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Stephenson Steam Railway opens Woodland Walk and Outdoor Learning Classroom. Photographs by Colin Davison. Stephenson Steam Railway is part of North East Museums.

NMDC news

Call for tenders - online climate resource

NMDC and AIM are seeking a consultant(s) to develop an online resource to help museums and heritage organisations identify practical guidance on environmental sustainability, and thus climate action, that best suits their situation. The project scope covers content research / curation (including developing categorisations or navigation through different existing resources), user journey recommendations, and engaging design elements. AIM and NMDC have been working with a consortium of sector organisations including Arts Council England, Museum Development, Historic England and Welsh Government to develop proposals, and envisage this work as a pilot for a potential larger project. There may also be a future commission to update the initial resource to ensure it is still capturing live and appropriate guidance. The closing date for tenders is 1 August 2025, with a budget of £10,000. [NMDC](#)

Members' news

Beamish, The Living Museum of the North wins Art Fund Museum of the Year

Congratulations to Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, which was named the 2025 Art Fund Museum of the Year on 26 June at a ceremony at the Museum of Liverpool. NMDC Board member Rhiannon Hiles, Beamish's Chief Executive, was presented with the £120,000 prize – the largest museum prize in the world – by Phil Wang, comedian and judge for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2025. Rhiannon said: "To receive such a prestigious award is a real honour, a phenomenal achievement, and is credit to the amazing people who make Beamish such a special place. Thank you to our fantastic staff and volunteers and to our communities, visitors, supporters and partners for their support". Jenny Waldman, Director of Art Fund, said: "The judges were blown away by the remarkable attention to detail of its exhibits across a 350-acre site and by the passion of its staff and volunteers." The other shortlisted museums who will each receive £15,000 were: Chapter (Cardiff), Compton Verney (Warwickshire), Golden Thread Gallery (Belfast) and Perth Museum (Perth & Kinross). [Beamish](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#), [Museums Association](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

You can recap the finalists with this overview from [Arts Professional](#). On BBC podcast Front Row you can hear from each of the finalists: [Beamish, the Living Museum of the North](#) (from 33.52), [Chapter Arts Centre](#) (from 23.05), [Compton Verney Art Gallery](#) (from 33.22), [Golden Thread Gallery](#) (from 33.42), [Perth Museum](#) (from 32.05).

Black Country Living Museum wins Gold in UK Tourism Award

Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) has been awarded Gold for 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' at the 2025 VisitEngland Awards for Excellence. The awards drew over 1,800 entries from across the country, with 52 national finalists selected following judging by tourism industry experts. BCLM competed against Leicestershire's National Space Centre which won Silver and Liverpool Football Club Tours & Experiences which won Bronze. BCLM Director and CEO Andrew Lovett, who attended the ceremony, said: "To take home the Gold is a proud moment for us all—and a well-earned recognition of the passion and dedication of our staff and volunteers. I'm thrilled we can now celebrate this with our visitors, who are such a vital part of our story." [VisitBritain](#), [BCLM](#), [BBC](#), [Timeout](#), [Telegraph](#)

Tate secures £43m towards new endowment fund

Tate celebrated its 25th birthday with a fundraising gala which raised £43m to establish a Tate Future Fund to secure Tate's long-term future. 680 leading artists and philanthropists from across the world came together to kick-start the fund with initial donations raised through individuals, foundations and Tate Trustees, with an aim to raise an endowment of £150m by 2030. The gala itself raised over £1m, these funds will be used to directly support Tate's artistic programme, its collection and its learning and educational activities. Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate, said "Our deepest thanks to donors whose generosity has helped to establish the Tate Future Fund. These gifts empower Tate to continue to shape a global art history which leads research and scholarship across the world's museums. It also ensures that access to the most exciting art is a reality for the broadest public for generations to come." [Tate](#), [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Also: It's manky and awful, says man on mission to revive Tate Britain, [Times](#)

Tate Liverpool receives major funding towards redevelopment

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has confirmed £12m of funding from the Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund towards the reimagining of the Tate Liverpool site on Royal Albert Dock. The project is now entering the final phase of fundraising ahead of the gallery's reopening in 2027. The new funding has been announced alongside philanthropic donations from the Garfield Weston Foundation and The Ross Warburton Charitable Trust. Tate Liverpool Director, Helen Legg, said: "We're grateful to the government for this investment and for their vote of confidence as we realise this once-in-a-generation renewal of Tate Liverpool. I am also thankful for the support of the trusts, foundations and private donors whose investment will ensure we serve the needs of artists and audiences, now and into the future. The bold transformation of Tate Liverpool will be invaluable to the region's visitor economy, a catalyst for the next era of waterfront redevelopment, and an opportunity for our communities to enjoy world-class art and culture in the heart of Liverpool." [Tate](#), [BBC](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Wallace Collection appoint architects for transformation

