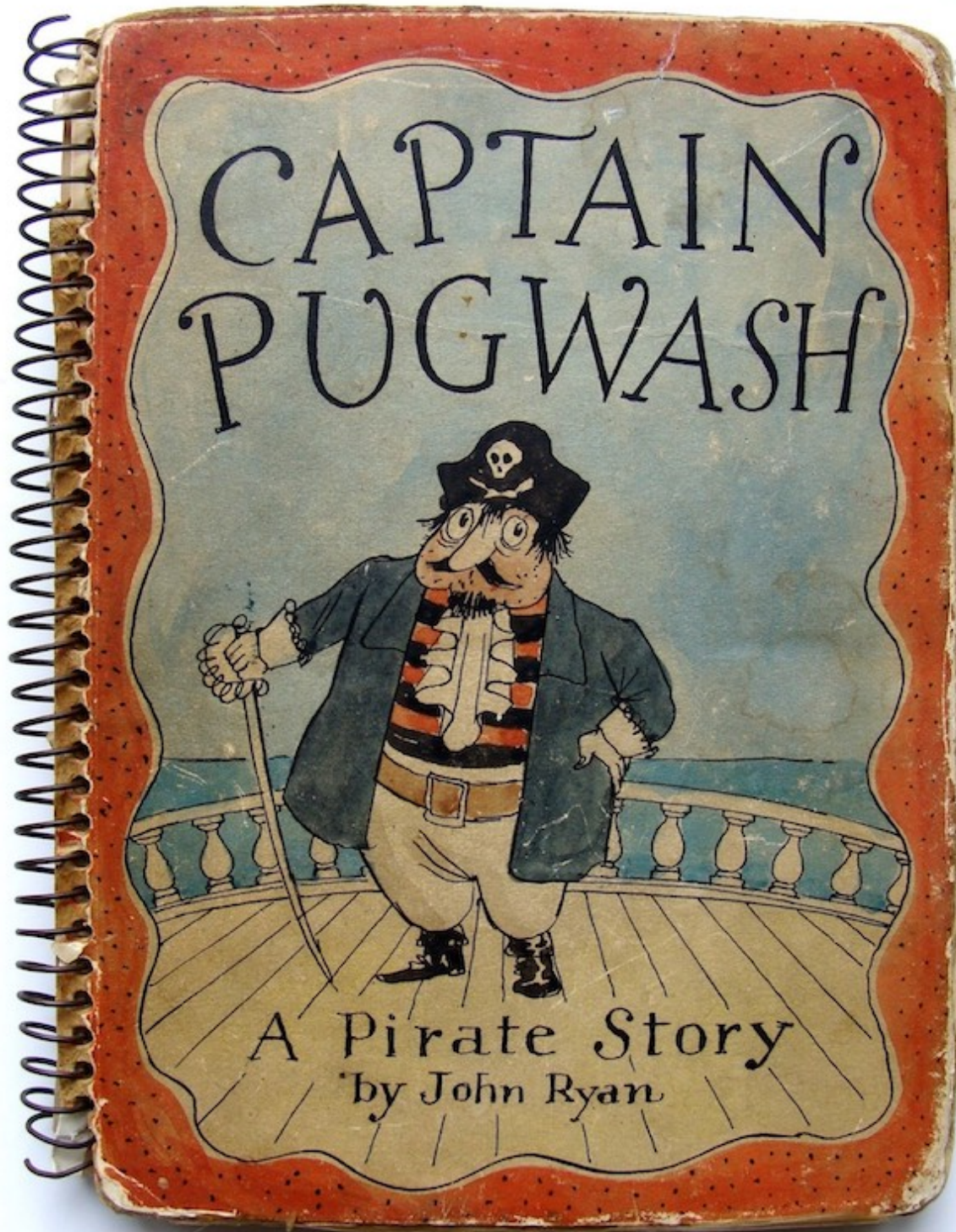


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Pirates - National Maritime Museum, 29 March 2025 - 4 January 2026. Dummy book - ink and watercolour on paper with metal binding, by John Ryan, 1953-55 © Isabel Ryan / Estate of John Ryan.

NMDC news

NMDC welcomes £270m Arts Everywhere Fund

On Thursday 20 February Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport Lisa Nandy announced over £270m of funding for the cultural sector, which will benefit museums, libraries, arts venues and the heritage sector through the Arts Everywhere Fund (the full details are outlined below in the Government news section). NMDC Chair and Tate Director Maria Balshaw welcomed the news:

"Today's funding announcements are fantastic news for the whole museum sector. We are incredibly grateful to see the Government's recognition of the importance of our world-class museums. The increase in budgets for national museums and galleries like my own organisation Tate will be vital in supporting our financial resilience, enabling us to continue caring for and providing access to the national collection and the incredible public benefit we deliver. We also warmly welcome the announcement of additional capital investment for national and regional museums through the Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund and the Museum Estate and Development Fund. This investment is urgently needed right across the museum sector for maintenance and repairs.

In particular, we are delighted to see the announcement of new funding for civic museums, who are facing an unprecedented set of economic pressures. They are some of the finest creative and cultural spaces in the world – caring for internationally significant collections, driving regional tourism and providing vital community services. The new Museum Renewal Fund will help bring civic museums back to a more sustainable position, and we are heartened that Government has listened to calls to protect this key part of our cultural and civic infrastructure." [NMDC](#)

Early Bird booking for the ICOM UK Conference closing soon

Early bird prices are available until 15 March for the ICOM UK annual conference which takes place on 1 and 2 May 2025 in Liverpool. *Regenerative Museums for Sustainable Futures* will focus on how museums can address climate and social emergencies. Through presentations, debates, and workshops, museum colleagues from around the globe will share practical examples of regenerative development in museums.

The event emphasises moving beyond sustainability and net-zero goals toward restoring ecosystems, rebalancing value systems, and using cultural heritage to foster climate action. Museums are encouraged to act as regenerative forces, engaging communities in solutions that integrate sustainability, resilience, and ancestral knowledge to combat environmental collapse and climate injustice.

