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Members' news



Needlework panel reputedly saved from the Great Fire of London, courtesy of the Museum of London. The museum's exhibition and programme to mark 350 years since the conflagration begins in September.

Museum of London launches competition to create new home

The Museum of London is launching a £200k competition, funded by the Mayor of London, to find an architect to create its new home on the site of Smithfield market. The 25,000 square metre area consists of the vacant Fish Market, the Red House and the Engine House as well as the market itself. The design must preserve these while adding modern interventions. Architects with a turnover above £2m are invited to apply: a shortlist of five will then be invited to produce designs. Museum of London Director Sharon Ament said *"I cannot wait to see schemes for West Smithfield from designers working in all four corners of the globe. The challenge of sympathetically reinventing a series of fascinating and wonderful buildings and reimagining them as a museum is big, a bit scary and terribly exciting, much like London itself."* The first round deadline is 15th March 2016 and a final choice from shortlisted designs will be made in the summer. [Museum of London](#) (dedicated competition website)

National Museum of Scotland to open ten new galleries this summer

The National Museum of Scotland has announced that it will be opening ten new galleries on July 8th, covering subjects from science to fashion. The opening marks the end of the second phase of its major £80m renovation programme. There will now be 40% more space, and 75% of objects shown will not have been previously on display for a generation. Director Gordon Rintoul said *"from Dunlop's first pneumatic tyre to cutting edge scientific discoveries from CERN, the fashion of Vivienne Westwood and Alexander McQueen, Dolly the Sheep and Picasso ceramics - we have something to appeal to everyone."* [Guardian](#), [BBC](#), [NMS](#)

New National Gallery Director reveals plans

The Director of the National Gallery, Gabriele Finaldi, who has been in post for six months, has spoken to *The Art Newspaper* about his plans and ambitions for the Gallery. He hopes to expand the 'overwhelmingly French' 19th century paintings collection to include works from Scandinavia, America, Spain and possibly Eastern Europe. He plans to 'ramp up' the exhibition programme – a show this December of Australian impressionists will expose audiences to art 'completely unknown to most visitors'. In 2017 the gallery will create more exhibition space in lower level of the main building, and Finaldi has ambitions to create a larger temporary exhibition space behind the gallery in a few years. There has been a tacit agreement with Tate since 1996 that National Gallery should cover art to 1900 and Finaldi is now keen to revisit this and begin collecting and displaying some art from the 1930s and perhaps up to the Second World War. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Transformed American Air Museum reopens at IWM Duxford

The American Air Museum at Imperial War Museum Duxford will be reopening later this month following a £3m renovation. It tells the story of Anglo-American collaboration in 20th and 21st century conflict. Highlights of the 850 displayed objects include an F-111 aircraft which was operational in the Gulf War and a C-47 Skytrain transport aircraft used during D-Day. Diane Lees, Director-General of IWM said, "*personal stories come to the fore... the impact of global warfare is told from contrasting perspectives, giving visitors a rounded view of the lasting effect of contemporary warfare.*" [IWM](#)

Lobbying and politics

Vaizey and Whittingdale split on EU

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey and Culture Secretary John Whittingdale are supporting different sides of the vote on EU membership. Whittingdale is among the 'gang of six' cabinet ministers supporting 'Vote Leave'. Vaizey by contrast tweeted "#Arts in the UK are stronger and better thanks to our membership of the EU". Shadow Culture Secretary Maria Eagle has used her first speech to make the case for remaining in the EU, highlighting the £8.7bn in social and regional development funding that the UK will receive to 2020. She said, "*we should stop flirting with EU exit... the entire sector could do without additional uncertainty and volatility caused by needless political instability.*" [Arts Professional](#), [The Stage](#)

Heritage Alliance, charities, academics, and scientists oppose anti-lobbying clause

