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Members' news



The Desborough necklace, which is being loaned from the British Museum to the Manor House Museum in Kettering from September, funded by the Art Fund's Weston Loan programme.

Tate St Ives wins Museum of the Year

Tate St Ives has won the £100k Museum of the Year award for its 'breathtakingly beautiful' gallery extension. Artist Melanie Manchot, who was one of the judges, said "as soon as I walked into Tate St Ives I had an amazingly strong feeling that they're doing something innovative. I've visited before, but now the whole building, the galleries, the views, all feel different – they have been given a new lease of life. The extension has not so much been an addition as a complete reimagining." The gallery was closed for 18 months as the extension was carved out of the hillside. It includes a public garden on the roof, a learning centre and a huge gallery. The other finalists were Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, The Postal Museum, London, Glasgow Women's Library and Ferens Art Gallery in Hull. The Postal Museum persuaded Royal Mail to frank letters sent across the country with the Museum of the Year competition and the shortlisted museums. Adele Patrick, who works at the Women's Library tweeted "I love letters but today's mail made history. Each envelope in Britain franked @womenslibrary Big up @ThePostalMuseum". [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [FT](#)

Kakapos and an enormous fin whale on display as Cambridge Museum of Zoology reopens

Cambridge University Museum of Zoology has reopened with a £4m upgrade after being closed to the public for five years. Displays include a 21 metre, 150-year-old fin whale skeleton, taxidermied animals from koalas to kakapos and material brought back by Charles Darwin from the voyage of the Beagle, including his pet octopus. During the redevelopment process the museum also rediscovered rare items in its stores, including feathers labelled as belonging to the Moa: a three-metre-high flightless bird hunted to extinction in New Zealand 6 – 700 years ago. The museum is now undertaking genetic testing to confirm its identity. The new museum structure includes stores, a glass entrance hall, café and learning lab. Director Professor Paul Brakefield said the museum's role is "*inspiring awe and excitement in the natural world, as well as helping to answer genuinely world-changing challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.*" [BBC](#), [Department of Zoology](#), [Guardian](#), [Varsity](#)

Goat herders with iPhones: Horniman's new gallery captures a changing world

Created with £4.7m in funding, five years' work and over 200 community consultations, the Horniman's new World Gallery has now opened. The densely packed exhibition shows 3000 objects from the Horniman's 80,000 strong anthropology collection. It captures changing times, with the warm jacket of a Tibetan goat herder displayed beside an iPhone acquired in the area. Mobile technology is now vital to nomads for sharing information about the state of Himalayan pastures. The galleries also describe how, in the Americas, historic Native American warrior societies re-emerged and became part of the Civil Rights movement. Director Nick Merriman says "*The Horniman curators have always been very rooted in the community, whether it's a community in Venezuela or in Lewisham.*" [Art Newspaper](#), [Horniman](#), [Guardian](#)

RAF museum relaunches telling human story of conflict

The RAF museum has relaunched following a £26m redevelopment. The new exhibition spaces emphasise the human story of the RAF, with objects including a Second World War pilots lucky teddy bear and a display about Noor Inayat Khan, the first Muslim woman to be awarded the George Cross. The displays also confront the ethical dilemmas of warfare, with a 'debate space' with a giant touchscreen posing questions such as 'the moral cost of killing with drones is too great. Do you agree?' *Telegraph* journalist Tristram Fane Saunders comments "*this museum is an educational experience like no other. It's free to visit, and it should be compulsory.*" [ALVA](#), [RAF museum](#), [Telegraph](#)

Designs revealed for East London's £1.1bn Olympic Park

Designs have been released for the £1.1bn Olympic Park now being re-developed in East London. They include a design for the V&A's second London building which is inspired by the dresses of Spanish couturier Cristóbal Balenciaga. [BBC](#), [Evening Standard](#)

Museums for social good and wellbeing

Creating a 'new enlightenment': report on strengthening Civic Museums

The English Civic Museums Network (ECMN) has published a new report 'The Future of Civic Museums: A Think Piece'. It explores the qualities of and challenges to civic museums and asks relatively radical questions about how they might rethink current practice. Report author Peter Latchford from Black Radley Ltd argues that to survive, civic museums must see themselves as part of the wider ecology that surrounds them, building a sense of place, rather than caring for collections in splendid isolation. Issues raised include:

- Civic museums face a funding crisis which is starker than the one facing museums in general. English Civic Museums Network members typically have 80% of income coming from grants, with 75% coming from local authority funds. The average reduction of this funding was 30% over the last five years. Many have faced significantly greater reductions.
- They have found it hard to respond resiliently to these challenges, partly through being constrained by local authorities which rarely offer the freedom of governance to develop the more agile, entrepreneurial models that will be necessary for survival.
- However, museums themselves must change, including looking again at existing models of staffing as well as widening skillsets.
- Caring for collections and buildings can be all-consuming, but this is no longer a sufficient offer in an age flooded with sources of information. Instead, collections must act as building blocks towards telling relevant stories and creating a sense of place.
- Museums also need to ask hard questions about existing collections practice: for example, is it always wrong to sell some collections items for financial gain to reinvest in the sustainability of the museum if they are not contributing to the museum's central aims?
- A new generation of philanthropists is needed, coming from a new appeal to the 55% of the public who define themselves as middle class. This is only likely to be effective if museum buildings and collections generate a grounded sense of place and community.