Day 1 is a fully hybrid conference format with panels and case studies considering how museums can be places that care for people, places, cultures and the planet, with examples from Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Iran, Kenya, Rwanda, the USA and the UK. Speakers include Ineza Grace Umuhoza, The Green Protector, Esme Ward, Manchester Museum, Lucimara Letilier of RegeneraMuseu and Elise Foster Vander Elst of the Design Museum.

Day 2 is in person only and includes a series of workshops, and city and museum tours. An evening reception is included in the price, which includes lunch on day one and ample conversation and networking opportunities.

NMDC and ICOM UK members get priority booking at a discounted rate, Early Bird rates are £90 and Early Bird student tickets are £65. [ICOM UK](#) (tickets)

Members' news

British Museum announces Western Range architect

Lina Ghotmeh - Architecture has won the open competition to redesign the British Museum's Western Range Galleries following a two-stage application process that saw 60 international architectural practices submit designs. Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the British Museum, said: 'Lina Ghotmeh is an architect of extraordinary grace and gravitas. Her team's proposals demonstrated an exceptional and materially sensitive architectural vision for the British Museum, and their 'archaeological' approach clearly understood the ambition for this project to be as much an intellectual transformation as an architectural one.' Lebanese born Lina Ghotmeh's notable projects include Stone Garden in Beirut (Dezeen Award, 2021), the 22nd Serpentine Pavilion (2023) and the Estonian National Museum. [British Museum](#), [Observer](#), [Financial Times](#) (£), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Arup](#)

Roden Centre for Creative Learning opens at the National Gallery

On the 28 February the National Gallery opened the Roden Centre for Creative Learning, the first part of the Gallery's Bicentenary suite of capital projects. The free to enter space is one of the largest dedicated gallery learning spaces in the UK which will welcome school groups during the week and families and young people at weekends and during school holidays. The transformed Centre will enable the National Gallery to engage with an additional 50,000 learners annually, resulting in 246,000 learners benefiting from the learning programme in total each year. Adults will also be able to access the space with free and ticketed events including during the Gallery's 'Lates' programme. On the upper floor The Creative Space is designed for sensory learning with a particular focus on special needs schools, made possible with support from the Julia Rausing Trust. [National Gallery](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [MyLondon](#)

Portrait of Mai to embark on a national tour

For the first time since Portrait of Mai by Joshua Reynolds was saved for the nation in 2023, the artwork will travel the nation thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Art Fund and other supporters. Titled *Journeys with Mai*, this national partnership project will also include a new engagement programme, creating opportunities for contemporary artists, young people and communities from the Pacific and across the UK. Portrait of Mai will travel first to Bradford Council's Cartwright Hall Art Gallery from 22 May, as part of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, then on to The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and The Box in Plymouth. [NPG](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Science and Industry Museum extends transformation and seeks architect for Wonderlab

By the end of 2025, 50% of the Science and Industry Museum's industrial heritage site will have been significantly repaired and renewed with thanks to over £40 million investment from the government, charitable trusts and foundations, and philanthropists. As part of this investment the Power Hall will re-open in Summer 2025. An extension to this transformation includes a new Wonderlab to open in late 2027, with an open competition launched on 21 February inviting architectural and exhibition design practices to submit first stage tender returns by 23 March. Feasibility work has also begun for a new Technicians Gallery for 11-16 year olds in collaboration with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. [Science and Industry Museum](#) (tender information), [About Manchester](#)

Name change and reopening for Royal Cornwall Museum

The Cornwall Museum & Art Gallery (formerly Royal Cornwall Museum), part of the mc7 consortium, reopened on Saturday 1 March following a £2.3m refurbishment. Based in Truro, opening exhibitions include 'Biodiversity' by environmental artist Kurt Jackson and the venue will now open 7 days a week. The museum is part-way through a major transformation which began with the Mineral Gallery last year. The project will continue with improvements to the upper galleries and facilities over the next two years. [Cornwall Museum & Art Gallery](#), [BBC](#), [M+H Advisor](#), [Cornish Stuff](#)

Members in the news -

- How to give back looted objects, Tristram Hunt, 3 March 2025, [Apollo Magazine](#)
- Science Museum to open three new galleries by 2030, 13 February 2025, [Blooloop](#)
- Science Museum boss Ian Blatchford: 'All British culture paid for by the state? How deadening', 10 February 2025, [Telegraph](#)
- Gallery reopening put back by two years - Tate Liverpool, 2 February 2025, [BBC](#)
- National Portrait Gallery's first female director: 'Seeing what it means to young women is humbling', 1 February 2025, [Telegraph](#)

Images this month

Images this month come from the '**Pirates**' exhibition which will opens later this month at the National Maritime Museum, part of Royal Museums Greenwich. Running from 29 March 2025 to 4 January 2026 the exhibition traces the changing depictions of pirates through the ages and reveals the brutal reality behind the fiction. [Royal Museums Greenwich](#)

Government news

£270m Arts Everywhere Fund launched

Timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the first ever arts white paper delivered by Jennie Lee, Britain's first ever Minister for the Arts, which advocated for "arts for everyone, everywhere", a new 'Arts Everywhere Fund' was announced by the Government.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said: "Arts and culture help us understand the world we live in, they shape and define society and are enjoyed by people in every part of our country. They are the building blocks of our world-leading creative industries and make a huge contribution towards boosting growth and breaking down barriers to opportunities for young people to learn the creative skills they need to succeed. The funding we are announcing today will allow the arts to continue to flourish across Britain, creating good jobs and growth by fixing the foundations in our cultural venues, museums, libraries and heritage institutions."

