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NMDC news



A short filmed introduction to a Leeds Museums and Galleries 'Meet and Make' session - the new virtual version of a weekly craft event for older people. All images this month courtesy of Leeds Museums & Galleries.

Museums will recover – but it will be a slow process

NMDC Chair and Science Museum Group Director Sir Ian Blatchford has written for *The Telegraph*, assessing the situation of the sector and how and when museums are likely to reopen. He says that although the Government has given 4th July as the earliest possible opening date “do not expect many of our national and regional museums to be racing towards it with undue haste...our path to reopening will be guided by two things: the safety of our visitors and staff, and financial sustainability.” The Science Museum Group, with museums the length of the country, will choose reopening times based on conditions in each area, including public transport, infection rates, and local tourism plans. Tate may be one of the earlier nationals to open, potentially in August, but no dates are certain. He also emphasises the popularity of museum resources during lockdown – use of SMG’s online educational materials has increased fourfold – the centrality of museums to national wellbeing, and the importance of helping them survive so that they can contribute to the social and economic national recovery. [NMDC](#)

Guidance for safe reopening

Good practice guidance for museums reopening to be published in mid-June

An NMDC-led cross-sectoral working group is developing good practice guidance on museum reopening with DCMS’ support. The approach is guided by the safety of visitors and staff, and financial sustainability. The guidance acknowledges the complexity of the sector, where each museum will be working within a unique set of circumstances and responding to local contexts. We hope the guidance will be ready to share in the next couple of weeks. [NMDC](#)

DCMS announces Cultural Renewal Taskforce

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden is chairing a taskforce aimed at reopening the leisure sector, one of five Government panels covering different parts of the economy. He will be supported by eight people prominent in culture or the creative industries, including ACE Chair Sir Nicholas Serota and Neil Mendoza, author of the 2017 Mendoza Review of museums in England, who has also been appointed to a new post as Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal. The group is covering four issues:

- Developing guidelines for safe reopening which dovetail with those already published, but shaped by sector-specific expert input.
- Creative new solutions, including those driven by digital to help sectors to work despite restrictions.
- Agreeing and aligning cross-sectoral guidance.
- Proving stakeholders with direct access to ministers.

The work, which began in late May, will be supported by eight working groups chaired by DCMS ministers and including representatives of sector bodies including galleries and museums. [Gov.uk](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Gov.uk](#) (Mendoza)

Reopening by business type, from offices to urban areas and green spaces

The Government has issued guidance on maintaining social distancing for those who manage green spaces or own urban centres. Issues highlighted include managing high footfall and restricted entry and exit points, and possible ways to use technology. It has also published eight guides to working safely in different settings – ranging from labs to restaurants, shops and offices. [Gov.uk](#) (green spaces and urban areas), [Gov.uk](#) (workplace), [Gov.uk](#) (shops), [Gov.uk](#) (food delivery from restaurants)

Guidance for those searching for archaeological finds

DCMS has also issued guidance for metal detectorists, mudlarks and others seeking archaeological finds as lockdown eases, including advice on getting to sites and protecting archaeology. [Gov.uk](#)

ICOM issues safety guidance for museums emerging from lockdown

The International Council of Museums has published guidance to help museums reopen while protecting the safety of public and staff. Issues covered include:

- Preparing for the arrival of the public – which might include timed tickets, establishing visitor maximums, online booking and how to deny access to those showing symptoms. It also explores the possibility of extending opening hours and giving some periods to particular demographics, such as young people or over 65s.
- Adapting the flow of visitors, which might include closing staffed cloakrooms and drawing dots on the ground to indicate correct spacing.
- Cleaning measures – especially around public toilets and access to sanitizer.
- Closing some rooms that don't lend themselves to social distancing, and restricting lifts to those for whom they are essential.
- Tips for handling behind the scenes areas – including advice to consider extending loan periods to minimise movement and handling of objects.

ICOM

Also: Artnet has gathered together prevailing issues and wisdom from the reopening of museums in the US in one place, covering issues from comms to managing bottlenecks at venues. [Artnet](#)

ALVA recovery tracker shows a tenth of visitors keen to return at once, but work needed on public confidence

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions has published two reports, tracking how the public are feeling about returning to visitor attractions. The first covers late April, and the second mid-May. The May report finds that:

- since the announcement of lockdown easing, there has been an uptick in sentiment that the worst is still to come from 24% to 35%, but the largest group (44%) think things will stay the same and 21% think the worst has passed.
- The average amount of time before people anticipate returning to a visitor attraction is 5.1 months.
- 9% say they will visit museums and galleries as soon as they reopen, 48% will see what happens and 43% are unlikely to visit for a long time. This is roughly similar to figures across leisure, from zoos to castles and theme parks – only gardens and country houses buck the trend with around a quarter happy to visit immediately.
- There will also be a knock-on from the level of confidence in using public transport, especially in London. Currently 21% say they will feel confident on public transport when lockdown eases, 61% will not.
- Concern about the level of crowds is a major barrier to visits. The top safety priorities for the public are venues limiting visitor numbers and being seen to enforce social distancing, addressing issues with toilets, indoor cafes, interactives and regularly touched surfaces and having hand sanitiser and staff visibly cleaning around the site.