The report concludes that there is a growing sense that society needs a 'new enlightenment'; the good news is that civic museums are well placed to deliver this, offering the health, wellbeing and happiness benefits that flow from a connected community with a shared sense of place. Responding to the report, ECMN member and NMDC Vice-Chair Iain Watson, Director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, said "*museums are significant civic institutions, and they can also play an increasingly important role in civil society. Peter Latchford's report provides challenges to museums and their funders. It highlights some uncomfortable truths and suggests how we can adapt to meet the changing needs of society.*" [NMDC](#) (to download full report)

Oral evidence begins on the social impact of participation in culture and sport

The Parliamentary Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee has begun to hear oral evidence about the social impact of participation in culture and sport. The first witnesses were Darren Henley, Chief Executive of ACE and Deborah Williams, Executive Director of the Creative Diversity Network, speaking alongside John Herriman, Chief Executive of Greenhouse Sports, which uses sport to change the lives of young people in London. The conversation returned several times to the need for collaboration, both across Government departments, between sport and the arts, and among many small charities and cultural bodies which may be trying to achieve the same thing, but which do not easily pool anecdotes or data. However, there are some examples of cross-departmental working in Government, for example between BEIS and DCMS on creative industries, and the Department for Education and DCMS on music education. Darren Henley said that ACE is developing new approaches to data gathering:

- It is about to recruit an economist for the first time, so that the body can "*make economic arguments that are very powerful and make them in an economist's terms*".
- It is creating a 25 year talent plan, which means tracking young people across the whole process of growing up from birth to young adulthood. Henley commented "*one of the things we noticed was that Government funding is in cycles—three, four, five years—but obviously people do not live their lives in Government budget cycles. They live their lives as lives. What we are doing there is taking a large group of children every year and working to make these interventions in their lives all the way through. We are going to evaluate it all the way through and look at the differences that it has made in those young people's lives, because we believe in it very*"

passionately but, as we heard earlier, some of the data has not been there.”

- ACE has created cultural educational partnerships across the country, so that organisations delivering similar work can talk to each other and also have more effective conversations with local and national Government. Deborah Williams added that the Creative Diversity Network performs the same service for broadcast.

[Parliament.uk](#) (full transcript), [Arts Professional](#), [The Stage](#), [Creative Diversity Network](#), [Greenhouse Sports](#),

Also: Nesta, which has also sent a written submission to the Inquiry, has blogged about the evidence gathered by its Arts Impact Fund. Since 2015, it has invested in 20 arts and culture organisations delivering positive social change in communities. Stories emerging from the Fund's work include mural art training as an alternative to custody for young offenders and the power of ballet for people with learning disabilities. [Nesta](#)

Museums as spaces for wellbeing: ACE funded online course

The National Alliance for Museums, Health & Wellbeing has launched a free online course 'Museums as spaces for wellbeing', funded by Wellcome and Arts Council England. It is made up of six online modules, covering issues including co-creation, impact and organisational change. [Museums and Wellbeing Alliance](#)

Soft power and international relations

British Council's international survey finds museums are among the most trusted UK institutions

The British Council has been researching how much trust the citizens of a range of countries place in the UK. Its report 'The value of trust: How trust is earned and why it matters' found that:

- Among people who had participated in the British Council arts and cultural programmes (including learning English) 75% said they trusted the UK, compared to 49% who had not. Those participating in UK cultural activity run by organisations other than the British Council averaged between those two poles, with 64% expressing trust.
- The report breaks down international trust levels by different aspects of UK society – ranging from fair government to rule of law, diversity and welcoming attitude. When measured from this perspective, museums and cultural institutions average the second highest level of trust at 67%, second only to universities and academic research (70%). Few measures scored below 50%, but only 41% believe the UK contributes a fair share to development in poorer countries.
- Those who expressed trust were almost twice as likely to want to do business with the UK (8% vs 14%)
- Trust in the UK also varies by country: it has increased in China, India and Saudi Arabia and has declined significantly in Brazil, Russia and Turkey. (In Turkey, British Council contact has a larger effect than in any other country – participants are 57% more likely to trust the UK).
- There was a small but significant decline in the perception that the UK is 'open and welcoming' following the decision to leave the EU.