The funding includes:

- A new £85 million Creative Foundations Fund to support urgent capital works to keep venues across the country up and running;
- A fifth round of the popular Museum Estate and Development Fund worth £25 million, which will support museums to undertake vital infrastructure projects, and tackle urgent maintenance backlogs;
- A new £20 million Museum Renewal Fund to help keep cherished civic museums open and engaging, protect opening hours and jobs, continue serving communities, and tell our national story at a local level;
- An additional £15 million for Heritage at Risk will provide grants for repairs and conservation to heritage buildings at risk, focusing on those sites with most need. This will restore local heritage, such as shops, pubs, parks, and town halls;
- A fourth round of the Libraries Improvement Fund worth £5.5 million, which will enable public library services across England to upgrade buildings and technology to better respond to changing user needs;
- A new £4.85 million Heritage Revival Fund to empower local people to take control of and look after their local heritage. It will support community organisations to own neglected heritage buildings bringing them back into good use;
- An additional £120 million to continue the Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund, which will ensure national cultural public institutions are able to address essential works to their estate;
- A 5% increase to the budgets of all national museums and galleries to support their financial resilience and help them provide access to the national collection;
- Confirmation that DCMS will be providing £3.2 million in funding for four cultural education programmes for the next financial year to preserve increased access to arts for children and young people through the Museums and Schools Programme, the Heritage Schools Programme, the Art & Design National Saturday Club and the BFI Film Academy.

[Gov.uk](#) (press release), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Arts Industry](#), [Campaign for the Arts](#) (Jennie Lee)

Ten culture projects across the UK are to receive a total of £67 million

The UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner, announced that ten culture venues across the UK will receive a total of £67m. Originally promised as part of Levelling-Up funding by Conservative Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt in the UK Budget in Spring 2024. The funding decisions had been paused by the new Labour Government but renewed commitment for investment has now been made. Projects receiving funding include -

- £15m for the National Railway Museum, York.
- £10m for Temple Works, Leeds, paving the way for the British Library North.
- £10m for the International Slavery Museum and the Maritime Museum in Liverpool.
- £5m for the National Poetry Centre in Leeds.
- £5 million for City Centre Cultural Gateway in Coventry.
- £10 million for Venue Cymru in Conwy, Wales.
- £2.6 million for the Victoria and Albert Museum in Dundee, Scotland.

Although not all previously promised projects received funding, Essex, Worcestershire, Derbyshire, Somerset and North Northamptonshire missed out. [Arts Professional \(£\)](#). For full details see the Government press release. [Gov.uk](#) (press release), [Arts Professional \(£\)](#)

Final settlement for Council budgets

On the 3 February over £69 billion government funding for councils was confirmed, a 6.8% cash-terms increase in Core Spending Power. Unlike previous years, this government has introduced a stricter approach to the inherited arrangements that allowed councils to request higher council tax increases if they need Exceptional Financial Support and see increases as critical to maintaining their financial sustainability. This approach has limited the number and scale of additional increases, with the government not agreeing where councils have asked to increase council tax by a very high amount or by high amounts in successive years. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: The Guardian reported on the 30 English local authorities that had received bailouts, for the first time the government has imposed conditions preventing councils granted exceptional financial support packages from selling 'community and heritage assets'. [Guardian](#), [Gov.uk](#) (EFS funding)

Welsh Government announces £4.4m funding to support arts, culture and publishing

The new funding, which is included in the Final Budget 2025-26 – on top of increases announced in the Draft Budget - represents an 8.5% increase for the sector on last year's revenue budget. The investment is on top of £73.8m allocated for capital projects which will help to protect and preserve Wales' cultural assets for future generations, improving visitor experiences and access. [Gov.wales](#), [Museums Association](#)

Also: Welsh Culture Minister refutes claim of 'crisis' in the country's arts sector, [Arts Professional \(£\)](#)



Pirates - National Maritime Museum. *The Bombardment of Algiers, 27 August 1816* oil on canvas, by George Chambers, 1836 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Greenwich Hospital Collection.

Cultural funding

3 in 5 museums fear closure, highlighted in new research

Cloud platform, GoDaddy, undertook the research in partnership with charity, Kids in Museums, collecting data with a survey of 40 small independent attractions with fewer than 100,000 annual visitors. Four in five (78%) reported the current period as the most challenging the sector has faced, while over half (58%) said overall income has not returned to its pre-Covid levels. [GoDaddy](#), [Arts Newspaper](#) (£), [Standard](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Council funding cuts still impacting local culture although some reconsider plans

- The [BBC](#) reported that **Coventry's** Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, a previous winner of the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award, will bring in charges from 1 April because of 'challenging financial times'. Admission for children up to age 15 and Coventry residents with Go CV+ cards would remain free, Day passes will range from £3 for Go CV cardholders to £4.50 for non-cardholders. Annual passes will cost Go CV cardholders £5 and the fee will be £9 for non-cardholders.
- In **Worcester** the city council is considering charging non-residents to visit the Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum. A nominal charge of £2.50. [BBC](#)
- Whilst **Walsall** Council have backtracked on their decision to close and relocate the collections of The Leather Museum, first opened in 1988. Leader of the council, Garry Perry announced, "We have carefully considered the feedback, and the museum holds a deep significance for many people, not least those involved in Walsall's historic leather industry." The decision follows the opening of a petition which garnered 6,000 signatures. The petition's organiser Claire Taylor, said: "The museum represents more than just a building; it is a meeting place, an educational resource, and a symbol of our unique leather-working heritage." [BBC](#)
- It was also widely reported that River & Rowing Museum in Henley on Thames in Oxfordshire could face closure. [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)
- [Arts Professional](#) (£) looked at other council's reconsidering initial cuts including **Bristol Council** and **Peterborough City Council**.
- In Scotland, **Perth & Kinross** Council have approved a £170,000 cash injection for Culture Perth & Kinross, the charity that manages its cultural services including the new Perth Museum. Opened in March 2024 after a £27.2m development, in November the trust reported to the council that the in-house café was running at a loss due to high overheads. [Museums Association](#)
- The Museum of Cannock Chase in **Staffordshire** is also likely to close from 1 April due to council cuts as Cannock Chase District Council attempt to close a £1.3m budget shortfall. [Museums Association](#)

Also: The Royal Academy announced redundancies as they plan to cut 18% of their workforce, [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (£)

Also: Blackpool's Showtown museum cuts staff 12 months after opening, [BBC](#), [Blackpool Gazette](#)

Museum charging and taxing tourists

The debate for museum charging, or for taxing tourists to the UK continues to play out. Two reports from the Cultural Policy Unit look at 'The Value of Free for All' and 'A City Tourism Charge' respectively.

