of organisations hoped to try crowdfunding and online donation, but by the following year only 1% and 3% respectively had done so. The sector may have become more cautious about committing deeply to digital.
- By contrast, when given funding through the Digital R&D Fund 52 organisations have been highly creative in ways likely to help them develop new audiences and business models.
- It is possible that some cultural organisations are not well networked with inventive digital suppliers, while others know the possibilities but are priced out of the market.
- Those most willing to experiment with digital have the most positive outcomes – 93% compared to a sector average of 73%.

[Nesta](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Jobs

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

- [Communications Co-ordinator - University of Cambridge Museums](#)
- [Reading Museum Assistant \(9.1hrs\) - National Library of Scotland](#)
- [Digital Imaging Officer - National Museums Greenwich](#)
- [Assistant Curator - Tate St Ives](#)
- [Senior HR Manager, Employee Relations - V&A](#)

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

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