

In this month's edition:

- [‘Dealing with contested history’: Ulster Museum addresses the Troubles](#)
- [Manchester Museum will be able to house major international exhibitions with £4.2m grant](#)
- [National Portrait Gallery receives £5m for new Weston Wing](#)
- [‘Expanding the idea of what a museum can be’: Museum of the Year finalists](#)
- [New round of the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund](#)
- [LGA responds to ACE’s consultation to create a ten-year plan to 2030](#)
- [Three out of five Lancashire museums to reopen this summer](#)
- [Arts Minister announces plans for 'more strategic' sharing of museum objects](#)
- [£10m of objects of cultural interest saved from export in 2016–17](#)
- [All Party Parliamentary Group reports on industrial heritage](#)
- [Chinese antiquities stolen by masked men from Bath Museum](#)
- [Museums and wellbeing roundup](#)
- [New enquiry launches on culture and cities](#)
- [Millicent Fawcett becomes first woman to be represented in Parliament Square](#)
- [Report finds working class people under-represented in the arts](#)
- [Black Cultural Archives responds to the Windrush scandal](#)
- [Should museums take less notice of visitor numbers?](#)
- [Ongoing debate on temporary exhibition ticket prices](#)
- [Mapping the museum digital skills ecosystem](#)

...and much more.

Section headings | [Members’ news](#) | [Awards](#) | [Funding](#) | [Local government and local museums](#) | [Collections](#) | [Theft and restoration](#) | [Wellbeing](#) | [Culture and the city](#) | [Representation of the people](#) | [Events](#) | [Appointments and resignations](#) | [Counting visitors, pricing tickets](#) | [Boards and trustees](#) | [Education](#) | [Brexit](#) | [International](#) | [A pixel in history: museums, technology and the long view](#) | [Jobs](#)

Members’ news



Yorkshire's Jurassic World was opened by Sir David Attenborough in April. Photo: Anthony Chappel Ross

'Dealing with contested history': Ulster Museum addresses the Troubles

Ulster Museum has marked the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday agreement with a new permanent exhibition, 'The Troubles and Beyond'. It explores the politics of the conflict and the impact on everyday life. Unlike a previous, more 'tentative' display it centres around the power of objects - including a pipe bomb, an LP of UVF songs and a Spitting Image puppet of Peter Mandelson. It also looks at post-conflict Northern Ireland, covering issues from flag protests to equal marriage and Brexit. National Museums Northern Ireland's Director of Collections William Blair said *"for some years now, the Ulster Museum has been working with other museums internationally, from Sarajevo to Beirut, exploring approaches to dealing with contested history and the legacy of difficult pasts. Our aim has been to create a gallery that provides a new platform for discussion – one that offers opportunities for people to respond and contribute their own stories."* Stella Byrne from HLF, which funded the project through its Collecting Cultures programme, acknowledged that much of the history the exhibition describes remains raw. She said *"I hope [the public] come recognising that this is a national institution trying to take a lead... There's nobody here trying to put one particular political viewpoint across. It's trying to look at things from a very rounded perspective."* [NMNI](#), [BBC](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#), [The Irish News](#)

Manchester Museum will be able to house major international exhibitions with £4.2m grant

Manchester Museum has received a grant of £4,215,800 from HLF to build a new exhibition space, create a permanent South Asian gallery and extend its outreach programme. The exhibition space will be large enough to house blockbuster and international shows, allowing northern audiences to see major shows without travelling to London. The South Asia gallery will be the UK's first permanent gallery to explore the stories of diaspora communities. It will have a performance space at its heart for music, dance and performance inspired by South Asia. Director Esme Ward said *"the project will develop and transform the museum to bring more wonder and inspiration from around the world to the people of Greater Manchester and beyond"*. Works begins in August, and while the building is partially closed the museum will be taking events and interventions out into Manchester itself. The completed building will reopen in 2020. [Manchester Museum](#), [HLF](#)

National Portrait Gallery receives £5m for new Weston Wing

The Weston Garfield Foundation has announced that it will contribute £5m towards the National Portrait Gallery's £35.5m transformation programme. It will fund a new Weston Wing in an area of the building which has been used as offices since the 1980s. The wing will have its own entrance giving more 'coherence' to the NPG's façade, and will house gallery, retail and catering spaces.