The Value of 'Free for All': The Price of Charging Overseas Visitors Admission to UK National Museums

This accompanying report argues against imposing charges on non-UK nationals and residents for admission to our national museums and galleries. It highlights that while such charges might appear to be a quick revenue fix, they undermine a foundational principle of free access, incur significant implementation costs and risk reversing longstanding policies aimed at expanding education and opportunity.

A City Tourism Charge: The Case for a Progressive Levy on Overnight Visitor Accommodation

This report proposes introducing a 3% - 5% levy on hotels and other tourist accommodations in England. The objective is to generate over £1 billion annually to support cultural infrastructure and placemaking, including major attractions, creative districts and grassroots venues. By ensuring that

higher-end accommodations contribute more than others, the proposal offers a progressive and equitable solution during these challenging financial times. [Cultural Policy Unit](#) (both reports)

In the press the debate continues with Tristram Hunt's piece for the Art Newspaper (£) '[Let's finally get on with it': V&A director voices support for UK tourist tax](#)' Elsewhere David Ross, Chairman of the National Portrait Gallery writes for the Times '[Charge tourists for museums but let them shop tax-free](#)' and Richard Morrison writing in the Times '[The idea of 'free' museums needs to be put out to pasture](#)'.

Manchester places culture at the heart of economic success

The annual culture report from Manchester City Council has outlined the importance of culture as a key driver for economic growth as well as contributing to wellbeing and happiness. The citywide 'Always, Everywhere' cultural strategy and culture sector in the last year alone contributed to an economic impact of more than £342m for Manchester, supporting at least 4,800 full-time jobs, as well as 16 apprentices and 2,284 volunteers. [Manchester.gov.uk](#)

Also: Commentary - Can we take Lammy-Nandy seriously if they let the British Council die? [Arts Industry](#)

Sector news

ACE review publishes terms of reference and opens call for evidence

On 20 February DCMS published the terms of reference for the review of Arts Council England. The review does not have as part of its scope the question of whether ACE should exist but it will explore its purpose and structure. Relationships and partnerships with stakeholders will also be looked at as part of the process. DCMS have also launched a call for evidence, the survey is for the users of the art forms ACE funds, through creative practitioners, freelancers, national, local or community based organisations and institutions, all views will be welcomed and taken into consideration. The survey runs until 24 April 2025. [Gov.uk](#) (terms of reference), [Gov.uk](#) (survey)

Also: ACE review to look at safeguarding funding decisions from political gain, [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Also: ACE is looking to appoint a Chair of the Museum Accreditation Committee, applications are open until 11th April. [ACE](#)

Historic England Emergency Planning Training Needs Analysis

Feedback is requested to help Historic England ensure that our historic environment is better prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies. You can influence what further training and guidance will be offered to those involved in emergency preparedness, response and recovery within our historic environment and the heritage sector. This could, for example, benefit -

- Employed staff or volunteers directly involved in artefact salvage operations following a museum or archive fire.
- Heritage specialists involved in flood or fire prevention and recovery at historic buildings.
- Historic property managers responsible for planning for security threats (e.g. terrorism) at their property.
- Category 1 and category 2 responders managing the recovery of a flood event that has impacted a listed building or scheduled monument.

The survey closes on Friday 4 April. [Historic England](#)

Diversity and inclusion

Three reports shine a light on diversity in the creative sector

The **Creative Mentor Network's (CMN)** latest impact report includes data from DCMS that says working class representation across the creative industries fell from 26% in 2020 to 19% in 2023. It adds that working class representation in the film and TV industry has halved over the last 40 years. [Arts Professional](#) (£), [CMN](#) (impact report)

Whilst **Guardian research** published on 21 Feb shows a third of major arts leaders are privately educated. The newspaper surveyed 50 organisations that receive the most Arts Council England funding and found almost a third (30%) of artistic directors and other creative leaders were educated

privately compared with a national average of 7%. [Guardian](#)

This data also comes as **Arts Council England** published their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2018-23 report on 28 February. Arts Professional reported that the proportion of ethnically diverse chief-executives at ACE-funded cultural organisations had doubled. The total workforce for 2022-23 shows 9% identifying as disabled against the national average of 22% disabled people in the working age population. 12% of board members were disabled in 2022-23 compared with 8% in 2018/19. [ACE](#), (website), [ACE](#) (pdf, 29pgs), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

South London Gallery relaunches Art Block

The Bukhman Foundation have funded the South London Gallery's Art Block initiative for a further two years allowing the innovative programme to run for 52 weeks a year. Art Block is situated at the heart of the Sceaux Gardens Estate in Peckham and welcomes children, young people and their families for free activities three days a week after school and at weekends and school holidays in a dedicated space. 71% of participants are eligible for free school meals (above the average for the borough) and cooking facilities are a central part of the offer. The programme offers high quality art and creative experiences and facilitates access to artists. [SLG](#)

Skills Mismatches in the UK's Creative Industries

Creative PEC latest State of the Nations report focuses on the widening gap between the skills the workforce has, and what employers say they need. Key report findings include:

- 65% of 'hard-to-fill' vacancies in the creative industries are attributable to skills shortages, compared with just 41% of 'hard-to-fill' vacancies across all sectors.
- Skills shortages are most pronounced for higher-skilled roles, with 78% of creative industries employers experiencing such deficiencies (in the three highest occupations), compared with 31% across all industries.
- Skills gaps among the existing creative industries workforce are on the rise, as the sector struggles to get to grips with rapid technological advancement and innovation. In 2022, nearly 60,000 creative industries workers were not fully proficient for their roles – an increase of 15,000 workers since 2017.
- Skills gaps caused by the introduction of new technology (including but not limited to AI) and the development of new products and services are a particular challenge for creative businesses.