[AIM](#) (ALVA reports), [Museums Journal](#)

Also: Newish twitter account @covidsitor, run by researcher and evaluator Marie Hobson, is hosting discussion and resource sharing on audience research and museum visitors during Covid-19 [Twitter](#)

VisitBritain launches tracker to discover how the public feel about taking a holiday

VisitBritain has launched a consumer confidence tracking survey to run over the next 13 weeks and assess how the public feel about taking short breaks or longer holidays in the UK. Findings from the first week include:

- Asked for a perception of when things will become 'close to normal' only 15% suggested a date in August or earlier, 17% said September and 22% October - December. More than 40% suggested dates in 2021.
- On a scale from 0 - 4, confidence in undertaking everyday activities is 3 for walks in the countryside, 2.2 for shopping at a local shopping centre and 1.8 for travelling on public transport and eating at a restaurant.
- 13% anticipated taking more short breaks in the UK than normal for the rest of the year, with 25% saying they would take about the same, 41% fewer and 21% do not yet know.
- Asked which leisure activities people are more or less likely to enjoy as lockdown lifts, only outdoor activities received net positive scores, with visits to beaches or mountains the highest at +39. Museums scored -7, similar to restaurants, cinema and festivals on -6.

- The most popular anticipated holiday destination is the South West, and most of those planning holidays intend to go by car.

Visit Britain is also planning a marketing campaign to encourage people to holiday in the UK when re-opening is underway, and is seeking stories of people and tourism businesses adapting, and day trip ideas to promote through its channels. [VisitBritain](#) (sentiment tracker), [VisitBritain](#) (early June results), [VisitBritain](#) (tell your story for reopening campaign)

Timings for ending lockdown across the four UK nations

The four UK countries have each published a roadmap towards the end of lockdown, including stages for the likely opening of museums and other attractions.

- Northern Ireland has published a five stage recovery plan in which the reopening of outdoor museums such as Ulster Folk Museum will begin at stage two of the process, and other museums and galleries at stage three. There are no dates for each stage, though the hope is to have reached stage five by December.
- Under the Scottish Government's plan for exiting lockdown, garden centres and outdoor activity areas were permitted to reopen in the first phase last month. There will be three week reviews before moving to stage two (which will include the reopening of some leisure amenities such as outdoor pubs, but not outdoor museums) and then stage three (including all museums). This means that the earliest point at which museums can reopen in Scotland is the second week of July.
- In England, museums can reopen on 4th July at the earliest, although this could be delayed or changed depending on how events unfold. There is also the possibility that guidance will vary by region so that 'a greater risk in Cornwall should not lead to disproportionate restrictions in Newcastle'.
- Welsh open air museums may be the first out of lockdown in the country, including St Fagans National Museum of History. The Welsh Government's reopening plan has a 'red, amber and green' stage, with museums expected to reopen in the 'amber' stage, although a blanket reopening is unlikely. Social distancing and capacity caps will continue at every stage. No dates have yet been applied to the plan.

[Museums Journal](#) (Northern Ireland), [Museums Journal](#) (Scotland), [Scottish Government](#) (reopening plan), [Museums Journal](#) (England), [Museums Journal](#) (Wales), [Experience UK](#), [Gov.uk](#) (England timeline for retail reopening)

New studies show the role of ventilation in minimising the spread of coronavirus

The Economist reports that the average workstation has decreased in size by about 25% over the last decade, and that to create a two metre gap between people in the average workplace may mean that as little as 30 – 35% of staff can fit, making homeworking for desk jobs likely until a vaccine is developed. Meanwhile *New Scientist* points to mixed evidence that the virus may still spread between socially distanced people, if they spend a lot of time together in poorly ventilated indoor space – whether that is a building or an aeroplane. *The New York Times* points to a recent Chinese study suggesting that out of 7,300 cases, only two people caught the virus while outside. The *Economist* concurs, and suggests that attention to ventilation may be worthwhile in many spaces, regardless of the coronavirus. It writes “one study found that the extra costs of improving air quality could be paid back in less than two years, in terms of higher productivity and reduced ill health.” *Undark* has been following the development of tests to see how long the virus can survive on different surfaces at levels that will transmit infection, but the current costs and debateable results mean that regular cleaning is the answer for most organisations at the moment. [The Economist](#), [New Scientist](#), [Undark](#), [NYTimes](#) (evidence for outdoor spread)

Addressing racism and injustice

Museum sector statements on Black Lives Matter

In response to the killing of an unarmed black man, George Floyd, by police in the US and reaction across the US and worldwide, a number of museums have signed a statement in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, including the Museums Association. It partly reads: *"as the leading membership bodies representing the UK museums, galleries, heritage and archives we take responsibility for ending racism in the heritage sector. This work is overdue. This work is non-negotiable. It cuts across all aspects of our sector, from the collections we curate and preserve, the people who make up the heritage workforce, to the learning programmes we deliver."* Museums across the UK have also put out their own statements, opposing racism and reflecting on how museums should look at their own collections and practice in the light of endemic racism: Derby Museums tweeted *"we will oppose racism and be prepared to be challenged about and act upon our history of colonial exploitation and our current practices."* Tate tweeted *"we have a platform, a voice, and a duty to our Black members, employees, artists, visitors and followers to speak up and stand for human rights and anti-racism. Nobody should have to live in fear because of the colour of their skin."* [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#) (statement), [Derby Museums](#), [Tate](#)

Members' news



Making Japan - this exhibition opened at the beginning of March at Lotherton Hall so was very short-lived in physical form. The museum converted it to a digital exhibition with object and exhibition photography, film and text from the interpretation panels.

