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NMDC news



Hawksbill Sea Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricate*, (Linnaeus,-1766). 1913, from Natural Sciences Collection. c. Museums Sheffield

Museums Day 15th May 2017



NMDC and the Museums Association are working together on a day of nationwide political advocacy for museums this spring. Museums Day will take place on 15th May 2017 and will be a focal point for all museums to engage with local and national politicians to promote the impact that museums have across social, cultural, economic, scientific and educational spheres.

Museums will be encouraged to step up their advocacy activity through a range of different activities, including writing to key stakeholders, inviting local politicians to visit museums and using social media to promote museums' work. The Museums Association and NMDC will provide guidance and facts and figures for participating museums prior to the event.

There will also be a parliamentary event in Westminster, which will provide an opportunity to show MPs and Lords what museums do and why they matter, and to discuss the challenges and opportunities that museums face as the UK Government undertakes a wide-ranging Museums Review. The event will include a keynote address from NMDC member Maria Balshaw, Director of Manchester City Galleries who is taking over as Director at Tate later this year, and will also showcase a set of innovative museum projects from across the sector. Parliamentary events in the devolved nations are also being planned for later this year.

NMDC Chair Diane Lees said: *"Museums Day will provide a great opportunity for the whole sector to come together to celebrate and promote what museums do and why they matter. It will be a chance for us to highlight the unique quality and value of UK museums' collections and expertise, and to build support for museums from national, regional and local politicians."*

Museums Day follows similar successful events in the USA, where the American Alliance for Museums' successful Museums Advocacy Day has run for several years. Further details will be announced soon. [Museums Association](#)

NMDC staff changes

Katie Childs, NMDC's Policy and Projects Manager, will be leaving NMDC at the end of March to take up the new post of Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Relations at Imperial War Museums. Among her many achievements during her five years at NMDC Katie has led NMDC's work on improving national-regional museum partnerships and promoting international working, drafted numerous NMDC documents including *Museums Matter* and the museum sector's joint response to the DCMS Culture White Paper, and negotiated a multitude of complex policy issues on behalf of members from copyright to firearms legislation. Katie takes up post at IWM on 3rd April and her new email address will be kchilds@iwm.org.uk

Also: NMDC is now recruiting for a new Policy and Projects Manager - a unique and exciting opportunity to work with museum directors and senior stakeholders across the sector to make a real impact on UK museum policy and practice. The deadline for applications is 20th March. For further information about the role and details of how to apply see the [NMDC jobs website](#).

Members' news



Rachel Maclean 'Feed Me', 2015. Courtesy of the artist, Arts Council Collection, South Bank Centre. Part of the 'I Want, I Want' Art and Technology exhibition at Birmingham Museums

A year's worth of visitors in six weeks for Ferens Art Gallery

The Ferens Art Gallery reopened on 13th January at the beginning of Hull's year as City of Culture after a £5.2m refurbishment. The gallery expected visitor numbers to increase but were overwhelmed to receive 92,000 in just over a month, compared to 11,910 visitors in the same period in 2015. Lorenzetti's 'Christ Between Saints Paul and Peter' has been the centrepiece for the reopening and the gallery is also displaying Francis Bacon's 'Screaming Popes' series. Curator Kirsten Simister said 'I am continually amazed by the buzzing atmosphere.' The city's Maritime Museum has also seen a 600% increase in audiences this year – 66,432 visitors to the 19th February, compared with 9,475 in the previous year. [Hull Daily Mail](#), [M + H](#)

Also: A new venue, the Humber Street Gallery, has opened as part of the regeneration of the Fruit Market area of Hull. The city council has invested £4m in the infrastructure of the area, which is now the city's cultural quarter. [M+H](#)

Glasgow approves up to £27m investment in Burrell Collection

Glasgow City Council has agreed to invest up to £27.3m in the £66m redevelopment of the Burrell Collection. It had previously committed £5.7m. HLF has pledged £15m and it is hoped that the rest will be raised by public donation. The Council's announcement means that it is now possible to procure the main contractor. Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Archie Graham, said "*Sir William's great legacy has been described as the greatest gift a city has ever received and we have a moral duty to ensure it is housed in the finest of buildings. The decision taken by the Council demonstrates our commitment to that great legacy and working with our partners we will unlock the great potential of the Burrell Collection.*" The building is expected to reopen in 2020. [Glasgow City Council](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Glasgow Evening Times](#)

Collecting straight from the battlefields: IWM marks its centenary

The creation of the Imperial War Museum was agreed by the government on 5th March 1917, and its first acquisition was a life buoy collected from a survivor of the Lusitania. As the museum celebrates its centenary, the life buoy remains on display. The decision to create a museum before the war had ended reflected the fact that the conflict affected every household in the country. IWM's first director Martin Conway went to France to meet General Haig and discuss 'collecting straight from the battlefield'. Current Director Diane Lees writes "*the intention was to collect and display material as a record of everyone's experiences during that war – civilian and military – and to commemorate the sacrifices of all sections of society.*" IWM is now creating special displays across its five sites highlighting some of the 'extraordinary, inspiring and devastating' stories the museum has told over the past century. [Guardian](#), [Imperial War Museums](#)