The Cabinet Office has said that it will introduce an anti-lobbying clause into all new government grants issued after 1st May. The move follows a report by the think tank the Institute of Economic Affairs, which claims that 'sock puppet' organisations are using government money for lobbying. However, the change has been widely criticised by groups across civil society, including NCVO, the Heritage Alliance, scientists and academics. In a letter to Prime Minister David Cameron, Heritage Alliance chairman Lloyd Grossman said "*we believe there is a legitimate role of civil society in informing government policy and in using its experience and research to influence legislation, policy and public service delivery. Trying to prevent civil societies from playing this role could have 'chilling' effect on public discourse in this country.*" Representatives from the Campaign for Social Sciences have also written saying they fear the clause 'may have unintended consequences'. Sir Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the NCVO, asked government to reconsider "*this draconian move that could have significant consequences for the charity sector's relationship with government*". Matthew Hancock, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, said "*taxpayers' money must be spent on improving people's lives and spreading opportunities, not wasted on the farce of government lobbying government*" and said that common sense rules would protect freedom of speech. [Heritage Alliance](#) (letter to David Cameron), [Third Sector](#), [Observer](#)

Culture Secretary gives speech on the BBC and digital

Culture Secretary John Whittingdale has given a speech at the Oxford Media Convention on the future of the BBC. He said that 80% of the public supported the BBC and think it provides a good service. He added that both the public and the government wants an independent BBC. However, he said it had to offer a more distinctive service and improve its work in partnerships. The BBC's governance structure is also likely to change. [Gov.uk](#)

Education, integration and refugees

Syria preserved: refugees as tour guides at Berlin museums

Four Berlin museums are employing Syrian refugees as tour guides, showing their fellow refugees around cultural holdings relating to the Middle East. The Pergamon Museum has holdings including the interior of a 17th-century Aleppo room, purchased in 1912. The house which once contained it has been destroyed in fighting. Refugee guide Nadiya Mamo, 46, told the *Guardian* that on looking at the exhibit "*I could smell the streets of Aleppo, I remembered the colour of the light in my room at dusk and I remembered how the city that used to be my home turned into living hell within just 48 hours. I think I am only now beginning to understand what that means.*" The museums hope that the project will help integrate refugees into German society, and that eventually they will be able to lead tours for the general public. Stefan Weber, Director of the Museum for Islamic Art said, "*when people are just waiting around with nothing to do, they can fall into a hole. They feel useless and worthless, but when you give people an important job to do, you also give them a certain status in your society.*" [Guardian](#)

Nesta prize for ideas to integrate refugees

Three million refugees are expected to arrive in Europe during 2016. Nesta is running a competition to find ideas which will help refugees integrate into society, covering issues as diverse as health, education, skills development and cultural diversity. Individuals and groups are both invited to enter and the deadline is 8th April. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a workshop in Berlin and three winners will receive €50,000 each. [Nesta](#)

Failing schools may harm Northern powerhouse says Minister

Sir Michael Wilshaw, the Chief Inspector of schools in England and head of Ofsted, has said that plans for the northern powerhouse are at risk because of poor secondary school results in major northern cities. Three schools in ten in Manchester and four in 10 in Liverpool have been judged as inadequate or needing improvement. He said "*I am calling on [local councillors] to make education in general - and their under-performing secondary schools in particular - a central target of their strategy for growth.*" He also recently described the UK as 'a nation divided'. Local council leaders said recent poor results are a 'dip' which they are working hard to address. Liverpool's Assistant Mayor for Education, Nick Small, criticised the 'narrow EBacc' which he argued would also harm the development of the skilled workforce. [Schools Week](#), [TES](#)

Public trust in charities declined in 2015

A recent survey shows that public trust in charities has declined dramatically in the last year. In 2014, 71% of the public said that they trusted charities, a figure which had been broadly the same over several years. However in 2015 the figure dropped to 57%, probably as a result of high-profile cases about fundraising tactics and charity reserves. [The Conversation](#)

Changing lives

Nominate a New Radical for 2016

Every other year, Nesta invites nominations for New Radicals – people working to shape the world for the better. Nesta writes: "*there are dozens of lists of the rich, the powerful, or the beautiful. Most of them don't really need more attention. But for people pioneering social change the oxygen of publicity can be incredibly helpful.*" It welcomes nominations in fields from the arts to health or charity, and of individuals or companies. It must be for a project created after January 2011. Suggestions are accepted until 29th March. [Nesta](#)