British Museum helps to detect fake antiquities seized at Heathrow

Two trunks of apparent cuneiform tablets and other Mesopotamian antiquities seized at Heathrow were sent to the British Museum in July last year where the contents were identified as fakes. Some of the inscriptions were a 'complete mish-mash which made no sense when read'. Curator St John Simpson said that the seizure was part of a wider pattern of criminals creating fakes as governments clamp down on the trade in real antiquities. He added that museums have a role to play in educating the public on the difference between real and fake ancient objects. [Museums Journal](#), [British Museum](#)

York Museums Trust announce community flower-growing project under lockdown

York Museums Trust is asking local residents to grow pot plants of any kind to contribute to a community flower display in York Museum Gardens. The space is currently shut because it is a registered botanical gardens needing high maintenance, and a minimal service is currently in place as 80% of YMT staff are on furlough leave. However, once lockdown is over, gardens manager Steve Williams will arrange all the donations, which should include a wide range of colours and varieties of plant, in a crowdsourced display. In the meantime, tips for growers will be published on @museumgardens on Twitter and @yorkmuseumgardens on Instagram. [YMT](#)

Museum from home of the month: Leeds Museums & Galleries

Images this month come from Leeds Museums & Galleries' work to continue to connect to audiences while its sites remain shut. Its website is offering virtual exhibitions, activities for children and adults, and its previously real-world programme adapted to current circumstances. Projects include transferring its 'meet and make' events with older people into video tutorials. Social media has paid a crucial part in making audiences feel valued during lockdown, but the museum is reaching offline too, both through press and specific projects: the 'museum window' community project collects stories and objects from people in Leeds and helps them to stay connected. Looking ahead, the museum is seeking to keep up momentum gained with its digital audience to ultimately provide a more accessible museums and galleries experience. [Leeds Museums](#)

New initiatives

Queer Heritage and Collections Network is launched

The Art Fund has supplied financial support for a new Queer Heritage and Collections Network, created by a partnership of bodies including the National Trust, English Heritage and the University of Leicester. Led by consultant Dan Vo, the network will first consult with the sector to discover what help it can offer and will then create an initial programme. Interested museums should contact d.vo@vam.ac.uk or @DanNouveau on twitter. [Museums Journal](#)

Family Friendly Museum Award from Home

Kids In Museums has launched a one-off set of awards for museums that have offered excellent online resources to families during lockdown. Families are invited to make nominations in five categories: best film, best social media activity, best website activity, best international digital activity and the Going the Extra Mile Award. Museums are also welcome to nominate themselves. The deadline for entries is 5pm on 30th June. [Kids in Museums](#)

Proud Places project puts London schoolchildren in touch with hyperlocal heritage

When London state school pupils go back to school in the autumn, the Heritage of London Trust will be offering some the chance to take part in its new £300k programme to put them in closer touch with local heritage. 7 – 16 year olds will be shown heritage in their own neighbourhoods, as well as meeting conservation experts and stonemasons. The programme will run for three years and will especially focus on regenerating neglected areas and reducing anti-social behaviour, as well as teaching older pupils presentation skills and building confidence. [Heritage of London Trust](#), [Evening Standard](#)

Collections

Connecting collections

Art UK has launched 'Curations', a new feature on its website, which allows users to curate their own exhibitions, selecting from the 250,000 works in public collections featured on the site. They can choose from a variety of display modes and add their own commentaries or notes, which can be kept private, or made public and shared on social media with the hashtag #CurateYourOwn. Art UK partners, including many museums and galleries, can also use the site to share actual or imagined exhibitions with a global audience; useful both for connecting during covid, and also as a way of archiving the content of past exhibitions which have drawn from public collections. [Art UK](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Social media campaign highlights connections across museum collections

17 cultural heritage sector-leading organisations have agreed to work together to promote national collections as a whole. As we reported last month, the Arts and Humanities Research Council has launched a major piece of work which will eventually lead to a single portal to all UK collections – but the delivery of such a system will be some years off. Therefore, and particularly in response to lockdown, organisations including AIM, CILIP, the Art Fund, Museums Galleries Scotland, NMDc and many more will be working to bring collections together in a social media campaign. All museums are invited to join in with the hashtag #collectionsunited over the coming weeks. [National Collection](#)

Collecting during coronavirus: from letters to tiny books

Museums and a whole variety of other organisations are continuing to collect a social and scientific history of the coronavirus. Some innovative projects this month include:

- The National Trust is calling for the public to send a letter to its Director-General Hilary McGrady to tell her about their lockdown experiences. Letters will help create an archive for the future, joining thousands of letters written across the centuries already held by the NT. [National Trust](#)
- Historic England has published a selection of the photographs of lockdown that it has collected. [Guardian](#)
- The British Library is asking children to follow the lead of the Brontës in producing tiny books. Realising that during lockdown *"a high proportion of children do not have access to computers, and that many do not have art materials"*, the library will also be distributing printed packs to aid participation through food banks, libraries and teachers. [British Library](#)

Available funding

NLHF offers new larger grants from its Emergency Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has now launched a new strand of larger grants from its Emergency Fund. It is offering sums of £50k - £250k, which are open to all previous NLHF grantees and can be used to cover essential costs for up to four months. The grants are intended to address immediate risks, help find stability and create a path to long-term sustainability. Organisations will get priority if they have tried other options without success and have limited reserves. The deadline for applications is 30th June. [NLHF](#)

UKRI launches £1.5m call to develop citizen science projects

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has launched a call for projects developing innovative citizen science across a broad range of research topics, including crowdsourcing data, analysing existing data sets and designing research programmes. The £1.5m funding will support projects with sums from £156k - £375k. Projects should be led by Independent Research Organisations or Higher Education Institutes and must involve citizens in exploring socially-relevant issues. UKRI's Tom Saunders says *"we know that some fields of research are much more familiar with citizen science methods than others, so we're particularly interested in supporting collaborations that extend citizen science research methods into new fields."* The funding is part of a broader ambition to involve under-represented communities and places with research and innovation. Applications are open until 9th September, with projects beginning by March 2021. [UKRI](#), [UKRI](#) (introduction on twitter)

Freelands Foundation opens £1.5m fund to support visual artists

The Freelands Foundation has opened a £1.5m fund as part of its commitment to help artists and freelance creative practitioners in England and Northern Ireland, in need of emergency support. Grants of £1.5k - £2.5, are available and applications are open until 2pm on 18th June. [A.N.](#)

