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The Lindisfarne Gospels - 'the most spectacular manuscript to survive from Anglo-Saxon England' showing at Newcastle’s Laing Art Gallery from September, on loan from the British Library.
BMAG reopens in April, looking at 21st century lives and the city’s music and film history

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery will open in April for the first time in two years, having been closed first by the pandemic and then for major rewiring work. BMT’s CEOs Sara Wajid and Zak Mensah said that the museum would ‘feel very different’, adding “we’ve invited some of the city’s leading creatives and arts organisations to animate the Round Room and Industrial Gallery with vibrant new displays that feel much more immediate. We’ll be touching on themes like popular culture, identity and community and there will be a very warm welcome inviting everyone to join in.” The Round Room’s new exhibition will display ‘We Are Birmingham’ – looking at 21st century identities in the city in partnership with six young people from Don’t Settle. A sensory exhibition will also celebrate the Que Club, once one of the city’s great music venues, and ‘Wonderland’ will look at Birmingham’s experience of film and cinema over 125 years. Experience UK, Birmingham Mail, BBC (Que Club)

Burrell Collection to reopen in the spring showcasing ‘artworks from five millennia’

The Burrell Collection in Glasgow will reopen in March after a £68m refurbishment, which will allow the museum to show more of its collections – including those that have never been on permanent display, or have not been seen for decades. Chinese pottery and porcelain from across five millennia, impressionist paintings and one of the earliest surviving Persian garden carpets are among its significant holdings. The building has also been cloaked in a protective ‘jacket’ improving thermal performance by 50% and now uses new environmental technologies to create power, heating and lighting systems. Nearly half of the funding for redevelopment came from Glasgow City Council, alongside contributions from NLHF, the Scottish and UK Governments as well as trusts and private donors. What’s On Glasgow, Burrell Collection (environmental innovations)

Unique Honresfield Library acquired for £15m by consortium including British Library and NLS

A consortium has acquired the unique Honresfield Library, which contains original manuscripts by figures including the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, Robert Burns and Walter Scott. The British Library and National Library of Scotland were among those in the Friends of National Libraries consortium leading the fundraising effort. Gifts included £7.5m from philanthropist Leonard Blavatnik, and £2.5m from museums and libraries themselves including the Bodleian, as well as the British Library and NLS. The manuscripts were originally collected by Rochdale mill owner William Law, and had been in private ownership for more than a century, but will now be donated to libraries and writers’ houses across the UK, including Jane Austen’s House and the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth. Amina Shah, Chief Executive of NLS said: “never before has a consortium worked so quickly and effectively to secure hidden literary treasures. This is a triumph for the people, for heritage and for the power of partnerships.” Art Newspaper, Guardian, Arts Industry, NLS, Museums Journal

York Museums Trust give staff week-long extra holiday in January

York Museums Trust is giving all of its staff an extra week off in early January, typically a quiet time for museums, to recover from the long-running extra demands of dealing with the pandemic. This is in addition to existing holiday provision. Chief Executive Reyahn King said “staff health and wellbeing is of utmost importance to York Museums Trust and all staff will be encouraged to take time to rest and recuperate. We hope people will return to work revitalised and ready to tackle the new year ahead. “YMT follows in the footsteps of the Eden Project, which closed for a week in November 2021 so that its staff could ‘switch off from work and rest as much as they can.’ MuseumNext, Museums Journal, York Museums Trust, Eden Project, BBC (Eden Project)
Images this month – TWAM’s programme, Lindisfarne Gospels (and a supporting cast of illuminated sheep)

Images this month come from the 2022 programme of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, which includes involvement in the Hadrian’s Wall 1900 celebrations, a return of ‘Vulcan’ to the Stephenson’s Steam Railway and ‘The Ignorant Art School’ at the Hatton Gallery, asking what art education is and who it serves, with help from artists and the community. There will also be an exhibition of the Lindisfarne Gospels – described as ‘the most spectacular manuscript to survive from Anglo-Saxon England’ at Newcastle’s Laing Art Gallery from September, on loan from the British Library. Related work across the region includes ‘Light Words’, a programme with schools, and the installation of 40 life sized illuminated sheep across Northumberland, created by artist Deepa Mann-Kier. TWAM, Arts Industry, British Library (Lindisfarne Gospels)

New Covid-19 rules

England’s Plan B to address the omicron variant

In early December the Prime Minister announced the move to Plan B in England. The new rules reintroduce home working, make face coverings mandatory in public indoor venues and require an NHS Covid Pass for some events for large numbers of people. (The latter only applies if you have at least 500 people standing indoors, 4,000 standing outdoors or more than 10,000 in any setting.) Museums should follow the Events and Attractions Guidance, which will track further changes. NMDC, Gov.uk (Events and Attractions Guidance)

New Covid-19 restrictions now in place in Wales as it moves to Level 2

Since Boxing Day, new restrictions have been in place in Wales as it moved to Level 2 to combat the omicron variant. Current rules include:

- 2m social distancing in premises open to the public.
- A maximum of 30 people at indoor events.
- The rule of six will apply in regulated premises including cinemas and theatres.
- There is also a requirement to wear a face covering in most public spaces, including museums.