Seldorf Architects have been selected by the Wallace Collection to lead the design and delivery of a transformational masterplan for Hertford House, the museum's historic home in London. Working in collaboration with Purcell and Lawson Ward Studio, the project will reimagine and revitalise the museum's spaces for the 21st century with a focus on improving access, sustainability and visitor experience. The announcement comes in the Collection's 125th anniversary year and as it celebrates welcoming over 500,000 visitors in a single year for the first time. A comprehensive fundraising campaign is being developed to realise the ambitions of the masterplan. [Wallace Collection](#) (pdf, 4pgs), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Also: Great North Museum: Hancock reopens The Explore Gallery with a help from local communities to reimagine displays, [GNM](#)

Members in the news

There have been a number of interviews across the media with NMDC members this month. **Maria Balshaw**, Director of Tate, featured in the [Times](#) on 25 years of the Tate Modern and the challenges of sponsorship and maintaining visitor numbers. The piece also includes her stance on admission charges, where she is quoted as saying, "One of the things that is unique and successful about the UK's museums is that we don't charge for basic entry." **Tim Reeve**, Deputy Director of the V&A was interviewed about the V&A East Storehouse in the newsletter [Maxwell Museums](#) on 11 June and V&A East Director **Gus Casely-Hayford**, was interviewed in the [Museums Journal](#) on the importance of diversity and inclusion in museums in the age of Trump.

- **Manchester Museum** - This woke museum has just been named Europe's best – and rightly so, 20 June 2025, [Telegraph](#)
- Security guards at three major London museums secure pay rise after months-long dispute, 13 June 2025, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Museums Association](#)
- **Royal Armouries** - UK's oldest museum sets out plan after £11.6m deal, 8 June 2025, [BBC](#), [Royal Armouries](#)
- Stamps mark Royal Observatory's 350th anniversary, 5 June 2025, [BBC](#)

Images this month

Images this month come from Stephenson Steam Railway in North Tyneside, part of North East Museums. Thanks to the dedication of volunteers at the North Tyneside Steam Railway Association, North Tyneside Art Studio, and the support of the local community, the Woodland Walk is now home to native trees, wildflower meadows, interactive art displays, and a range of features designed to encourage biodiversity. The redevelopment has transformed two acres of previously unused land into a vibrant sanctuary where nature can thrive. It was supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund with additional funding from a crowdfunding campaign via the Aviva 'Save Our Wild Isles' Community Fund, which raised £7,133.17. These funds enabled the creation of a wildlife pond, a wildflower meadow, bug hotels, a Learning Cabin, and sensory trail. [Stephenson Steam Railway](#)

Awards for the sector

King's Birthday honours for museums

Congratulations to all the recipients of the King's Birthday honours announced on 13 June 2025 including Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the V&A, who received a CBE in recognition for his service to museums. Tim led on the redevelopment of V&A East Storehouse which opened to glowing reviews at the end of May.

Others from NMDC member museums who were recognised for their outstanding contributions to museums, heritage and art included an OBE for Alex Farquharson, Director of Tate Britain. MBEs went to Camilla Hampshire, former manager of Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM), Christopher Walker, the Executive Director of Business and Operations at Royal Museums Greenwich and Kirsten Walker, the Director of Collections Care and Estates at the Horniman Museum and Gardens.

Across the sector Alison Myners, the former chair of the Royal Academy, was awarded a CBE, and James Korner, vice president of London's Foundling Museum and Keith Ludeman, chair of the London Transport Museum, were awarded OBEs. Mark Bills, the former director of Gainsborough's House and Anastasia Tennant, the former senior policy adviser at Arts Council England received MBEs. Heather Stevens, head gardener at the Museum of the Home, was given a BEM for services to heritage and to gardening. Philanthropists Hans Rausing and Anna Rausing received a knighthood and damehood respectively for services to the arts.

A number of volunteers were also recognised for their commitment to the sector including Norma Geoghegan, a volunteer at Imperial War Museum North, James Glennie, who was honoured for services to the Gordon Highlanders Museum and to the Royal British Legion, and Mary Maidment, a volunteer tour guide and steward at the Tate and the Foundling Museum, who was recognised for services to heritage. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (full list), [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Government news

Cultural Spending Review

Chancellor Rachel Reeves presented government funding plans to Parliament on 11 June. As expected total expenditure at DCMS will be reduced by 1.4% over the Spending Review period from 2025/26 to 2029/29. This includes a 1.2% cut in resource spending (2025/26-2028/29) and a 2.8% cut in capital expenditure (2025/26-2029/30). The department's administration budget will be cut by 15% by 2030. It says the settlement will provide: 'Funding for the UK's world-leading culture and heritage sector, with billions over the Spending Review period to fund celebrated institutions such as the National Museums and Galleries and organisations like Arts Council England, which support local projects across the country and ensure that the best of British culture is accessible to all'. [Gov.uk](#)