Of the different creative sub sectors museums, galleries and libraries have the lowest average hourly earnings at £15.18 but the highest number of workers with a degree or equivalent at 90%. [Creative PEC](#) (website), [Creative PEC](#) (report, pdf, 67pgs)

Safe Access from AIM

The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) is launching a Safe Access Museum Cohort, as part of the Safe Access Project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and they are looking for a small group of dedicated organisations to join the 18-month culture change and capacity-building programme. The focus is on embedding wellbeing and a Trauma Informed Approach within heritage settings, so that people from marginalised backgrounds can engage safely with sensitive collections and stories. If your organisation is interested in participating, please contact Jenna Marrion at jenna.marrion@aim-museums.co.uk by 5pm Friday 11 April 2025 for a conversation. [AIM](#)

Participation, diversity and inclusion in cultural and creative industries - Horizon Scanning

This Horizon Scanning research report from UK Parliament has a focus on the barriers to participation, diversity and inclusion when working in the cultural and creative industries sector. Published on 17 February it poses questions to parliament on how participation can be increased. It includes a useful list of references that will help anyone researching the barriers to inclusion and diversifying the sector. [Parliament.UK](#)

Also: Postal Museum Announces £1 Million Accessibility Upgrade for Mail Rail Experience, [Experience UK](#)



Pirates - National Maritime Museum. Compass, brass, iron, wood and other materials, by Jonathan Eade, London, about 1750 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Governance

Diversifying Governance: From dialogue to action at the Whitechapel Gallery in London

Join Clore Leadership and the Cultural Governance Alliance on Thursday 10 April for a day-long programme of action-oriented surgeries designed to help your organisation take concrete steps towards diversifying its governance. Gain practical insights, guidance, and tools to break down barriers, expand representation, and create a leadership team that reflects the communities you serve. The one-day programme will:

- Provide practical insights for transforming governance structures
- Feature expert speakers addressing recruitment, retention, and inclusion
- Offer targeted surgeries on board diversity
- Introduce a comprehensive EDI Benchmarking Toolkit

Designed for Chairs, Trustees, and Executive leaders across arts, heritage, and cultural sectors.

Tickets from £160 + VAT. 10% CGA Member and multi-ticket discounts available. [Clore Leadership](#)

Digital and AI

AI Playbook for the UK Government

The playbook offers guidance on using AI safely, effectively and securely for civil servants and people working in government organisations. It sets out 10 key principles to ensure AI is used transparently, effectively, and in the public interest and it is a useful starting point on how to use AI safely. It also explains and defines the different fields of AI. [Gov.uk](#) (website), [Gov.uk](#) (pdf, 118pgs)

Digital skills training for collections from Art UK

Art UK has received funding from Arts Council England to undertake a digital skills project over the next two years. They are seeking to recruit a cohort of 20 collections in England who wish to receive dedicated support to enhance their digital skills in areas such as storytelling, marketing and audiences. Running from April 2025 to January 2026 the programme will deliver training through online webinars and toolkits, skill sharing with networks, and will result in bespoke digital content, created, published and marketed with dedicated help from the team at Art UK. Expressions of interest need to be submitted by 14 March 2025. [Art UK](#)

Let's Get Real: AI - new cohort ready for sign-ups

Expressions of interest are open for the next 'Let's Get Real' cohort which will explore issues and opportunities around AI in a supported, playful and collaborative environment. Starting in April 2025, the cohort will focus on AI by exploring tools, use case studies, and look at governance and strategy, all in the context of what it means to be a cultural organisation trying to get the best from technology. The programme will explore AI and the culture sector with playfulness, vulnerability and in ways that offer genuine room for innovation. The deadline to apply is 31 March 2025. Participation costs £3,000 per organisation and covers two people to attend all 7 workshops, and numerous mentoring and support sessions. [Audience Agency](#)

Reminder - MuseumNext AI Summit

This one-off online event is on 26-27 March 2027 and will offer a deep dive into how leading cultural institutions are embracing the latest technology, with case studies from the people leading this work. All sessions will be available to delegates live-streamed and then on-demand for 12 month and include talks titled: 'AI in the new Rijksmuseum Collection Online', 'How London Museum's new website is using AI to power content relationships' and 'Leveraging AI to manage large collections of photographs'. Tickets cost from £130 for individual tickets to £260 for an unlimited ticket (which allows unlimited delegates from one organisation to attend). [MuseumNext](#)

Also: Two cross-party committees respond to Government consultation on artificial intelligence and copyright, [parliament.uk](#)

Also: New website [trove.scot](#) from Historic Environment Scotland brings together 335,000 records and 1.2 million images relating to designated sites and culturally significant objects in Scotland.