National Museum Wales is among places asking for pre-booking to visit its venues. £120m will be available for nightclubs, retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism businesses (as well as an additional £5.25m for some libraries, museums and independent cinemas – see funding section below for details). Welsh Government, National Museum Wales

Advice for Scotland and Northern Ireland

- Advice on the latest developments for museums in Scotland is available from Museums Galleries Scotland, and the Scottish Government’s guidance for museums and galleries, last updated on 23rd Scottish Government.
- Nightclubs have been closed in Northern Ireland since 26th December, but outdoor and indoor visitor attractions can open, subject to rules on maximum numbers. NI Direct (visitor attractions), NI Direct (overview)

A snapshot of European museum pandemic restrictions – as a majority of countries require Covid passports

The Network of European Museum Organisations has published the findings from its late December survey into restrictions in accessing museums in 30 European countries. It found that:

- Museums in most countries are currently open, although those in Denmark are closed until 14th January.
- 18 countries are asking for some form of Covid passport – with Austria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Slovakia and Switzerland only allowing visitors who are vaccinated or recovered. UK museums are mandated to seek covid passports only for very large events, not for ordinary entry.
- Many Finnish museums are choosing to ask for vaccination passports, as this allows them to admit more visitors at the same time.
**Risks to resilience**

‘Closure by a thousand cancellations’ in the face of omicron

Museums and visitor attractions have faced a difficult few weeks as the arrival of the omicron variant caused a decline in footfall. Some museums, including the Wellcome Collection, National Army Museum and Natural History Museum had to close early for Christmas because of staff shortages. But ALVA’s Bernard Donoghue said that the visitor economy has also been ‘experiencing closure by a thousand cancellations’, adding in an interview with Sky News that for every day of the pandemic, tourism has lost around £200m. This longer term picture has been caused by a combination of the absence of international visitors in the UK, a dip in UK visitors holidaying at home, plus a decline in those who head for town and city centres for work and pop into theatres and museums afterwards. MA Director Sharon Heal said that recent developments mean that “it will be a very challenging winter for museums on top of an extremely difficult 20 months dealing with the impact of the pandemic. While we are grateful for the additional funding from government it will not cover the ongoing loss of income.” Museums Journal, Museums Journal, (pre-Christmas closures) Sky News (twitter)

Staff redundancies at Stoke pottery museums – as Council seeks to monetise film locations

Stoke on Trent Council has published proposals for its 2022 - 23 budget which would reduce staff and opening hours at its two museums telling the story of the city’s history as the birthplace of mass produced ceramics. Plans include:

- Closing the Gladstone Pottery Museum from November – March each year and marketing it as a film and events location, generating an estimated £125k. It would open five days per week in the spring and summer. The museum is currently the site for the popular Channel 4 series, The Great Pottery Throwdown.
- Opening times for the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery will be reduced from seven to five days per week.
- The new plans would cause the redundancy of around 19 posts including senior and assistant curator, several front of house and two business development posts, with 5.5FTE new posts being created, including a curator of contemporary ceramics.
- The plans are aimed to save £560k on the museum service overall.

There has already been local opposition to the plans, with 15,000 signing a petition since Friday. Previously, the Council had announced that various museums and leisure centres would not reopen until January 17th so that staff could be redeployed to essential services. The Council is also planning wider cuts, making 60 of its posts redundant or long-term unfilled so it can save £7.1m in its 2022 – 23 budget. Children’s centres, and child mental health services have also been cut or lost staff. In a statement issued on 8th January, Council Chair Abi Brown defended the plans for museums, saying that the proposals would ‘support the modernisation of the service’, with a single team working across both museums ‘building on expertise and skills that are already in place’. She added that the Council is committed to Stoke on Trent’s role as ‘the world leader in ceramics’ and pointed to its bid to become City of Culture. Paul Williams, Chair of Stoke on Trent Cultural Destinations said “while I have some sympathy for the council and the tough decisions that they are being asked to make at this time, I would argue that the proposals being considered need to be balanced against the massive contribution both museums and cultural services more widely make to community wellbeing, quality of life, the visitor economy and ultimately Stoke-on-Trent’s position as a vibrant cultural destination.” The public consultation on the Council’s proposed budget runs to 14th February. Stoke Sentinel (leisure closures), Stoke Sentinel (redundancies), Stoke Sentinel (filming plans), Stoke on Trent City Council (budget consultation), Stoke on Trent City Council, (statement), BBC
Irish Government to pilot Basic income for the Arts to address pandemic damage

The Irish Government is consulting on a Basic Income for the Arts scheme, aimed to support around 2,000 creatives over a three year period, and address the ‘unprecedented damage’ to the sector caused by the pandemic. Tourism and culture minister Catherine Martin described it as a ‘once in a generation intervention’. The level of support has not yet been fixed, but a figure of €10.50 (£8.75) is being floated. BBC

**BBC at 100**

Launch of the Turkistan at Readheads, South Shields, 1962. Showing as part of the exhibition ‘Pushing the Boat Out: Shipbuilding and Ship Repair in South Tyneside’ from May at South Shields Museum & Art Gallery. Courtesy of TWAM.

Take part in the BBC’s Art That Made Us Festival – and gain access to BBC archives and technology

The BBC is running the Art That Made Us festival throughout April, in partnership with museums, alongside its landmark television series on the cultural history of the British Isles. Museums are encouraged to sign up, with newly announced benefits including:

- Access to archive assets on BBC pages on the broad theme of ‘creativity’ which partners can use at their events or as part of their digital offer.
- Partners can also ask for specific BBC material from BBC Archive and these will be made available subject to research resources and rights.
- A small number of Festival Partners will also work with the BBC’s R&D team to use tools developed to enhance interactive and immersive digital storytelling. For example Canvas creates beautiful pages bringing together video, audio, gifs and pictures, as demonstrated in stories about Wedgewood’s First Day’s Vase and Scotland’s dancing prisoners of War.