HLF asks how it has changed lives

HLF has funded 38,000 projects over the past 22 years and is now seeking stories of how its projects have changed lives. It asks people to tell their own stories, or those of others they have seen engaging with HLF projects by emailing stories@hlf.org.uk. Follow #ChangingLives on twitter for stories like that of Owen Mort, who became a heritage blacksmith through an HLF project. [HLF](#), [HLF](#)

Evaluation framework for arts and health

There is increasing acceptance that simple arts interventions - such as singing groups for older people - have measurable health benefits. Public Health England has commissioned 'Arts for health and wellbeing - an evaluation framework', which gives brief guidance to health and cultural organisations who want to track the effectiveness of culture for health projects. The report authors Aesop (Arts Enterprise with a Social Purpose) write "*while there is a growing evidence base, it is not readily accessible to those whose responsibility it is to commission or develop services.*" It outlines the options for different evaluative approaches from the arts observational scale to the patient health questionnaire, and offers detailed questions to help build tailored evaluation programmes. Gov.uk

Events and surveys

MuseumNext Dublin: discounts for NMDC members' museums

MuseumNext is holding its eighth European conference in Dublin on 18th–20th April. There will be over 40 speakers, 15 tours and 3 social evenings, plus networking opportunities. Speakers are from major national and international institutions and include Marian Goodell, CEO of Burning Man, Michael John Gorman, CEO of Science Gallery International and Francesa Rosenberg, Director, Community, Access and School Programs at MoMA. Tickets are £500. If your Director is a member of NMDC (members are listed [here](#)) then use the code NMDCsaver to receive a £50 discount. [MuseumNext](#)

Digital: from idea to audience

A few places are left on this Royal Pavilion & Museums-organised course aimed at museum professionals who are looking for ideas and advice on how to create digital products and experiences. The day will cover how to develop an idea and shape it for an audience and how to work with an outside developer. It takes place at the Association of Anaesthetists in London on 9th March. Free, but booking essential. [Royal Pavilion & Museums](#)

Objectively speaking

The British Museum is holding a free event on 4th April: *Objectively Speaking - the value and practice of object based teaching*. It will look at the impact of digital as well as asking how museums can connect collections with classroom and academic teaching. Booking is open until 30th March, unless tickets sell out sooner. [British Museum](#)

Museums Week returns to twitter

Museums Week will again be running on twitter from 28th March–3rd April. The organisers suggest broad themes for each day – from secrets to gardens and from research to what you love. [Museums Week](#)

Space Invaders: Women Museum Leaders' conference

A conference addressing issues around women's leadership in the museum sector will take place on March 18th at IWM London. It aims to kick start a public debate about the lack of gender equality in museum leadership. Speakers include Shami Chakrabarti, former Director of Liberty, Professor Nicola Lacey, [School Professor of Law, Gender and Social Policy](#) at LSE and Dr Nirmal Puwar, academic and author of '[Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place](#)'. Tickets are £15. Follow the conference on Twitter at #MuseumAgender and @MuseumAgender. [Eventbrite](#) (booking)

AIM 2016 conference

The Association of Independent Museums has announced its 2016 conference, *The Elements of Success*, which will take place from 23rd-25th June at The Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. Topics include running an award winning visitor attraction, legal changes to fundraising and workforce development. Confirmed speakers include HLF Chairman Sir Peter Luff and Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland. Earlybird tickets are from £45 per day for AIM members until 24th April. [AIM](#)

MA survey on EU funding

With the EU referendum now fixed for 23rd June, cultural organisations are now considering the funding impact of a yes or no vote. The MA is inviting museums and galleries to fill in a short survey about their current EU funding applications. The MA itself puts arguments favour of staying in the EU. Policy Officer Alistair Brown says, "*While most funding comes from domestic sources, large chunks of research and project funding come from the EU, along with regional development funds... It seems unlikely that the government would invest more in culture if we left the EU, so the risks of leaving seem high. But the second question is the greater one – will museums rise to the challenge of engaging with questions thrown up by the referendum? How do museums act as a forum for discussions about the past, present and future of Britain and Europe?*" [Museums Journal](#) (survey), [Museums Journal](#)

ACE survey of visual artists' livelihoods

The Arts Council is running its first survey into the livelihoods of visual artists in a decade. It will cover challenges to visual artists which stop them achieving their full potential, including social, cultural and economic factors such as employment status, education, age and gender. The deadline for the survey is 25th March. [ACE](#)