Contemporary Art Society announces fund to acquire artworks during coronacrisis

The Contemporary Art Society's Rapid Response Fund will be supporting the acquisition of up to ten artworks by museums and galleries during lockdown, to help support engagement with local communities when they reopen. Director Caroline Douglas says "*the CAS has always been one of the most important investors at grassroots level in the arts ecosystem, supporting artists, galleries and museums through smart and timely purchases.*" It is now inviting the public to help it raise a further £20k towards the project. New acquisitions through the fund will be announced at the beginning of every month. [CAS](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Surveys and consultations

Digital engagement and Covid-19: survey from Art UK

Art UK is asking art collections to participate in a survey about the impact Covid-19 is having on digital engagement. The survey results will guide Art UK in its support for collections and will be shared with the DCMS, ACE, the National Lottery and the devolved governments. The person who completes the survey needs to have an overview of the digital engagement that already exists around your art collection. The survey closes on 17th June. [Art UK](#)

Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence: shortage occupation list

The Government's Migration Advisory Committee is seeking evidence from organisations as it compiles its UK shortage occupation list, with a particular focus on RQF 3 – 5 (medium skill) occupations. It wants to hear about roles filled by migrant workers, salary levels and implications of changes being planned at the end of the transition period after leaving the EU. There are options to either give full evidence, or answer more limited questions. The deadline is 24th June. [Gov.uk](#)

Appointments and resignations

Frances Jeens has been appointed as interim Director of the Jewish Museum. She was previously its Director of Learning and Engagement. [Museums Journal](#)

Ellen McAdam will be stepping down as Director of Birmingham Museums Trust from early June 2020 after almost seven years in the post. Ellen had been due to step down in October, but the Board has kindly agreed to advance Ellen's retirement in order to care for a family member. BMT is now advertising for a new Director.

Beamish Director Richard Evans has resigned with immediate effect. The museum will continue to be run by its Deputy Director and senior leadership team until a recruitment process takes place. [Museums Journal](#)

Neil Mendoza has been appointed as Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal. His brief will include a focus on philanthropy in arts and culture, to help sector bodies and DCMS develop support for the sector. [Gov.uk](#)

Events, professional learning and podcasts

Collections Trust: presenting your collections online

The latest online event from Collections Trust is a Q&A on how best to present collections online, with speakers including Culture24's Richard Moss, Rachel Cartwright of the SW Museum Development Programme and Alec Ward of Museum Development London discussing options and showing good examples. The event takes place from 11am on 25th June. [Collections Trust](#), [Collections Trust](#) (YouTube channel)

A more generous future? Nesta talks to Yancey Strickler

Nesta is running an online in conversation event with Yancey Strickler, the founder of Kickstarter. He will be asking 'can we build a society that looks beyond money, focused on values that make life worth living?' He will argue that while the pursuit of wealth has produced innovation and prosperity, it has also embedded the idea that the route that the most money is always the right path. He will discuss how we should expand our idea of value. The event takes place on 24th June from 4pm; book to secure a place. [Nesta](#)

Climate Literacy webinars and more from Julie's Bicycle

Environment and culture specialist Julie's Bicycle has published its programme of upcoming events, including creative climate literacy webinars and weekly creative climate chats every Wednesday from 4.30pm. It also lists recent podcasts and filmed conferences. [Julie's Bicycle](#)

Save the date: AIM conference going virtual

The Association of Independent Museums has announced that it will go ahead with this year's conference in virtual form. Details are still in the pipeline, but the dates are fixed for 18th – 19th June. Follow AIM's twitter feed for up to date details. [AIM](#) (twitter)

Learning and career development resources in brief

- Museum Freelance has published a list of training resources, with topics including general business skills, marketing and audience development, evaluation, climate, evaluation and health and wellbeing. [Museum Freelance](#)
- Charity consultant Jean O'Brien is amassing an eclectic list of courses, webinars and events relevant to broad professional development during lockdown, with an emphasis on fundraising and charity digital skills. [Lockdown learning](#)

Charity Finance Group conference

The Charity Finance Group annual conference has now moved to 13th October, with the theme 'Creating a Better Future'. Topics range from practical financial management, to addressing climate, and 'reinvention from the Plantagenets to Madonna'. Tickets are £194 for organisations with a turnover less than £1m. [CFG](#)

Audience Agency launches masterclasses in online skills

The Audience Agency is offering three-hour small group online masterclasses in digital areas where cultural organisations most need to improve their skills and offer in the current circumstances. Upcoming events include Online Community Participation on 10th June, Social Media Effectiveness on 15th June and Evaluating the Importance of Digital Activity on 17th and 18th June. All events are £220 per person (contact louise.kenny@theaudienceagency.org if you would like to discuss any aspect of the event or pricing ahead of booking). [Audience Agency](#)

Also: the Museum of London has announced that its digital training will continue online, with new dates announced here. [Museum of London](#)

Digital Works podcast – 'interrogating the shiny new things' and what still works post-covid

Since February, the Digital Works podcast has been interviewing a range of people who do digital in the cultural sector, whether in-house, consultants or funders. It looks at what 'shiny new things' are available in a fast-developing sector, and what is useful in practice. Interviewees include Louise Cohen, the Royal Academy of Art's Head of Digital and the Audience Agency's Kati Price. In the latest episode, consultant Chris Unitt attempts to answer some of the questions he [aired in a widely circulated](#) post last month. He talks about models for monetising the arts drawn from across the sector from film to theatre and museums; the challenges of setting a new price point (which often involves weaning people off 'free') and discussing which organisations will cope the best with a 'digital revolution that happened over ten days'. [Digital Works](#) (latest episode with Chris Unitt) [Digital Works](#) (episode index)

Gardens - from cities to the sea



Museum Window is a community project created as part of Leeds Museums & Galleries bicentenary in 2021, collecting stories and objects from people in Leeds, and helping them to stay connected offline. People are encouraged to create their own museum window, with potential for installation at the museum itself at a later point.