Birmingham Council decides against cuts to Birmingham Museums Trust

Birmingham City Council has decided against £750k in cuts which it contemplated applying to Birmingham Museums Trust for the 2017-18 financial year. Director Ellen McAdam said "*with over 9,000 signatures on our petition and many letters of support, we would like to thank all of our supporters who have helped to show how valued our city's museums are and how vital funding support is to their continued success.*" She added that no BMT venue will now need to close, but that the financial landscape from April 2018 is uncertain and the museum will continue to talk to the council. Plans to close two Birmingham libraries have also been withdrawn. The city council has made £71m in cuts for the coming financial year, and increased council tax by 5%. [BMT](#), [Birmingham Mail](#), [Birmingham Mail](#) (libraries), [Taitmail](#)

National Media Museum changes its name as it opens 'new chapter'

The National Media Museum in Bradford is being renamed 'The National Science and Media Museum' and launching an exciting new programme including a £1.8m Wonderlab exhibition featuring astronaut Tim Peake. The museum hopes to rebuild and expand its audience which fell from 1 million when it opened in 1983 to 460,000 in 2016. Director Jo Quinton-Tulloch said it is 'an ambitious new chapter for the museum', adding "*it is the start of our long-term strategy to look at our core subjects differently and inspire the filmmakers, photographers, scientists and engineers of the future. Ultimately, our aim is to take our place among the top international museums and build on our status as a key part of British, Yorkshire and Bradford tourism.*" She described the planned display of Tim Peake's spacecraft later this year as a 'huge coup' for the museum, likely to draw large audiences. [BBC](#), [The Guardian](#)

Highlights list for 2017

Images this month come from our highlights list for 2017 – a selection of major exhibitions and stand-out events from NMDC member organisations. Raphael at the Ashmolean sits alongside a Pink Floyd retrospective at the V&A; in Bristol there's a chance for children to name a very large Pliosaurus or for adults to attend an immersive Dark Ages evening fighting off Grendel. RAF Museum Cosford offers a food festival under the wings of impressive aeroplanes; Norfolk museums celebrate early photographer Olive Edis; and Oxford University museums offer 'Brain Diaries' in a programme which showcases modern developments in neuroscience. Manchester museums are commencing a three-year arts exchange programme with South Asia, with arresting contemporary art including a meteorite apparently crashing through the ceiling of a gallery.

At RAMM in Exeter luminous modern images of underwater life contrast with stories of the Victorian obsession with the seashore. The natural world also features strongly at National Museums Scotland which continues to show *Monkey Business*; the Natural History Museum promises the definitive account of the world's largest creature, the blue whale; while the Horniman's animatronic animals allow visitors to find out if they can move faster than a fly. Plywood, turtles, a stuffed cat, posh frocks, a giant sandcastle, an indoor tree and of course Vikings, ancient Egyptians and numerous Madonnas are all conscripted to shed light on the world we live in. You can read the whole list here: [NMDC](#)

Museum futures roundup

The Art Newspaper has written about the challenges facing the new Directors of the Tate and V&A, Maria Balshaw and Tristram Hunt. [The Art Newspaper](#)

The Scotsman has published images of V&A Dundee as the scaffolding is removed from the new building and the exterior is revealed. [The Scotsman](#)

The Eden Project in Cornwall is building an 109 room hotel on its site which will be sustainable and incorporate existing landscape features such as trees and stone walls. [ALVA](#)

Design museum Director Deyan Sudjic has given a long interview to the *Guardian* about the museum's new home, and changing ideas about design and taste. [Guardian](#)

Politics

Cultural Property Act passed

The Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill has passed and received Royal Assent on 23rd February. This ends a long period where the UK government failed to sign the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Consequently, there are now two new offences in UK law: making cultural property the object of an attack, and dealing in cultural property illegally exported from occupied territory. Any objects falling into this category can be seized by the government for return to their country of origin when peace is re-established. The MA welcomed the new law, but said that the Hague Convention is limited and the government should offer more help and resources: "*British police forces require sufficient resources and international co-operation to be able to play their part in combatting illicit trade.*" [Parliament.uk](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Government launches review of the HLF and NHMF

The government has launched its review into the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund. It will look at how both bodies carry out their roles supporting the heritage sector, how they work with partners, and how well the HLF operates in distributing National Lottery money. An online call for evidence is open until 6th April. [Gov.uk](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Digital strategy launched for the UK

The government has launched its digital strategy for the UK, which ranges from coding lessons for all children from Key Stage 1 to plans to make major cities attractive to digital businesses. The government commits to the digitisation of culture and says it will "*undertake a major enhancement and rationalisation of heritage records nationally and locally, including an update and improvement of Historic England's customer-facing IT.*" It also pledges to undertake a Digital Culture Project to help cultural organisations make good use of IT, and notes that use of digital will also be covered in the DCMS Museums Review. The Heritage Alliance has published a briefing note highlighting issues of relevance to the cultural sector. [Heritage Alliance](#), [Gov.uk](#)

Museums and political unrest

Jewish Museum evacuated after bomb threat

The Jewish Museum was evacuated on 28th February following a bomb threat: around 100 people including two school parties were asked to leave the building. After police checks, it reopened later in the afternoon. The museum had stepped up security since the 2014 terrorist attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels. [Museums Journal](#)