The deadline for submissions to work with the BBC’s R&D team is 28th January. Contact mark.macey@bbc.co.uk with any queries before applying. NMDC (full details of the festival), BBC (sign up as a Festival Partner), BBC (Canvas tool)
BBC launches online exhibitions, and partners with museums, to celebrate its centenary

The BBC has launched three online exhibitions on a dedicated site to mark a century since its inception in 1922. ‘100 Objects’ features technology, props, documents, artwork and buildings, curated in partnership with museums including Science Museum Group. ‘100 Faces’ covers figures from monarchs to correspondents and actors, and ‘100 Voices’ is an oral history collection of those who worked at the BBC. SMG will digitise 1,000 BBC objects as well as developing an exhibition and events programme. A dozen other museum partners include the Museum of London, Manchester Museum and Showtown Museum, Blackpool. BBC

Statistics: visitors, income and trust

Ipsos MORI Veracity Index: museum curators among the most trusted professionals

Museum curators are the fifth most trusted profession in the UK, up 4% from last year in the Ipsos MORI Veracity Index.

- 86% of the public say they trust museum curators – the same level of trust as teachers, and just behind nurses (the most trusted at 94%), librarians (93%) and doctors (91%).
- ‘Politicians generally’ and ‘Government ministers’ were near the bottom of the list of 30 professions at 19% – only advertising executives are less trusted at 16%. Trust in police has also fallen eight points to 63%.
- There is little difference in the level of trust in museum curators by gender or political party, but they are more likely to be trusted by those with degree (93%) than those with no qualifications (76%). This gap is to be found across nearly all professions in the poll – only bankers are more trusted by people with no qualifications (50%) than degree holders (35%).

Ipsos MORI, Museums Journal

National museum visitors in the first pandemic year: visitors down 94%, and £8m trading loss

The Government has released figures for visits to 15 grant-in-aid sponsored national museums for the first pandemic year of 2020 – 21. Figures show:

- There were 2.6m visits to DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries, a decrease of 94.3% from 46.1m in 2019- 20 (a year where pandemic closures were only a factor in the final 2 – 3 weeks).
- Visits declined 90.8% for museums and galleries outside London and 94.9% within London.
- Visits from overseas fell even further to 56,000, a 99.8% decline compared to the previous year. They formed 2.1% of the visits for the year, down from more than half pre-pandemic.
- Visitor satisfaction also fell by around five points, from 97.0% to 91.9% - this is based on a smaller sample than usual (and it is not reported how much this might be impacted by visitors being asked to observe new restrictions.)
- Self-generated income fell to £143.5m, a decrease of 56.3%. This includes £10.1m from admissions (down 82.9%), a trading loss of £8.1m (down 117.8%) and £141.4m fundraised and contributed income (down 36.8%).

Gov.uk

Culture during Covid-19: hyperlocal, with patchy evidence of reaching new audiences online

The Centre for Cultural Value has published an overview assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector, through blogs and film, drawing from an event it ran in November. Findings include:

- Although the number of cultural engagements increased during the pandemic, the number of people reached remained static. Digital was good at transforming access for younger, disabled and/or rurally based audiences, but these tended to be already highly engaged. CCV argues “it wasn’t the great diversifier that some commentators are setting it up to be”.
- Hyperlocal and community based work was very successful, reaching the wider social ecosystem.
- Cultural Recovery Funding held the status quo, with culture-rich areas like Manchester receiving more support.
The pandemic also affected less advantaged demographics in the cultural workforce more than the wider sector – including young, female, disabled and ethnically diverse workers.

A complete set of films from the event, with topics including ‘Covid 19: the great unequaliser?’, ‘the future of cultural labour’ and ‘from implications to action: what now?’ are now available. CCV (overview), CCV, (films of sessions)

**Income from DCMS funded cultural institutions 2019 – 20**

DCMS has published funding data for the 19 cultural organisations it funds through Grant in Aid, including ACE, 15 sponsored museums and galleries, BFI, the British Library and Historic England. It shows that:

- Total income of DCMS-funded cultural organisations was £3.6bn, a 2.3% decrease from 2018 - 19 when adjusted for inflation.
- Of this 29.5% was Grant in Aid, a decline of 1.7% from the previous year.
- 8% was fundraising income, 1.9% donated objects, and 56.8% from other sources.

Gov.uk
Philanthropy
Charity giving declines 20% among richest - with a handful giving very generously

A new report, ‘Mind the Giving Gap’ shows that philanthropic giving has been declining for some years in the UK, with the trend stronger among the richest 1% - those earning more than £175k per year. Produced by the Law Family Commission on Civil Society, the report finds that:

- The long term picture is a decline from 36% of households giving regularly to charity in 2000, to 26% in 2018. However, those who are giving, give more - increasing from £8.48 in 2000 to £13.16 in 2018, adjusted for inflation.
- Incomes among the top 1% of earners have increased significantly since 2011, to an average of £271k. In this time charity donations among the group fell 20%, to £48 per month.
- However, some wealthy people stepped up during the pandemic – the Charities Aid Foundations points to a 26% increase of payments by private clients into charitable trusts in 2020 – 21.
- The UK’s 1,700 richest people made two thirds of the donations given by the top 1%.
- In 2019, the UK population averagely gave 0.8% of income to charity, compared with 0.2% for the wealthiest 1%.
- Closing the ‘generosity gap’ among the very rich could generate £1.4bn for UK charities.
- There may be other underused sources of charitable funds: charities claim Gift Aid on just over half of donations in the UK, but a further 25% may be eligible for it.
- An analysis of tax assessments shows giving by those based in the wealthiest areas is seven times higher than the most deprived – so place-targeted fundraising efforts among local business leaders may be one approach to unequal giving by geography.

The Commission, which is chaired by former Cabinet Secretary Lord Gus O’Donnell, proposes two other interventions: a Government-appointed Philanthropy Commissioner and locally based Philanthropy Champions to work alongside Metro Mayors. Guardian, UK Fundraising, Law Family Commission (report)

Museum openings for 2022

In brief: museum openings for 2022 – from art in Nigeria to the first women’s museum in England

Major museums will be opening around the world this year, including some like the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, which expected to open in 2020 but have been held up by the pandemic. Other new openings include:

- The Institute of Contemporary African Art & Film in Ilorin, Nigeria, which reflects the country’s art renaissance in the past decade, and is described as its ‘first visual art institution of international repute’.
- The National Museum in Oslo, Norway will be the largest in Nordic countries, and will cover art, architecture and design.
- The East End Women’s Museum will also open in London, the only dedicated women’s museum in England.
- The UK’s first permanent digital art gallery will open at The Reel Store in Coventry and will play a major role in City of Culture 2022.