[Campaign for the Arts](#) have a detailed review of the impact of the Spending Review which compares all the government departments. Their analysis shows the government is now planning to spend well over a third less per citizen from DCMS by 2029 compared with 2010. Culture Select Committee chair Dame Caroline Dinenage criticised the real-terms DCMS cuts as the 'wrong choice', as reported in [Arts Professional](#). BBC Front Row discussed the impact of the Spending Review with Caroline Norbury, CEO of Creative UK, Stephanie Sirr, Chief Executive of Nottingham Playhouse, and Sienna Rodgers, Deputy Editor of parliamentary magazine The House. [BBC Front Row](#) (from 22.42) [Arts Professional](#) also looked at the Office for Value For Money report by HM Treasury published alongside the Spending Review which reveals that measures to deliver the desired savings will include workforce restructuring, improving staff productivity and merging back-office functions (see pg25 for DCMS implications). [OfVfM](#) (pdf, 48pgs), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Creative PEC](#), [Guardian](#) (general winners and losers)

Creative Industries Sector Plan

The Government published the Creative Industries Sector Plan on 23 June setting out ambitions for significant growth across the UK's creative industries. Over the next decade £380 million will boost the creative industries to help drive innovation, regional growth and investment. Key initiatives include a £150 million Creative Places Growth Fund, £50 million for new Creative Clusters, and additional R&D labs backed by the UK Research Institute. The report talks about the interconnected ecosystem of individuals and organisations working in the sector and directly refers to museums with in this network; 'This ecosystem is underpinned by our public investment in museums, heritage and cultural infrastructure, and through Arts Council England, the British Film Institute and other Arm's Length Bodies around the UK.' Museums are also mentioned in the key role the Creative Industries play in the transition to net zero (pg 34) citing NMDC's [Climate Crisis information](#) including the Bizot Green Protocol. The plan also mentions plans to develop and deliver the role of a new freelance champion. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Gov.uk](#) (spending plan, pdf, 80pgs), [Creative PEC](#) - overview of the plan, [This Week In Culture](#), [Arts Professional](#) (freelance champion)

Also: Lisa Nandy, Culture Secretary was interviewed on BBC Front Row on 25 June 2025 about the Creative Industries Sector Plan. She talked about the British Business Bank and investment in the sector and why the Creative Industries have been selected as one of the eight growth sectors of the economy. There is also a discussion on AI and the future of DCMS. [BBC Front Row](#) (from 00.40)

Reminder: Museum Estate and Development Fund Round 5

The Museum Estate and Development Fund: Round 5 is currently open, expressions of interest should have been submitted by 5 June 2025 and the full application form opens at 9am on 14 July and closes on at midday on Thursday 2 October. The total fund of £25m will support grants between £50,000 and £5m. The eligibility for this fund is non-national Accredited museums based in England, and/or local authorities based in England who are responsible for maintenance of non-national Accredited museum buildings. [ACE](#)

ACE publish advice on the Ivory Act and Government Indemnity

On the 1 July Arts Council England published advice concerning the Ivory Act and Government Indemnity Scheme which is available on the ACE website. There is now specific guidance relating to the Ivory Act 2018. ACE will be hosting an interactive webinar and Q&A session on Government Indemnity on 31 July 2025 at 2pm. It will cover all aspects of applying for Government Indemnity and there will be an additional focus on the provisions of the Ivory Act 2018. [ACE](#) (Government Indemnity), [ACE](#) (Ivory Act specific guidance), [ACE](#) (webinar)

Priorities for Culture Capital Grant Funding from the Welsh Government now open

The Priorities for Culture launched in May 2025 and this grant scheme is for capital funding between £20,000 and £200,000 to address the following ambitions:

- Ensuring culture is inclusive, accessible and diverse;
- Reflecting the needs and aspirations of children and young people;
- Caring for our collections and assets
- Supporting good digital practice, and
- Supporting sustainable development, achieving net-zero, and tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

Deadline for applications is 1 August 2025 and there is no requirement for match funding. A number of drop-in sessions have been planned to find out more about the grant scheme, discuss potential projects, and ask any questions you have. The webinars will be held on the following dates through Microsoft Teams:

- Friday 4 July, 10.00-11.00
- Wednesday 9 July, 11.00-12.00
- Wednesday 16 July, 2.00-3.00
- Thursday 24 July, 2.00-3.00
- To register for one or more sessions please email it to mal.training@gov.wales, [Gov.wales](#)

Also: ACE to introduce 'light touch' reporting for NPOs, [Arts Professional](#)



Keith Merrin, Director of North East Museums and Helen Featherstone, Director of England, North, National Lottery Heritage Fund, open the Woodland Walk at Stephenson Steam Railway.
Photograph by Colin Davison.

Cultural funding

Collection sell-offs, new pricing structures and funder changes

The impact of financial pressures in the museum sector are continuing to be felt with news that the **Munnings Art Museum** in Essex, which celebrates the artist Alfred Munnings, has decided to sell a sculpture to generate funding to secure the future of the museum. [Colchester Gazette](#).