Alice Campbell-Cree comments *“it is often the qualities that we ourselves consider to be most fundamental to our society that are also the most important to international perceptions and trust in the UK. Upholding, investing in, and protecting these qualities is likely to have a positive impact on our international relationships, helping to secure future prosperity for the UK. Supporting and making the most of the organisations which earn trust for the UK worldwide will be critical to this.”* [British Council](#)

Smithsonian strengthens its ties with the University of Glasgow with a strategic partnership

The University of Glasgow and Smithsonian Institution in Washington have created a strategic partnership, building on a relationship which has evolved from a first collaboration in 1993. Their new agreement extends to work placements, internships and research collaborations and will involve using collections on themes from antiquities to science. The Smithsonian cares for 154 million objects across 19 museums and nine research centres and is the largest institution of its kind in the world. [Museums Journal](#)

Also: The British Museum has reignited its relationship with Zayed National Museum in the United Arab Emirates, in an agreement including object loans and renaming a gallery at the BM after the founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The gallery will describe how farming began in the Middle East and spread to Europe. [Art Newspaper](#)

CIF lobbies on Brexit and artistic freedom of movement

The Creative Industries Federation has continued to lobby government about Brexit, calling for the UK to remain in the Customs Union and Single Market, and highlighting the importance of rapid freedom of movement for creative freelancers across the continent. Alex Beard, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House said that roughly 12 times a year ROH needed to bring in a replacement creative at a day's notice, and that delays risked the cancellation of performances. [Creative Industries Federation](#)

Funding



The Becket Casket, which is being loaned by the V&A to Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery for its Treasures exhibition, opening 25th August and funded by the Art Fund's Weston Loan programme.

Cultural Development Fund offers £20m for towns and cities in England

The Government has fulfilled one of the commitments in its Industrial Strategy by launching a £20m development fund to invest in culture. Rather than investing in a specific venue or artform, the fund will go to geographical locations, including cities and towns in rural areas. Areas can bid for sums from £3m - £7m to fund a slate of cultural projects that will help regeneration and create jobs. Projects could include bringing historic buildings back into use, redeveloping museums and galleries and making spaces for creative businesses. Arts Minister Michael Ellis said "*this fund gives more places the chance to harness the unique power of culture to regenerate communities, create jobs and boost tourism.*" The Government hopes that this approach will help smaller towns replicate the success of Hull, which has created 800 new jobs since 2013 on the basis of its year as City of Culture. Calls for expressions of interest run until 15th August. The full applications process is open from 9th September - 19th October. [Gov.uk](#), [ACE](#) (application process)

New £20m fund launching in July to develop community responses to loneliness

The Government, Big Lottery Fund and the Co-op Foundation have contributed towards new funds amounting to £20m to address loneliness in society. Charities and community groups will be able to bid for funding from July. The £11m 'Building Connections Fund' will 'make the most of local spaces, opening them up for community use'. Research shows that young as well as older people can suffer from isolation, and the fund aims to support improving social connections for people of all ages.

[Gov.uk](#)

Also: The Government is calling for evidence on its Loneliness Strategy, with a deadline of 20th July. [Gov.uk](#)

Art Fund offers £250k in the second round of the Weston Loan Programme

The second round of the Weston Loan Programme has opened, offering £250k to support loans from national museums to regional and smaller local authority museums. Each museum can apply for between £5 - £25k until 11th September, with successful applicants being announced in December. In the first year of the programme, the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund supported 13 museums to borrow major works of art. These include prints and drawings of the 'creator of modern circus' Philip Astley loaned from the V&A to Newcastle-under Lyme and Rembrandt's 'An Elderly Man as Saint Paul' (1659) loaned from the National Gallery to Cannon Hall Museum, Barnsley. The project has already had measurable impact. Rugby Art Gallery attracted 70% more visitors to its 'About Face' exhibition compared with previous shows. The exhibition included loans of self-portraits by Lucian Freud, Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi from the National Portrait Gallery. The programme will offer £750k in total over three years, including £100k in training opportunities for museum professionals. [Art Fund](#)

Also: Penny Bull, Senior Programmes Manager at Art Fund has written about the importance of enabling more people to see objects from national collections and the success of various partnerships between national and non-national museums across the country. [Apollo Magazine](#)

Building an endowment fund: learning from the HLF Catalyst programme

From 2012 onwards HLF and DCMS ran an experimental programme to help cultural organisations build endowment funds to make them 'more resilient and less reliant on public funding'. The pilot programme offered between £500k and £5m in match funding to organisations seeking to raise money from philanthropists. By the end of the programme two thirds of the 31 participating organisations had reached their funding targets, raising £53.3m in private investment leveraged by £29.8m of HLF match funding. Dr Beth Breeze has written a final evaluation of the work, which also contains useful information on donor behaviour and explains 'how any charitable organisation can assess its readiness to embark on building or growing an endowment'. The report found that getting funding for endowments can be harder than funding more immediate projects, nevertheless most organisations involved in the pilot intend to continue fundraising. The Bowes Museum, which had a positive experience raised £600k in six months when an individual donor offered to double any gifts – then these donations were doubled again by museum Friends and again, in turn, by HLF. Director Adrian Jenkins said "*This gave us a really compelling marketing campaign because we were able to say 'if you give us £1, it will become £10 immediately. If you give us £10, it will become £100.'*" Not all Catalyst successes drew from relatively wealthy individuals. At the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich an overhaul to its approach to fundraising led to a tripling of gifts through donation boxes, raising £500k. [M+H](#)

Fact sheets and short films: Museums and Galleries Tax Relief

ACE has published a series of fact sheets and six short films to guide venues through the Museums and Galleries Tax Relief. Although the conditions have been published for some time, the new resources offer a more accessible route through the detail. [ACE](#)