The Museum as Method: Collections, Research, Universities

The Museum as Method Conference explores how the museum can be used as a laboratory and the collection as a research technology. The organisers argue that museum collections have been sidelined in recent years by innovators in arts and social sciences, but that their use is now being re-evaluated. The conference is supported by University of Cambridge Museums – academics and curators from across the arts and sciences are encouraged to attend. It takes place at CRASSH in Cambridge on 14th–15th March. [CRASSH](#)

For what it's worth: essentials of collections valuation

A one-day conference will explore the subject of valuation of museum and gallery collections, which require insurance but may have no market value and will never be deaccessioned. Delegates will hear examples of policy and practice from experienced museum practitioners including ACE's Scott Furlong. It takes place at NHM on 22nd April, from 9am-8pm (including reception). Tickets are from £75 and should be booked on 020 7942 5725 before 24th March. [NHM](#)

VisitEngland Annual Survey

VisitEngland has recently launched its Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions. All visitor attractions in England are invited to participate in this survey, and you should have received a unique survey for each museum you manage, either by email or by post. The survey results are among the most downloaded from the VisitEngland website, attract considerable media interest, and are used extensively by government and the industry. Each participating attraction will receive its own benchmarking report. Should you not have received your questionnaire, or if you have any other questions about the survey, please email AnnualAttractionsSurvey@visitengland.org.

Marketing Excellence award winners

Winners of the Marketing Excellence Awards, given to libraries, museums and archive services across Wales, have been announced. Museum winners include:

- Demonstrating Marketing Excellence - The Royal Welch Fusiliers Regimental Museum for Faces of World War One
 - Joint Marketing Project - National Museum Wales for Children's Heritage Passport Campaign
 - Museums Marketing Champion - Vanessa Tudge & Jessica Brown at the National Trust, Erddig
- Judge Jonathan Deacon, Professor of Marketing at the University of South Wales said, "*Many of the entries were low in budget but high in creativity - proving that sophisticated and successful marketing does not depend on large budgets.*"

Hire a Shaman: bid for a Connect! artist for October Museums at Night

Museums At Night has announced the 2016 Connect! artists who UK museums & galleries can win to lead their participatory October Museums at Night events, along with a £3000 bursary. They are:

- Shaman and problem-solver Marcus Coates

- Installation artist Susan Hiller
- Artist and social commentator Aowen Jin
- Conceptual artist Peter Liversidge
- Conceptual film artists and curators Karen Mirza & Brad Butler
- Sculptor and performance artist Bedwyr Williams

Any UK museum, gallery, cultural or heritage site can apply to win one of these artists and a £3000 bursary towards their Museums at Night October event. The deadline is 11th March, then the public vote will open in May. All runner-up venues will receive a small bursary to support their alternative Museums at Night event. [Museums At Night](#)

Register for May Museums At Night

Register for participation in May's Museums at Night by March 18th [here](#). Please also send high-res promotional photos to rosie@culture24.org.uk who is receiving press requests for images. [Twitter](#) (call to action), [Museums at Night](#) (application form)

Cuts

Last chance for expressions of interest in running Lancashire Museums

Lancashire County Council will go ahead with the closure of five museum sites in April unless it receives expressions of interest in taking over the sites by 27th March. One site, Fleetwood Museum, appears to have a taker: Fleetwood Town Council says it can find the £82-£105k needed to run it through reserved funds and an increase in Council Tax. Terry Rogers, Chairman of Fleetwood Town Council said, "*our main concern is not to have [the museum] closed over the spring and summer period because of the trustees and volunteers. We don't want to lose the continuity of the museum. We have got future plans to use part of the building for community work.*"

The other sites are the Museum of Lancashire in Preston, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Judges' Lodgings Museum in Lancaster and the Queen Street Mill in Burnley. Former staff have suggested that the mill museums may cost more closed than open, due to the huge size of some collection items and the difficulty of putting them into storage. A local campaign in Helmshore to keep the Textile Museum has attracted the support of 9,000 people including local MP Jake Berry. Lancashire County Council is raising Council Tax by 3.99% and has set aside a £3m 'fighting fund' to lessen the impact of cuts on buses, libraries and museums. However, 40 libraries are expected to close.