Museums including the **V&A, British Museum and Science Museum Group** joined cultural institutions in backing a defence of corporate partnerships in a letter to the [Financial Times](#). They argue that working with businesses is essential for cultural organisations to operate effectively within existing economic structures. It was also reported in [Museum and Heritage Advisor](#) with a response from Culture Unstained reported by the [Museums Association](#).

In Leeds the **Thackray Museum of Medicine** is one of a number of museums that have been recently reviewing their pricing structures, moving to a new structure that allows visitors to choose their own admission fee. The museum now offers four pricing tiers ranging from £9 to £16, replacing its previous fixed admission structure. The museum has set £12 as its recommended ticket price, which it said covers operational costs for the Grade II listed building. [M+H Advisor](#). In February the [BBC](#) reported that a "pay as you feel" admission charge will be introduced at some council-run museums including at **Leeds City Museum, Leeds Art Gallery and Leeds Discovery Centre** as the council approved £103.8m budget savings for the next financial year.

Also: Museums give city economy multi-million pound boost, [Leeds City Council](#)

[Arts Professional](#) published a piece asking 'Where has all the funding gone?' in the charity sector, followed by the news that the John Ellerman Foundation will no longer run a dedicated fund for museums and galleries. Launched in 2014, the John Ellerman Foundation's museums and galleries programme offered grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 per year, for up to three years. Part of its new strategy for 2025-2030 will be a commitment to tackling the planetary crises and reducing societal polarisation, among other priorities. Among the final grants made by the Museums and Galleries Fund included the National Coal Mining Museum who received just over £87,000 to review its industrial heritage collection. [John Ellerman](#), [Museums Association](#)

Also: Welsh Government failing to adequately support free entry, says committee, [Museums Association](#)

Sector news and surveys

Art Fund survey shows strong support for local museums

A new survey commissioned by Art Fund and run by More in Common found that 80% of UK adults want local authorities to support their local museums. The survey of 2,000 adults across the UK showed that local museums are a strong source of regional pride, with three in five people across the UK saying museums make them feel proud of where they live. Three quarters of UK adults (73%) say that museums teach them something new when they visit, and interestingly knowing how the donation money is used is what would most encourage people to support their local museums. [Art Fund](#)

Arts Pay Survey from Arts Professional opens

Employees, freelance workers, artists and business owner-managers are being encouraged to contribute to Arts Pay 2025, to shine a light on pay and conditions in the cultural sector. Previous surveys on the subject of arts pay were conducted in 2022 and 2018. The survey takes between 10-30 minutes to complete and the results will be shared later in the summer. [Arts Professional](#) (article), [Arts Professional](#) (survey)

Survey of the heritage science community

The heritage science community involves anyone who uses the application of scientific techniques and technologies to improve the understanding, conservation, management, and enjoyment of/engagement with cultural heritage. This survey from Human Economics, who have been appointed by AHRC to lead the evaluation of its Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science (RICHeS) programme, will support AHRC to refine and enhance future funding competitions. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. [RICHeS Survey](#)

Also: Importing cultural goods into the EU and Northern Ireland - AIM have shared the DCMS briefing note on new regulations around importing cultural goods into the EU and NI. [AIM](#)

Climate emergency

Transforming Energy Report from Julie's Bicycle

'Powering the Future: Insights from Transforming Energy' looks at lessons from across the Transforming Energy programme, run by Julie's Bicycle (JB), that aims to accelerate climate action across the UK's cultural sector. There are more than 100 organisations that are part of the Buildings Net Zero Energy strand, with 22 receiving tailored support through the Capital Investment Readiness strand, enabling them to develop business cases, secure funding, and shape the future of sustainable cultural infrastructure. Key insights include:

- Cultural organisations are ready to act, but lack access to strategic, future-proof capital funding that enables deep, sustainable upgrades.
- High upfront costs, volatile electricity pricing (plus poor payback terms) and uncertainty around technologies are stalling momentum, especially for older or historic buildings.
- Transforming Energy is working. Peer support, training and practical tools are accelerating action, however there is still a shortage of specialist providers who understand the unique complexity of cultural spaces.

There are also key recommendations including the need for funders to support future-fit, sustainable and decarbonised buildings. [JB](#) (press release), [JB](#) (briefing note, pdf, 13pgs)

Climate in practice case studies

Art Fund have published seven UK museum and galleries case studies showing the ways in which museums, galleries and cultural organisations are engaging audiences with the climate crisis and reducing the environmental impact of their programmes. In May and June 2025 Art Fund supported 44 museums, galleries and cultural organisations across the UK to programme events inspired by THE HERDS, which is currently making its way across the UK. [Art Fund](#) (press release), [Art Fund](#) (case studies, pdf, 55pgs), THE HERDS - [BBC](#)

Sector reports

New research: Migration in UK Creative Occupations and Industries from Creative PEC

This research from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) fills the evidence gap in relation to migration, creative occupations and creative industries, by providing detailed statistics on sector trends, rates of growth, country of origin and distribution across the UK. This report outlines how important it is that the migration system works to meet the sector's needs as one of the Government's priority growth sectors. Key findings include:

- Since 2021 there has been a 70% increase in temporary visas for creative occupations vs a 13.5% increase for non-creative occupations.
- During the same period, across all types of (longer stay) Worker visas, those granted for creative occupations increased by only 8% and for non-creative occupations by 233% (106% if Health and Care visas are excluded).
- 65% of all visas granted to creative workers were in 'IT, software and computer services.'
- The next most common creative occupations sponsored by visas are 'Actors, entertainers and presenters' (7.5% of all visas granted to creative workers), 'Musicians' (5.5%), 'Marketing associate professionals' (4.6%), 'Arts officers, producers and directors' (3.9%), 'Marketing and sales directors' (3.1%), 'Graphic designers' (2.2%) and 'Artists' (1.6%).
- More than half of non-UK creative workers being granted a new visa were from Asia (62.6%), followed by the rest of Europe (16.8%), Americas (9.1%) and Africa (9.1%). More than half of the granted new creative visas came from India (53%), with the next country, the US, accounting for just 5%.
- In 2024, 16.2% of the creative industries workforce was accounted for by non-UK workers, up from 11.6% in 2014. This compares with 14.4% of non-UK workers employed in non-creative industries, up from 9.3% in 2014.
- The lowest share of creative occupations for non-UK workers was in the 'Museums, galleries and libraries' sub-sector, although these workers still accounted for a third of the overall workforce in this sub-sector. [Creative PEC](#) (press release), [Creative PEC](#) (report, pdf, 91pgs)

Report looks at recommendations around 'UK Soft Power'

'Strengthening UK Soft Power: Strategic Recommendations' from the UK Soft Power Group, explores the significant benefits that the UK reaps from its soft power, from supporting international peace and security, to boosting economic growth and strengthening the UK's relationship with Europe. Harnessing these benefits will be critical for the UK to meet the challenges of an increasingly turbulent geopolitical environment. The UK Soft Power Group (UKSPG) Members includes NMDC members the British Library, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the Science Museum Group. The report makes five recommendations including:

- Establish a structured channel for engagement between Government and the wider soft power sector, including the UK Soft Power Group, alongside the Soft Power Council.
- Provide clarity on the Government's strategic priorities and long-term planning horizons and develop predictable funding mechanisms for UK soft power.
- Enhance connectivity between soft power assets and overseas Posts by better leveraging existing on-the-ground expertise, mechanisms and institutions.
- Develop a 'digital gateway to the UK', a soft power digital platform where UK soft power assets can share resources, information on upcoming events and collaborate on projects.
- Develop provision for Whitehall Departments and devolved administrations to collectively address strategic issues and find practical solutions to opportunities and challenges in the soft power space. The UKSPG has been Co-convened by the British Council and the British Foreign

Policy Group. [British Council](#) (press release), [British Council](#) (report, pdf, 60pgs)

Entry fees a major barrier for 'Gen Z' when accessing heritage

A new report from Historic Houses, the association that represents Britain's independently owned historic houses, castles, and gardens, has published new research looking at Gen Z's engagement with heritage. Gen Z covers those born between 1997 and 2012. 'Keeping history alive: Understanding the barriers to Gen Z engagement with heritage' is based on research that examines key themes related to young people and heritage sites including pricing, transport, social media engagement, and the use of collections with a focus on historic houses. Key take-aways of the research are:

- 99% of respondents said they were interested in visiting heritage sites.
- The top barrier to accessing heritage sites is getting there (and associated costs), with 73% identifying this as a factor.
- Many also found high entry fees a major barrier with 58% citing this as their reason for not visiting.
- 47% are willing to pay up to £10 for entry, with over a quarter at 27% willing to pay up to £15.
- An overwhelming majority of participants said they disliked digital interpretation, citing a desire to turn off from technology whilst visiting heritage sites.

Almost all of those surveyed talked about the appeal of 'behind the scenes' tours, 'hands-on' conservation workshops, and 'limited edition' experiences, and the vast majority suggested they would be happy to pay a (relative) premium for this. Interestingly despite popular perceptions of Gen Z, the research suggested the vast majority disliked QR codes and other digital interpretation. They cited that they liked the opportunity heritage sites provided to put their phones away, turn off technology and engage with the place and people around them. [Historic Houses](#) (press release), [Historic Houses](#) (report, pdf, 9pgs), [Museums Association](#)



Stephenson Steam Railway, photograph by Colin Davison. Steam Locomotive No. 401 Thomas Burt.