Images this month: Yorkshire, the original Jurassic Park

Images this month come from the north's deep past as the new exhibition 'Yorkshire's Jurassic World' opens at the Yorkshire Museum. Reviewing the exhibition *New Scientist* gives a precis of the county's tumultuous geological past: during the Jurassic *"the global climate was several degrees warmer and Yorkshire was tropical. Early on in the period it was at the bottom of a deep sea; 25 million years later it was thrust upwards by plate tectonics to become a lush, riverine landscape roamed by dinosaurs. At the end of the period it was a shallow coral reef."* This has left the county with 'abundant sedimentary rocks stuffed with fossils', many of which feature in the exhibition. Star objects include an ichthyosaur fossil with six embryo skeletons visible inside it: the first evidence that ancient sea reptiles gave birth to live young. [New Scientist](#) (paywall), [Guardian](#)

'More rooms than parliament' – upgrading a huge building that 'cannot close'

British Museum Director Hartwig Fischer has given a wide-ranging interview to the *Guardian* about the huge challenge of maintaining the museum's structure and planned redisplay of objects. The museum has 3,000 rooms compared to 1,100 at the Palace of Westminster, and shares many of the problems with electricity, gas and water supplies 'in dire need of repair'. It requires work on a scale with the Rijksmuseum, which closed for a decade. Fischer says however that the museum 'cannot close' and that work will be phased. He hopes that over time a redisplay will show that 'human history was driven and has always been driven by exchange, by cultures communicating'. He says that it is 'the first duty' of the museum to be transparent about provenance and the colonialist forces which brought many of the objects into the museum's collection. [Guardian](#)

Awards



Ammonite. Photo: Anthony Chappel Ross

‘Expanding the idea of what a museum can be’: Museum of the Year finalists

The Art Fund has published the shortlist for its annual Museum of the Year award, which offers a £100k prize. The five museums are:

- The Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, which features the world’s first purpose-built motor racing circuit. An £8.4m development project has revived the site and allowed it to offer learning opportunities in science, engineering and technology.
- The Ferens Art Gallery, which completed a £5.2m refurbishment and complete rehang to be at the heart of Hull’s hugely successful year as City of Culture.
- Glasgow Women’s Library, which has grown from beginnings as a tiny shopfront with no funding or staff in 1991, to a refurbished permanent space with a lending library, a growing crowdsourced collection and community curators. Its visitors doubled during its 25th anniversary year.
- The Postal Museum, which has drawn 75,000 visitors since it opened last July and which includes a 15 minute ride on trains through London’s former underground postal delivery network.
- Tate St Ives, which opened a £20m underground extension during 2017, doubling its exhibition space.

Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar said that each of the museums tapped into ‘very current concerns’ and ‘expand the very idea of what a museum can be.’ The winner will be announced on 5th July. [Art Fund](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Hull Daily Mail](#), [Glasgow Women’s Library](#), [Telegraph](#) (shortlist in pictures)

Funding

New round of the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund

A new round of the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund has opened to cover the period 2018–20, with funds being released from April 2019 onwards. The fund offers support for capital projects and is open to museums which either have designated collections, are funded by DCMS or which are or have been NPOs or MPMS. Funding is available up to £300k, which must not be more than 75% of the total cost of the project. The work carried out must either improve the display and interpretation of collections, increase access for disabled people, physically improve a public space or improve environment, storage or conservation of collections. The deadline for initial applications is 31st August. Any queries should be sent to dcmswolfsonfund@culture.gov.uk. [Gov.uk](#) (application form)

ICOM UK – British Council travel grant scheme 2018–19

The ICOM UK – British Council annual travel grant scheme for museum professionals has reopened for 2018–19. The grants support international partnership projects between institutions. There is £17k available in total with up to £1.5k available per organisation or consortium for travel beyond greater Europe and £700 for visits within Europe. Priority will be given to non-national museums, those which haven't previously worked overseas and those working with countries on the Overseas Development Aid list. The deadline for round one applications is 4th June, and 24th September for round two. [ICOM UK](#)

Culture Change programme plus £2.5k for fundraising innovation projects

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy is offering a tailored programme on changing fundraising culture, aimed at leaders of arts organisations in England who are embarking on substantial change, often driven by economic factors. The course includes two days of organisational training and two days of consultancy. It is part-funded by ACE, with remaining costs of £1,750 +VAT. The deadline for applications is 31st May. AF&P has also launched an Innovation Fund for Fundraising, and is seeking two organisations to receive £2.5k of investment each towards developing new fundraising techniques. The deadline for applications is 25th May. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#), [AF&P](#)

