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Rain exhibition National Library of Scotland running till 30 April 2027. Credit: Neil Hanna.

Members' news

London Museum plans for November opening

On the 28 November the London Museum will open in Smithfield in time for its 50th anniversary, marking the culmination of a decade-long transformation of the historic General Market. The adjacent Poultry Market will open in 2028, expanding the museum with two temporary exhibition spaces, a dedicated learning centre and a collections store. The £437m project has been developed through a partnership between the City of London Corporation and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, alongside support from a range of philanthropic supporters including Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Goldsmiths' Foundation, The Linbury Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "The opening of the new London Museum will be a hugely significant moment both for London and internationally. Backed by one of the largest ever cultural investments in our capital, London Museum will attract millions of visitors and Londoners and reinforce our status as the culture capital of the world. London Museum celebrates the past, creates opportunities in the present and will inspire future generations, as we continue to build a better London for everyone."

[London Museum](#), [BBC](#), [Times](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#)

Hull Maritime Museum sets opening date

Part of the Humber Museum Partnership, Hull Maritime Museum will open to the public on 8 August after a multi-million pound transformation. Closed since January 2020 the project will double the museum's public space with around 1,300 objects accessible across galleries and open storage spaces, an increase of 50% on previous displays. Many objects will be on public display for the first time. The project was funded through a combination of local and national public and charitable sources. Hull City Council contributed £11.8m, the National Lottery Heritage Fund £7.7m and private donations account for £0.9m. The museum building originally opened in 1871 as Hull's Dock Offices and became the city's Maritime Museum in 1975. [Hull Maritime](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

National Railway Museum receives £3 million for Central Hall

The National Railway Museum in York, part of the Science Museum Group, has received £3 million government funding for the Central Hall project which will create a new building at the centre of the museum site, providing level access throughout as well as a new interactive gallery called Railway Futures: The Porterbrook Gallery. The investment builds on initial support from DCMS given in 2019. The transformed National Railway Museum will be the cultural heart of York Central, a 45-hectare brownfield regeneration scheme. [SMG](#), [Museums Association](#)

British Museum Bayeux Tapestry plans reach across the country

As part of the programme for the upcoming Bayeux Tapestry exhibition, the British Museum has launched 'Bayeux Around Britain, supported by WorldQuant' a nationwide programme designed by the museum to communicate the story and significance of the Bayeux Tapestry to as many people as possible, and make it more accessible to schoolchildren. Through a network of more than 60 partner organisations providing education programming, including museums, galleries, libraries, archives, cathedrals and heritage sites, the programme will ensure that Bayeux Tapestry-related activity is within an hour's drive of two-thirds of the country. On 14 October 2026, the Museum will also broadcast live into hundreds of classrooms across the country, bringing the story of the Bayeux Tapestry to life through a curriculum-linked schools event for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils. [British Museum](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [BBC](#) **Also:** Bayeux tapestry tickets generate nine-hour online queues as public scramble for access, [Guardian](#)

Beamish Museum's Chief Executive recognised in King's Birthday Honours

Rhiannon Hiles, the Chief Executive of Beamish, The Living Museum of the North, and member of NMDC's Board was one of a number of heritage and culture professionals recognised in King Charles' Birthday Honours list. Hiles received a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) award for services to museums, along side Melanie Keen, the former director of London's Wellcome Collection. Henry Grunwald, former chair of the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, and Joanna Cannon, professor emerita at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London were also honoured. OBEs (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) were awarded to Celia Richardson, National Trust, Andy Purvis, NHM and Mukesh Sharma, NLHF. Suzanne Raine, trustee of the Imperial War Museum was decorated with an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) and Paul Kitching, head of the Natural History Museum, Tring, was recognised with a BEM for services to museums and to the community in Tring. [Museums Association](#), [Gov.uk](#) (full list)

National Portrait Gallery launch £5 tickets for under 25s

Club NPG from the National Portrait Gallery will offer £5 exhibition tickets for 16-25 year olds alongside discounted tickets for public programme events. [NPG](#)

Members in the news:

- **V&A** announces national tour of David Bowie archive, [M+H Advisor](#)
- National Museum 'in early discussions' over closing for repairs, **National Museum Cardiff**, [BBC](#)
- Ahead of the **Horniman's** 125th birthday this weekend, head of horticulture Errol Fernandes on the museum's outdoor spaces, [Museums Association](#)
- **Science Museum Group** awards Fellowship to the King, [M+H Advisor](#)
- Reports of the blockbuster exhibition's death are premature as **Tate's** Kahlo show breaks ticket record, [Guardian](#)
- Communities in north Wales to get better access to national collections: **Amgueddfa Cymru** sign Memorandum of Understanding to increase access, [Museums Association](#)

Images this month

Images this month come from NMDC member National Library of Scotland and their new Rain exhibition which dives into Scotland's relationship with rain. From weather forecasting, fashion, and film, to rain-soaked love stories, climate emergencies, and everything in between. A perfect reason to cool off! Running until 30 April 2027, the exhibition is free. [National Library of Scotland](#)