Art Newspaper, MuseumNext, M + H, MuseumNext (Reel Store)

Also: Ipswich Museum will receive a major £8.7m upgrade, with NLHF recently announcing that it will contribute £4.3m. There will be added gallery and education space, and reinterpretation of its collections, including those on world cultures. Museums Journal
Group events and festivals

The 'First Saturday' event at Shipley Art Gallery - a chance for creative people from Gateshead to meet. Courtesy of TWAM.

Hadrian’s Wall 1900 festival celebrates heritage site with a year of events

The Hadrian’s Wall 1900 festival will begin on 24th January and run throughout 2022, to mark 19 centuries since the Romans built the celebrated landmark. Hundreds of events will take place across its length. The festival is chaired by Bill Griffiths, Head of Programmes and Collections at Tyne & Wear Museums. Although many museums are programming, he says that the focus will be on community led work, and that the team decided early on “let’s not do what we’ve done before. Let’s not make it about museums. Let’s make it about people and the communities on Hadrian’s Wall. It is their wall, it is not the preserve of curators.” Walks, exhibitions and food festivals will take place alongside online events, and all those in the vicinity of the wall are encouraged to take part. The small festival team will help with fundraising, marketing and sustainability, but all participating groups will run their own events. Guardian, Hadrian’s Wall Country

Sign up for National Lottery Open Week

The National Lottery is inviting supported organisations to register if they would like to take part in National Lottery Open Week, from 19th – 27th March. During the week, members of the public will use their lottery tickets to access special offers at museums and heritage sites. These will be listed on a dedicated Open Week page. Despite the pandemic, last year’s event attracted 25,000 people to 650 sites across the UK. National Lottery

Appointments, resignations and honours

Manchester Jewish Museum Chief Executive Max Dunbar has stepped down after a decade in post and a major redevelopment. The museum is now recruiting for his successor. Manchester Jewish Museum, Museums Journal

Iwona Blazwick is stepping down as Director of the Whitechapel Gallery after two decades. Art Newspaper, Museums Journal
René Olivieri has been announced the new Chair of the National Trust, succeeding Tim Parker. M + H

New Year Honours list

IWM Director and former NMDC Chair Diane Lees has been made a Dame for her services to museums and heritage.

Andrew Lovett, Director of the Black Country Living Museum, Chair of the Association of Independent Museums and NMDC Executive Committee member, has received an OBE for services to cultural heritage, especially during the pandemic.

Laurie Magnus, Chair of Historic England receives a CBE for work to protect heritage during the pandemic.

Peter Murray, founder and Executive Director of Yorkshire Sculpture Park receives a knighthood for services to the arts. He recently announced his retirement after leading the organisation for 44 years.

SMG’s Science Director Roger Highfield receives a CBE for services to public engagement with science.

English Heritage Trust Chief Executive Kate Mavor received a CBE.

MBEs were also awarded to a number of museum professionals including Judith Owens, Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast, Robert Bud, Keeper Emeritus at the Science Museum, Philip Dawe of RAF Northolt, Historic England’s Sally Embree and William Griffiths, Director of Milton Keynes Museum. Museums Journal, Gov.uk (High Awards), inews, Arts Professional

Surveys and consultations

DCMS Select Committee Inquiry: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda

The DCMS committee has launched a new Inquiry – ‘Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda’. It will ask whether the current model of distribution ensures reach into areas that might be missing out, plus how creative talent and businesses can bring life back to town centres and protect commercial buildings against closure. It is currently accepting written evidence with a deadline of 18th February. Parliament.uk

Covid-19 impact survey: how is omicron affecting museums of all kinds?

AIM has launched a Covid-19 impact survey with a particular focus on how the omicron variant is affecting museums of all kinds. In particular, it is seeking robust and specific information about the level of need, both to the end of March when the current recovery funds end and during the rest of the year. It should take 8-10 minutes to complete, and will help AIM in its conversations with funders. AIM
Podcasts

Stephenson Steam Railway's locomotive Vulcan will be reunited with guest engine Victor for the first time since the late 1980s at a steam gala in April. Courtesy of TWAM.

Fingerprints – new Ashmolean podcast considers its collections in the light of decolonisation and restitution

A new seven part podcast, ‘Fingerprints’ from the Ashmolean Museum will discuss the invisible mark left behind by makers, looters, archaeologists, soldiers, rulers and curators on museum objects – and how conflict and colonialism have shaped the museum and its collections. Launching on 21st January, it will include thinkers who have challenged museums on their future direction, including Bénédicte Savoy, co-author of the Report on African Cultural Heritage and Simukai Chigudu, one of the founding members of the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. Ashmolean’s Director Xa Sturgis, will also speak about Powhatan’s Mantle, a now-unique survival from the Algonquian-speaking people. He says “today, it’s displayed not in the context of those people who made it… but rather, of the white Europeans who collected it…For museums to evolve, for museums to engage directly with as many visitors as possible, we have to, I think, face some of these problems full on.” Ashmolean, M + H

Events

Museums, Health and Wellbeing Summit

MuseumNext’s ‘Museums, Health and Wellbeing Summit’ will look at how museum programming can combat social isolation and reduce stress as the pandemic continues. An international mix of speakers come from institutions including The Met, National Galleries Scotland, Jewish Museum London and National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. The event takes place online from 31st January – 2nd February. Tickets are £120 per person, with reductions for students (£25) and freelances (£60), and £240 for a group ticket. MuseumNext

Climate Loss and Damage: what can’t be prevented, what can be restored?