50 bursaries for career development courses at the Whitechapel Gallery

The Art Fund is offering 50 bursaries for museum professionals to attend skills development courses at the Whitechapel Gallery. Topics range from publishing exhibition catalogues to fundraising, curating youth programmes and creating a communications campaign. The deadline for applications is noon on 25th May. [Art Fund](#)

Culture Seeds funding now open to individual Londoners for arts and cultural projects

The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has opened a new funding scheme as part of ambitious plans for culture in the capital. Individual Londoners and organisations with a turnover of less than £50k can apply for funds for arts, culture and heritage projects. Grants of £1–5k are available. The scheme is a rolling programme over two years with no deadlines. [London.gov](#)

PM announces £3m for cultural projects for social good in the North

The Prime Minister Theresa May has announced a new £3m fund for 'Northern Powerhouse' projects which harness arts and culture for social good. Arts projects and enterprises which support the local community can apply for up to £150k. In her speech May said "*offering a mix of grants and loans, the social investment fund will be open to non-profit, community-based organisations that deliver a positive social impact as part of our modern industrial strategy.*" [Gov.uk](#), [Gov.uk](#) (full speech)

HLF rejects some capital projects as it sifts 15 options

New spaces at the National Railway Museum and a plan for a museum and art gallery in Swindon are among the capital projects recently turned down by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Trust was seeking £12.2m towards a £22m plan to display the city's significant collection of 20th century modern art. NRM hoped to use £13.4m to refurbish its Great Hall and build a 'wonderlab'. Director Judith McNicol said that the museum remains committed to its vision of a £50m overhaul and will now review its options. [Museums Journal](#), [BBC](#)

Local government and local museums

LGA responds to ACE's consultation to create a ten-year plan to 2030

The Local Government Association has published its written response to ACE's consultation on a ten-year plan to 2030. The LGA said that its members remain the largest funders of culture, investing £2bn each year in arts, museums, libraries and cultural services. However, councils will have lost 75p in every £1 in core funding by 2020, putting pressure on investment in culture. It acknowledged that ACE 'cannot and should not attempt to replace all local authority funding' but asked for more flexibility in accepting council support in kind. It said that councils remain committed to a role in bringing partners together, and in using the arts for a wider social remit such as tackling social disadvantage and improving wellbeing. [Local Government Association](#)

Three out of five Lancashire museums to reopen this summer

Three of the five Lancashire museums closed to the public in 2016 due to council cuts will be reopening from this summer. Queen Street Mill, which holds the only fully working steam powered set of textile looms in the country, will reopen, as will Helmshore Textile Mills in Rossendale and the Judges' Lodgings Museum in Lancaster. Each will be open from Friday to Sunday from April to October until at least 2020. The museums will also continue to host school visits all year round. Councillor Aidy Riggott said the council is working with organisations to create a plan for the long-term sustainability of the sites. Of the other two sites, Fleetwood Museum is now run by a Trust and there are ongoing discussions about reopening the Museum of Lancashire in Preston, which is currently accessible to school parties, but not the wider public. [Lancashire Telegraph](#), [Lancashire County Council](#)

Collections

Arts Minister announces plans for 'more strategic' sharing of museum objects

Arts and Heritage Minister Michael Ellis will publish plans later this year for more strategic sharing of artworks and objects across the country. In an interview with HuffPost he discussed the development of a new Partnerships Framework which was recommended in the Mendoza Review of English museums, aiming to 'extend [the nationals'] reach throughout England in a more strategic way' and covering areas including collections management, learning and working with audiences. He said "*I will work with our national museums on this and look forward to hearing from them how best to take this on. We also need to remember that loans are dependent on the venues' ability to accommodate items - this can be down to the size of objects and space available, environment and conservation conditions, as well as the venue's own collection. It is worth noting that our local and regional museums have some amazing items in their collections that they lend to national museums too.*" He also discussed lending beyond museum spaces - including the tour of Dippy the Diplodocus from the Natural History Museum which will appear in a cathedral and a town hall, and long term lending by the National Portrait Gallery to the National Trust. NMDC is now working with DCMS and ACE on plans for the Framework which is due to be published in September 2018. [Huffpost](#), [DCMS](#) (Mendoza Review)