Government news

Local government reform checklist and increase in mayoral power

Arts Council England (ACE) have published a checklist with key points museums should be thinking about in preparation for the upcoming reorganisation of the local government system. First outlined in the Government's white paper on English Devolution in 2024, over the next few years the radical reorganisation will see the end of two-tier county/district councils, which will be replaced by larger, single-tier authorities designed to serve populations of at least 500,000 and oversee all local public services. The resource from ACE is designed for senior leaders in local authority owned and operated museums services, and should be used with colleagues to build a clear understanding of:

- your service operations
- risks and responsibilities
- the value your museum delivers

The local government reorganisation will affect the 21 county areas of England that still operate under the two-tier structure, as well as 19 "small neighbouring unitary authorities" that will be integrated into the new, larger unitary authorities. In total, 164 borough and district councils operating in these counties will be completely abolished.

Mayors have also been handed new powers under the Right to Request scheme, part of the devolution process, which shifts more control to local leaders. As part of this process the North East will work with ACE to strengthen alignment between national and local investment in culture, including involving Mayoral Strategic Authorities in discussions on the design of future operating models, such as regional boards. By aligning funding more closely with local priorities, the aim is to use arts investment as a driver of economic growth and a richer cultural offer for

communities across the region. [ACE](#) (Local government reform website), [ACE](#) (resource, pdf, 12 pgs), [Museums Association](#), [Gov.uk](#) (white paper), [Gov.uk](#) (mayoral powers)

Art Explora Mobile Museum gets government backing

Art Explora is building the United Kingdom's first custom-built mobile museum, designed by Ab Rogers Design studio, with financial support from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The £1.6m government initiative aims to bring art to communities everywhere with artworks from the Government Art Collection. The tour begins in a pre-existing mobile museum across the South West then the North West of England, this summer. From 2027, the non-profit arts organisation Art Explora will tour the new mobile museum with three 12-week exhibitions each year. The Mobile Museum addresses the social, economic and geographic barriers that prevent many people from participating in the arts. It sets up within walking distance of local schools and community centres in areas identified as having high deprivation and low cultural engagement. Further museum partners include the National Portrait Gallery, Leeds Art Gallery, Birmingham Museums Trust and National Museums Liverpool. [Gov.uk](#), [Art Explora](#), [Museums Association](#)

Democratic Engagement Fund opens for civil society organisations

The Democratic Engagement Fund will provide grants to civil society organisations (CSOs) to deliver politically neutral, place-based activities that help people understand, engage with, and participate in democracy. The Fund focuses on groups that are currently less democratically engaged and aims to generate evidence on what works to increase democratic participation, informing future policy and practice. In addition, CSOs will be able to apply to carry out democratic engagement with young people, supporting the expansion of the franchise to 16-and 17-year-olds. Available funding ranges from £25,000 to £50,000 with a total budget up to £2.5m. Eligible organisations include charities and community interest groups. [Gov.uk](#)

Government backs The King's Trust's youth opportunity initiative with £10 million of funding

This nationwide initiative will fully launch in 2027, providing young people with access to more trusted adults, training, skills and work experience opportunities. The funding forms part of the Government's £500 million National Youth Strategy 'Youth Matters' to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people. The initiative will include clear routes to employment and work experience opportunities. This investment will be matched by corporate and philanthropic partners, creating a £20 million programme over the next four years to expand trusted adult support across England. There is also a plan to open over 50 Young Futures Hubs with an initial 8 local authorities across the country already named as early adopters. [Gov.uk](#) (funding), [Gov.uk](#) (Young Futures Hubs)

Also: Culture secretary quits X in protest at 'misinformation', [BBC](#)

Also: The places hoping to become first Town of Culture, [BBC](#)

Sector news

ACE announce changes to the NPO process

Arts Council England have published early information about the next National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding round which will run for five years from 1 April 2028 to 31 March 2033. Arts organisations, museums and libraries will be able to apply for amounts from £50,000 per year. ACE has pledged to create a simpler process with a shorter and clearer application form. Further application guidance will be published in September 2026 with applications opening in October-November 2026. As part of the independent Hodge review, ACE has committed to deliver a simpler process, designed with users and with decisions informed by both national and local input. Their website confirms there will be significant changes if you decide to apply to join the next round of NPOs. [ACE](#) (intro), [ACE](#) (key information), [Museums Association](#)

Call for evidence on National Lottery Good Cause funding

The Government has announced a 12-week, UK-wide Call for Evidence on National Lottery Good Cause funding. The Call for Evidence will be guided by three principles:

- Firstly, this funding belongs to the public. The billions that the National Lottery invests - £33m a week - must reflect the modern priorities of the British people - in all communities.

- Secondly, decisions must be made by the public. It is time to trust the people who know their streets, their community spaces, and their heritage best.
- Thirdly, community ambition shouldn't be met with red tape.