Writing for *The Guardian*, columnist Ian Jack contrasted the relatively modest sums needed to save Lancashire's museums with the £60m promised by George Osborne and London Mayor Boris Johnson towards building a Garden Bridge in Central London – a plan which has met with mixed reviews. He writes: "*a sum of £60m, adjusted for inflation, would keep Lancashire's museums open for nearly the next half century.*" [Museums Journal](#), [Rossendale Free Press](#), [Guardian](#)

Also: The ruins of Sunnyside Mill and clocktower in Bolton, which were built in 1862, are to be demolished as they are unsafe. [Bolton News](#)

Bede's World saved as new operator found

In mid-February Bede's World in Jarrow went into administration and seemed likely to close. However it has been saved following intervention by the local council and will be run by a new operator, Groundwork. The attraction, which opened in 1993, employs 27 people and has 70,000 visitors each year. Former trustees said government cuts were partly to blame for the near closure, but South Tyneside Council said it had not cut funding. Broadcaster Melvyn Bragg was among those opposing the closure plan and argued that it showed a North-South divide. He said, "*the Venerable Bede is one of the greatest figures in British history. In fact, his own books and the contemporary Lindisfarne Gospels were the foundations of British culture and both are world famous and rightly so.*" [Shields Gazette](#), [Independent](#), [Shields Gazette](#) (possible reopening), [BBC](#) (Bede's World saved)

Welsh colliery museum spared as council has second thoughts

Neath Port Talbot Council has decided not to close Cefn Coed Colliery Museum and is looking for other solutions to keep the museum viable. It had originally intended to withdraw a £60k grant over two years, and still hopes to reduce its costs, but will work with supporters and the Welsh Government to find other funding. Two libraries have also been spared. Neath Port Talbot Council needs to save £11m in the coming financial year. [BBC](#)

Strategies for protecting regional museums

ACE's Director of Museums John Orna-Ornstein has blogged about strategies which may help regional museums in difficult financial times. He says northern museums are particularly at risk because of typically higher reductions in local authority funds *"but also because this is the heartland of the civic museum. Northern towns and cities from Huddersfield to Preston and from Bradford to Lancashire have strong eclectic museum collections and fine civic buildings. They were developed from the wealth of industrialisation, and its decline leaves them horribly exposed."*

However, he describes a very positive visit to Wakefield Museum, where support from the local council, significant loans and a deep knowledge of local audiences is enabling it to flourish. Orna-Ornstein observes:

- Small amounts of additional funding can make a big difference: Wakefield Museum has just received £100k from the Museums Resilience Fund, now open for applications.
- Whether civic museums feel well supported may depend less on the level of cuts and more on local authorities making 'strategic, partnership-based' plans for local culture rather than 'short-term, less strategic decisions'.

He asks whether civic museums can combine services as Colchester and Ipswich have done, or procure goods on a larger scale. He invites museum staff with views to get in touch. [ACE blog](#)

Library of Birmingham Development Trust closes after philanthropy effort fails

The Library of Birmingham Development Trust, which was formed in the hope of raising £2m of philanthropy each year for the library, has been wound up. Conservative councillor and Trust Board member Randall Brew said cuts to the Library had made raising funds very hard: *"we have had substantial donations but not enough. When the city council started imposing the cuts, the private philanthropy dried up. People just felt they were paying for the cuts."* The Library continues to cost £2m each month, much of it interest on the £187m build costs. The Council is attempting to repurpose the library, for instance by moving a language centre into the complex, to offset the debt. [Birmingham Mail](#)

Station Museum in Sunderland at risk of closure

Monkwearmouth Station Museum, an 1840s station building which was last used by rail passengers in 1967, is at risk of closure 'as a temporary measure' following discussions at Sunderland Council. There has been a 'steady decline' of visitors to the attraction. However, Liberal Democrat councillor Niall Hodson, who is also a curator and cultural historian, said closure would be short-sighted: *"On the one hand [the Council] announce large-scale cultural projects like the Keel Square redevelopment and a bid for City of Culture, and on the other hand, they seek to close our existing heritage sites. What Sunderland Council don't understand is that culture is not about big-money projects, it's about preserving our existing local cultural heritage, and keeping it alive, accessible, and relevant."* [Sunderland Echo](#)