The second webinar in the Creative Climate Justice series from Julie’s Bicycle focuses on loss and damage – which kinds can’t be prevented and those that can be restored. The talk takes place on 1st February from 11am – noon and tickets are free. Julie’s Bicycle
Cultural Heritage Data School - create, visualise and analyse digital archives and collections

Cambridge Digital Humanities is holding a Cultural Heritage Data School, an online intensive application-only teaching programme bringing together participants from the wider Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector and academia to explore the methods used to create, visualise and analyse digital archives and collections. The curriculum will be structured around the digital collections and archives pipeline, covering the general principles and applied practices involved in the generation, exploration, visualisation, analysis and preservation of digital collections and archives. The school runs in daily sessions from 1.30 - 4pm from 2nd – 15th March. The deadline for applications is 30th January. Fees for successful applicants are £245 standard rate and £45 concessions. Contact dataschool@cdh.cam.ac.uk with any queries. Cambridge Digital Humanities

Standing out in the crowd: a beginner’s guide to social media strategy

Digital Culture Network is holding a one hour webinar on creating a social media strategy, for those revising a current channel or creating a new one, with advice on auditing your current strategy, creating content pillars and building a presence that does not get lost in the crowd. The event is on 2nd February from 2pm, tickets are free. DCN

Creative Coalition Conference 2022

Creative UK (the organisation now merged from the Creative Industries Federation and Creative England) has announced its Creative Coalition Conference 2022. It will bring together speakers from across sectors including V&A East Director Gus Casely-Hayford, comedian Ruby Wax and artist Sir Steve McQueen, and will address important sector issues from climate to issues of bullying, alongside workshops and discussion of what to expect from 2022. The event takes place online on 1st – 3rd February and is free. Creative UK, Creative UK (overview blog)

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy launches new learning options with FutureLearn

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy is launching a new series of courses on the MOOC platform FutureLearn, beginning with ‘Essentials in Arts Fundraising’ from 17th January. Courses are free if completed within a given timeframe. FutureLearn, Arts Fundraising

British Museum – Museum Futures Summit

The British Museum’s ‘Museum Futures Summit’ will explore a decade of work supported by the NLHF Skills for the Future fund, which developed paid entry-level training opportunities aimed to increase the diversity of the cultural heritage sector. The event will welcome past and current trainees, as well as the staff who develop and deliver training programmes. The event will also cover other paid entry routes into the sector – including apprenticeships, internships, and other funded programmes for early-career training across cultural heritage. There will be a mixture of case study presentations, panel conversations, participatory sessions, workshops and networking time. Send proposals for presentations or discussion topics to UKpartnerships@britishmuseum.org. The event will take place via Zoom on 8th March. Museum Futures

Conferences on Digital Asset Management and Heritage Collection Management

Henry Stewart Events will be hosting its second DAM and Museums online event on February 2nd. The event will explore how a Digital Asset Management system is becoming the creative link between technology and art, and will include case studies from the industry’s leading experts, alongside networking with more than 2,000 galleries, libraries, archives and museums professionals. It will be followed by its inaugural sister event, Heritage Collection Management on February 3rd, which will explore the GLAM technology landscape and the evolving strategy around collections management technology. Tickets are free for all GLAM and non-profit professionals. Henry Stewart, (DAM), Henry Stewart, (Collections Management)
Career development and research

Museum Lab 2022 – making connections between Africa and Europe

Museum Lab 2022 supports professional changes between curators, researchers and leaders in museums and galleries in Europe and Africa. Its programme aims to change museums, and address pressing issues from social justice to climate change. Work centres around Cape Town and Berlin, with partners also including National Museum Wales. A programme of teaching and residencies runs to September 2022. The deadline for applications is 23rd January. [AIM, Museum Lab]

Paul Mellon Centre offers funded study opportunities in British Art History

The Paul Mellon Centre is offering three generously funded opportunities for students and researchers in British Art History through its ‘New Narratives’ awards. The programme aims to support students and researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds while developing a dynamic community of writers and thinkers with new perspectives on British art and visual culture of all periods. Options include an MA/MPhil, Doctoral Scholarship and Early Career Fellowship, with support to cover fees and living costs of £32k - £35k. Applications are open from 17th January- 28th February. [PMC (Early Career), PMC (Doctoral Scholarship), PMC (MA/MPhil)]

Covid-19 support funds

Additional £30m for the Cultural Recovery Fund in England

The Treasury and DCMS have made additional support available through the Cultural Recovery Fund in the light of the new omicron wave. This consists of:

- An additional £30m for the latest round of Emergency Response Support for organisations in immediate financial needs, with the ‘permission to apply’ deadline extended to noon on 18th This brings the total fund to £60m. [ACE]
- £1.5m towards funds for freelancers across the arts, including £200k open to visual arts workers through the Arts Information Company. [ACE]

[ACE (twitter signposting to all support avenues), Gov.uk, DCMS (Sunak announcement), ACE (blog)]

Business grants applicable to some museums and tourist attractions in England

The Government has also announced two further new business support grants for England:

- The Additional Restrictions Grant is provided by local councils and allows them to support businesses severely impacted by the coronavirus restrictions when most needed. [Gov.uk]
- The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant, for businesses most likely to be impacted by the Plan B omicron restrictions. [Gov.uk]
- There is also an overview of the full £1bn new package of support for businesses. [Gov.uk]

Scottish Government’s £65m new pandemic support for culture includes £1.7m for museums

The Scottish Government has announced a new £65m support package for culture and events. It is giving:

- £32.5m for cultural businesses and grassroots venues.
- £2m for performing companies, including to cover Christmas losses.
- £10m for freelancers, now open through Creative Scotland’s Cancellation Fund, with £500 - £2k available per applicant.
- £19.8m for the events sector.
- £1.7m for museums, galleries and heritage

This support is additional to £20m in business support funding for culture and events announced on 14th December. [Scottish Government, Creative Scotland (freelance fund)]
£5.25m Welsh Government Winter Stability Fund includes support for museums

The Welsh Government has announced £5.25m in emergency support for museums, libraries and independent cinemas facing either the risk of closure or job losses, through its new Winter Stability Fund. This is in addition to £60m already announced for businesses facing new restrictions in Wales. The fund covers the operating period of 1st October 2021 – 31st March 2022. It opens on 12th January with a deadline of 5pm on 26th January. [Welsh Government]

Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage Organisations in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Covid Recovery Programme for Heritage Organisations aims to reduce or remove heritage organisations’ financial operating deficits which have arisen as a result of the pandemic in 2021-22. Grants of £2k - £50k are available, with some grants over £50k in exceptional circumstances. The deadline for applications is noon on 28th January. There are also grants for individuals of up to £2k. [Museums Journal (scroll to bottom), NLHF]

Other funds open for applications

Let’s Create Jubilee Fund opens for community partnerships with museums and artists

ACE has opened the Let’s Create Jubilee Fund, which offers support to create events in celebration of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in June. Voluntary and community organisations can seek £750 - £10k to work with artists and cultural organisations, including museums on a broad range of creative activity. ACE said “we want this funding to help create events that celebrate this unique national moment in a way that sparks the imagination of people across the country, drawing on the creative talent and ideas of the many different cultures and communities throughout England. We hope that these events will not only be wonderful creative celebrations, but will also build lasting relationships between community organisations and the artists and cultural organisations in their neighbourhoods.” The application portal opened on 4th January – all applicants will hear the outcome by April. The Platinum Jubilee website has also launched outlining plans including tree planting, beacon lighting and street parties. [ACE (twitter), UK Community Foundations, ACE (blog), Platinum Jubilee (event website)]

Royal Society Places of Science scheme offers £3.5k to small museums

The Royal Society has opened a new round of its Places of Science scheme, which offers grants of up to £3.5k to small museums, to help them create projects telling stories of science and scientists in ways relevant to their community. It is especially keen to fund projects that explore under-represented people, are led by organisations that don’t usually feature scientific content, involve partners to enhance outcomes, and reach audiences who are not deeply engaged with science. Applicants are encouraged to get in touch with the Royal Society’s public engagement team for a chat before submitting an application. The deadline for applications is 16th February. [Royal Society, M + H, Museums Journal]

ACE Place Partnership Projects – make a step change in creativity opportunity from villages to cities

ACE has launched Place Partnerships project funding – a strand of National Lottery Project Grants which offers over £100k for work which makes a step-change in cultural opportunity in towns, villages and cities across England. There is no upper limit to the fund, but there would need to be exceptionally strong reasons for support over £1m. Guidance gives examples of the sorts of projects that might be funded - for example a local authority, cultural organisations and businesses in a rural setting developing better arts provision to encourage more young people to stay in the area. NPOs can apply for these project grants, with some restrictions. There is a rolling application process, likely to take 24 weeks from the initial Expression of Interest. [ACE]
NMHF Covid-19 Response Fund especially keen for applications from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland

The National Heritage Memorial Fund’s Covid-19 Response Fund is distributing £40m for heritage assets which are of outstanding national importance and at risk due to the impact of Covid-19. The fund will cover costs including acquisition, transport, conservation and packaging, investment to resolve conservation backlogs, condition surveys, professional fees and ownership transition costs. It will also support organisational development and skill-building to support asset transfer, including business planning support. As it is a fund of last resort, applicants should also describe where else they have tried to gain funding. The Fund is open to all four UK countries, and with a healthy bunch of applications from England, it is now particularly keen to hear from applicants in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is open until April 2023, and accepts rolling applications with no deadline.

New AIM fund offers up to £8k for conservation grants to smaller and non-accredited museums

AIM is partnering with the Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust to offer new conservation grants to local authority, independent and non-accredited museums which have struggled to access other support. Up to £8k per applicant is available from the AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day grants, from a total pot of nearly £50k. Applicants must be AIM members, and the deadline is 31st January.

Awards

Dinant sur Meuse, 1839, J M W Turner. Showing at the Laing Art Gallery as part of the ongoing ‘Newcastle in Watercolour’ exhibition. Courtesy of TWAM.
Art Fund seeks Museum of the Year 2022

The Art Fund is seeking applications for Museum of the Year 2022. It is especially keen to hear from organisations whose achievements tell the story of creativity and resilience in the sector, focusing on engaging audiences now and in the future in ways that can be sustained. It welcomes applications from museums, galleries and historic houses of all sizes. The process is simple and based around three questions:

- What did you do in the last year which showed imagination and creativity?
- How did this make a difference?
- How will you sustainably build on this in the future?