Darren Henley, Chair of the UK National Lottery Forum and Chief Executive of Arts Council England said: "This is an important opportunity to ensure that funding from The National Lottery continues to reflect what matters most to people in villages, towns and cities across the UK. Over the past three decades, The National Lottery has made a permanent, positive change to the whole country. It's been the power behind the success of sport, culture, heritage, film and community projects across the UK. This is everyone's chance to highlight the vital role of The National Lottery and its players in our public life". The call closes midday on 23rd September 2026. NMDC will be submitting a response to the consultation and encouraging members to also respond individually. [Parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk) (Nandy statement), [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) (call for evidence)

Public Accounts Committee warn on threats to national museums and galleries

A new report from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published on 24 June warns that national museums and galleries are being left vulnerable to a range of issues from threats from cyber security to the physical security of collections, as the Government continues to rely on a reactive, rather than a strategic approach. The Committee does not believe that the DCMS is taking advantage of its central role to bring museums and galleries together to better address these issues. It finds that measures including the implementation of digital record keeping should be considered and has asked the DCMS to set out the concrete actions it and museums and galleries have taken and are taking to address cyber and physical security threats. The PAC recommends that the DCMS should set out clear metrics by which it will assess museums and galleries, and what consequences there will be for those that do not meet the criteria it sets out to measure them against. The PAC also found the DCMS lacks the necessary insight into museums and galleries' financial situations to give it sufficient early warning of potential financial failures, with the Department recognising that it must rely less on anecdotal evidence. [Parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk) (press release), [Parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk) (report, pdf, 30 pgs), [Guardian](https://www.guardian.co.uk)



A sketch of an umbrella and hat blown away in a hoolie. Rain - National Library of Scotland.

Sector reports, research and surveys

Managing risks and reputation in fundraising

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy have published a new comprehensive, clear guide and toolkit that aims to support arts, culture and heritage organisations approach fundraising confidently and responsibly. There are sections on governance, financial vetting and creating fundraising or gift acceptance policies. The guide also usefully breaks down advice for small and grassroots organisations and mid to large scale organisations, and includes support for creating a protest management policy. There is also a section with clear advice for trustees. [Arts Fundraising](#) (website), Guide and Toolkit (pdf, 71pgs)

Scottish heritage sector the focus of new Creative PEC report

The latest State of the Nation Creative PEC report 'Audiences and workforce in arts, culture and heritage sectors: Recent trends and new evidence for Scotland', is in partnership with the AHRC Place-Based Research Programme team at the University of Glasgow. Drawing on Scottish census data, the report provides new insights into audiences and workforces in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Although overall engagement in culture in Scotland is high there is significant disparity between the wealthiest and most economically disadvantaged areas with (for example) 31% (most wealthy) visiting an art gallery compared with 14% (least wealthy). The report also challenges assumptions that cultural production is concentrated within large urban centres: Scotland's cultural workforce is distributed across a diverse range of places, including islands, rural communities and smaller towns. [Creative PEC](#)

Heritage Samples Registry community survey

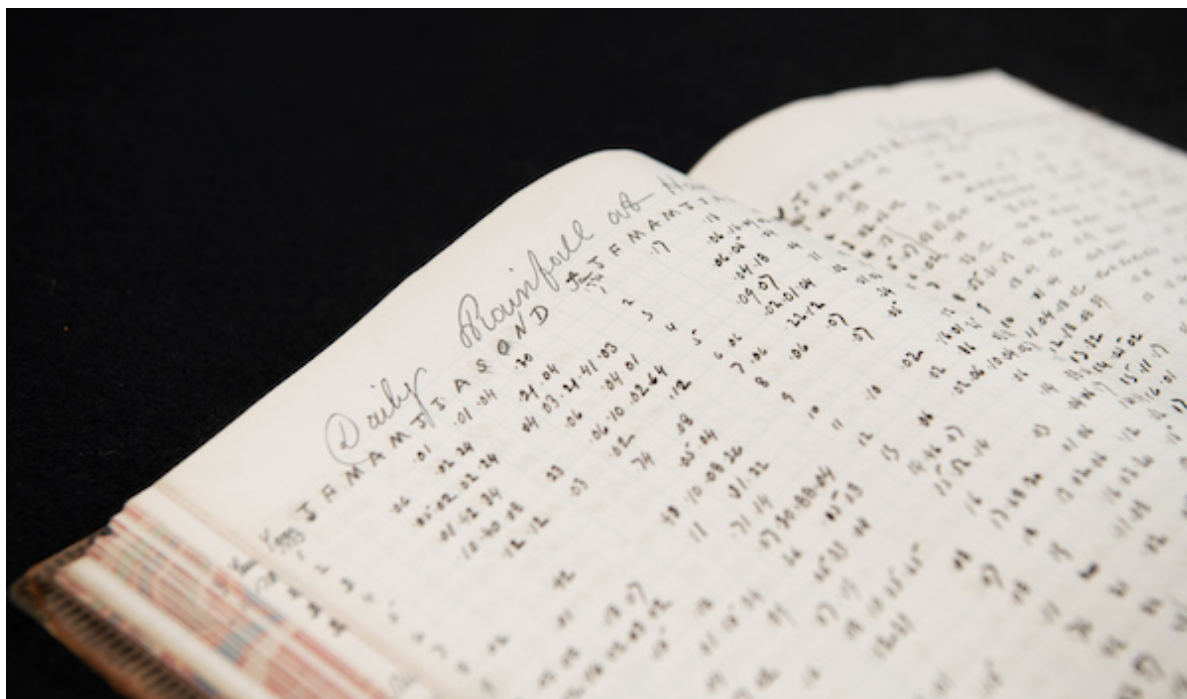
The Heritage Samples Registry is an emerging international initiative led by the National Gallery (UK), KIK-IRPA (Belgium), FORTH (Greece), and the Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum (Germany), to support the persistent identification, discovery, and sharing of physical samples used in heritage science: paint cross-sections, material fragments, archaeological specimens, reference standards, and the many other valuable samples that underpin heritage science and related research. This short survey is seeking input from researchers, institutions, and project partners — including those involved in related initiatives — to help shape this service and better understand community needs and priorities. It can be completed by individual researchers or institutions. Further background information is available on the project website. [Survey](#)