Garden Museum announces reopening with Derek Jarman exhibition on 4th July

The Garden Museum in London has announced that it will reopen on the first day permitted by Government, 4th July. It will be showing its delayed exhibition on Derek Jarman's house and garden at Dungeness, which were recently saved for the nation through a £3.5m fundraising effort. Entrance to the exhibition will be on timed tickets and in line with social distancing guidance. However, the museum is currently trying to recover from financial losses of £270k incurred between March and June from loss of visitors, venue hire and profits from its café. Its fundraising efforts will include a 50 mile sponsored swim by Director Christopher Woodward from Newlyn in Cornwall to Tresco on the Isles of Scilly. [Garden Museum](#), [Garden Museum](#) (sponsored swim)

Hope that Natural History GCSE can be launched in 2022 with support from NHM

Following some years of campaigning by nature writer Mary Colwell, a GCSE in Natural History has been approved for consultation by Defra and DfE and will be available to students from 2022 if all goes to plan. Teachers will have opportunities to work with the Natural History Museum to teach children about their surrounding environment. [Telegraph](#)

Also: National Trust Director General, Hilary Grady has written in *The Telegraph* about the importance of supporting progress on the environment post-covid, saying that just as there is a Government programme of support for retail and manufacturing, there must be one for 'nature, wildlife and environmental organisations'. The National Trust expects to lose £200m this year and has paused some conservation schemes, though it hopes to continue with its tree planting programme. She adds that support is needed beyond the countryside: "*our towns and cities can't take any more destruction of habitat and biodiversity. We must grow back in green, not grey.*"

[Telegraph](#)

Employment

Chancellor makes further announcements on furlough payments

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has made further announcements on the extension and eventual winding down of the furlough scheme:

- The scheme for self-employed people will be extended for a second and final period, covering three months to August. Eligible applicants can receive 70% of average monthly earnings, made in one payment with an overall cap of £6570. As before, this excludes some forms of self-employment.
- For employees, the furlough scheme will be funded as before during June and July, although from 1st July businesses will gain the flexibility to bring back staff part time, and pay for that proportion of their wage. From August, employers will resume paying NICs and pensions, and Government wage contributions will decline to 70% in September and 60% in October.

[Gov.uk](#) (self-employment), [Gov.uk](#), BBC, [Times](#), [Gov.uk](#) (new hub page for all Job Retention scheme resources)

Curating for Change: work placements programme for disabled curators

Screen South's Accentuate Programme has secured initial funding from NLHF for a new 'Curating for Change' work placement programme which will help increase the number of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse curators making a career in the sector. The initial £116k support will allow Screen South to eventually develop funding for 18 Fellowships and Traineeships at 18 museums across the country. The National Railway Museum in York, Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds and smaller rural museums in the Cumbria Museum Consortium are among those taking part. Head of Accentuate Esther Fox said *"There is a huge appetite within Museums to address the current underrepresentation of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people, but they are keen to have specialist support to inspire and support them to do so."* The project is also seeking two consultants to help kick off the project. [Accentuate](#), [Accentuate](#) (evaluator), [Accentuate](#) (digital)

Employment and changing work in brief

- Younger workers aged 18 – 24 are the most likely to be affected by changes to employment during the pandemic, totalling 35% overall, with 24% furloughed, 9% losing their job and 2% losing hours and pay. The next most affected demographic is 60 – 64 year olds at 24% overall. The youngest and oldest parts of the workforce are least able to work from home. Those in atypical work are also more likely to be furloughed or out of work. [Resolution Foundation](#), [BBC](#),
- CEBR reports that the trend over the past few years is for significantly more people to earn a living as a writer, artist or musician, with the total of those in 'artistic, literary and media' occupations now at 454,000. For example, the number of those earning a living as artists up 122% to 61,000 in the last 15 years. [CEBR](#)
- Meanwhile research by the science journal *Nature* found that 81% thought that some work-related meetings should continue to be virtual after the pandemic, with some finding that the situation has expanded their opportunities. Academic Tom Brown said *"I know colleagues around the world with limited budgets who've also suddenly been able to attend many more meetings"*. Many others advocated mixed on and offline events, to take advantage of 'serendipity' and the benefits of networking. [Nature](#)

Tourism



May half term activities at Leeds City Museum were around the theme of mummification, with a combination of learning, making and doing activities exploring Ancient Egypt. Activities have been adapted for online visitors to use long after half term.

Tourism has higher furlough rate than any industry as custom 'falls off a cliff'

Tourism in the UK is worth an estimated £127bn each year and employs 3.1m people, or 8% of the UK workforce. Now around 80% of these workers are furloughed, the highest proportion in any industry. If tourism starts again in June, VisitBritain is modelling a 55% decline in inbound tourism and 24% loss in domestic tourism, totalling £37.2bn lost income. Some counties such as Cornwall rely on tourism for up to 30% of the economy and will be especially badly hit – with losses over Easter alone estimated at £300m; similarly a third of all jobs are now estimated to be at risk in South Lakeland. An inter-dependent ecosystem of accommodation booking, flights, coach operators, food outlets and attractions means that if one tourism segment fails, it is likely to affect all the rest. MPs representing tourism areas are arguing for the sector to be supported through to spring 2021. Tim Farron, the Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale in the Lakes says *"having committed the many billions we're committing on furlough and grants, it will all be money down the toilet if we don't keep people going through to the time where the economy properly picks up."* Sector leaders suggest that when the tourism recommences, rural areas and coastal towns are likely to benefit first – although that will need to be balanced against local fears that tourists will bring an increase in Covid-19 cases with them. [Politics Home](#)