Paris museums and the aftermath of terrorist attacks

Meanwhile *The Art Newspaper* reports that major Paris venues including the Louvre are seeing falls in attendance around 15% following last year's terrorist attacks. The museums are also spending up to €1m in additional security. In early February there was an incident 'of terrorist nature' outside the Louvre involving a lone man with a knife which was swiftly dealt with. French art critic Didier Rykner said "*the problem isn't the attacks themselves, but the state of emergency. The Americans and Japanese are no longer insured in the same way and the embassies warn people not to go to France.*" However the Louvre has seen a marked increase in 'very satisfied' visitors, which rose from 56% to 70% in 2016. It believes it will take three years for its audiences to climb back to previous levels. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Hands off our Revolution: Tate Modern Director among those joining artists campaign

An international group of artists, curators and writers have launched a campaign, 'Hands off our Revolution', to counter the rise of right wing populism across the world. The organisers are planning exhibitions and events, stating "*we believe that art can help counter the rising rhetoric of right-wing populism and fascism, and its increasingly stark expressions of xenophobia, racism, sexism, homophobia, and unapologetic intolerance.*" Artists Isaac Julien and Tacita Dean as well as Tate Modern Director Frances Morris are among the signatories to the statement. [Hands off our Revolution](#), [Museums Journal](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

People's History Museum leads Wonder Women Festival

2018 marks the centenary of some women over 30 gaining the right to vote. The Manchester festival 'Wonder Women' runs from 2nd-12th March this year and is a creative countdown to the anniversary, including talks, workshops, city tours and exhibitions including 'Wonder Women: Suffragettes of Football'. It is being led by the People's History Museum and launched with artists, musicians and performers at Manchester Art Gallery. [Creative Tourist](#), [People's History Museum](#)

Cultural sector responses to the EU referendum



Companion Pieces, Gateshead in a Box by Paul Scott. Part of an exhibition celebrating a century of Shipley Art Gallery.

Brexit: an oral history

In the aftermath of the vote to leave the European Union, National Theatre director Rufus Norris publicly worried about the disconnect between the view from the cultural sector, particularly in London, and the wider country. He planned a listening project across the UK and from this a new play has emerged, created by Carol Ann Duffy, but compiled from more than seventy in-depth interviews, themselves a selection from many more conversations. Norris presumes a predominance of Remainers in his audience, so has slightly privileged the Leaver voice. He says "*I think what comes through very clearly is a strong rejection of modern politics, the selfishness, the career-driven nature of it*" but he says he has also detected how "*utterly convinced everyone was of the supreme correctness of their own position*". He points to a loss of empathy on both sides which the referendum highlighted. 'My Country, a Work in Progress' runs at the National Theatre in London until 22nd March before transferring to the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow. [The Guardian](#)

Derby Museums to create 'Your Place in the World'

Derby Museums is creating a new co-produced project with the diverse communities of Derby called 'Your Place in the World'. It has attracted funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and DCMS/Wolfson Fund. It will use Derby's World Cultures Collection to talk to people about their place in the community and Derby's place in the world. Derby Museums Director Tony Butler told Museums+Heritage "*we will be thinking of local and global citizenship at the same time. But rather than go to community centres we are going to be going to boxing clubs and laundrettes and barber shops because communities are self-selecting and I think we have to try and work really hard to try and find where the genuine mix of people would be.*" [Derby Museums](#), [M+H](#)

More resources on Brexit and the cultural sector

Happy Museum has published materials from its workshop 'How can the cultural sector respond to the referendum?' and is planning similar events in future. James Doerer, a freelance and former senior researcher at the Arts Council also has an older but useful list of materials, from blogs to institutional responses to radio programmes on cultural sector responses to Brexit. [Happy Museum](#), [James Doerer](#)

Art and culture in new places

We will delight them on the beaches...

A new Coastal Cultural Network was set up at the end of February bringing together local authorities, cultural organisations, Coastal Community Teams and other local groups, with the aim of using contemporary art and culture to revive coastal towns. The network is being led by Hastings Borough Council. Members will have access to an online forum to share case studies and create new work. The Arts Council, which is championing the project, points to previous successes regenerating the coast through the arts – from the well known role of Turner Contemporary in Margate to Grants for the Arts which helped set up the Skegness SO festival, now visited by 80,000 people. [ACE](#), [Coastal Communities](#)

Artists transform South London psychiatric ward

A psychiatric ward at Springfield University Hospital in Tooting has invited in artists to improve its once colourless walls. Artists include Turner Prize winners Assemble, Gavin Turk, the photographer Nick Knight and the patients themselves. The idea came from artist Tim A Shaw, who said after visiting a friend in a psychiatric ward: "*we thought it wasn't necessarily the right kind of environment to feel better. It was cold and clinical, and from our point of view, the colours and artwork weren't stimulating.*" Psychiatrists involved in the project have praised the project for improving the wellbeing of patients – through both the improved surroundings and participating in art. [The Guardian](#), [Hospital Rooms](#)

Museums get involved in Disabled Access Day

Disabled Access Day is taking place on 10th–12th March to allow institutions to showcase their existing accessibility and to encourage members of the public, who may be put off by concerns about access, to visit venues. St Paul's Cathedral and the Wellcome Collection are among the heritage and museum venues taking part this year. [VocalEyes](#) (St Paul's), [VocalEyes](#) (Wellcome) [Disabled Access Day](#)

'Back then, you wouldn't have got 50 quid for an Elizabethan painting'