Export bar for depiction of African man in 17th century Europe

Arts Minister Michael Ellis has placed a temporary export bar on 'Head of an African Man Wearing a Turban', an oil sketch by Peter Paul Rubens. It was created in 1609 for a depiction of Balthazar in a painting of the Adoration of the Magi. The painting is on paper, rather than the panel favoured by Rubens, suggesting that the man is someone Rubens encountered by chance, rather than a posed model. Aidan Weston-Lewis, a member of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art described it as *"the most positive and dignified representation of a black person in 17th-century European art... it would make a transformative addition to a public collection in this country."* The export bar runs to 7th July with a possible extension to 7th January 2019. The asking price is £7.69m. [Gov.uk](#)

Also: An export bar has also been applied to Joseph Wright of Derby's 'An Academy by Lamplight', probably painted in 1769. The asking price is £7.46m, and the bar extends to 31st July. [Gov.uk](#)

£10m of objects of cultural interest saved from export in 2016–17

DCMS has published an overview of Export of Objects of Cultural Interest for the period 2016–17:

- During the period 15 items worth £67m had an export bar applied on the grounds of being national treasures.
- Owners of three, objects, including a sapphire coronet belonging to Queen Victoria, withdrew requests for an export license following serious expressions of interest to purchase within the UK.
- Four objects worth £12m were acquired by institutions or individuals within the UK. These were Wedgwood and William Burges vases, a tapestry and 'The Fortress of Königstein from the North' by Bernardo Bellotto.
- Eight objects worth £41m, or 62% of the value of all objects placed under deferral, could not be retained in the UK.

The report also expresses disquiet at a handful of cases where the export bar system has gone wrong. In 2015–16 the National Gallery made a matching offer of £30,618,987 for Pontormo's 'Portrait of a Young Man in a Red Cap' only to be rejected by the owner. The report comments *"the integrity of our system depends on applicants who agree to accept a matching offer at the hearing of the case following through on that agreement... It is regrettable that public institutions and funding bodies have, on the basis of such undertakings, wasted time, effort and fundraising credibility by raising the necessary funds only to have their offer rejected."* Culture Secretary Matt Hancock says in his introduction *"my department is therefore carrying out an examination of the process to see how it might be strengthened."* [ACE](#)

Museums accreditation review: feedback in pictures

Museums accreditation bodies in the four UK countries have been consulting on proposed changes to the scheme, which has been running for 30 years. 800 people have engaged with the review and the bodies have produced a short infographic giving a flavour of reactions, including statistics and quotes. The top reasons for seeking accreditation are to show a museum has reached a standard (84%) and to access funding (82%). Respondents also said that:

- Time between returns should be increased from 3 to 5 years.
- Writing a forward plan and reviewing policy and procedures is the most helpful part of the process.
- Mentors are highly valued and should receive more support.
- 60% believed that the standard is realistic to achieve.

A refreshed scheme will be launched later this year. [MGS](#), [ACE](#)

All Party Parliamentary Group reports on industrial heritage

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Industrial Heritage, convened by Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, has published a report on the challenges facing the sector, with case studies including Ironbridge Gorge, the King's Cross area in London and the Big Pit National Coal Museum in Wales. The report found that:

- Industrial heritage is valuable both economically and as a source of national identities.
- The sector has fiscal challenges, but also needs to be more inclusive by age, gender and ethnicity. There are examples of industrial heritage sites which have diversified workforces through apprenticeship schemes, and improved finances with commercial approaches to

redevelopment.

- There is strong support for the sector from the public, but many of those who most strongly engage are not having their voices heard.
- There are policy disincentives to protecting industrial heritage. The report cites Heritage Alliance comments on taxation: *"work to historic buildings is subject to 20% VAT, yet no VAT at all is charged on new buildings. This creates a perverse incentive to demolish old buildings rather than repairing, maintaining or altering them."*
- Sites such as collieries and gasworks, which hold very specialised but redundant equipment, and which may also be contaminated by industry can be particularly challenging to preserve or re-use, especially when located far from urban centres.
- The number of professionals in the sector is falling but finding time and money for training is difficult. Mark Smith of the Heritage Railway Association commented *"the task of persuading HLF, government, and other potential funding partners that you can't train an engineer in six to 18 months, that's ongoing."* Helen Featherstone, Director of Sheffield Industrial Museums said *"the youngest [in my engineering team] is 49 and the oldest is 74; succession planning is a real worry for me."*
- Industrial heritage tends to be underplayed in tourism campaigns, although successful projects like the Titanic Foundation shows there is great potential.