Regional museums cuts roundup

Local government cuts continue to cause significant funding problems museums across the country. New areas for concern include:

- Five museums in Kirklees, West Yorkshire are under threat as the council looks to save £531k by 2017–18. The Council is considering reducing museums from five to three and cutting opening hours. The museums are Tolson Museum, Oakwell Hall, Red House Museum, Bagshaw Museum and Dewsbury Museum.
- Broxtowe Borough Council has put the [DH Lawrence Heritage Centre](#) on the market to let the building. Arts Council intervention may mean a more positive outcome: it has given £20k to the Council to publish a report on ways to save the site.
- Shropshire County Council seems likely to cut Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery by a third in 2016–17 from £290k to £200k: its proposed budget for museums in 2017–18 is currently zero.

Katina Bill, a curator at Kirklees Museums Service spoke to the *Guardian* about its local role, and the value of having Egyptology collections locally: *"although we hold world-class collections, with objects from around the globe, our exhibitions are first and foremost aimed at local people and we approach the display and interpretation with their needs very much at heart. I believe it is the role of museums to help people understand the world and their place in it. Having ancient Egyptian collections helps us to do that for the people of Kirklees."* [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Nottingham Post](#)

Also: The National Maritime Museum Cornwall will be losing the equivalent of three full time posts out of 34, following a deficit of £290k. Director Richard Doughty said visitor figures are record-breaking for this year, adding "we are determined to make the museum sustainable for the long term and although change is always unsettling, this is an opportune time to restructure and put in place a plan to reduce shortfalls." [Museums Journal](#)

Reimagining collections



We All Own Art by Bob and Roberta Smith, a still from a film created to celebrate the launch of Art UK. It was presented to the nation via the Parliamentary Art Collection at the end of the launch.

Art UK replaces Your Paintings

The new website Art UK is replacing Your Paintings as the online home for art from every public collection in the UK. More than 3,000 collections are represented, dwarfing the 50 British collections on Google Art Project and making it the most comprehensive single site for UK art. It launches with the nation's entire collection of 200,00 publicly-owned oil paintings - watercolours, drawings and artworks in other media will be progressively added. In 2017, a major HLF funded project to add UK public sculpture will begin, with some in 3D.

The site is partly financially sustained by over 500 Partner Collections, which pay an annual subscription to appear on the site, and in return will receive commercial opportunities and be able to add additional artworks. Many NMDC members, from the Ashmolean to National Galleries Scotland are Founder Partners, among the first 200 to join the scheme. Kim Mawhinney, Head of Art at National Museums Northern Ireland, said, "some projects have the capacity to be epoch-making and the development of Art UK may be such a moment in terms of access to art." [ArtUK](#) (list of partners), [Guardian](#)

Storiell: a reimagined museum for Gwynedd

The museum Storiell has opened at Bishop's Palace in [Bangor](#). It has been created on the old site of Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery following a £2.6m renovation project. The work was a partnership between Gwynedd Council and Bangor University, both of which will now be able to offer better access to their collections. HLF contributed £1.4m. Cllr Mandy Williams-Davies of Gwynedd Council said, "with a new shop offering a showcase for local Welsh products and goods, the opening is another sign of Bangor city's regeneration and how the arts and heritage have played an important role in doing this." [Daily Post](#)

Community led museum wins enterprise award

Winners of the Enterprising Museum Award sponsored by Museum Galleries Scotland were revealed at the 2015 Arts & Business Scotland Awards. This year there were two joint winners. Biggar and Upper Clydesdale Museum opened in July 2015 after a huge community effort to raise £500k to display collections, as well as drawing in Trust and public funding. The Scottish Maritime Museum won for their Scottish Boat Building School, which has taught traditional skills to the local community. [Biggar Museum](#), [MGS](#)

Funding

ACE seeks views on its post 2018 funding structures

The Arts Council is planning to reorganise its budgets post-2018 and is seeking views on its plans. These include:

- Banding the National Portfolio by size of grant, and offering tailored application forms to each band. This is in response to some smaller organisations having 'considerable challenges' with the one size fits all model.
- Merging museums into the NPO scheme rather than having a separate group of Major Partner Museums. Libraries would also be part of the single scheme. It hopes this will create more collaboration between sectors as well as healthy competition for funding, although it adds "*of course we are mindful of our responsibility to balance the overall cultural ecology - in practice, our initial modelling shows that the likely impact of this change will be fairly limited*".
- Expanding the Grants to Artists programme so that museums can also apply, and so that new approaches are included such as "*prototyping new cultural and creative industry products and services; artistic or cultural games; or digital content about arts and culture*".
- Focusing Strategic funds on low audience engagement, diversity and skills; children and young people and resilience and sustainability.

ACE and ComRes are running a [survey here](#) to collect views. There will also be a mix of workshops and briefing events during March. [M+H](#), [ACE](#), [ComRes](#) (survey)

Art Fund describes priorities for 2016

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, has highlighted some of the organisation's priorities for 2016. These include the new Moving Image Fund, launched last autumn, which has already given £400k in grants to Towner Art Gallery and The Whitworth to start developing collections. The Fund itself was created in a partnership with the Thomas Dane gallery, to create a public/private funding model to attract philanthropists. The Art Fund will also be expanding its work to support curatorial 'brilliance' with funding which also develops careers. It will continue to act as a strategic advisor to smaller museums, and an advocate for museums under threat. Particularly highlighting the threat to Lancashire museums, Deuchar said "*we must work hard to ensure the survival of free cultural provision on everyone's doorstep – beyond the relatively protected national museums and galleries.*" [M+H](#), [Art Fund](#)

£1 million competition to encourage adventures on heritage railways

The Government has announced a new £1 million competition to generate ideas to encourage tourism by train. It is aimed particularly at heritage railways and community rail partnerships. The vast majority of heritage rail is outside London, and the government hopes that the scheme will encourage people to explore history sites beyond the capital. 10 million people a year visit a heritage railway, bringing £250 million to the UK economy. Around 20 competition winners are expected to receive between £20k-£75k to develop their ideas. Entries must be received by 4th April. [Gov.uk](#)

Art360 offering grants to save artists' archives

The DACS Foundation has opened applications for the Art360 project, which aims to work with 100 modern and contemporary artists over three years to help planning the preservation of their archives. Supported by The Art Fund, Art360 is offering grants of up to £6k to artists. [Art Fund](#) (Art360)

Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund open for new applications

The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, which is run by the Museums Association, is open for a new round of applications until 23rd March. The Fund covers time limited collections work which is outside the core work of the museum, and has previously given grants between £20k-£100k. Projects should lead to a deepened understanding of collections and leave a legacy once the project is over. [Museums Journal](#)

BAMF travel award

The British Association of Friends of Museums has £2k to spend on travel awards in 2016 (and again in 2018 and 2020) for a museum volunteer or young professional. Apply with 500 words explaining why you should receive an award by the end of April. [BAMF](#)

Coming through fire and flood

Campaign Canute seeks to raise £2m to 'reimagine' Jorvik Viking Centre

Jorvik Viking Centre, which was damaged by flooding in December, has announced that it will reopen in early 2017. Although insurance will cover the water damage, Jorvik is hoping to raise an additional £2m to 'reimagine' the centre for the 21st century. #CampaignCanute is appropriately named after the Viking king with the questionable track record in flood management, whose reign began exactly 1000 years ago this year. The overhauled centre will include more use of digital and audiovisual innovations, as well as redisplaying Viking objects in the light of new research. [Jorvik Viking Centre](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Fire, fire!