Funding news and opportunities

ACE National Lottery Project Grants - Museum Unlocking Collections

Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants are open with a time limited priority for museums on 'Unlocking Collections', which aims to enable museums to develop their collections-based work and increase public engagement with, and use of, their collections. Applications are sought that focus on areas of museum practice including - re-interpretation of collections, digital tools and mechanisms and collections review. The funding can support documentation, collections development, workshop activity, developing digital skills and collections review projects. Funding will generally not be given to projects that primarily support staffing or management costs, infrastructure or capital costs, and projects that do not provide clear benefit to people and communities. There are different application forms depending on the grant amount requested. Grants are available in three amounts for, £30,000 or under, £30,001 to £100,000 and £100,001 or over. [ACE](#)

Museum Fundamentals inaugural grants allocated and second round opens

AIM's Museum Fundamentals grants are funded by the Pilgrim Trust and The Julia Rausing Trust and launched in December 2024. The grants combine valued collections care and conservation funding supported by the Pilgrim Trust with new funding from The Julia Rausing Trust meaning applicants can apply for up to £20,000 for funding to undertake a collections-based project. 12 grants were awarded including:

- The Long Shop Museum - £14,000 for the redesign and redisplay of 'Made in Leiston' gallery.
- Wycombe Museum £18,669.44 + Mentor - Securing the Future of Wycombe Museum's Chair Collection.
- Museum of Army Music £11,437.24 - Understanding the Heritage of Army Museum – A significance project.
- Museum of Cornish Life £15,000 - Glass conservation and engagement project.

A full list of projects can be found on the AIM website. The second round of grants are now open with grant awards up to £20,000, with a deadline of 8 August for expressions of interest. [AIM](#) (awarded grants), [AIM](#) (second round applications)

Art Fund Reimagine grants open

Reimagine grants from Art Fund offer between £10,000 and £50,000 for work that provides space to experiment with new ideas and approaches, or for an opportunity to revisit important work that has been put on hold. As part of this aim, applications should fall under one or more of these categories: Relevance, Research and rationalisation, and Resilience. The priority areas are:

- Growing and engaging audiences
- Increasing capacity and expertise in collections work/workforce
- Encouraging partnerships, shared learning and sustainability in the sector

Eligible organisations must be formally constituted, not-for-profit organisations that hold permanent collections. These collections may include fine art, applied art and design, social and natural history, archaeology, and scientific objects. Eligible organisations are museums, galleries, historic houses and university museums. Applications close at 5pm on Tuesday 12 August. [Art Fund](#)

Archives and manuscript funding for Welsh organisations

The Culture Division of the Welsh Government and the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT) have entered into a funding partnership for 2025/26. The partnership will enable eligible archives and museums to apply for the full cost of a remedial conservation project. Non-national archives, libraries and specialist collect institutions are eligible to apply. The majority of the grants are between £500 and £10,000, the case for funding will be stronger if you can show that you have secured some funds towards the project, either from your own budgets or from other external funders. Expressions of interest in applying for remedial conservation funding are now invited. Contact helen.baguley@gov.wales by 18 July 2025. [NMCT](#)

Digital

Online collections information impacted by AI Bots

The GLAM-E Lab report has captured the impact that bots building datasets for AI model training are having on online cultural collections. In late 2024, isolated reports began to appear from individual online cultural heritage collections that described servers and collections straining – and sometimes breaking – under the load of swarming bots. These bots were reportedly scraping data and images from collections websites to build datasets to train AI models. Highlighting the results of the short survey circulated in April 2025, this report indicates that online cultural heritage collections are struggling with new traffic spikes. Those reports are looking more and more like an early warning. Not every online collection is being impacted, but many are. The GLAM-E Lab is a joint initiative between the Centre for Science, Culture and the Law at the University of Exeter and the Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy at NYU Law. You can also read more about the issue here - AI Scraping Bots Are Breaking Open Libraries, Archives, and Museums, [404Media](#). [GLAM-E Lab](#) (website), [GLAM-E Lab](#) (report, pdf, 37pgs)

AI and funding applications

Arts Council England have set out their policy on the use of AI during the application process, and its own position on the use of AI during the review of grant applications. They recommend those using AI tools should do so cautiously. They highlight the risks around bias, transparency, data protection and the moral and legal rights of creators if applicants decide to use such tools. Their guidance also highlights that ACE do not use AI technologies in carrying out the assessment, or decision-making on applications. [ACE](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

The **National Lottery Heritage Fund** have also given the green light for the use of AI in funding applications outlining their position as follows 'You may use AI tools to help complete your Project Enquiry, Expression of Interest and application. We will not reject an application just because AI was used.', but they sound a note of caution – 'AI can provide a useful starting point but won't be able tell the unique story of the heritage project you want us to fund and may include plans that are not practical or suited to your requirements. The proposals in your application inform our decision making and form part of your contract with us. Proposing activity you can't deliver could be a breach of your contract.' [Heritage Fund](#), [Museums Association](#)

Also: One Further 'Viral Museum Videos' great for inspiration via Louise Cohen, [LinkedIn](#)

Continuing Professional Development

Clore 2025 Inclusive Cultures Programme now open

Inclusive Cultures is a four-month disabled-led professional development programme designed for cultural leaders seeking to take steps towards systemic change. Run by Clore Leadership the programme draws on Inclusive Leadership theories and practice, and the lived experiences of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people/communities, and uses coaching techniques to inform both thinking and action. The online programme runs from September to December 2025 and the application deadline is 17 July. Costs range from £80 for freelancers to £185 for large organisations. [Clore](#)



A musical performer celebrates the opening of the Stephenson Steam Railway Woodland Walk. Photograph by Colin Davison.