[Trove.scot](#)

Young people

Time Odyssey – an interactive learning experience

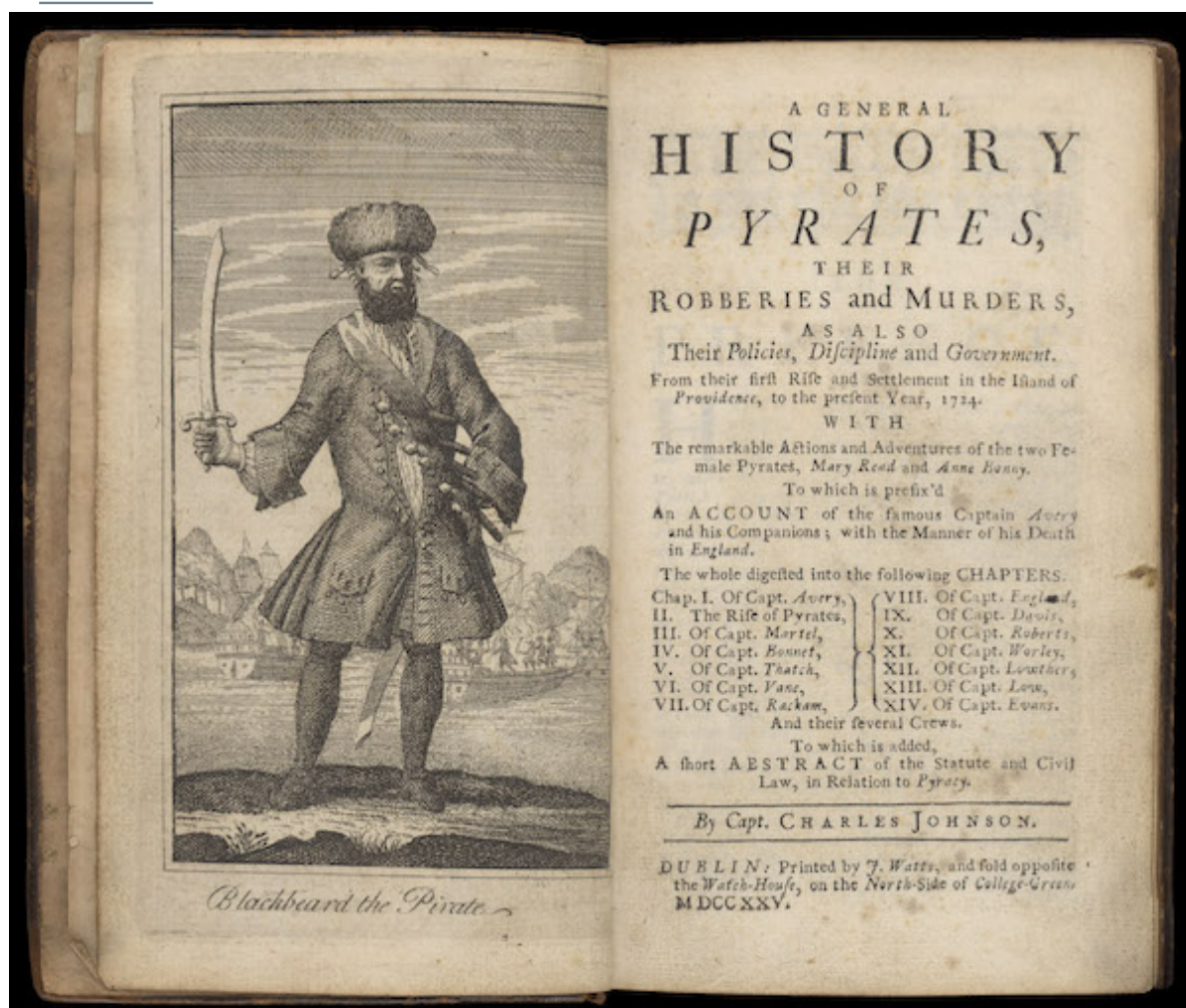
Art Explora is looking for museums across the UK to join in the delivery of [Time Odyssey](#) - a national learning programme that takes school children aged 7 – 11 on an exciting digital adventure around the museum – both physically and virtually. Developed in partnership with the British Museum, the programme uses pioneering technology to engage school children with museum collections in a completely new way. To ensure access for all, Art Explora funds coach transport for participating schools, helping to overcome geographic barriers and enable more children—including many visiting a museum for the first time—to experience these inspiring collections. To learn more visit the website and contact erin.saunders@artexplora.org [Art Explora](#)

UK Youth Summer - Summer Jobs Programme

The Summer Jobs Programme is a six-week initiative for young people aged 16-20 at risk of violence, helping them gain skills, confidence, and a brighter future. By offering mentorship, supervision, and guidance—alongside the support of a dedicated youth worker—you'll not only help shape a young person's future but also bring fresh perspectives and energy into your team.

- All young people participating in the programme will be paid weekly in line with the National Living Wage.
- As an employer, you'll play a crucial role in creating opportunities that reduce risks and open doors for young people. Express your interest and find out more with their employer resources.

[UK Youth](#)



Pirates - National Maritime Museum. *A General History of the Pyrates* by Captain Charles Johnson, published by J. Watts, 1725 © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Ukraine

Update on international support for Ukraine's cultural sector

Three years since the full-scale Russia invasion of Ukraine the Museums Association have published an analysis piece that looks at how culture can be protected during warfare. The latest figures from UNESCO state that as of 19 February 2025 they have verified damage to 485 sites since 24 February 2022 – 149 religious sites, 249 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 33 museums, 33 monuments, 18 libraries, 1 archive and 2 archaeological sites. [Museums Association](#), [UNESCO](#)

On 11 February 2025, the NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations) and the OBMIN (Ukrainian for exchange) Foundation signed a strategic cooperation agreement for 2025-2028 aimed

at enhancing support for museums and museum professionals across Ukraine. A key priority of the partnership is to foster greater collaboration and exchange between Ukrainian museum professionals and their European colleagues, strengthening professional networks and facilitating knowledge-sharing. As part of the cooperation agreement, NEMO will be an official partner of OBMIN's international conference 'Resilience, Recovery, Future' scheduled for 26-27 June 2025 in Warsaw, Poland. The conference as well as the partnership aims to advance key areas such as digitisation, social engagement, modern museum management, and international cooperation among museums. [NEMO](#) (press release), [NEMO](#) (conference)