Better data aids US arts philanthropy

Inside Philanthropy has assessed changes in philanthropy in the US, where business traditionally gives more in arts sponsorship and is estimated to give around \$1bn in 2018. Whereas in the past many major donors have given based on gut instinct, some like Bloomberg Philanthropies have recently invested heavily in tracking data. In a saturated job market business is also supporting the arts to create a more attractive working environment and because aesthetic experiences at work produce 'enhanced performance in product design, brand naming, and problem solution generation'. [Inside Philanthropy](#)

ACE publishes a guide to lawful fundraising

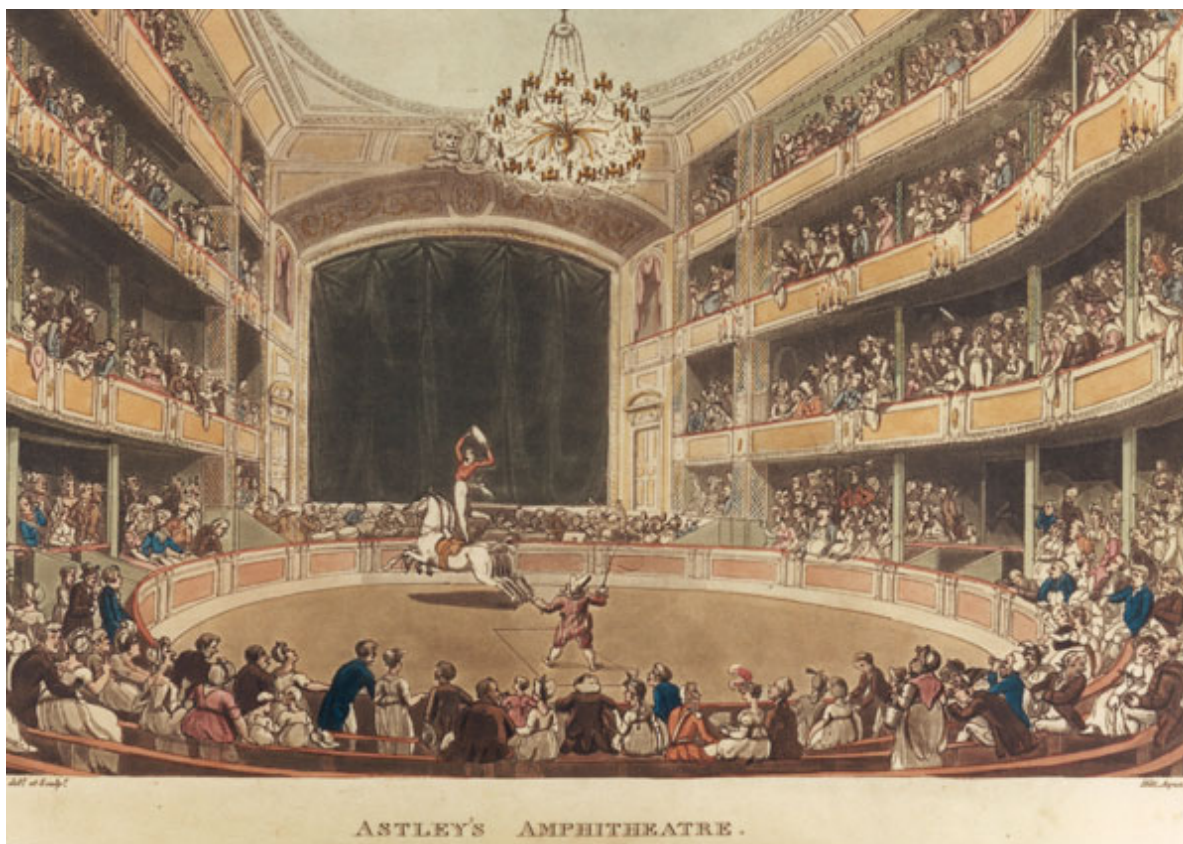
Many arts organisations and museums are now diversifying their income streams and seeking more philanthropic giving; but simultaneously rules about how personal data can be used are tightening. ACE has published 'A Practical Guide to Lawful Fundraising' to help cultural bodies navigate potential conflicts. It includes practical scripts that an organisation might use at the point of collecting data by telephone and online. It particularly raises the issue of 'wealth screening', including areas where the law is still unclear. There are 'finely balanced' examples such as whether it is acceptable to screen supporters against the Forbes Rich List, or use postcodes as an indicator of wealth. It also explores social media grey areas such as using Facebook and Twitter custom audience tools for fundraising, which might be problematic if these analyse and extend data without consent. The guide is pragmatic, but suggests cultural organisations seek advice in some circumstances. [ACE](#)

Also: The public has taken a strong interest in GDPR legislation with complaints to the Information Commissioners Office doubling in the first month of enforcement. There has also been a spike in businesses declaring data breaches; the new legislation has underlined that this must be done promptly. [Guardian](#)

ICOM UK travel grants open for applications

ICOM UK, with support from the British Council, is offering travel grants to support museum professionals to develop mutually beneficial international projects and partnerships for their organisations. The grants enable recipients to undertake an international visit to meet with colleagues and share skills, expertise and experience. The next deadline is 24 September for travel before 11 February 2019. [ICOM UK](#)

Events



One of six prints, drawings and engravings associated with Philip Astley, the creator of modern circus, and now showing at Brampton Museum, Newcastle-under-Lyme. The images are on loan from the V&A as part of the Art Fund's Weston Loan programme.