The *Guardian* reports on the tantalising prospect that much of British 16th to 18th century history may be crated and forgotten in US warehouses, the property of American billionaires. For sixty years from around 1880, a number of super rich Americans were interested in buying up European heritage and did so on an enormous scale – from paintings to tapestries, to doors and whole interiors. Sir Roy Strong, who is campaigning to track down the lost items, says that in the period before export controls "*there were ship-loads of early English portraits exported, not just grand things. There were interesting Elizabethan and other pictures. Back then, you wouldn't have got 50 quid for an Elizabethan painting.*" The extent of export was so great that 30 tonnes of English architectural objects went down with the Titanic. Randolph Henry Hearst is rumoured to have bought up large collections and then left them in warehouses in the Bronx, where they may still remain. Historically, there have been some successes in rediscovering architectural material: in the 1990s, the owners of Gwydir Castle tracked down the interior of a 1640s room to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which had purchased it from Hearst. The museum, which had held the room in storage for decades, sold it back to the castle. [Guardian](#)

Events



Hands over eyes c. Pink Floyd Music Ltd photo by Storm Thorgerson/Aubrey 'Po' Powell 1971 Belsize Park. 'The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains' opens at the V&A later this year.

Breaking boundaries: a free conference to help museums build resilience

As part of its work as a Major Partner Museum, Ironbridge Gorge is organising a two-day conference to help other museums build resilience and think beyond traditional boundaries. Topics include funding, attracting young people, digital technology and media. Participants include speakers from Culture Coventry, ACE, Black Country Living Museum and Twycross Zoo. The ACE-funded conference takes place on 16th-17th March at Enginuity. [Ironbridge Gorge](#)

Let's Get Real conference

Speakers have been announced for the Let's Get Real conference which will look at the best way to engage young audiences online. Experts from within and beyond the arts and heritage sector include speakers from Raspberry Pi, the National Holocaust Centre & Museum, the Children's Commissioner for England, Google Arts & Culture, Digitalme, Innovation in Education, and more. The event takes place on 20th March at the Museum of London – tickets are from £76.55 including VAT and booking. [Lets Get Real](#), [Culture24](#) (booking)

Museums at Night: May festival

Ticket sales have begun for the Museums at Night festival. Any UK cultural or heritage organisation wishing to take part by running an after-hours event during the May festival dates should register before 17th March to be included in Culture24's next round of press releases. [Museums At Night](#) (registration)

Audience diversity academy

The Arts Marketing Academy is running a second stage of its Audience Diversity Academy. The whole programme takes place online and participants are encouraged to experiment with engaging new audiences through work-based experiments. The work runs from April to November 2017 and is open to anyone working for an arts, cultural or heritage organisation in England. Places are £150 and the closing date for applications is 17th March. Staff from the Fitzwilliam Museum and De La Warr Pavilion are among previous alumni. [AMA](#)

Also: AMA are again running the Future Proof Museums event, an intensive development programme to improve the resilience of museums across England. The deadline for applications is 25th April. [AMA](#)

Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference

The National Archives and Research Libraries UK are seeking papers for its November conference 'Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities'. The conference will explore the cultural value of collections in the creative economy and explore how evidence-gathering by libraries and archives has been vital to advocating for the sector. The organisers are now seeking abstracts for 20 minute talks, to be sent by 30th April. The conference itself takes place at The Lowry in Manchester on 27th–29th November. [Museum Development North West](#), [DCDC Conference](#)

MuseumNext Europe: NMDC discount

MuseumNext brings together museum professionals from more than 40 countries to discuss what's next for museums. This year the European conference will feature people, ideas and technologies that will be game-changing for the museum sector. The conference is relatively unusual in its international mix of delegates, and links museum professionals with colleagues from across Europe and further afield, often leading to international collaborations. It takes place 26th–28th June in Rotterdam. Standard tickets are €824.89. A €100 discount is available to newsletter readers by using the code: NMDC [Museum Next Europe](#)

Also: A more techie museum audience is invited to Culture Geek, which is also organised by MuseumNext, and takes place on 19th May at the Royal Geographical Society, London. Tickets are from £230.36 including fees and VAT. [Culture Geek](#)

Art Fund Curators' Day programme planned

The Art Fund and Arts Council have announced a new partnership which will develop events across the country for curators in 2017 and 2018. The organisations hope to document the events and make them available digitally so that those not attending courses have access to the learning points. [ArtFund](#), [Arts Council Collection](#)

Museums and Wellbeing week

Museums and Wellbeing week takes place from 6th to 12th March. This is the second year of the scheme, which is accompanied by a now sold out conference. Participants include the Horniman, Wellcome Collection and Bethlem Museum of the Mind. Museums can submit relevant events and promote them on the hashtag #museumsandwellbeing. [Museums and Wellbeing](#)

Re-evaluating collections

National Gallery's £30m Pontormo bid rejected

The National Gallery's attempt to acquire a £30m Pontormo painting, Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap, has fallen through. Although the funds were raised, with significant help from the Art Fund and £19.4m from the UK government, the buyer of the painting hedge fund manager Tom Hill did not accept the offer. He said that the fall of the pound against the dollar since he made the purchase would mean he would lose \$10m on the sale. It is likely that an export license will now be refused for the next ten years, so although the painting remains in Hill's hands, it cannot leave the UK. A spokeswoman for DCMS said *"we have prevented this extraordinary piece of art from leaving the country, and hope to see it on public display at some point in the future."* Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar, who has previously been critical of the export bar process told the *Telegraph* *"applying for an export licence you have to promise if a museum raises a matching sum you will sell it to them. We [the Art Fund] want to see some proper legal muscle to a system currently based on gentlemen's agreements ... the civil servants running it need to listen to people who have new ideas for change."* [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Help the British Museum choose a longlist of notable Treasure finds

This year marks 20 years since the Treasure Act and inception of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Since then over 5,000 treasure finds have been acquired by over 100 museums, and 1.24m finds have been recorded by PAS. The British Museum is planning a 'Summer Season of Treasure' to mark the anniversary and launching a competition to choose the nation's top 20 favourite finds. Museums are invited to propose treasure finds to be included in the longlist by emailing mlewis@britishmuseum.org. The public will choose from a shortlist drawn up by a panel of experts.