Ironbridge Gorge Director Anna Brennand describes its success in attracting younger audiences by blending modern and heritage industry, and partnering in STEM programmes. She said *"we're offering coding workshops throughout FabLab which has been hugely popular with teenagers, but we've now got a big uptake from their parents who want to understand what their children are doing at school. So, we've probably got as much demand now from the adults to learn what the children are learning"*. [Nick Thomas-Symonds](#) (full report)

Stirling Smith erratum

Last month we quoted from Hansard as we covered a parliamentary debate about local museums. During the debate it was asserted by Stephen Kerr MP that the Stirling Smith collection holds a 'nipple protector used by Roman soldiers to prevent chafing'. In fact, no such object exists. The closest object the Stirling Smith holds is an 18th century item used by wet nurses. Little is known about it, although it features in an episode of The Quizeum. [Hansard](#), [The Quizeum](#)

Theft and restoration

Chinese antiquities stolen by masked men from Bath Museum

Jade mandarin ducks and an inlaid box and gold artefacts were among the Chinese collections stolen from the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath by four masked men on April 17th. The museum was subsequently closed to carry out an assessment of the losses and has now launched an appeal to cover improvements to the gallery. Detective Sergeant Matthew Reed said *"due to the items stolen and the speed of the burglary, we suspect this to be a targeted attack, with the artefacts possibly stolen to order. These items range in monetary value, but their cultural significance is priceless."* [Art Newspaper](#), [Bath Echo](#), [Avon and Somerset Constabulary](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Museum of East Asian Art](#) (inventory of stolen goods with pictures)

Also: *The Art Newspaper* has published more details of how The British Museum is working with Scotland Yard and the governments of Egypt and Sudan to address the looting of pharaonic antiquities. [Art Newspaper](#)

Hacking the Heist: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum highlights \$500m theft using AR

In March 1990, thieves broke into the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum, in Boston, MA and took 13 paintings worth \$500m, which have never been recovered. The museum has displayed the empty frames ever since, but 28 years later, a new generation of visitors often do not realise their significance. The museum's augmented reality project 'Hacking the Heist' allows visitors to see the stolen paintings back in place through tablets. The museum continues to offer a \$10m reward for information leading to the recovery of the paintings. [Hacking the Heist](#)

Museum of crime opens in Dorset

A new museum of crime has opened in Dorchester, Dorset bringing '200 years of crime' to life at the Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum. It is run by the Shire Hall Trust and has been created with £1.5m HLF funding, match funded by West Dorset District Council. The 'immersive' experience allows visitors to walk in the footsteps of the accused, and captures an age when a 12 year old stealing a cloak faced five years in a reformatory school. Visitors can also learn about the Tolpuddle Martyrs, sentenced at the court and discover what happened to them using interactive guides. [ALVA](#), [Dorset for you](#), [BBC](#)

Wellbeing



A shallow coral sea. Photo: Anthony Chappel Ross

Museums and wellbeing roundup

The newly formed Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance has published its first roundup of stories and reports relating to cultural engagement and wellbeing. These include:

- A report from AgeUK which showed that over 65s at a 'particularly low ebb' found pleasure in drawing, photography and crafts.
- A new Health Humanities Medal launched by AHRC to reward those carrying out research or leadership which links arts and the humanities to healthcare and wellbeing.
- The Arts Council of Wales has published an arts and health mapping report and aims to put an arts and health co-ordinator on every health board in Wales.
- A second report on 'Museums as Spaces for Wellbeing'. It builds on earlier work which gathered data on 603 projects from 261 museums and looks in greater depth at how museums are responding to demographic and policy shifts. These include an ageing population, a move to a less medicalised view of healthcare, co-creation in service design and the effects of cumulative health inequalities. Case studies include Birmingham Museums Trust, which has been running a Creative Carers programme for the past two years. One participant said 'it is like pebbles in a pool – ripples benefit me and then benefit others I care for'.