Museums and digital memory: from creation and curation to digital preservation

The British Museum's 2018 National Programmes Conference will focus on the theme of 'digital' with an emphasis on preservation. The day will explore both the exciting outward-facing side of digital technology in museums, and the back-of-house side that can often get overlooked. It asks, if museums are memory institutions, how can they plan to retain all the digital memory being created? Tickets are free, but booking is essential. The event takes place at The British Museum on 3rd September. [British Museum](#)

Transformers influence course for social change through museums

The MA is offering a course for those interested in the social power of museums, who want to develop community partnerships and seek to encourage change in museums themselves. The events take place on three days in a six-month period from late September to mid-March. Freelancers as well as museum employees are welcome to apply. Tickets are £150, which includes a year's membership of the MA. [Museums Journal](#)

Creative Industries Federation second International Summit

The Creative Industries Federation is hosting its second International Summit with topics including the future of the creative workforce, global challenges from environment to migration, new consumers and soft power. The event takes place on 9th October at the Barbican. Tickets are £80 for CIF members, £400 for non-members and free to journalists. [CIF](#)

Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference

The annual Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference is a partnership between the National Archives and Research Libraries UK. This year the theme will be 'memory and transformation', with panels exploring themes ranging from memory institutions and material narratives to digital memories and public reminiscence. Tickets are up to £228. The conference takes place at Birmingham Conference Centres from 19th – 21st November. [DCDC](#)

Museums+Tech 2018: the collaborative museum

This year, the Museums Computer Group conference, Museums + Tech is on the topic of the collaborative museum. It will address how a participatory approach can create higher quality content, bring new audiences and provide important learning experiences for staff and institutions. There will also be a chance to network with an international audience. Limited early bird tickets are £99 for members (joining MCG is free). There are also tickets at £47.50 for students and unemployed people. The event takes place on 19th October at the National Gallery. [MCG](#)

Consultations and surveys



This painting by Lucian Freud is among the self-portraits loaned from the National Portrait Gallery to Rugby Art Gallery & Museum for its About Face exhibition which closed in June. This was supported by the Art Fund's Weston Loan programme. Museums can now apply for the second round.

Heritage Lottery Fund Policy Directions consultation

As a Lottery distributor and public body, HLF must take into account Policy Directions issued by ministers when making funding decisions. These are now being revised following the tailored review of HLF in 2017. Government is now consulting on the revised directions and seeks responses by 11.45pm on 29th July. Four Policy Directions earmarked for revision relate to greater innovation in funding models, a greater commitment to fund heritage at risk, an emphasis on digital skills and better utilisation of data. [Gov.uk](#)

DCMS consults on data ethics and innovation

DCMS is consulting on the creation of a new Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. The Centre will help Government to champion the economic and social benefits of data and AI, technologies which increasingly permeate society, while preventing unintended consequences and addressing privacy issues. The consultation runs to 5th September. [Gov.uk](#)

Scotland publishes draft cultural strategy

The Scottish Government has published its draft cultural strategy and is now undertaking a period of further consultation. It covers topics including culture's relationship to issues from technology to poverty, low income, climate change and economic planning. The draft is scattered with questions as prompts to further feedback. Funds are also available to host discussion events around the strategy, please contact culturestrategy@gov.scot. The consultation closes on 19th September, with the final report due to be published later in the year. [Scottish Government](#) (draft strategy), [Scottish Government](#) (overview)

Durham Commission on Creativity in Education

The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education aims to support young people from birth to 25 in formal and informal education. It is a collaboration between ACE and Durham University. It is now seeking views about creativity from personal experience and professional practice. It asks questions about what helps with and limits creativity. The survey should no more than 15 minutes and is open until the end of July. [Durham University](#), [ACE](#)

Survey: sustainability of archaeological archives in museum storage

Historic England is carrying out a comprehensive survey of what museums charge for the transfer of archaeological archives, how they fix a fee and how those sums are subsequently used. It is seeking responses from all those involved in this process. [Swindon Museum & Art Gallery](#)

Culture and geography

Arts and museum engagement tracked by geographical area for the first time in a decade

Government data has revealed the level of arts attendance and participation across English local authorities for the first time in a decade. The 'Active Lives' survey collected data from 500 adults in each of 326 local authority areas. An interactive map shows engagement by geography, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity and gender. 70% of adults had visited a museum or watched or participated in the arts in the past year. The data shows that:

- Although London and the South East have the highest level of engagement overall, London also shows some of the widest differences from area to area. 92% in the City of London engaged last year, but only 55% in Barking and Dagenham.
- Women are more engaged than men, with 74% visiting a museum or arts event compared to 66% of men.
- The highest participation by age is among some of the oldest and youngest groups: 73% of 16 – 24 year olds and 72% of those aged 65 – 74. Attendance declines to 40% among the over 85s.