The 2022 judging panel, chaired by Art Fund Director Jenny Waldman, will include IWM Director Diane Lees, artist Harold Offeh and two others to be announced. The winner will receive £100k and four other finalists will receive £15k. A shortlist of five museums will be announced in early May and the winner in July. Art Fund, Museums Journal

V&A schools problem-solving design project among winners of Art Explora Award

Winners have been announced for the second year of the Art Explora – Académie des beaux-arts European Award, which encourages institutions to reach new and wider audiences. V&A was among four winners for its `V&A Innovate` project, which invites school children to work in design teams of 4 - 6 to solve a real world problem. Other €50k prizes went to Musée d’Ixelles Brussels for ‘Museum at Home’ and Monnaie de Paris for ‘The senses of memory’ a digital, multi-sensory museum guide kit on the history of coin minting, aimed at older people with care needs. The €10k Audience Choice Award went to Musée du Louvre-Lens for ‘the participative exhibition’, organised with a group of disadvantaged young people. Art Explora also runs a year-round international programme with interests including art in nursing homes and art history programmes run with Sorbonne University. V&A (Innovate), Art Explora

Digital Culture Network invites votes on its first awards

ACE’s Digital Culture Network has published a shortlist of excellent digital projects from 2021 for its first awards celebrating innovation in digital and tech. Categories include digital storytelling and digital inclusion – where people are invited to vote for their favourites by 14th January. There are also awards for social, content creation, income generation, data, digital trailblazer organisation and emerging digital leader. Winners will be announced at a virtual event on 20th January. DCN

Four winners announced for Activist Museum Awards

Four organisations and individuals have received a £1k Activist Museum Award from the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester’s School of Museum Studies. Projects include a two-day event from the Museum of Homelessness ‘Leave our Neighbours Alone – how to beat the hostile environment’ and work at the People’s History Museum with campaigning organisations to raise awareness of the impact of the Nationality and Borders Bill. Digital Story Studio Fast Familiar and arts educator Jean Campbell also received awards. Museums Journal

European Museum of the Year nominees announced

60 nominees have been announced for the European Museum of the Year Award 2022. Four UK museums have been shortlisted: Aberdeen Art Gallery, The Box, Plymouth, the National Maritime Museum and the Science Museum for ‘Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries’. The winner of the related Council of Europe Museum Prize 2022 has already been announced as Nano Nagle Place, a museum and community hub in a working convent in Cork, Ireland, which has a programme including work with asylum seekers and refugees. Museums Journal, European Forum (nominees in detail), Museums Journal, (Nano Nagle Place)
Rethinking histories of slavery and empire

‘This statue, in this city, in this time’ - Colston Four found not guilty of criminal damage

Four protestors who helped pull down the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol in June 2020 have been found not guilty following a jury trial, dividing political and public opinion. One of the four, Rhian Graham told The Guardian “I keep hearing that this case is a green light for pulling down statues. But it’s not – it’s about this statue, in this city, in this time.” Another, Sage Willoughby, said that the result was “a victory for Bristol, a victory for racial equality and it’s a victory for anybody who wants to be on the right side of history.” The prosecution argued that removing the Grade II listed statue was criminal damage, and that Colston’s involvement in the slave trade was irrelevant. By contrast the defence made Colston’s leading role in the Royal Africa Company a central part of its argument, pointing to his wealth generated through the enslavement of 84,000 people, 19,000 of whom died. The historian David Olusoga, who was a witness for the defence, afterwards put the verdict in the context of a worldwide re-evaluation of the past. He says “in the months since the murder of George Floyd millions of people across the world have examined their nations’ official histories, and the history lessons they were taught at school. They have discovered missing chapters, half-truths and lost connections between the crimes of then and the inequalities of now”.

However, many others have objected to the verdict: a YouGov poll showed that only 23% of the public thought that this was the right outcome, with 52% saying it was wrong, plus 25% who did not know. Conservative MP for Newark Robert Jenrick tweeted “we undermine the rule of law, which underpins our democracy, if we accept vandalism and criminal damage are acceptable forms of political protest. They aren’t. Regardless of the intentions.” Attorney General Suella Braverman said she was considering referring the verdict to the Court of Appeal. This would not overturn the verdict, or prevent a jury from acquitting for a similar charge in future, but would tighten the direction given to them by a judge. Shadow Attorney General Emily Thornberry said: “The Attorney General has a duty to uphold democracy, the rule of law and the sanctity of the jury system, not play political games when she doesn’t like the results.”

Analysing the outcome, legal commentators, including David Allen Green said that it does not set a legal precedent, and that it is part of the ‘rule of law’ that juries are independent of State prosecutors. Many are also unsurprised by the verdict, given a history of juries acquitting for protest-driven damage, on issues ranging from GM crops to arms manufacture and climate change. Writing in 2020, criminal barrister Matthew Scott predicted “my view is that, whatever direction a trial judge might give, it would be extremely difficult to find a jury with at least ten members willing to convict them for the destruction of a symbol of slavery.” Six other protestors involved in the fall of the statue were not taken to court but instead took part in a restorative justice programme. Meanwhile, an exhibition of the damaged Colston statue coupled with a public consultation on its future has recently closed at M Shed – its final destination will be shaped by the results of this in coming months. BBC, Guardian (Olusoga), Law and Policy Blog, Twitter (Jenrick), Twitter (Barrister blog), Barrister blog, Art Newspaper, Guardian (Suelia Braverman), YouGov, Secret Barrister, Bristol Museums (Colston exhibition archived online), Sun (‘verdict is outrageous vandalism’), Museums Journal, Guardian (protest timeline), Guardian (legal opinion), Evening Standard (Court of Appeal), Guardian (Rhian Graham)

National Trust lays out next steps for exploring country houses, colonialism and slavery

Speaking to The Guardian National Trust Director General Hilary McGrady has reflected on how the culture wars have affected its work – including personally receiving death threats which she says ‘come with the territory’. The Trust now has plans for building on the ‘first stage research’ of the Colonial Countryside report on slavery, colonialism and country houses to create a more multi-layered picture of the Trust’s properties. She said “the next step is, property by property, to ask if we need to do more research. And how would we weave that into the story so that we get a whole history of the place? It will take a long time, to be honest.” She added that nothing would be taken away from existing provision, and that the Trust remains delighted to welcome visitors who mainly want to walk around the garden and have a ‘lovely cup of tea’. The Trust has nearly recovered its pre-pandemic membership, and is diversifying from a ‘white, middle class, middle aged’ makeup, but wants to work to become more accessible, including across the socio-economic divide. Guardian