VisitBritain publishes proposals for Government to support the tourism industry

VisitBritain has outlined the measures that it believes Government should take to protect and recover the tourism sector. These include:

- A standard which allows businesses to judge whether it is safe to reopen under clear criteria, coupled with a clear guide to consumers about when it is safe to travel.
- Recognition that the domestic market will open up first, with a major marketing campaign around holidaying at home, and an additional Bank Holiday later in the year.
- An extension of the furlough scheme for sector workers, since many tourism businesses will be among the last to reopen. When reopening happens there should be apprenticeship levy funding to support training in safe practice, and clear guidance on protecting staff and customers.
- VisitBritain is also exploring creating a charter mark for 'stay safe' attractions and is in conversation with other tourism bodies about its development.
- It is seeking a rent holiday for restaurants and other business premises and a relaxation of planning laws to, for example, broaden the places where food can be consumed.
- In the slightly longer term, it also wants to bring forward plans for 'tourism zones', opening up poorer parts of the country to tourism.

[VisitBritain](#)

VisitScotland says local tourists will return first and points to rising interest in ecotourism

A VisitScotland event led by Riddell Graham has discussed the prospects for the sector over the next year, with insights into the timeline for re-opening the sector. He said *"the initial return will be Scots holidaying in Scotland, then day trips... we don't expect a return of the international market at all this year"*. He anticipates a particular hit to American visitors, who are a major source of business and may be among the last to return. However, as the sector recovers, there may also be more opportunities to amplify 'Smart Tourism' – a responsible tourism approach which considers social, economic and environmental issues, and which is a good fit for Scotland. Recent reports show that searches on 'ecofriendly travel' are up 73% in the last year and that many tourists are specifically looking to visit destinations practicing green principles. [Smart Village Scotland](#), [Visit Scotland](#) (The Road to Transformational Tourism), [Visit Scotland](#) (Exploring Sustainable Mobility for Sustainable Tourism)

£250m emergency funding for walking and cycling

The Government has launched a £250m emergency fund to support changes to public space use including pop-up bicycle lanes, wider pavements and cycle and bus only corridors. Greater Manchester is planning 150 miles of protected cycle track and Transport for London is planning a 'bike tube' network above Underground lines. Statutory guidance has also instructed councils to reallocate road space to pedestrians and cyclists. This fund is the first stage of a £2bn investment. [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

International



Museum from Home: a new video each day with a changing weekly theme, based on Leeds Museums school loans boxes. Leeds Discovery Centre Learning Officer, Emily Nelson, has been producing these for home schooling purposes and general enjoyment. The two minute films come with additional teaching resources, activities and links to further reading.

A snapshot of European museum reopening: from Austria to Poland

The Art Newspaper has published short overviews of the experience of five museums across Europe that have recently reopened, from the Royal Castle in Warsaw, to Brandenburg State Museum of Modern Art. The range of experience shows that:

- All are observing some form of social distancing, but that varies by country: at the Brandenburg State Museum of Modern Art the 1.5m distance is reinforced by poles and ribbons to carry, plus floor markings; in Poland it is 2m and Austria stipulates 10sq m per visitor.
- Audiences are enthusiastically returning – the Institut Giacometti in France reports being sold out of its timed tickets for the first three days after reopening. Its President Catherine Grenier says *"The interest was immediate—people were waiting for direct contact with art again"*.
- However, the number of visitors is reduced to less than a quarter of previous numbers (and sometimes much less) by the new capacity limits.
- Beyond the now familiar gloves, hand sanitiser and plexiglass, there have been some less widely reported approaches to containing the virus. The Royal Castle has switched off its ventilation as a possible risk factor and the Institut Giacometti is now opening 11am – 7pm to avoid putting pressure on rush hour traffic.
- The Brandenburg Museum has made an early start in addressing the situation in displays, using its collection to look at themes of handshakes, masks and gloves.
- The *New York Times* also picks up on more visceral reactions to the new experience of museums in Europe: one visitor to the Berlinische Galerie complains that with the current constraints 'you can't relax when you look at the images, you can't breathe', while one museum professional is more optimistic: 'I think the joy that people will get from being back in the museum will be bigger than the inconvenience.'

- Meanwhile, Florence Cathedral is issuing its visitors with lanyards which will vibrate and light up if they come too close to others.

[Art Newspaper](#), [Smithsonian Magazine](#) (Florence Cathedral), [Art Newspaper](#) (Brandenburg State Museum), [New York Times](#)

International approaches

Italy announces a lifeline for museums in its €55bn relaunch decree

Italy has announced a €55bn 'Decreto Rilancio' or relaunch decree to fund its reopening, including measures for museums ranging from €200m to cover lost ticket sales and a more general €100m Culture Fund to support businesses with long term loans. Nevertheless, in mid-May, the city of Florence could not reopen its civic museums because of a €190m hole in its finances. State funding for museums will not cover the whole sector, and is likely to focus on 470 state museums which cannot cover their costs. At least one Director, James Bradburne of the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, sees some advantages in smaller crowds, telling *The Art Newspaper* "I can still remember a world before mass tourism and over-crowded museums." [Art Newspaper](#)

Also: In Budapest, City officials are thinking about how to reboot tourism in a new way, deterring the drunken stag parties who arrive on cheap flights. Mayor Gergely Karácsony says "we want to spread out the spots in the city that are touristically interesting, and change the type of people who come. It shouldn't only be bachelor parties and booze – we want to rebrand ourselves a bit." [Guardian](#)

Calling on all reserves: museums plan for survival

Scottish museum and heritage sites facing severe difficulties 'by the end of the summer