The data will be used by ACE to feed into its new ten year strategy, and to inform its Creative People and Places programme which builds arts in under-served areas. [Arts Professional](#)

The Hansard Society measures how geography affects people's sense of influence

The Hansard Society has carried out a new analysis of 15 years of its Audit of Political Engagement data to draw conclusions about which areas of the country are most strongly associated with a sense of power over the country's decision making. A majority believe they have 'no influence at all' in every region – but the percentage who believe they have some influence is around 25% in London, falling to less than 10% in Wales and around 12% in Scotland and the North East. These differences lessen but still persist when party affiliation and socio-economic factors are taken into account.

[Hansard Society](#)

Awards

Modernist textiles and conflict currencies: New Collecting Award winners announced

The Art Fund has announced the six winners in the fourth year of the New Collecting Awards, which help curators build their careers and receive mentoring while acquiring new collections for museums. Winners include Richard Kelleher, assistant keeper at the Fitzwilliam Museum, who receives £40k to collect currencies of conflict and dissent from the past 500 years. Independent curators Tiffany Boyle and Jessica Carden have been awarded £70k towards acquiring works by black artists which address gaps in Glasgow Museums' holdings and confront the city's involvement in the slave trade. Other winners will build collections representing emerging British artists, craft and design in modern London, Neo-Expressionist prints and modernist textiles. [Art Fund](#)

Marsh Awards for Palaeontology and Mineralogy

Three Marsh Awards are being offered for 'unsung heroes' who have made a major contribution to promoting palaeontology or mineralogy in the UK and abroad, and for the best Earth Sciences book of the year. Contributions could include website creation, collecting and donating to museums, conservation or artistic or technical innovation. The deadline for nominations is 1st November – prizes, including £1k for each winner, will be awarded at the Natural History Museum in mid-December. [NHM](#)

Kids in Museums Family Friendly shortlist

Kids in Museums has published the list of eleven museums shortlisted for its Family Friendly Award 2018. It includes large city museums such as the Whitworth, the Postal Museum and Leeds City Museums as well as rural and smaller museums like The Erewash Museum in Derbyshire and Yr Ysgwrn in Gwynedd. The latter is a turn of the 20th century farmhouse telling the story of Hedd Wynn and a generation killed in the First World War. In the next phase of the competition, 'undercover family judges' will visit each venue and report back. Winners will be announced later this year. [Kids in Museums](#), [M+H](#)

Appointments and honours

Ray Macfarlane has become Chair of Museums Galleries Scotland. [MGS](#)

Janet Vitmayer, former Chief Executive of Horniman Museum & Gardens has been made a dame in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to museums and diversity. [Arts Professional](#), [Horniman](#)

Collections

MP calls for national funding for Black Cultural Archives following the Windrush scandal

When it emerged that members of the Windrush generation had been deported from the UK with others at risk, Brixton's Black Cultural Archives stepped in to offer its building for legal advice sessions. Now local MP Helen Hayes is seeking national funding for BCA as 'the custodian of the history of black people in Britain'. She also led a debate in the House of Commons which led to the designation of June 22nd as Windrush Day, with £500k of Government money for commemorative events. [Arts Industry](#)

“They may be priceless or almost worthless in the future” acquiring historic ivory

The British Museum has accepted a gift of 500 ‘exquisite’ Chinese ivory figures, first collected in the early 20th century by Shanghai-based hotelier Sir Victor Sassoon. The acquisition is well within the ethical boundaries of the Ivory Bill, now passing through Parliament, as the collection is historic and of high cultural value. Director Hartwig Fischer said the British Museum ‘fully and unreservedly’ supports banning the ivory trade. The acquisition means that the museum may now become ‘a global centre for the study of ivories’. Although the objects themselves will continue to be of incalculable cultural value, Jane Portal, Head of the BM’s Asia Department said that financially ‘*they may be priceless or almost worthless in the future*’ in the light of changing legislation. [The Guardian](#)

A History of the North in 100 objects

A website has been launched featuring 100 objects from museums from across the North of England, which tell the story of the region. The project is part of the Great Exhibition of the North, which has now opened in Newcastle-Gateshead. Objects include the oldest surviving FA Cup in the world (in use from 1896 – 1910), industrial age vehicles including the PSS Wingfield Castle, a 14th century statue of St Christopher and the 1971 album ‘Astral Navigations’ released by Holymother Records. Among the oldest objects is the 692AD Codex Amiatinus from Jarrow, the most recent is Aikaterini Gegisian’s 2016 work ‘Memorial to Men of Steel’. The website encompasses the breadth of the cultural influence of the North, and a museum map encourages tourism to big and small museums. [100 objects north](#)

Also: The BBC has captured the opening of the Great Exhibition of the North in a number of programmes. [BBC](#), [BBC](#), [BBC](#) (3min on Stephenson’s Rocket), [GetNorth2018](#) (full programme)

Attenborough’s Picasso ceramics donated to Leicester museum

76 ceramics by Pablo Picasso owned by the late filmmaker Richard Attenborough and his wife Sheila have been given to New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. Many of the works were acquired by the Attenboroughs directly from the artist himself. Richard Attenborough was raised in Leicester and had a longstanding relationship with the museum, where the works have been on loan since 2007. [ACE](#)