Also: The National Trust for Scotland has produced a new report ‘Facing Our Past’ which explores the legacies of slavery in Scotland. It intends to use the research to ‘expand on the stories that our
Open letter from Creative UK on Government support for Creative Higher Education

An open letter from Creative UK has been published in The Telegraph calling on the Government to support creative education as it puts plans in place for post-18 educational funding. Recently the Government announced funding cuts of 50% for arts subjects at university from £36m to £18m. The letter says that creative roles make up a significant proportion of the Shortage Occupation List, and that creative industries have potential to create 300,000 more jobs and generate £28bn for the economy by 2025. Creative higher education is essential to provide a pipeline of new talent. The letter is signed by over 90 institutions and prominent individuals, including Tate Director and NMDC Chair Maria Balshaw, former Education Secretary David Blunkett and Heritage Alliance Chief Executive Lizzie Glithero-West. Creative UK, Guardian (May 21)
Knitting space antennae: the case for valuing both arts and sciences in higher education

In an article for the FT John Gapper looks at whether creative subjects are being undervalued by Government, especially as it focuses on salaries of graduates by subject. Medicine, economics and law offer the most lucrative careers, with creative arts at the very bottom of the list. Nevertheless, creative industries were one of the largest contributors to the pre-pandemic economy at £115.9bn, behind only construction (£129.2bn) and finance and insurance (£124.9bn). Combining arts and science in new and creative ways can have surprising and future-shaping results. For example, Dean of Nottingham Trent University Michael Marsden says “the local newspaper had a dig at us for offering knitting as a degree course, but we have a professor here who did pioneering work for the European Space Agency on knitting satellite antennae.” Work Advance Director Lesley Giles says that Government should look beyond ‘narrow judgements’ on short term earnings for creatives as “In a more agile and dynamic economy, we need the creative skills that enable people not to be replaced by robots.” Creative UK’s Caroline Norbury agrees that it is time for a rethink, countering nostalgia in politicians for well-paid manual industries. She adds “we are still fighting decades of prejudice about arts being for a privileged few. The reality is that a school leaver is far more likely to have a sustainable career in games than as a vehicle panel beater.” FT

Whitworth launches ‘Bags of Creativity’ and shop which saves creative art materials from landfill

The Whitworth has launched new ‘Bags of Creativity’ containing craft materials and interesting objects for families to pick up for use in the gallery, or to take home. With a suggested donation of £2.50 per bag, to support Whitworth’s schools, wellbeing and community work, each is full of recyclable and reusable materials. Whitworth has recently also opened a Shop of Creativity which sells low cost, affordable creative art materials that would otherwise be destined for landfill, supplied by Leeds Scrap Store. Whitworth (bags), Whitworth (shop)

School trips from Europe now more likely to head to Ireland than the UK

There is further evidence that school trips from Europe to the UK have collapsed for the coming season, as the effects of Covid-19 restrictions are compounded by Brexit. The UK’s decision not to accept EU group passports or identity cards is believed to be central. One German operator told The Guardian “about 4% of all pupils in Germany are not EU nationals. They can’t afford a visa. Teachers don’t like to leave them at home so are choosing other destinations”. A French company said that its enquiries for UK trips had fallen 80% for the coming year, compared with a pandemic-driven decline in enquiries about Ireland of only 40%. With a million schoolchildren previously taking these trips in a typical year, operators argue that the changes will deprive attractions of visitors, and undermine soft power connections. Morag Anderson of the British homestay company ETSUK said “give me a child at 12 years old on a school trip to the UK and I give you a future higher education student, employee, researcher, entrepreneur, tourist – with family and friends… And a future parent, encouraging a future child to travel, work and study in the UK. Once this cycle is interrupted, there is no going back.” Guardian

Museum Youth Group Directory – add your museum

Kids in Museums has launched a Museum Youth Group Directory and map, listing venues across the UK, and a description of their offer to young people. Museums are invited to submit information about their group via a simple form. A museum youth group can include youth panels, forums, young volunteer programmes and other regular opportunities for young people to get involved with a museum or heritage site. Kids in Museums

Live streaming to primary schools – a short guide

Culture24’s Digital Pathways programme has published a new short guide to live streaming to primary schools. It includes insights into popular topics (including Romans, the Great Fire and prehistory) and motivations – including the enjoyment of live, interactive events without having to leave the classroom. Live streams can also help museums overcome barriers of geography, reaching schools hundreds of miles away, and can cope with much larger audiences of potentially thousands for some broadcasts. Digital Pathways
Collections

Export bars: a prince as midshipman, a high status 17th century Black lady, earliest surviving longcase clock

- A temporary export bar has been placed on Allegorical Painting of Two Ladies, painted around 1650 in the English School style. The painting is rare for the time in depicting a black and white woman side by side, presented as equals with similar dress, hair and jewellery. It is valued at £272.8k, and an export bar is in place until 9th March with a possible three month extension. [uk](#)
- An 18th century painting of Prince William (later William IV) has received an export bar until 16th March 2022, and is valued at £314,880. Informal in style, it shows him wearing his midshipman’s uniform on the quarterdeck of the Prince George during the American Revolutionary War. [uk](#)
- The earliest surviving purpose-made longcase clock, dated to the reign of Charles II has also received an export bar to 13th It is valued at £3.009m including VAT. [Gov.uk](#)

Jobs

Posts being advertised on the NMDC jobs board this month include:

- [Collections Information Assistant - Horniman Museum & Gardens](#)
- [Heritage Painter/Decorator - Black Country Living Museum](#)
- [Back End Web Developer - British Library](#)
- [Learning Producer, Schools and Families - Science Museum Group (Manchester)](#)
- [Schools, Young People and Adults Lead - National Museums Liverpool](#)

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

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