The National Trust for Scotland has announced that it anticipates income losses 'similar to the Trust's current financial reserves' and that it is consequently anticipating selling non-heritage land and property and putting 429 staff at risk of redundancy out of a total of 751 employees. When lockdown eases, it aims to open 27 core properties with social distancing and a further 18 in 2021, when it expects the economic downturn to continue. Meanwhile Industrial Museums Scotland, Museum Heritage Highland and the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance have jointly called for help from major funders to avoid closures and redundancies. The group estimate that half of independent museums in Scotland will face crisis by the end of the summer. A separate survey by Museums Galleries Scotland showed that 71% of independents do not have funds to survive for more than a year. The Scottish Government's roadmap means that Scottish museums will not reopen until at least the second week of July, but missing the high season and the general absence of tourists meant that many cannot viably reopen until next year. Local authority museums are likely to be among these, with the fear that as budget shortfalls bite, they may never reopen. [National Trust for Scotland](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#) (MGS survey), [MGS](#)

ACE reflects on events so far – and the immediate risk to independent museums

ACE CEO Darren Henley has reflected on the unfolding of the Covid-19 crisis so far – events which have seen the funding body cancel many of its usual grants and pour the money plus most of its reserves into emergency funding to stabilise the sector. 14,000 applied for funds for organisations and individuals outside ACE's portfolio, more than could be supported, but Henley says "we hope that, collectively, this emergency funding will have done enough to prevent the fabric of the cultural sector from unravelling immediately." ACE is now preparing for a longer-term, while expecting the virus to shape events for months or years. A yet-to-be-published survey suggests that cultural organisations will be at risk to different degrees and over different timeframes – with independent museums relying on visitor income among the most at risk in the immediate future. Henley says that in the longer term, he's adopting a 'realist-optimist' approach, expecting losses, but also pointing to the way that people and communities have turned to creativity during the crisis, underlining its value. [ACE blog](#), [Arts Industry](#)

'Go big or go home' – calls for a Marshall Plan for the arts

Conservative political commentator Matthew d'Ancona has argued that there needs to be a one-off 'Marshall Plan for the arts' to prevent sector workers and institutions from being financially destroyed by the coronavirus. Many arts workers are in the gig economy and part of the 35% of freelance workers estimated to have 'fallen between the cracks' of Chancellor Rishi Sunak's furlough scheme. Meanwhile the Globe Theatre, which receives no public subsidy, is facing probable closure without intervention, and Julian Knight, Conservative chair of the DCMS committee has written to Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden asking him to avert the 'tragedy' of that outcome. d'Ancona argues that intervention will have to happen on a much wider scale to save the sector, citing not just its importance to the 'British way of life' but to economics, with the Centre for Economics and Business Research estimating that the sector is worth £23bn each year, £2.8bn in taxation as well as enhancing soft power and drawing in tourism. [Arts Industry](#) (Globe), [Evening Standard](#)

The Lockdown Interviews: a snapshot of how museums are coping

Staff and directors from museums of all sizes have been writing and being interviewed about how institutions are managing under lockdown - and how they are planning for a still-volatile future. A number have been interviewed by Claire Madge of the Tincture of Museum blog. In part, good and bad luck shapes the prospects of each site: Joe Sullivan, Director of the Cartoon Museum has furloughed himself leaving all work to Trustees, but benefits from a peppercorn rent keeping closure costs manageable; David Green Director of the Florence Nightingale Museum says it has lost 98% of its income and will have run through its reserves within months. At the same time it has attracted considerable press interest because of the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale this year, coinciding with the opening of Nightingale hospitals across the country.

For Nat Edwards, Chief Executive of the Thackray Museum of Medicine, lockdown came during a major refurbishment, delaying the work and removing all hope of a summer opening. However, he also points to how crisis has galvanised the sector – and the Thackray itself has helped by offering free parking to NHS staff and lending ventilator parts from its collections to engineering firms to help them make more. Some of its furloughed staff have also signed up as NHS volunteers. He says *"expectations have been (carefully) thrown out the window. And I've found that when freed from constraints of process, people's deeper instincts and values have kicked in. [There will be] more digital content in our projects and tailoring that content to a far greater range of communities' needs, from training resources and apprenticeships, to advocacy tools, social prescribing opportunities and a whole host of other applications and re-uses that genuine collaboration will define. Big, expensive, blockbuster projects are, I think, going to feel unworldly after the crisis. Museums that fail to reflect our collective recent experience on a human scale will seem aloof."*

Meanwhile *The Guardian* carries a discussion between Tate Director Maria Balshaw and National Theatre Director Rufus Norris. Both of their organisations have large reserves but will struggle with an extended period with few visitors - with the NT currently 'losing several million a month', and Tate relying on visitors for 70% of its income. But Balshaw also emphasises the importance of cultural reopening for the nation's mental health: *"our world has changed beyond recognition. It's understandable people feel fearful. Museums, galleries and the arts have a huge role to play in rebuilding social confidence. ... We'll need to reassure the public the numbers will not put them at risk. And this is urgent because of another challenge our country now faces: people's emotional wellbeing, social connections and mental health."* [Tincture of Museum](#), [NLHF](#) (Thackray Museum), [Guardian](#) (Tate and NT)

Also: The Southbank Centre has warned that it will have exhausted its reserves by September and may need to remain closed until April 2021 without further Government support. [Guardian](#)

Supporting good mental health



'Meet and Make' is a making session for older people which usually takes place each Friday at Leeds Art Gallery. Now these events take place through video tutorials which offer a chance to look at collection items and use them as inspiration to make objects from materials at home.