Also: National Museum Wales and the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery have each received a painting by abstract artist Albert Irvine, part of a group of 15 given to the nation through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. [Welsh Government](#),

Museums among the collaborators in the first UK biobank

The first UK-wide biobank has opened, collecting and curating animal genetic material for conservation and research. The CryoArks Biobank is a collaboration which includes the Natural History Museum and National Museums Scotland, as well as zoos and universities. It is led by the Frozen Ark Project European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). Supported by £1m in funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the biobank will allow BBSRC’s scientists to search in one databank, instead of combing through separate collections. Tim Littlewood, head of Life Sciences at NHM said “*museums of the future will need more than just biological specimens preserved as pressed plants, pinned insects, skins and skeletons – although those things are important. Natural history collections are essential for providing baseline data against which change can be measured.*” [Museum Practice](#)

Education and Access

Children in Netherlands museums

Museums in the Netherlands have a particularly strong offering for children and young people. A new report by the Network of European Museum Organisations explores case studies from the country and looks at the reasons for success. There is a confluence of factors, including a commitment to cultural education across society and government, prizes and awards, including the Kidsproof Museum Prize, and governance models since the 1990s which have given museums more freedom and flexibility as well as making them more accountable. [NEMO](#)

Open Up: new resources for attracting diverse visitors to museums

Open Up Museums is a website of resources for museums wishing to broaden their audiences. There are case studies based on the experience of 12 pilot museums including Derby Museums Trust, Glasgow Women's Library, Museum of Cambridge and National Museums Liverpool. It describes the raft of measures that each venue has introduced and the results so far. There is also the option for more museums to sign up to the project, receive news and offer their own advice. The project is driven by AIM in collaboration with other major museum funders and bodies from all four UK countries. AIM Director Emma Chaplin said "*the whole museum sector has struggled to make itself attractive to visitors outside the groups that have traditionally come to museums. Research told us that AIM members knew this was a challenge that they needed support to address. The Open Up resources have been developed to help museums bring about the internal changes they need to make to start doing things differently and welcome new visitors to their museums.*" [Open Up Museums](#), [M+H](#)

Norfolk Museums Service receives £745k to reach young people

Norfolk Museums Service has received £745k from HLF's Kicking the Dust funding to reach young people across the county. NMS will now work with around 8,000 people aged 11 – 25, giving them a role in shaping heritage provision. Project partners include YMCA Norfolk and the Library Service. HLF's Heritage Ambassadors, who are a group of 16 – 25 year olds recruited from across the UK, had a major say in allocating the money. East Anglia Heritage Ambassador Hannah Keddie said "*it has been an amazing experience learning how grants are awarded, and helping HLF to allocate £10m to projects involving more young people in heritage. I'm really pleased that Norfolk Journeys has won funding, as we found its plans to involve young people in museum work and provide them with archaeological experience especially appealing.*" [Norfolk County Council](#)

Cultural youth get free passes to explore Europe

As part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage the EU has partnered with Interrail to offer 18,000 free passes for young Europeans turning 18 this year to explore Europe and immerse themselves in its culture. There will also be many cultural events taking place across the continent as part of the Year. The EU hopes the scheme will promote a 'European identity' and promote visits to cultural sites. [ALVA](#), [Europa.eu](#)

Developing the museum Lates scene in Northern Ireland

HLF has given £80k to the Northern Ireland Museums Council to develop a programme of Lates to 'reimagine the museum experience for people aged 18 – 30' and 'change the perceptions of what to expect from a museum in 2018'. The funding is part of a wider £500k investment in Northern Ireland's cultural heritage, including augmented reality, walking maps and guided tours. [HLF](#),

Also: The Museums at Night festival format, which is run by Culture24 in the spring and autumn across the UK, may be changed. The London segment will be replaced by an event called Latefest, taking place close to midsummer from 2019. It is not yet certain what will happen to Museums at Night in the rest of the country. Culture24 Campaigns Manager Nick Stockman said "*we are currently consulting with stakeholders about the options for the twice-yearly UK-wide Museums at Night campaigns from May 2019.*" [Museums Journal](#)

Arts GCSE and A Level entries continue to decline

Ofqual has published the number of students entered for GCSEs and A levels this summer, with data showing that exam entries in arts subjects continue to decline. Compared to 2017, only Art and Design saw a modest increase, with particularly steep falls in entries for Performing and Expressive Arts (down 40% at GCSE) and Design and Technology (down 24%). Averaged across arts subjects, there are 9% less entries at GCSE and a decrease of 4% at A level. [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