Survey for the heritage and conservation science workforce

Icon, the Institute of Conservation and the National Heritage Science Forum are working together to carry out the first UK-wide survey of the heritage and conservation science workforce. If your work involves any scientific or technological analysis of cultural heritage, please complete the survey to improve understanding of the workforce, its skills and needs, and demand for services. They are interested in input from individuals, employers and commissioners of heritage and conservation science services. Closing date 31st August 2026. [Survey](#)

British Council research reflects concern for heritage at risk

Key findings from British Council research published in June highlight that 86% of UK public agree cultural heritage must be protected in times of crisis with 81% agreeing that cultural heritage protection should be considered alongside humanitarian efforts. The findings have been released to mark the 10th anniversary of the international Cultural Protection Fund (CPF), which supports communities around the world to safeguard cultural heritage at risk. The research, conducted by Censuswide, surveyed 2,500 people aged 16-44 across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. When asked what cultural heritage means to them, more than half selected family traditions and celebrations (58%), closely followed by historic buildings and monuments (57%). Food and recipes passed down through generations (45%), and music, songs and dance (45%), were also highly selected. [British Council](#)



A daily rainfall tracker. Rain - National Library of Scotland.

Climate Change

Museums and galleries across the country close in the heatwave

The recent (and continuing) hot weather is having a significant impact on the sector with closures affecting income revenues for museums that lack the infrastructure for dealing with the high temperatures. The [Museums Journal](#) published details of a round-up of the museums that closed during very hot weather in June compiled by Mortice Consulting. Director Ben Melham who has been tracking the closures across Europe told the Journal "This heatwave has seen full and partial closures at a level unseen before," so with increased likelihood of more extreme weather events "climate resilience must be built into broader resilience and operational planning". Closures included Oxford's Story Museum and London's Young V&A, whilst partial closures affected the British Museum, V&A, Natural History Museum and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. [M+H Advisor](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£) (including Europe)

People's Emergency Briefing - call for museums to host screenings

A new film, the People's Emergency Briefing, presented by Chris Packham and bringing together expert perspectives on the climate and nature crisis and the implications for the UK, is being screened in communities and workplaces across the country to raise awareness and build support for a government-led public briefing.

It follows the National Emergency Briefing (NEB) in November 2025 which brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence to politicians and other stakeholders in Westminster. The campaign, which is supported by a wide range of organisations including the National Trust and Carbon Literacy Project, aims to encourage UK decision-makers to step up their response to the escalating climate and nature crisis. It is calling for a prime-time televised emergency briefing to the nation so that the whole country can be fully informed about the risks we face and the solutions available.

The 50-minute People's Emergency Briefing film is intended as a catalyst for a wider public conversation and a stepping stone towards a live televised national briefing. There are now 1,800 screenings taking place across the UK and beyond, and the NEB team are keen for as many new hosts as possible - including museums and cultural organisations - to take the film to their communities, workplaces and networks, with a view to creating a tipping point. Further information on the film and how to register to host a screening is on the [National Emergency Briefing website](#).

Theatre Green Book have partnered with the NEB to host an online webinar for people working in the arts and cultural sector on **Wednesday 16 September, 5pm-6.30pm**. The session is an opportunity to watch the film in full, see how the screening process works, understand what support and resources are available and ask questions of the NEB team. Attendance is free and [details are on Eventbrite](#).