NMS receives £390k to explore the imperial past of 130 military collections

The Arts and Humanities Research Council has given National Museums Scotland £390k to expand knowledge of 130 military collections from across the UK relating to the British Empire. 'Baggage and Belonging: Military Collections and the British Empire (1750–1900)' will look at how objects were acquired and what they reveal about relationships between British forces and non-European peoples. NMS writes *"these are the proceeds of looting, trophy-taking or souvenir hunting on the one hand and co-operation, diplomatic exchange and scientific enquiry on the other."* The project will include training for staff at military museums around interpretation and display. The results of the research will also be reflected at major museums including the National Army Museum and National War Museum. [NMS](#)

Finding the intangible in museum collections

ACE is funding a series of workshops to help identify intangible heritage in museum collections, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, ritual and festivals, knowledge about nature and the universe, and traditional crafts. The work is being carried out by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites UK (ICOMOS). The participating museums are Weald and Downland Living Museum, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, The Cambridge Museum and Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery. ACE's Director of Museums John Orna-Ornstein said *"This project will be an important catalyst for museums in the South East and one we're pleased to be able to support. It will help equip more staff with the skills they need to showcase these intangible elements to their audiences and ensure they are not lost to the sands of time."* [ICOMOS](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Export bar for George III wheel barometer

Culture Secretary Matt Hancock has placed an export bar on a rare George III wheel barometer, believed to be one of only nine to survive. It was made in Derby by the family of John Whitehurst, a clock maker, instrument maker, natural philosopher and member of the Lunar Society. The asking price is £160k, and export is deferred to 22nd April with a possible extension to 22nd July. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: An export bar has been placed on a £24.5m painting by Parmigianino 'the Virgin and Child with Saint Mary Magdalen and Infant Saint John the Baptist'. The bar is in place until 9th June with a possible extension to December. [Gov.uk](#)

Museums + Heritage publish awards shortlist

Museums + Heritage has published the shortlist for their annual awards, after a record number of entries. There are around 7 – 10 organisations shortlisted in each of ten categories. These include:

- Restoration or Conservation projects include the Natural History Museum's Blue Whale project; National Museums Liverpool's Lady Lever Art Gallery South End development; Royal Museum Greenwich's restoration of the King's Presence Chamber ceiling and the Fitzwilliam's collaboration with the Hamilton Kerr institute on the restoration of Sebastiano's Adoration of the Shepherds.
- The temporary or touring exhibition shortlist includes Royal Pavilion & Museums' 'Fashion Cities Africa'; The Novium's 'Tim Peake: an extraordinary journey'; Royal Museums Greenwich's 'Samuel Pepys: Plague, Fire, Revolution'.
- Best marketing campaign includes the 14 – 18 NOW, Jeremy Deller theatrical collaboration 'We're Here Because We're Here', Durham Cathedral's Lego project and the Mary Rose Trust's 'Mary Rose Revealed'.
- The ten new galleries at National Museums Scotland are on the shortlist for best permanent exhibition, as is the Imperial War Museum for the American Air Museum at IWM Duxford.

Winners will be announced in a ceremony on 17th May. [M + H](#)

Stolen goods: help the Metropolitan Police

The police have recovered a number of items which may be stolen from a known offender who is now in prison. Images of the goods are online – please contact DC Sophie Hayes at the Metropolitan Police's Art and Antiques Unit 020 7230 8286 if you recognise any of these objects. [Metropolitan Police](#)

Surveys and consultations

Firearms Licensing fees for museums

The government is consulting on firearms licensing fees for museums and approved shooting clubs, with a view to increasing fees to cover the cost to taxpayers. NMDC and the Museums Association are jointly responding to the consultation, as are the Association of Independent Museums and the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, which runs until 5.30pm on 9th March. [Gov.uk](#)

Revenue generation 2017

Arts Quarter is holding its second annual survey on revenue generation. The survey seeks trend information rather than specific figures and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. The results will be used to help benchmarking across the sector. [Arts Quarter](#)

The Arts Council as an employer

Arts Council England has commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies to conduct research into how it is perceived as an employer by people at all stages of their creative and cultural careers. People are invited to fill in a short survey before 17th March. All responses will be anonymised. [Institute for Employment Studies](#)

VisitEngland Annual Survey

VisitEngland have recently launched their 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 is an official statistic, generates considerable media interest when published and each participating museum will receive their own benchmarking report. The deadline is 1st May. Museums and galleries which have not received a questionnaire, or those with any other questions about the survey, should email AnnualAttractionsSurvey@visitengland.org.