Mortal remains

Glasgow School of Art being partially dismantled after second devastating fire

On June 15th Glasgow School of Art was gutted in a major fire, just weeks before the completion of a £35m restoration project, which was itself initiated after a section of the School caught fire four years ago. The damage this time is much more serious and it is still uncertain whether the building can be saved for a second time. Unstable walls are currently being dismantled and some local residents cannot return to their homes because of the risk of collapse. Options include dismantling the building brick by brick and putting it back together 'like a jigsaw'. This approach has previously been used on very old buildings including the Acropolis and Dresden Frauenkirche, but has not been applied to 19th and 20th century structures, in part because of the expense. In the initial days Council leader Susan Aitken said "*certainly I think the consensus is that there is hope and we are certainly not writing off the Mackintosh building yet. Our intention, our focus will be to try and save that building and finding a future for it.*" The building may be added to a wider existing strategy to regenerate the surrounding area. Scottish Secretary David Mundell told Parliament "*the UK Government previously gave £10 million to rebuild the School after the last fire and we stand ready to help again. There was never any question about the need to rebuild and restore it when tragedy struck just four years ago. The situation is far worse after the weekend's fire, but I hope we can start with that aim in mind.*" There have been initial suggestions that restoration may cost £1 - 200m. More fortunately, archival material and almost all artworks were removed from the building in 2014 and are still in storage away from GSA. [Art Newspaper](#), [Dezeen](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Gov.uk](#), [Hansard](#) (GSA debate), [Museums Journal](#), [BBC](#) (jigsaw restoration), [BBC](#) (dismantling building)

Also: Elsewhere in Glasgow, the Willow Tea Rooms, also designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, have been restored to something very close to their original 1903 state and will reopen in early July, weeks after the 150th anniversary of Mackintosh's birth. [Atlas Obscura](#), [Willow Tea Rooms Trust](#)

Exit Plastic: Horniman and National Trust lead the sector

The Café at the Horniman Museum and Gardens has replaced single use plastics with plant-based, compostable products, making it more environmentally friendly. It has already replaced coffee cups, straws and sandwich bags with plant-based products, and is looking at alternatives to bottled water. The museum is also a member of Refill, which aims to make it easy and convenient to refill water bottles.

Meanwhile, the National Trust has announced ambitious but slightly longer-term plans to phase out the sale of all single-use plastics at shops and cafés at its properties by 2022. It has already eliminated plastic from its disposable cups and cutlery in favour of biodegradable products. It is also seeking alternatives to plastic in its plant sale areas. Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire has enthusiastically embraced the NT's policy and has blogged about the nuts and bolts of its changes – from eliminating sauce sachets to moving away from less environmentally friendly suppliers. [Refill](#), [National Trust](#), [Waddesdon Manor](#), [Scottish Government](#)

Hunterian Museum to consider the burial of Charles Byrne

Trustees of the Hunterian Museum will consider whether the skeleton of Charles Byrne, which has been displayed in the museum for many years, should be removed from display or buried, possibly at sea. Byrne, who was born in Ireland in 1761, and died at 22, probably due to his pituitary gigantism, which caused him to grow to 2.3m. Byrne reportedly told friends that he wished to be buried at sea to avoid his body being used for medical research, but his remains were nevertheless acquired by a surgeon and eventually came into the collections of the Royal College of Surgeons. Now the Hunterian will close for three years as a part of RCS's development and ethical questions about Byrne's skeleton will be discussed by Trustees. [Museums Journal](#)

Tech

AI in museums: from natural language processing to robots

The MuseumNext conference has been exploring how AI has become part of everyday life and entwined in museum processes. Museum technologist Sara Boutall described how machine learning and natural language processing are already being used to forecast visitor numbers or respond to queries. It is also a factor in creating dynamic pricing. More dramatically, the Smithsonian Institute is developing a 4ft robot called Pepper which can answer visitor questions, collect data, dance and play games. Boutall suggested that eventually museums will be expected to have the precognition of Amazon or Uber and be able to tailor a museum visitor's experiences to their known interests.

[ALVA](#)

Also: A digital art museum has opened in Tokyo with 50 interactive works which merge together, driven by 520 computers and 470 projectors. Toshiyuki Inoko, Founder of teamLab, which is a co-partner in the Mori Building Digital Art Museum said "*digital art has been liberated from the constraints of material substance... we immerse and meld ourselves into this unified world, we explore a new relationship that transcends the boundaries between people.*" [Smithsonian](#), [M + H](#)

Jobs

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

- [Trustees: Artist, Art Historian and Legal expert - National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [Museums Learning and Engagement Manager - Glasgow Museums](#)
- [Data Officer - Royal Albert Memorial Museum](#)
- [Picture Library Researcher - Museum of London](#)
- [Senior Corporate Development Manager - Science Museum](#)
- [Media Officer - The National Archives](#)
- [Microscopy Specialist - Natural History Museum](#)

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

And finally...

Abbeys reveal the social life (and elaborate frauds) of history

Two Abbeys have been having a once-in-several-centuries spring clean: Westminster Abbey because it has just opened a new museum space in its triforium, Bath Abbey because its stalls are being removed for restoration work. Fascinating objects have surfaced at both locations. At Westminster, finds include a hand-painted playing card from the 16th century, a medieval overshoe (for preserving fancier footwear in muddy London streets), late 17th century tobacco paper and post-war sweet wrappers, which may have been left in the space by BBC commentators covering Elizabeth II's coronation. More startlingly, Bath Abbey has turned up some 'devil coins' with 'civitas diaboli' inscribed upon them. These were part of a set planted in Scandanavia churches in the 1970s by a museum clerk, Knud Langkow as part of an elaborate hoax. His niece told the Danish press that Langkow wasn't a satanist but 'I think normality annoyed him'. [Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#), [Westminster Abbey](#),

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