You can sign up for information from CH&WA on its holding website [here](#). [CH&WA](#), [London Arts in Health Forum](#), [LAHF](#) (Health Humanities award), [Museums and Wellbeing](#), [Arts Council of Wales](#), [Museums Journal](#)

A rare shifting statistic: over 65s arts audiences grow over the last decade

The latest Taking Part survey statistics focus on film and arts. Many statistics for cultural engagement over the past ten years of Taking Part have remained largely the same, but there has been a marked rise in older people (65 to 74) taking part in the arts. 71% engaged in 2005–06, rising to 79% in 2016–17. There was also a 4% increase among the over 75s in the same period. [The Stage](#), [Gov.uk](#)

Culture and the city

New enquiry launches on culture and cities

A new enquiry, initially created by ACE and Core Cities, will look at how culture flourishes in cities and how it can continue to thrive at a time of reduced funds and rapid change. The enquiry will be independently chaired by Virgin Money CEO Jayne-Anne Gadhia, working alongside ACE Chair Sir Nicholas Serota and leaders in the fields of culture, education and finance. The enquiry will cover issues including:

- How to unlock new funding streams as culture contributes to government priorities such as integrating communities, combating loneliness and skills for work.
- How tax incentives can encourage cultural investment and philanthropy.
- Whether planning and incentives for developers could help generate more places for culture in cities.
- How cultural organisations can be supported to generate more commercial revenue and increase non-traditional sources of giving.

People are invited to contribute evidence to the enquiry before 30th May via the Core Cities website. [ACE](#), [Core Cities](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Airbnb launches new platform aimed at spreading tourism more evenly

Airbnb is often cited as part of a tourism problem as cities from Amsterdam to Venice struggle with huge tourist numbers, sometimes at the expense of the local population. Now it is seeking to create solutions with a new platform 'The Office of Healthy Tourism' which will encourage the creation of new tourist hotspots, luring people away from a handful of overcrowded destinations. Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky has previously said that the problem is "*millions of people are going to see a few things, rather than millions of people going to see millions of things*". The business is also creating a new Tourism Advisory Board, made up of travel industry leaders from across the world. The plans echo several UK government initiatives which seek to encourage more overseas visitors to explore beyond London. [ALVA](#)

Representation of the people

Millicent Fawcett becomes first woman to be represented in Parliament Square

Gillian Wearing's statue of the suffragist Millicent Fawcett, unveiled in April, has become the first statue of and by a woman to be placed in Parliament Square. The figure holds a sign reading 'Courage calls to courage everywhere' and also references 52 women and a handful of men who helped the first tranche of women obtain the vote a century ago. Caroline Criado Perez, who campaigned for the erection of the statue said "*when I went for a run in Parliament Square two years ago and first noticed that all the statues there were of men I could never have imagined quite how perfectly the dream would eventually be realised.*" Sculptor Gillian Wearing said that she was pleased that Fawcett, who gave six decades of her life to the movement, had been selected as the central image. She hopes that the monument will convey 'how campaigns succeed, and how inspiring political activists are'. [Gov.uk](#), [Google Arts & Culture](#) (Road to Equality), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Heritage Calling](#)

Scottish and English small grants available to celebrate the centenary of women's vote

The Scottish government has opened a small grants scheme with £170k available to communities to mark a century since some women first received the vote. A further £330k has been allocated to related projects including £90k for Glasgow Women's Library. Meanwhile the Government Equalities Office has opened round two of its small and large grants schemes for England, with closing dates of 17th and 18th May. [Scotland.gov](#), [Government Equalities Office](#), [Scotland.gov](#) (representation of women in politics), [One Scotland](#)

Report finds working class people under-represented in the arts

A new report has found that working class people continue to be significantly under-represented in the Creative Industries. 'Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries' is based on 300 hours of interviews with creative professionals, following a survey in 2015. The report found that no artform apart from crafts came close to having 30% representation of working class people, which is the average for the population as a whole. Film, TV and radio average 12.4%, visual and performing arts 18.2% (museums are referenced in the report, but no figures are cited for class). One of the report's authors, Dave O'Brien, said the creative industries sector is 'quite socially closed' whilst congratulating itself on 'being the good guys'. [Guardian](#), [Create London](#)