Climate Change Committee publishes 'A Well Adapted UK' report

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has published 'A Well Adapted UK' the Fourth Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk which outlines concrete steps and investment needed for adaptation. Baroness Brown, Chair of the Adaptation Committee says "we are already experiencing disruption and damage from the rapidly increasing risks from climate change in the UK today" but that there is already enough evidence of where change is needed such as better cooling, flood protection and a more secure water supply to take action.

The report estimates the need for investment of "around £11 billion per year (range £7–£22 billion, 2025 prices) from the public and private sectors. This will generate returns in the tens of billions." It also suggests that "Government needs to lead a public dialogue about the level of resilience people expect and their willingness to pay for it." The purpose of the report is to "kickstart delivery of change". [CCC](#)

Cool Off in Culture campaign launched

Cool Off in Culture is a UK-wide campaign seeking to signpost the public to cultural venues where they can go to keep cool in hot weather. There is an interactive map for the public where you can add your venue. Alongside the map the campaign has produced a new Heat Adaptation Guide for Arts & Cultural Organisations and accompanying checklist which provides practical, building-focused strategies for navigating severe weather, developed by climate adaptation specialists Shade in the UK. [Cool Off in Culture](#) (campaign hub), [Heat Adaption](#) (Guide), [Heat Adaption](#) (Checklist)

The Path to Net Zero report with sector case studies

A new report commissioned by Creative PEC and Arts Council England shows that decarbonising the UK's cultural buildings delivers significant cost and energy savings. The findings present a clear opportunity to attract new funding into the sector. 'The Path to Net Zero' is co-authored by Fran Sanderson of Figurative and partners at Renew Culture, Buro Happold and MGAC. This report analyses seven representative case studies from across England and Wales to provide evidence on real-world energy and cost savings as well as the return on investment (ROI) from cultural retrofitting projects. Museum and gallery case studies include The Lowry, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum. The report is designed primarily to support understanding among cultural organisations, policymakers and funders involved in delivering these essential cultural retrofitting projects. [Creative PEC](#) (press release), [Path to Net Zero](#) (report, pdf, 77pgs)

Also: Royal Air Force Museum completes landmark £2.9 million decarbonisation project, [Salix](#)

Carbon Literacy training for museum professionals

The Design Museum in London is offering Carbon Literacy training over two half days in conjunction with Museum Development England. Running on Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 September from 9.30-1.30pm the workshops will be delivered online. This course is suitable for museum and cultural heritage professionals in a variety of roles. It has been delivered to a variety of sector colleagues, including Heads of Sustainability, Programme leaders, Project Managers, those who work in Communications, Curatorial, Development/fundraising, Exhibitions delivery, Learning, Events, Marketing, Retail, Catering and Visitor Experience. The training costs £95 and includes a certificate. [Design Museum](#)

Awards

The Box, Plymouth, win Art Fund Museum of the Year

The 2026 winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year is The Box in Plymouth. The Box was commended by the judges for an ambitious and welcoming approach – bringing together extraordinary collections, exhibitions and archives under one roof, alongside impactful community work and a deep commitment to access for all. Victoria Pomery OBE, Chief Executive of The Box, was presented with the £120,000 prize in a ceremony at the Cutty Sark, Royal Museums Greenwich. Four shortlisted museums including the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), The National Gallery (London), Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery (Norwich) and V&A East Storehouse (London) were all highly commended and received £20,000. [Art Fund](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#)

Family Friendly Museum Award shortlist announced

Kids in Museums have whittled down nominations for the Family Friendly Museum Award to produce a shortlist of museums and galleries across the country. 20 museums have been listed across five categories with several NMDC members gaining recognition: Hull and East Riding Museum (Humber Museums Partnership), Woodhorn Museum (North East Museums), Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow Life), Leeds City Museum (Leeds Museums and Galleries), National Maritime Museum, Ashmolean Museum and Norfolk Museums Service. There is a special category this year for Best Museum Careers Initiative celebrating the museums, galleries and heritage sites who are working to support young people to engage meaningfully with opportunities to develop skills for employment, gain professional experience in the heritage sector and build positive attitudes towards work. The winners will be revealed in October. [Kids in Museums](#)

AAH 2026 Curatorial Prizes

The Association for Art History named The Hepworth Wakefields' Helen Chadwick: Life Pleasures, as the winner of the 2026 Curatorial Prize for Exhibitions. The team also won the Curatorial Prize for Writing for the book of the same name which accompanied the exhibition. The winning exhibition, curated by Laura Smith (Artistic Director, The Hepworth Wakefield) and Farah Dailami (Assistant Curator, The Hepworth Wakefield), was praised by the panel for the rigorous research and archival recovery work undertaken on Chadwick's work and life, and how this informed an effective narrative within the exhibition. [AAH](#), [Hepworth](#)