Awards

Kids in Museums announce Family Friendly Museum Award shortlist

18 museums are in the running for this year's Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award including NMDC members Abbey House Museum part of Leeds Museums and Galleries who are shortlisted for Best Small Museum. In the category for Best Medium Museum - Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle upon Tyne, the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea and V&A Dundee are competing with The Amelia Scott in Tunbridge Wells. In the large museum category the three shortlisted museums are The Burrell Collection in Glasgow and two London museums the Horniman Museum and Gardens and the London Transport Museum. This year there is a new category 'Best Museum Youth Project: Social Justice' which has recognised the work of Black Cultural Archives, London, Glasgow Life Museums and Wiltshire Museum. Family judges will visit the shortlist over the summer to help judge the finally winners who will be announced in October at the Young V&A. [KIM](#)

Also: Fantastic For Families Awards open, apply by 16 July 2025, [Fantastic For Families](#)

Also: Blooloo open nominations for their Museum Influencer List for 2025 until 4 August, [Blooloo](#)

Openings, new investment and museum closures

Opening of Paisley Museum delayed until 2026

'Unforeseen issues' have seen a delay to the opening of Paisley Museum until 2026. Last December Renfrewshire Council agreed to put an extra £12.5m into the project, raising the total budget to just over £65m which was scheduled to open in July 2025. [BBC](#)

SS Great Britain secures £1m towards redevelopment

Bristol's SS Great Britain has been awarded £800,000 from the Philip Nicholas Trust and the Headley Trust, alongside £245,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund grant is for a community-led heritage initiative planned to directly inform the redevelopment. At the heart of the site's transformation is the redevelopment of the Dockyard Museum, which leads audiences onto the historic vessel. Designed as an immersive experience, the new museum will explore how the SS Great Britain changed the world, illuminating the journeys of over 30,000 passengers and crew who travelled aboard the ship between 1845 and 1886. [SS Great Britain](#), [Arts Professional](#)

The Time Machine Museum of Science Fiction set to close

The BBC reported on the closure of The Time Machine Museum of Science Fiction in Herefordshire which is to close following the owner's decision to retire. The museum opened in 2007 with 85% of the collection connected to the Dr Who tv series. The collections will be sold on 16-18 July. [BBC](#)

Also: Former London War Tunnels to House £220m Military Intelligence and Espionage Museum, [Experience UK](#)

Also: From Joyce's death mask to Bono's sunglasses: a look around the Little Museum of Dublin's grand curiosities, [Guardian](#)

Conferences and events

Museums Association 2025 Conference programme launched

This year's 2025 Museums Association Conference will be held from 7-9 October in Wales at Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru – St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff with a theme of Belonging. The Conference programme has now been launched and includes sessions on Trans-inclusive culture, a look at Birmingham Museum Trust citizens' jury, climate-positive wellbeing for museum staff and museums as a convening power at a time of increased polarisation. Digital access to the whole conference starts from £55 for unwaged/student/volunteer to £665 for all-staff institutional access. In-person tickets start at £185 for a single day to £565 for the full conference for non-members. [Museums Association](#) (booking details), [Museums Association](#) (conference details)

Leeds City Museum hosts the GEM Conference

The theme of this year's GEM Conference is sustainability in its broadest sense - from environmental responsibility to organisational resilience, maintaining wellbeing and creating long term embedded equitable opportunities for communities. Running from 10-12 September the conference will be available online and in-person at Leeds City Museum where attendees will explore how museum and heritage learning professionals can adapt and innovate in the face of global challenges. Online only cost from £58.12 and in-person prices vary from one-day tickets for students/unwaged at £117.72 to the full conference at £384.23 for GEM Members and £661.59 for non-members. [GEM](#) (Conference), [GEM](#) (bookings)

Early Bird tickets available for the Collections Trust Conference

The 2025 Collections Trust Conference will be held online on 2 October from 10-4pm and will have a focus on taking a different approach to deal with longstanding challenges. The conference programme will offer a mix of presentations, case studies and discussions. Speakers will cover:

- Reflecting on developments over the last decade, and forward to the next; how can we pave the way for museums to develop to their full potential?
- Resetting the conversation – do we need to change the way we talk about these challenges in order to make meaningful progress?
- Dealing with legacy issues that might be holding us back.
- Enhancing capacity and sustainability in collections management.
- The 2017 Mendoza Review called for “...a sensible approach to both growing and rationalising collections.” What does this mean in practice, and how can we develop a more holistic approach to collections development?