RSA podcasts assess the impact of Covid-19 on the big issues of society, including mental health

UCL's Professor Daisy Fancourt who is an expert on the intersect between arts and health has been speaking to the RSA's 'Bridges to the Future' podcast about her work assessing the nation's mental health under lockdown. The work is being carried out through a survey which has been tracking a wide group of volunteers through the past 2 – 3 months. She comments: *"In many ways this is exacerbating a social gradient, the different social positioning of individuals based on economic circumstances, because for some people with houses and big gardens... this could feel almost like a holiday from normal life, whereas for other people living in very small overcrowded accommodation with major stresses about how they are going to cope day by day, this could be their worst nightmare"* She says that there are some signs of depression increasing as lockdown continues, but also some anxieties lessening – especially around catching the virus among those able to stay at home. Younger people are finding it more difficult than middle aged and older people to cope with weeks of confinement. Fancourt says she is also tracking whether creativity under lockdown is associated with better mental health outcomes, and looking for insights into the effects and use of social media. RSA's series continues with a broad range of speakers, from former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd on geopolitics, to UCL's Geoff Mulgan on what the world will look like post-virus. [RSA](#) (podcast episodes) [RSA](#) (Fancourt)

APPG assesses social connection during the covid crisis

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration has produced an initial report on 'social connection in the Covid-19 crisis. Overall, 1 in 10 adults in the UK are digitally excluded. However, although there are higher rates of older people without internet access, 18% describe feeling more lonely in the current circumstances compared to 39% of 18 – 24 year olds. [British Futures](#)

Creating interactivity and a 'shared night out'

The BBC has been reviewing which arts events are working the best online, with a particular focus on the performing arts, but with findings applicable across culture. Live interactivity is a recurring theme across artforms: playwright Simon Stevens says *"What doesn't work is watching streaming of plays on computers, whenever I watch those I just feel lonelier than I felt before. What is interesting is when writers, directors, actors and designers start thinking about - what are the dramatic potentials of Zoom?"* A one-act Tom Stoppard play 'A Separate Peace' recently premiered on the webinar platform. An immersive theatre game has also been repurposed for Zoom, and its artistic director Zoe Seaton comments *"There was one point where a character says, 'If you've got war paint get it on now', and you see people rushing to the kitchen and getting ketchup and things."* The universal theme – which also applies to simpler concepts, from quizzes to yoga and cookery classes – is the importance of creating a 'shared night out', rather than consuming already-completed content in solitude. [BBC](#)

Voices from the sector: survey results from museum professionals

NEMO's final museum report suggests job losses and the need for better emergency planning

As we first reported last month, the Network of European Museum Organisations has been collecting data on how 1000 museums in 48 countries have been affected by Covid-19. The final report shows an unchanged picture of substantial financial loss, with museums in tourist regions expecting to lose 75 – 80% of income. NEMO comments that there is 'no fast track back to normal'. Although a majority of museums have not so far laid off staff, a quarter are expecting to do so in the longer term, a third have already put freelance contracts on hold and 60% have stopped working with volunteers. NEMO stresses the importance of making best use of digital and museums developing emergency planning to make them better prepared for future crises. [NMDC](#) (statistics from original report), [Museums Journal](#), [NEMO](#)

Catalyst Thinks workshops discuss agility and resilience in the cultural sector

The group Catalyst Thinks has been discussing how the cultural sector should deal strategically with unfolding events. A first workshop in April suggested a number of ways forward now published in a brief report, including: consolidating around strongest work (whether that's an in-house course, business line or in-house expert); communicating a core story; trying out new ideas on audiences while they are particularly receptive; and considering every aspect dynamically, including pricing and reshuffling old and new content in different ways. Organisers are planning further sessions, contact Kate Rolfe at hello@therevelsoffice.co.uk to find out more. [Catalyst Thinks](#)

ICOM survey finds most insecurity where museums are 'recent and few'

Meanwhile an International Council of Museums survey of 1300 museum professionals from 103 countries found that most respondents expected some level of downsizing in staff numbers, programmes, or a risk to their institution itself. The freelance sector is 'very fragile' with around 40% saying they had either been temporarily laid off or lost contracts. Closure was most feared in regions where museums are 'recent and few', including 39% of those responding from Arab countries, 27% in the Pacific and 24% in Africa. In Africa, only 5% of museums are able to offer online content to audiences. Meanwhile, 8% in Europe and 10% in the US also thought that closure of their institution is likely. ICOM has called for relief funds, saying *"Museums, as key protagonists in local development and as incomparable places for people to meet and learn, will have an important role to play in rebuilding the local economy and repairing the social fabric of affected communities."* [Museums Journal](#), [ICOM](#), [The International News](#)

Art Fund publishes views from the sector on the impact of covid

The Art Fund has published the results of its survey of 427 museum professionals, assessing the effects of the virus on future work. Respondents said that:

- 98% of museums have cancelled exhibitions or delayed them to 2021.
- There is an expectation that there will be more collections-based shows and fewer blockbusters.
- 85% are concerned about how to encourage visitors back and many expect large indoor and outdoor spaces to reopen first – with the costs and difficulties of social distancing making the

challenges greater for smaller museums.

- 86% have invested more in digital activity – but this translated into greater website visits for less than half, whereas social media engagement has increased significantly. Many are interested in how to monetise online activity.
- 80% of national and independent museums have furloughed some or all staff, compared to only 5% of local authority museums.
- More than half are worried about their own jobs and the future of their organisation. There is a demand for networking, training, peer support, and signposting to the most useful resources.

The Art Fund will be using these responses to shape how it supports the sector, and will be making further announcements about what it plans to offer shortly. [Art Fund](#)

Jobs

A few posts are being advertised this month:

- [Access and Learning Officer \(STEM and History\)](#) - RAF museum
- [Systems Engineer, Infrastructure Services](#) - British Museum
- [Project Editor](#) - National Portrait Gallery

You can find new additions on our website [here](#).

Also our friends at Accentuate are currently seeking a [freelance evaluator](#) and [digital consultant](#).

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