Den Gamle By wins European Museum of the Year Award

The Danish open-air site Den Gamle By (The Old Town) in Aarhus city has been named as the 2026 European Museum of the Year by the European Museum Forum. The museum was lauded for bringing together historical and contemporary urban environments to address urgent contemporary questions, including migration, sustainability and social justice. The Council of Europe Museum Prize had already been awarded to the Young V&A in April. The Museum Prize for Environmental Sustainability went to Lahti Museum of Visual Arts in Finland. [EMA](#)

Nominations open for Volunteer Leader of the Year

The Heritage Volunteering Group have opened nominations for this year's Volunteer Leader of the Year award. The annual award celebrates the achievements of those who have made a difference and recognises innovative and outstanding examples of volunteering leadership and management within the heritage sector. This year the winner will receive a £100 gift card including an hour's consultation with Rob Jackson Consulting Ltd and the runner-up will receive a £25 gift card. The nomination form can be downloaded from the HVG home page and should be returned to heritagevolunteeringgroup@gmail.com by 31st August 2026. [HVG](#)



A rain poem. Rain - National Library of Scotland.

Collections

Empowering Collections report from Museums Association

Originally published in 2019, the updated version of the Empowering Collections report from the Museums Association highlights the ongoing challenges of resourcing vital work with collections, and of the value of creating strong partnerships – and of adopting innovative approaches, including through the use of digital technologies. Whilst the report has shown a willingness to open up collections and shown the increased awareness of decolonisation processes, there was still some apprehension about this work in terms of fear of a negative response and how to get boards and leadership to support the work. The report also notes a lack of resources for collections work and that there was sometimes a need to choose between back of house collections work and work with communities. Respondents wanted to understand more about how AI could be utilised ethically and effectively in collections management. Aside from funding, responses were overall positive about the policies, infrastructure and sector-wide support that is currently in place, but called for more sharing of collections information within the sector. [Museums Association](#) (website), [Empowering Collections](#) (report, pdf, 22 pages)

Understanding UK collections storage research published by NLHF

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has published results of research looking at how museums manage stored collections and the challenges they face in keeping them safe, well documented and accessible to the public. The UK wide survey of over 200 museums and in-depth stakeholder interviews revealed a range of pressures:

- **storage capacity is at its limit:** 60% of museums report their stores are already full.
- **most collections are in storage:** 71% of museums keep more than half of their items in storage.
- **conditions often fall below sector standards:** only 15% meet best-practice care and conservation standards.
- **documentation backlogs limit resilience and access:** gaps in inventory and cataloguing limit risk management, space planning, rationalisation and access.
- **collections continue to grow while rationalisation falls behind:** 83% are actively collecting, 65% plan to rationalise but 47% disposed of nothing in the past year.

- **public access to stored collections is limited:** only 2% offer open access and most access is by appointment.

The research also highlighted a "need for coordinated leadership, targeted investment and strong focus on collections planning, rationalisation and skills." Heather Lomas Consulting and Emma Chaplin Heritage and Museum Services led the research. As a next step the Heritage Fund has said it will collaborate further with the sector to understand where targeted action could support museums. [NLHF](#)

Hazards in Collections Toolkit

Museum Development South West have produced the Hazards in Collections Toolkit part of a collaborative year long project to help museums in the South West identify, make safe, monitor and manage hazardous objects in their collections. The project resources include a introductory video into reducing hazards in collections, a template for museums to create a list of their own hazardous collections and a handbook to help museum teams identify, eliminate and reduce risks in their collections. [MDSW](#)

Cultural sector funding

National Glass Centre demolition and risk to UK heritage

Alexander Goodger, the director of Stourbridge Glass Museum in the West Midlands, has written an open letter voicing concerns for the future of the UK's story of glass heritage as the National Glass Centre prepares to close at the end of July, and calling for a cross-sector strategy to prevent irreversible loss. The Centre, which houses a museum of glassmaking, hot glass furnaces and workshops as well as the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, is owned by the University of Sunderland and operated by Sunderland Culture, an independent trust responsible for several cultural assets in the city. The Gallery, which was designed in 1953 by architect James Wallace as an exhibition and events space, sits within the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design. The [Museums Association](#) reported that the cost of renovating the building could come to between £14m and £45m. Sunderland Culture is hoping to develop a new £7.5m glass facility on a smaller site, and has secured a £5m grant from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Cultural Development Fund towards this. [BBC](#) (future plans).