There are a limited number of Early Bird individual tickets available for £32.50. Full price individual tickets cost £37 and team tickets for 3-6 attendees cost £83.50. There are also 100 free inclusive

places for unwaged attendees (students or volunteers) or for those underrepresented in the UK museum workforce. [Collections Trust](#)

NEMO's European Museum Conference 'Who cares? Museums, wellbeing, and resilience'

The Network of European Museum Organisations 2025 Conference takes place from 26-28 October 2025 in Horsens, Denmark. The event will explore the transformative role of museums in supporting mental health, wellbeing, and community resilience. As museums increasingly embrace their potential as spaces for emotional healing, social connection, and therapeutic experiences, the European museum conference will highlight inspiring case studies and innovative approaches that position museums as active contributors to public health. The conference fee is 200 Euros, students get a 50% discount and NEMO members can send two representatives free of charge. The conference website has details of travel and accommodation options. [NEMO](#) (conference), [NEMO](#) (booking details)

Call for Speakers: MuseumNext Museums & Social Media Summit

In November 20-21, MuseumNext are hosting the Museums & Social Media Summit, exploring how museums can harness the power of social media to engage audiences, build their brands and tell stories. Proposals from those interested in speaking at this event are open until 20 July with suggested topics including: choosing appropriate platforms, building and managing online communities, collaborating with influencers and using AI tools. The summit is online with tickets ranging from £30 for students to £188 for an Early Bird Unlimited ticket to give access to unlimited people from your organisation. [MuseumNext](#) (call for speakers), [MuseumNext](#) (booking)

Heritage Volunteering'25 - Transforming Communities

This year's Heritage Volunteering Group Conference will feature a keynote speech by Lisa Ollerhead, Director of the Association of Independent Museums, which will explore the impact of the Connected Communities project. The conference will take place online via Zoom on 25 November and 26 November, 9:30 to 13:15 and will look at the role that volunteering can play in transforming lives and communities. Attendees will have the chance to pick from 12 workshops ranging from creating communities of volunteering to creating a sense of belonging. Early Bird tickets (available till 24 October) cost £30 and standard tickets cost £40. [HVG](#) (conference), [HVG](#) (tickets)



A performer dressed as a butterfly celebrates the opening of the Woodland Walk at Stephenson Steam Railway. Photograph by Colin Davison.

Appointments and resignations

Nick Merriman, Chief Executive of Historic England, has announced his intention to step down with immediate effect after only 18 months in position due to personal reasons. Merriman joined Historic England from the Horniman Museum and Gardens. The board has appointed Geoff Parkin to serve as interim chief executive. [Museums Association](#), [Guardian](#)

Liz Johnson, who is currently the Director for Museums & Collection Development and Birmingham at Arts Council England, has been appointed as the new Area Director for the Midlands. Johnson will take over from Peter Knott who is stepping down from the role in mid-August. [ACE](#)

The British Council has named **Ruth Mackenzie** as Director of Arts, moving from her previous role as Program Director, Arts, Culture & Creative Industries policy for the government of South Australia. She has previously served as a special and expert adviser to DCMS, co-artistic director at Chichester Festival Theatre, as well as in roles at Arts Council England and the Southbank Centre. [Arts Professional](#), [British Council](#)

Simon Wallis will replace Axel Rüger as Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Arts (RA), following Rüger's departure in October 2024 to become Director of the Frick Collection in New York. Wallis was appointed Director of the Hepworth Wakefield in 2008 and took the gallery through its public opening in 2011. He was previously Director of Chisenhale Gallery in East London, Senior Exhibitions Organiser at the ICA, London; Curator at Tate Liverpool; and Curator at Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge. [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [RA](#)

Catch up

City of London Considers Micro-Museum at Disused Toilet Site Near Monument, 24 June 2025, [Experience UK](#)

Are London's museums getting too close to the art market?, 18 June 2025, [Financial Times](#)

The London Museum of Water and Steam is firing once again, 18 June 2025, [Times](#)

Historic England reopens upgraded science facility providing specialist heritage research and care, 11 June, 2025, [Museums Association](#)

New London culture title to launch in September with five-strong team, 10 June 2025, [Press Gazette](#)

International news

Netherlands returns 119 looted artefacts known as Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, 23 June 2025, [Independent](#)

Climate Activist Hurls Pink Paint at Picasso Painting at Montreal Museum, 20 June 2025, [ARTnews](#)

Louvre visitors forced to go through 'Mona Lisa journey' to see painting, 17 June 2025, [Telegraph](#)

National Portrait Gallery head resigns two weeks after Trump called for her firing, 13 June 2025, [CNN](#)

Researchers create AI-based tool that restores age-damaged artworks in hours, 11 June 2025, [Guardian](#)

Jobs

Posts being advertised on the [NMDC jobs board](#) this month include:

- [Security Operations Manager - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Records Management Officer - IWM](#)
- [Assistant Registrar - Science Museum Group](#)
- [Insight Manager - British Museum](#)
- [Project Development Manager - Tullie](#)

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