Buy a lunch for someone else at the Discovery Museum

The Discovery Museum in Newcastle has launched a new initiative in partnership with its café franchise Sodexo to allow museum visitors to pay for extra items in the café to gift to other visitors who are homeless or facing financial difficulties. Their donation will be turned into vouchers distributed by organisations including Young Homelessness North East and West End Foodbank. Visitors will then be able to get a square meal while visiting the Discovery Museum. [Discovery Museum](#)

Black Cultural Archives responds to the Windrush scandal

Black Cultural Archives in Brixton, the only heritage site dedicated to the African-Caribbean British story, has responded to the Windrush scandal following publicity about the large number of people deported or threatened with deportation to the Caribbean after lifetimes in the UK. The archive is hosting one-to-one sessions with a team of lawyers for people who are affected by the fallout. BCA's Director Paul Reid said "*the government has been forced into retreating into 'administrative error', a sign of defeat, but I hope we can do something more than just address the issue of citizenship. I want to see the contribution of the Windrush descendants and black people though British history taught in the curriculum, to the streets and our angry young people, but I want the links to go further, right into the boardrooms of Canary Wharf. We can take this moment to make a fundamental change, that is my hope.*" He also told *Museums Journal* that the archive, which sits in a 'symbiotic place...between culture and activism' would have accepted the Windrush landing cards, destroyed by the government in 2010, into its collections. [Taitmail](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Events

MuseumNext in London

MuseumNext's upcoming conference will take place at the Royal Geographical Society, London from 18th to 20th June; the first day is a 'discovery day' with free access to cultural spaces across London. The speakers include Nina Simon, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History; Henry Mason, Managing Director of TrendWatching and Karen Carter, Executive Director of Myuseum of Toronto. Tickets are £336 for a single day, including VAT, or £600 for the whole conference. [MuseumNext](#)

A Culture of Lates conference: how do museum Lates build audiences and generate income?

This conference explores the role of after-hours museum and gallery events as part of the wider night-time economy. It shows how this programming can generate income and gives advice on developing attractive events. There is also an opportunity to network with museum programmers, creative producers and event organisers from the UK and abroad. The programme is based on Culture24's three recent reports which are the first to research Lates in detail. The event takes place at the National Gallery on 1st June and tickets are £109. [Culture24](#)

'Making the Case' – breaking down barriers to museum access for learning disabled people

Venture Arts is holding a symposium about making museums more accessible to learning disabled people. The event takes place at the Whitworth on 25th May and features speakers from the Royal Academy of Arts, Manchester Museum and Actionspace. Tickets are £15. [Venture Arts](#)

UMG conference 'Foreign exchange?' full programme now published

The University Museums Group has now published most of the programme for its annual conference. The theme is 'Foreign exchange?' and it will explore how small and large university museums can benefit from international work. Keynotes will be given by IWM Director Diane Lees and Wayne Modest, Head of the Research Centre for Material Culture at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. UMG is still keen to hear from people interested in giving eight minute 'lightning talks' (deadline for submissions 1st June). The conference takes place at the University Museum of Zoology in Cambridge on 3rd July. Tickets are £40. [UMG](#)

Appointments and resignations

Loyd Grossman is stepping down after nearly a decade as Chair of the Heritage Alliance. The body is now seeking a replacement. [Heritage Alliance](#)

Counting visitors, pricing tickets



Jurassic Park: sauropods in Yorkshire

Should museums take less notice of visitor numbers?

Former National Gallery Director Nicholas Penny and ALVA Director Bernard Donoghue have written for *Apollo Magazine* about the effect of visitor figure releases, and the distorting factors as they are examined for 'winners' and 'losers' by the press and the sector. Nicholas Penny points out that nationals' visitor figures may include Trafalgar Square protestors who just want to use the loo at the National Gallery, "or coachloads of tourists decanted into the British Museum while their hotel rooms in Bloomsbury are being prepared". Conversely, a decline because of terrorism or a return to 'normal' after an exceptional event may be interpreted as a loss of form. He argues that although attendance figures are not going to go away as performance indicators, they should be balanced against other factors – how long do people spend in the gallery? What do they say in surveys about the quality of the experience?