Funding news and opportunities

New grants from the National Archives

Community-led research projects will get a boost following a £1 million award to the National Archives by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The project, known as Spaces, Places and Belonging, will help a wider range of people engage with cultural organisations. Three grant schemes will be available for cultural heritage organisations of any size to apply to. Individuals working in the cultural sector will be able to apply for up to £1,000 bursaries to help them build the skills needed to set up outreach and research projects. Seed Corn Grants of up to £3,000 will be available to support early-stage or pilot projects to engage communities with research. Larger grants of up to £30,000 will be awarded for collaborative projects of significance to local people, where community groups are working hand-in-hand with their cultural organisations. At least £550,000 in funding will be distributed over three years. The opening date for applications will be announced later in the spring. [TNA](#)

Also: Archives Revealed Cataloguing Grants from the National Archives include £50,000 to Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust (Brighton & Hove Museums), [TNA](#)

Beecroft Bequest for grants up to £20,000

The Beecroft Bequest is administered by the Museums Association and is open to institutional members for the purchase of pictures and works of art (furniture or textiles can be considered) not later than the 18th century in date. Applicants must provide a copy of the condition report and an independent valuation for submissions to be considered. Applications can be considered at any time. [Museums Association](#)

Seeds of Change prize fund for sustainable initiatives open

Applications are now open for Seeds of Change 2025 the annual £10,000 prize fund supporting innovative and entrepreneurial sustainable initiatives in the cultural sector. Run by the Association for Cultural Enterprises, the prize is for Cultural Enterprises Members and Associate Members. You can apply for any amount of funding up to £10,000, and joint applications are also welcome, for example from a cultural organisation and an Associate Member. Apply by 28 March 2025. [ACE](#)

Wolfson Foundation Grants round-up

Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG) are one of the beneficiaries of the latest round of grants from the Wolfson Foundation. They have received £1.25m towards a "once-in-a-generation" capital project to redevelop the Royal Observatory. A total of £17m has been awarded to almost 80 projects including North East Museums (formerly known as Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums) which has received £200,000 towards a redevelopment at the Discovery Museum and the National Space Centre in Leicester which was awarded £500,000 for the redevelopment of its Outer Solar System Gallery. [Wolfson Foundation](#), [Museums Association](#)

Historic England funds 30 working-class history projects

The Everyday Heritage grants programme has distributed almost £500,000 to 30 projects across England that will explore working-class heritage. Projects include Hexham, Liverpool's Overhead Railway, and the tradition of 'Shrovetide Football', an annual medieval football game still played in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. One of the selected projects is The 'Atchin Tan Heritage Project', led by Pride of Romany. It aims to preserve British Romany cultural heritage in Nantwich's Sound Common through collaboration with community elders, historians, and local residents to capture histories and stories dating back to the 16th century. [Historic England](#), [M+H Advisor](#)

Awards

Digital Culture Awards Shortlist

The 2025 shortlist from DCN (Digital Culture Network) has been announced and highlights the 23 entries who represent the breadth and strength of digital innovation happening across the country. NMDC members feature in the category for 'Digital Content' with Royal Armouries selected for their TikTok launch, the other categories include 'Digital Marketing' with the Postal Museum shortlisted for 'Life after Twitter: embracing a new social media strategy', 'Using Data' which includes the Foundling Museum for their ticketing transformation alongside awards for 'Digital Inclusion' and 'Digital Champion'. The winners will be announced in March. [DCN](#)

Cultural Enterprises Awards finalists named

The Association for Cultural Enterprises run these annual awards across 14 categories, NMDC members including Beamish Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Kettle's Yard, Ashmolean Museum, British Library, Museum of the Home, Young V&A, and Glasgow Life are all shortlisted and Darren Gilliland, eCommerce Sales Advisor, Glasgow Life, has been named as one of the team members in-line for the 'Rising Star' award. The winners will be named on 12 March 2025. [ACE](#)

Nominations open for the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award

The 2025 Family Friendly Museum Awards searches for the most welcoming and accessible museum and gallery for families and is judged by visitors. Museums can self nominate as well as members of the public. The deadline for nominations is Friday 25 April and Kids in Museums are holding an online information session on Thursday 3 April to find out more. [KIM \(Award\)](#), [KIM \(information session\)](#)



Pirates - National Maritime Museum. Original costume for Will Turner from *The Curse of the Black Pearl* cotton, leather, wool and other materials, designed by Penny Rose, about 2002 © Penny Rose / CosProp

Conferences and events

Rethinking cataloguing - institutional memory

This online zoom event from the Collections Trust looks at what institutional memory is and where it is found - inside or outside your organisation. It will also explore institutional forgetfulness when staff leave and how to combat this. This session will run on 27 March 2025 from 10.30-11.30am. Submit the sign-up form by Thursday 20 March. The event is free. [Collections Trust](#)

The Kenneth Kirkwood Day 2025 : Who Owns Museum Collections? And what should we do with them?

Hosted at the Pitt Rivers Museum on Saturday 29 March 10-4pm, the Kenneth Kirkwood Day covers the theme of repatriations and features speakers including Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the British Museum and Dr Alexander Sturgis, Director of the Ashmolean Museum. Pitt Rivers and GLAM staff can book on this event for free (Staff ID required), tickets cost £15 for students and £55 for full price. [Pitt Rivers](#)

Museum Tech 2025: A Digital Festival for Museums

Running all day on 2 April at the Barbican Centre in London, this event from the Museums Association will focus on embedding strategic approaches to technology. Speakers include Trish Thomas, Head of Digital Innovation, London Museum and John Stack, Director of Digital Innovation and Technology at The National Gallery, and sessions include how museums are currently using AI and developing immersive experiences. Tickets cost £82 for concessionary members, £92 for freelancers and consultants, £108 for members and £164 for non-members. [Museums Association](#)