New spaces



In Leaf (Primary Time) Neha Choksi, 2015, live performance. Created for Hayward Gallery. Courtesy of the artist and Project 88, Mumbai. Part of the three year 'New North and South' collaboration between Manchester museums and South Asia

Bromley seeks proposals for subterranean culture venue at Crystal Palace

Bromley Council is in the early stages of planning a cultural venue at Crystal Palace park, while working within the infrastructure that remains from the Crystal Palace which burned to the ground in 1936. The new building is planned to have a much smaller footprint than the original palace, with an overground segment on the Palace Terrace and a subterranean area making use of the Victorian subway, which is largely closed to the public at the moment. Councillor Stephen Carr said *"this is very much the first step in a process and we are seeking expressions of interest from a wide range of cultural venues to fulfil the potential of this unique location. We could eventually see a proposal that becomes a viable venue in its own right, while ensuring the restoration of the subway."* The deadline for expressions of interest is 10th May. [Bromley Council](#)

New London space to offer public access to the Government Art Collection

The government is planning to move the Government Art Collection (GAC) to a new London venue where some of the paintings currently in store can be displayed. Two thirds of the 14,000-strong collection is currently displayed in government offices in the UK and overseas. Since 1999, the remainder has been housed near Tottenham Court Road, but the storage space is not environmentally controlled and has no public gallery space. There has been some political pressure to make the collection more open to the public – notably it was a promise in the Liberal Democrat 2010 manifesto. It is not known whether a new home for the collection has been selected. A DCMS spokeswoman said *"The GAC is the most dispersed collection of British art in the world. The GAC is looking for new accommodation and, as part of this, hopes to establish a small display space that everyone will be able to enjoy. The location and timing will be announced in due course."* [The Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Very small cities in the running for 2021 City of Culture

Eleven bids have now been submitted to be 2021 City of Culture in a list including the smallest city in the country, St Davids in Wales. The list will be finalised at the end of April, with a shortlist announced in July and the winner in December. The HLF will give £3m to the winner for development. Other cities bidding are Perth, Paisley, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland, Coventry, Hereford, Warrington, Portsmouth, Wells and Swansea.

Paisley is believed to have the highest number of listed buildings in Scotland, but is tiny for a city with a population of 76,000 and overshadowed by nearby Glasgow. Labour Council Leader Mark Macmillan says the bid is 'allowing people to be proud of Paisley again' and points to £100m of planned building work, much of which will be enlarging the museum. An initial bid for £15m to the HLF failed last year, but the Council has now put in a revised application. [Guardian](#), [Renfrewshire Council](#), [Gov.uk](#), [BBC](#), [The Conversation](#)

Eclectic jobs for enterprising people

Redefining job descriptions: building on 'Character Matters'

Museums+Heritage has published four articles this month following up on the 'Character Matters' report which explored the skills and personality types of people working in the museum sector, and which made recommendations about how to develop staff in the future. Case studies include:

- The Royal Pavilion & Museums' Workforce Development Programme. This has helped generate a more unified idea of the workforce. Front of house staff can, for example, train in conservation skills rather than getting trapped in rigidly defined roles. The body has also run a recent conference to share its learning practices.
- The University of Leicester has created a 'Socially engaged course' as part of its Museum Studies offer, which invites students to think about how museums can help generate positive social change and engage with social justice and rights.

The report is also concerned with representation – for example, in museums serving a large BME community with no black or Asian staff, and work to bring in skills from people who have not previously worked in the sector. Helen Wilkinson, Deputy Director of AIM and a member of the steering committee of the 'Character Matters' report, said that she also hoped for a culture change towards more flexible responsibilities: *"for me one of the overriding messages from the report is the landscape for museums is really shifting and everyone who works in museums is going to need a broader range of skills because, particularly thinking about the funding climate and the need for income generation, being more entrepreneurial is going to be part of everyone's job, it's not just going to be one department in the museum that earns the money."* [M+H](#)

Museums Galleries Scotland becomes a Living Wage employer

Museums Galleries Scotland has become accredited as a Living Wage employer, meaning that all its staff will now receive at least £8.45 an hour. There are now 750 registered Living Wage employers in Scotland and over 3,000 across the UK. One in five employees in Scotland receive less than the Living Wage, but there is a strong economic as well as social case for it - workers earning a wage which keeps them out of poverty are shown to be happier, more productive and less likely to be absent from work. [MGS](#)

Funding

Museums facing steep business rate rises from April

New rateable values coming into force from 1st April will significantly increase the rates bills for many museums, with bills rising by hundreds of thousands of pounds for the largest institutions. The rateable value of the Science Museum will increase from £5m to £7.4m, while the British Museum is still fighting an ongoing court case with Camden Council over its rates bills.