Jewish Museum London to get £1m government funding

Marking Jewish Cultural Month, Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy confirmed £1 million support for the Jewish Museum to sustain their vital outreach and engagement programmes with schools and communities, and accelerating its search for a new home. The museum closed their Camden location in 2023 and has since continued its work as a "museum without walls", delivering exhibitions, learning programmes and community engagement activities across the capital. The announcement was made at the launch of 'Two Rooms' a new interim space for the Jewish Museum London, while it searches for its permanent home. The space is located at JW3 in North London and features two new exhibitions celebrating the richness of the museum's collections and the long history of Jewish families in Britain. [Gov.uk](#), [Museums Association](#)

Round-up of sector pressures

Good news for the Jewish Museum comes as the [Museums Association Journal](#) published analysis on the growing **divide between regional and national museums** on financial pressures and approaches to free entry. This month the [Museums Association](#) also reported on news that the University of Dundee was planning to close the **Cooper Gallery** by June 2027 part of a long-running cost-cutting exercise to stave off full financial collapse. Herefordshire Council said plans for the Grade II* listed Shire Hall would no longer include a new upper floor and roof terraces, as spending on the project was set to run £14m over its original £20.5m budget. The [BBC](#) reported that **Hereford's museum and art gallery** redevelopment has been readjust because of the current economic climate. [My London](#) also reported on cuts to plans for a new **Migration Museum** which will be based in the City of London. Part of a new housing development, plans have removed a second floor for the museum and replaced it with student housing. It was [reported](#) that **Rochdale's Pioneer Museum**, the birthplace of the modern co-operative movement, was also at risk with an annual deficit of £240,000. Since 2007 the Co operative Heritage Trust has managed the museum together with its collections, archives and historic assets, following a £3m endowment from the Co op Group.

Digital news

RAMM opens up digital content with new strategy

In 2024, RAMM (Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery) adopted a new Open Access Strategy for their digital collections, which includes releasing digital surrogates of public domain artworks as CC0 (waiving rights to copyright). Since then, GLAM-E Lab and RAMM staff have been collecting data on the wider impact of the strategy to find out more about how going open access has affected the museum and to inform future open access strategies. RAMM has published a report detailing the findings of this research including:

- An 85% increase in website visits to RAMM's website around the time of the open access announcement;
- A total of 12,880,510 Wikipedia page views of articles containing RAMM images;
- RAMM images featured across 32 different Wikipedia languages, including English, Portuguese, Slovak, Urdu and Korean;
- A total of 529 downloads of RAMM's open access 3D models from SketchFab;
- A further 11 local cultural heritage organisations uploading works open access in collaboration with RAMM. [RAMM](#) (report)

CMA sets sights on Google search services in UK

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has imposed a new conduct requirement for Google search, meaning it must take specific action under the UK's digital markets competition regime. The requirement will secure a fairer deal for publishers and consumers and improve Google's search services in the UK. Sarah Cardell, Chief Executive of the CMA, said: "With features like AI Overviews rapidly reshaping online search, it is crucial that content publishers, including news organisations, have appropriate bargaining power over how their content is used. At the same time, these measures will help tens of millions of UK search users better understand and trust the information presented to them." Google will have nine months to implement all changes but the CMA expects important parts of the controls to become available to publishers well before that deadline. The Conservative MP Damian Hinds has also introduced a new Private Member's Bill aimed at giving online publishers and other website operators greater visibility over the scraping of online content by automated bots. [Gov.uk](#) (CMA), [Parliament.uk](#) (Private Member's Bill)

Museum Data Service Newsletter

The Museum Data Service is a free service that aims to connect and share all the object records across all UK museums, large and small. They have launched their own newsletter to help you keep informed on progress, updates and events and are also running a couple of introductions to the service on 23 July and 25 August starting at 11am. [MDS](#) (website/newsletter sign up), [MDS](#) (events)

Funding opportunities

Freelands Foundation new fund opens

The 'Learning Through Making' fund from the Freelands Foundation is a new fund that provides grants of up to £25,000 for visual art education projects that creatively engage audiences with the process of making and exploration of materials. Applications are welcome from UK-based visual arts organisations for projects that are open, curious and iterative, and which enable learning through exploration and testing.

This could include:

- Providing materials, transport or access to expertise and facilities
- Action research projects to trial something new or find something out, e.g., a new series of workshops or events
- Adding a making-focused element to existing activity

Applications are open to arts organisations that are registered charities and CICs of all sizes from across the UK. You can find out more about the fund on support sessions scheduled for Thursday 9 July and Wednesday 12 August 2026 at 10.30am. Apply by 12pm on Friday 11 September 2026.

[Freelands Foundation](#), [Support sessions](#)

Jerwood Art Fund grants open until October

These grants support museums and galleries to commission artists to make work of exceptional innovation and quality – furthering the artist's development at a pivotal stage in their careers, while enriching public collections through new contemporary art. The funding will support two commissions of £70,000 – £100,000, covering the full costs of delivering and presenting the commissions with each partner museum. They will consider applications from public museums, galleries, historic houses, libraries and archives based in the UK or Channel Islands. The deadline for applications is 2 October 2026. [Art Fund](#)



A silhouette art piece of Robert Burns' 'Tam O'Shanter'. Rain - National Library of Scotland.