GEM Conference - Early Bird tickets and call for papers

The 2025 GEM Conference will be in at Leeds City Museum from 10-12 September, with a focus on 'Sustaining Our Practice, Sustaining Our World'. This year's theme focuses on sustainability in its broadest sense – from environmental responsibility to organisational resilience, maintaining wellbeing and creating long term embedded equitable opportunities for communities and the sector. Early Bird tickets are available until 16 June and member presentations are invited on the themes of - sustaining museum learning practice, the role of resilience in the sector and programming, sustainable community partnerships and environmental sustainability. The deadline for papers is 28 April 2025. Tickets cost from £52.72 for Early Bird student/unwaged to £62.46 Early Bird Members and £92.80 for Early Bird Non-members. [GEM](#)

Why and how galleries and museums internationally/globally have emerged and evolved

To develop our understanding of the reasons for creating museums, and to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the creation of the National Gallery in London, proposals are invited for a conference hosted by the National Gallery and the Museums & Galleries History Group. The conference will explore the different ways in which museums and public art galleries come into existence and the impulses, rationales and objectives for 'creating' museums, foregrounding the wide range and variety of museum creation, and exploring core questions of purpose, meaning and context, whilst also drawing attention to the specificity of the National Gallery, reflecting on the contexts for its founding impulses and exploring the future roles, purpose, and functions of (inter)national galleries. Papers can cover any aspect of museum creation between about 1600 and the present day, for any type of museum, anywhere in the world. The conference dates are 26-27 September (final date TBC). The deadline for submission of proposals (200-300 words) has been extended to Friday 14th March 2025. [MGHG](#), Please send proposals to contact@mghg.info

Heritage Volunteering Group (HVG) calling for workshop hosts for Heritage Volunteering '25

This year's leading volunteer management conference will be taking place online on 25-26 November 2025, with a theme of Transforming Communities and will explore how volunteering strengthens connections, drives inclusion, and delivers real impact. Inspiring individuals to lead engaging, interactive workshops that spark new ideas and shape the future of heritage volunteering. Workshop hosts will receive free conference tickets and expert training from Rob Jackson Consulting, with full technical support provided. Applications are open until Friday 13 April 2025. [HVG](#)

Appointments

ICOM UK, the International Council of Museums UK, have made two senior appointments to strengthen their leadership team. **Maria Blyzinsky**, heritage consultant and independent Curator has been elected as Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees, working with Christian Baars. **Kristina Broughton** has also been appointed as Strategic Director, Broughton brings experience from recent roles as CEO of Wessex Museums Trust and Chair of the South West Federation of Museums & Galleries. [ICOM UK](#), [Arts Professional](#) (£)

Clare Gough is joining the Garfield Weston Foundation as their new Director succeeding Philippa Charles who stepped down in June 2024. Gough has spent the last 9 years at Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery where she was founding Director overseeing the restoration and transformation of the Ealing home of Sir John Soane. She takes up her new role with the grant maker in May 2025. [Garfield Weston](#)

The Southbank Centre has appointed two new members to its board of governors. Former British Library Chief Executive, **Sir Roly Keating** and **Leigh Tavaziva**, Group Chief Operating Officer at the BBC will take up their posts on 27 February 2025. [Southbank Centre](#)

David Mann, Director of the Scottish Maritime Museum, is set to retire after 12 years, stepping down on 28 March 2025. He will be succeeded by Matthew Bellhouse Moran, current Executive Director of the Unicorn Preservation Society, Dundee, and Vice Chair of Museums Galleries Scotland. Key projects overseen by Mann include the £1.25m refurbishment of the Victorian Grade A Linthouse in 2013. [Scottish Maritime](#)

Flavia Frigeri has been appointed as Curatorial Collections Director at the National Portrait Gallery. Taking up her role from April 2025, Frigeri replaces Alison Smith who was Chief Curator. As Curatorial Collections Director, Frigeri will oversee Curatorial, Collections Management, Archive and Library Departments, leading on acquisitions and commissions. She is currently CHANEL Curator for the Collection at the National Portrait Gallery and was instrumental in doubling the number of portraits of women on the NPG's walls. [NPG](#)

Libby Jackson is joining the Science Museum as its first Head of Space. Jackson, one of the UK's leading experts in human spaceflight, will play a key role in the museum's space-related public engagement activities while supporting the museum's curators to acquire new space technologies for the national collection and deepening the museum's relationships with space agencies around the globe. She joins the Science Museum from the UK Space Agency, where she was Head of Space Exploration and previously led the education and outreach programme for British ESA astronaut Tim Peake's Principia mission. [Science Museum](#)

Catch up

Podcast - Arts & Culture Podcast from the Association for Cultural Enterprises has some really interesting episodes - particularly worth listening is an episode with Clore Leadership featuring Hilary Carty, Keith Merrin and Sara Wajid exploring the changing landscape of leadership in the cultural sector. [Arts & Culture](#)

Pull in the young — a daunting mission for our museums, 1 March 2025, [Times](#) (£)

Cultural events planned as museum takes shape, 1 March 2025, [BBC](#)

Preston Manor to reopen with Downton Abbey-style immersive experience, 27 February 2025, [Museums Association](#)

Museums' slavery focus has become humdrum, historian says, 25 February 2025, [Times](#) (£)

International news

Brooklyn Museum Workers Rally Against Layoffs Outside Benefit Dinner, 25 February 2025, [Hyperallergic](#)

Chinese ceramics take centre stage at new museum in Portugal, 24 February 2025, [Art Newspaper](#) (£) / [Wallpaper](#)

Culture wars: Trump's takeover of arts is straight from the dictator playbook, 22 February 2025, [Guardian](#)

Netherlands to return stolen Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, 19 February 2025, [BBC](#)

French culture sector faces 'violent' cuts as parliament adopts 2025 budget, 7 February 2025, [Art Newspaper](#) (£), [Euronews](#)

Jobs

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

- [Curator of Living Cultures - Manchester Museum](#)
- [Collections Researcher \(Transatlantic Slavery\) - The National Archives](#)
- [Conservation Manager - Glasgow Life](#)
- [Senior Art Handling Technician - Tate](#)
- [Curator of Photography and Photographic Technology - Science Museum Group](#)

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