In January, Imperial War Museums lost an appeal over its business rates, which means that the cost of rates for its national war film archive in Saffron Walden will rise from £2,543 in 2010 to £30,615. These are the costs after IWM's 80% fee reduction because it is a charity. The museum estimates that across its sites, its rates bill will rise by £100k in the coming financial year. Following recent research, the Association of Independent Museums estimates that smaller museums will be affected to some extent, with 90% of museums receiving a rise in 2017-18. [Museums Journal](#), [Telegraph](#)

£3m of Celebrating Age funding awarded

The Arts Council and the Baring Foundation have granted £3m for a new Celebrating Age fund, given to organisations developing dedicated programmes for and with older people. The fund was created in response to Taking Part statistics which show that arts participation falls away steeply among over-75s. Age UK's Index of Wellbeing shows that cultural participation makes the highest contribution of 5.75% towards overall wellbeing of those over 60. First round recipients of funding include Wolverhampton Art Gallery which receives £90.8k for its 'Still Lively' programme, a two-year mixture of visual arts activities, exhibitions and events in partnership with arts organisations and a housing association. [ACE](#)

ACE offers match funding for Crowdfunders

The Arts Council is continuing its experiment with offering match-funding for arts projects featured on crowdfunding platforms. It is now offering £125k total and up to £10k per project in match-funding on Crowdfunder. Theatre, dance, textiles and documentaries are among the eligible projects. [Crowdfunder](#)

Also: Crowdfunder, HLF and Nesta are offering a half day workshop on crowdfunding heritage projects in Liverpool on 14th March. [Crowdfunder](#)

Developing England's tourism: Discover England Fund

A second round of funding has been announced for small projects and pilots as part of the Discover England Fund. Up to £250,000 is available for initiatives that test and trial approaches to product development, build knowledge and generate shareable good practice across the industry. The deadline for initial expressions of interest is 10 March. [VisitBritain](#)

European Year of Cultural Heritage

The European parliament has reached a provisional agreement that 2018 will be European Year of Cultural Heritage. €8m will be available to fund the year, which will raise awareness of European history to strengthen European identity. It will also look at the benefits of heritage, as well as the pressures it faces from environmental pressure on sites to illicit trafficking in cultural goods. [European Council](#), [NEMO](#)

Wales extends capital development grants to museums and archives

The Welsh government's capital development grant scheme, first created for libraries, has now opened to museums and archives across Wales. There are two bands: one of up to £120k for improving external appearance, collections care and visitor experience and a second offering grants up to £300k for larger strategic projects. The deadline is 13th March. [Welsh government](#)

Education



Fancy dress is strongly encouraged at this Bristol Museum Late 'Booty, Beasties and Baddies'. Visitors enter an immersive Dark Ages world where Beowulf and Grendel fight it out.

Teachmeet: free event mixing teachers and the cultural sector

Culture24 is mixing teachers with curators and education officers from museums, galleries and arts organisations at its Teachmeet event. It will bring the worlds of education, culture, arts, and digital media together, with a special focus on using digital collections to support teaching and learning. Teachmeet is an informal gathering where all participants are welcome to share ideas they have trialled in the classroom or ask questions. There are 70 free places for cultural professionals, but people are asked to book only if they can definitely attend. There are also 100 free places for teachers, and Culture24 will be grateful to anyone who can pass on details to teacher networks. The event takes place on 20th March at the Clore Learning Centre, Museum of London from 5–7pm.

[Culture24](#)

London cultural education mapped

Cultural education charity A New Direction has produced an interactive map charting cultural education programmes across the capital. It allows users to see what work is taking place in each borough and by organisation. [A New Direction](#)

Ebacc and the arts: conflicting statistics

A report published by the New Schools Network claims that the introduction of the Ebacc has not impacted on the level of popularity of arts at GCSE. Its figures show that the number of GCSEs taken in 2015-16 is higher than in 2011-12 when the Ebacc had just been announced. The discrepancy with figures previously published by the Cultural Learning Alliance appears to centre around the fact that the New Schools Network figures exclude Design and Technology, where numbers have fallen significantly. However, there are less teachers and teaching hours in arts subjects, and fewer post-16 students are choosing arts or Design and Technology A-levels. In a speech to the New Schools Network Culture Minister Matt Hancock praised the complementary benefits of studying arts with science: *"rigorously taught, music complements maths; drama complements English; and the study of art complements history. The rigour matters but so does the breadth."* However, London Mayor Sadiq Khan is among those criticising the absence of arts from the Ebacc. He told *The Stage* *"look at what China is doing, what Singapore is doing... What they are doing is introducing arts into their curriculum at a time when we, according to the EBacc, are taking it out. It doesn't make sense"*. [RSA](#), [Gov.uk](#), [New Schools Network](#), [The Stage](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

Erasmus programme safe post-Brexit, says creator

Sofia Corradi, the Italian who first created the Erasmus programme 30 years ago, says she feels confident that the scheme will continue to operate in the UK post-Brexit. Since 1987, 5 million Europeans, including 600,000 from the UK, have gone to study, work or train abroad through different strands of the scheme. Corradi says *"if there is one thing that does not worry me about Brexit it is the future of the Erasmus programme. This is one of the most successful and least controversial initiatives of the European Union, it would be very short sighted to lose it"*. [Europe Street News](#)

Appointments and resignations

John Orna-Ornstein, who has been Arts Council England's Director of Museums since 2013, is moving to the newly created post of Director of Curation and Experience at the National Trust in June. Hedley Swain will lead ACE's museum work until a replacement is found. [Museums Journal](#), [M + H](#)

The Creative Industries Federation has announced that Rick Haythornthwaite will become its new Chair on 10th April, taking over from Federation founder Sir John Sorrell. Rick is currently Chairman of Mastercard International and Centrica and a long-standing supporter of the arts and creative industries. [CIF](#)

The CEO of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Thomas Campbell, has resigned as the museum faces financial difficulties. [BBC](#), [New York Times](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Guardian](#)