Conferences and events

Museum Ideas 2026 International Conference

The 2026 Museum-iD Conference will be held on 26 September in London at the Wellcome Collection. The theme of the conference will be based around the question - How can museums help create a more just, caring, and hopeful future? Meet colleagues from around the world and hear stories that spark new ideas and remind us why museums matter. Delegates from 17 countries took part last year, creating an atmosphere of curiosity, generosity, and shared learning. Speakers announced so far include: Dr JC Niala (History of Science Museum, Oxford), Michael Corley (The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), Adam Milford (The Box, Plymouth) and Jocelyne Stahl (Foundation Humboldt Forum, Germany). Tickets are available on a sliding scale, with discounts for booking with colleagues. 1 ticket costs £197 with £97 tickets for those facing barriers to participation.

[Museum-iD](#)

International Cultural Heritage Law - short course

This course from the British Institute of International and Comparative Law runs across five sessions and offers an introduction to cultural heritage as an international legal concept. It will include discussions of the key threats to cultural heritage at present, including trafficking, armed conflicts, and development. Taught online the sessions include the restitution of cultural heritage and combatting the trafficking of cultural objects. Dates for the course are 30 September, 7, 14, 21, 28 October 2026 from 1-3pm and cost £400. [BIICL](#)

NEMO European Museum Conference

The Network of European Museum Organisations will be holding their annual conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 11–13 October with a focus on 'Human after all - Museums in the wake of AI'. As AI reshapes how museums work and connect with audiences, and as digital vulnerabilities and cyber threats continue to grow, this conference invites you to pause and reflect on what truly matters: people, trust, and cultural stewardship. Together exploring how museums can not only respond to change, but be part of shaping it. There are also sessions on cybersecurity. Tickets cost 110 EUR for member tickets and 220 EUR for non-members. [NEMO](#)

Heritage Volunteering Conference

Held online on 24 November and 25 November, 9:30 to 13:30, the Heritage Volunteering Conference will explore how to continue to inspire volunteers in this ever changing world. From Passion to Purpose - Volunteer Engagement in a Changing World, will include keynote speakers; Denise Hayward, Chief Executive Officer, from Volunteer Now, and also Dominic Pinkney, CEO from Works4U. Attendees will also have the chance to pick from 12 workshops ranging from harnessing influencing power, to creating retention mechanisms within your organisations. Early Bird tickets cost £30 with full price tickets costing £40. [HVG](#)

Appointments

Craig Bentley has been appointed as Director of the National Railway Museum, a position he has held in acting capacity since January 2025. Craig has led the National Railway Museum and Locomotion through a monumental year in its history – with the re-opening of Station Hall alongside the celebrations for the 50th birthday, the 200th anniversary of the modern railway, and the bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. [LinkedIn](#)

Maria Balshaw, previously Director of Tate and former NMDC Chair, has been appointed as the New Master of University College, Oxford. Dr Balshaw will take up the post on 1 September 2027, following Baroness Valerie Amos' successful seven-year Mastership, and become the College's second female head of house. [Oxford University](#)

National Museums Scotland have named **Sushma Jansari** as Keeper of Global Arts, Cultures and Design. Jansari, currently Curator South Asia at the British Museum, curated the award-winning exhibition 'Ancient India: Living Traditions', she takes up her role from September 2026. [LinkedIn](#)

Claire Messenger is taking over from Maria Blyzinsky as Co-chair of ICOM UK. Messenger brings over twenty years of expertise in international collaboration gained from managing the British Museum's International Training Programme, a global network of culture and heritage professionals. [ICOM UK](#)

Catch up

Plan for £8m redevelopment of Highland museum, 30 June 2026, [BBC](#)

London Transport Museum to get makeover, 25 June 2026, [BBC](#)

Misan Harriman to step down as chair of Southbank Centre, 24 June 2026, [Guardian](#)

Trent Park museum to open on 21 July 2026, 22 June 2026, [M+H Advisor](#)

Brunel's SS Great Britain site renamed as new museum prepares to launch, 11 June 2026, [Museums Association](#)

International news

Former Netherlands Fotomuseum director awarded €400,000 after unfair dismissal ruling, 1 July 2026, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) / [Dutch News](#)

First the Kennedy Center, now the Smithsonian. How long can the museum system's leader, Lonnie Bunch, survive?, 22 June 2026, [The Atlantic](#) / Lonnie Bunch: the last bulwark for the Smithsonian, 28 June 2026, [Observer](#)

The Netherlands and Germany agree to return 2,000 artifacts to Ghana, 22 June 2026, [ARTnews](#)

Louvre president tells French Senate museum is 'at the end of its rope', 17 June 2026, [ARTnews](#)

Frankenthaler Climate Initiative awards \$4.5m in grants to US arts organisations, 17 June 2026, [Blooloop](#)

Jobs

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

- [Project Manager \(Exhibitions and Galleries\) \(18 months FTC\) - Science Museum Group](#)
- [Director, Collections Care - Imperial War Museum](#)
- [Senior Commercial Operations Manager - Glasgow Life](#)
- [Head of Creative Studios - National Museums Liverpool](#)
- [Experience Manager Smithfield - London Museum](#)
- [Head of Public Programmes - National Library of Scotland](#)

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