The arts group Artichoke has been awarded £750k by the Arts Council for a large scale event to commemorate 350 years since the Great Fire of London. The grant is part of its £35m Ambition for Excellence programme. The group will work with unemployed young Londoners to create a sculptural representation of 17th century London which will then be burned at the height of the celebrations. The Museum of London will also be collaborating with Artichoke on evolving Great Fire 350 plans. [ACE](#)

Fourteen convicted of museum art thefts

Fourteen men have been convicted of thefts from a string of museums during 2012. The artefacts were worth up to £57 million. Although there had been some convictions directly after some of the thefts, such as the removal of 18 jade artefacts worth £15m from the Fitzwilliam Museum, it became increasingly apparent that organised crime, rather than one-off opportunism, was behind the losses. One of the gang acted as a "fence" in Hong Kong. The final four to be convicted in February 2016 were described as the gangs 'generals' who had planned the crimes. The gang hired in a second, often incompetent, group for some robberies: having stolen an 18th-century jade bowl and porcelain figurine Durham University Oriental Museum, they hid them in the fields and could not find them again. The artefacts were later recovered and returned to the Museum. An attempt to steal a rhino head from Norwich Castle Museum ended in farce as the thieves dropped it and were chased by the public. However, the items taken from the Fitzwilliam Museum have never been found. Vernon Rapley, the Director of Security at the Victoria and Albert Museum said he applauded the police, adding "*over and above implementing security standards, museums need to understand what's happening at the moment, and they can only really do that by being open and sharing information among themselves.*" [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Best preserved Bronze Age site discovered in Fenland quarry

The best preserved Bronze Age site ever found in Britain has been discovered in a clay quarry near Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire. 3000 years ago, an entire village caught fire and collapsed, eventually becoming submerged in nearby water, preserving everything from walls to plant fibre textiles and cups. The latest find is a wheel in remarkably good condition. Site Director Mark Knight said, "*this site is one continuing surprise, but if you had asked me, a perfectly preserved wheel is the last thing I would have expected to find. On this site objects never seen anywhere else tend to turn up in multiples, so it's certainly not impossible we'll go on to find another even better wheel.*" [Historic England](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#)

Historic Environment Bill provides more protection for Welsh monuments

The National Assembly for Wales has passed the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill to strengthen protection for historic sites. The provisions mean that:

- It will be more difficult for individuals who damage protected monuments to escape prosecution by pleading ignorance
- New powers to take urgent action if an historic site is falling into disrepair or to stop unauthorised work
- Local authorities will gain new ways to recover their costs when they have to take direct action.
- Wales will become the first UK country to put historic environment records on a statutory footing

Deputy Minister for Culture Ken Skates said, "*the Bill has been the result of extensive conversations with heritage professionals, voluntary organisations and the public. This gave us a clear idea of the challenges and the need for effective and flexible mechanisms for how we manage change.*" [Welsh Government](#)

Also: Baroness Randerson is leading a review into Welsh heritage services, which will consider creating a stronger, unified identity for the sector, improving the commercial performance of heritage sites and fulfilling the Well-being of Future Generations Act. [Welsh Government](#)

Museum of Lost Objects

The BBC is running a series of 10 in-depth articles about historical sites destroyed or damaged in Syria. Some, like the mound at Tell of Qarqur, predate classical civilisation by thousands of years and tell the story successive cultures at a single site. [BBC](#)

Export bar for early image of vanished Nonsuch Palace

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has placed an export bar on the earliest known image of Nonsuch Palace, the magnificent Surrey Royal residence built by Henry VIII, and progressively dismantled by Charles II's mistress Barbara Villiers who sold off the parts to pay her gambling debts. By 1690, little was left. Flemish artist Joris Hoefnagel's 1568 watercolour is the oldest of only six remaining depictions of the palace. The picture is valued at £1m and the export bar is in place until 31st May with a possible extension to the end of August. [Gov.uk](#)

Fun Palaces evaluates – and prepares for 2016

Fun Palaces, the community annual event based on the premise of 'Everyone an Artist and Everyone a Scientist', has been evaluating its work. In 2015, 142 Fun Palaces created by 2,000 people received 50,000 visits. 89% of palace creators wanted to do it again. Demographically, the Fun Palaces did well at reaching beyond the 'usual suspects' though more work has to be done in reaching Asian, people with disabilities and men, as well as communities in the richest and poorest areas. [Fun Palaces](#) (evaluation), [Fun Palaces](#) (2016)

Jobs

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

- [Academic Programmes Manager - National Archives](#)
- [Punk London Project Coordinator - Museum of London](#)
- [Prospect Research Executive - Science Museum Group](#)
- [Senior Audience Researcher and Developer - National Railway Museum](#)
- [Graphic designer \(middleweight\) - Natural History Museum](#)

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

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