Museum expansions

Northampton museum begins extension

Northamptonshire council has begun £8m of extension work on Northampton museum including new galleries, an exhibition area and shops. The work is being funded by the 2014 sale of the statue of Sekhemka, which cost the museum its accreditation and public funding. Councillor Anna King said *"at a time when other museums are closing down or cutting back, we are making a huge investment in ours, which will help boost its fortunes and protect it for the future. During the extension and renovation, we will be running an appeal to expand and enhance the collection, and we have already been approached with donations linked directly with Northampton's heritage."* The museum is expected to reopen in autumn 2018. [ALVA](#)

Also: In an opinion piece for *The Art Newspaper* the art historian Bendor Grosvenor argues the case for nationalising museum collections in the care of local councils so they cannot be sold off. [The Art Newspaper](#)

World Rugby Museum to expand

The World Rugby Museum at Twickenham closed on 1st March for modernisation. The new museum will be moved to the South Stand at the rugby stadium, and will include three times as many exhibits as well as commentary, film and match footage. It will reopen during winter 2017-18.

[ALVA](#)

Harnessing Norman power: Lincoln Cathedral receives £11.4m for regeneration

Lincoln Cathedral has been awarded a grant of £11.4m by the Heritage Lottery Fund to create a new visitor centre and increase its appeal to tourists. The development will also include a shop, café and exhibition facility. Outside spaces will be opened up, and there will be improved access to archaeological artefacts, treasures, manuscripts and sculptures. The Cathedral hopes to increase its profits by £500k each year and attract 125,000 more visitors. HLF Chief Executive Ros Kerslake said "*Lincoln Cathedral is one of England's finest surviving architectural examples of Norman power and dominance.*" [Lincolnshire Today](#), [BBC](#)

Local authorities and the arts

Winners announced for first Hearts for the Arts Award

What Next? and the National Campaign for the Arts have awarded the winners of the first Hearts for the Arts Awards. The awards highlight local councils which have found imaginative ways to support the arts, despite tight council budgets. The winners include:

- The London Borough of Lewisham's [Meet me at the Albany](#) project wins best local authority arts project encouraging community cohesion. It encourages frail older people to meet at the local arts centre after cuts made local day care centres unsustainable.
- Nottingham City Council won Best Local Authority Arts initiative for its performing arts library service. The IT-driven service has saved the council money and is expected to break even within two years, while serving local amateur companies which would not be able to afford rates from commercial publishers. [National Campaign for the Arts](#)

New business model for Walsall Art Gallery

Walsall Council has drawn back from the prospect of closing the New Art Gallery in the city and will now draw up a new funding model. It has submitted a bid to the Arts Council and other funders in an attempt to raise £3.5m for the new approach. Elsewhere, the Labour and Liberal Democrat-controlled Council has cut 281 jobs, will not fill 139 vacant posts, will close six libraries and put up Council Tax by just under 5% in order to save £86m by 2020. [BBC](#)

Tech

Newnham College project to put more prominent women on Wikipedia

85% of all Wikipedia editors are male, and only 17% of biographies of notable people are of women. A Women's Day event at Newnham College Cambridge on 8th March encouraged more people to become editors and to add women currently missing from the huge online encyclopaedia, which is the seventh most visited site in the world. [Newnham College](#)

A plague on all our houses: Wellcome backs gaming for the public good

The Wellcome Trust and Epic games have joined forces to create a \$500,000 video game prize. Winter, one of the shortlist, features the Black Death and religious fanaticism, but is aimed as much at education as sensationalism as players experience how a medieval society addresses a major epidemic. The work is reflected at the Wellcome Collection which has also begun to collect and back the design of video games. The Wellcome Trust has previously supported 'Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice' which looks at the experience of mental illness. [Guardian](#), [Developing Beyond](#)

Also: 13 - 30 year olds in Bristol with an interest in gaming, media, history or storytelling are invited to participate in workshops to create a museum game around histories of disabled people. The workshops are free, begin in late March and are organised by the HLF funded History of Place project, which traces the lives of disabled people through 800 years and across eight historic sites.

[History of Place](#)

Vimeo channel opens dedicated to museum shops

The Association for Cultural Enterprises has launched a Vimeo channel with short films advising museums how to optimise retail in museums, with excellent examples from the sector. Their work is funded by the Arts Council. [Association for Cultural Enterprises](#)

Jobs

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

- [Policy and Projects Manager - National Museum Directors' Council](#)
- [Travel Trade Sales Executive - Royal Museums Greenwich](#)
- [Conservator - Science Museum Wroughton](#)
- [Cashier - Tate St Ives](#)
- [Development Manager \(Philanthropy\) - V&A Dundee](#)

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

And finally...

...it should happen to a vet

The State Darwin Museum in Moscow is putting on a new exhibition in celebration of Yorkshire author and vet James Herriot. Herriot, whose real name was Alf Wight, once visited Russia with a boatload of sheep in 1961 and later fictionalised the experience. His books and the TV series continue to be popular in Russia where he also has a fan club. Staff at the World of James Herriot museum in Thirsk have recently been invited to Moscow. Director Ian Wright says that Herriot has also drawn Russians to Yorkshire *"The Russian people are so enthusiastic about everything Herriot and we've had many Russian visitors coming to visit the area and see the places that Alf Wight based his books on."* [World of James Herriot](#), [BBC](#)

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