Bernard Donoghue says that it's the detailed analysis of ALVA's figures, not the 'Top of the Pops' ordering that is most revealing: "*attractions that grow their visitor numbers sustainably share some common behaviour. This includes a willingness or ability to invest in refurbishment and refreshing their core offering; a decision to foster creative partnerships with unusual suspects; a determination to tell the stories of their collection, people and places in more engaging ways, attracting new audiences as a result; and a resolve to be bolder in their public programming, including trying new income-generating events.*" He also argues that the right pithy visitor statistic can be extremely useful for advocacy: not only do three South Kensington museums rival the visitor numbers of Venice; the National Trust in the UK has more members than the National Rifle Association in the US. It might be difficult to extract policy recommendations from that last stat – but perhaps a deep love of heritage and scones is not so bad as a defining national trait. [Apollo Magazine](#)

Also: The ideas magazine *Aeon* asks whether concentrating on metrics, not judgement, has unintended consequences and drives out innovators whose original ideas do not hit organisational targets. [Aeon](#)

Ongoing debate on temporary exhibition ticket prices

There has been ongoing debate in the press about the price of exhibition tickets at major museums, with several now above £20. These do not deter audiences overall: V&A's Pink Floyd exhibition, with tickets upwards of £26, was also among the most popular of 2017 and contributed to a 26% increase in footfall for the museum. However, ticket prices may impact on breadth of access. Discussion now centres around the National Gallery's Monet exhibition (£20-£22). Director Gabriele Finaldi told Radio 4 that the cost reflected the price of large scale shows and pointed to many free exhibitions offered by the gallery: "*[In the Monet exhibition] there's a good number of paintings which have not been seen in public before... those are the pictures that are most difficult, sometimes impossible for the public to see. To have brought those in and to be able to show those in this exhibition I think is very attractive for the public.*" Shadow Culture Minister Tom Watson attributed increases in costs to cuts to arts budgets over the past eight years, adding that museums should balance the need to generate funding with an obligation to widen access. The artist Jeremy Deller argued that income from shows is needed to subsidise museums and that 'maintaining a free entrance to museums' collections is more important'.

Tate has announced it will begin charging a flat £5 for all exhibitions for 16 to 25 year olds, as well as offering them discounts on food and in the gallery shop. It is also seeking a digitally savvy trustee, possibly in their 20s, to represent young people on its Board. Tate Director Maria Balshaw is expecting the scheme to result in no loss of income as the modest prices attract more young people to the gallery. Meanwhile IWM is dropping temporary exhibition charges in London and Manchester for its 'Making a New World' season to mark the end of the First World War. Its has also installed smartcard donation boxes across the sites to make it easier for visitors to make voluntary gifts. [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Tate Collective](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Guardian](#) (Monet review)

Contactless donations

The National Funding Scheme allows charities to accept contactless donations alongside or instead of a traditional collection bucket through its 'tap + DONATE' gadget. It has just published a new case study of a partnership between business and charity: a London barber's shop raised £4.3k over a week towards the Mayor's Fund for London, by allowing customers to donate by tapping their cards. The average donation was £25. NFS also quotes projections that contactless payments will increase 900% by 2025, while cash use will drop by 45%. [National Funding Scheme](#)

Boards and trustees

Many charity boards are less inclusive than those of businesses

A new report on the diversity of charity senior structures including Boards and Senior Management Teams has revealed that:

- Charities on average have only 6.6% BME people at Board level, less than the 8.2% average for FTSE 100 companies.
- Although 65% of workers in the charity sector are female, men make up 60% of senior management.
- 80% of senior management teams have no BME staff.

The British Council was highlighted as the largest body to have no BME representation on its Board, which is made up of seven men and three women. A launch in the House of Commons in May brought together 160 charity leaders to discuss representation by gender and race. [Inclusive Boards](#)

AIM publishes new online guides for Trustees and Boards

The Association of Independent Museums has published new guides for Trustees and Boards of museums containing practical advice on good governance, engagement, team building and recruitment. They are the result of AIM's three-year programme of seminars and 'tackle some of the questions that Boards find most challenging' [M + H](#), [AIM](#)

Education

Open letter to Nick Gibb as GCSE entries to arts exams continue to fall

Minister of State for School Standards Nick Gibb MP has announced a package of £96m to support children gifted in performance and arts subjects until 2020, extending projects with ACE, the BFI and Historic England for another two years. He argued that the number of pupils taking at least one arts subject had stayed steady since 2011 and is not threatened by growing numbers (now 2 in 5 pupils) taking the Ebacc range of subjects. The Creative Industries Federation has contested the figures in an open letter to the *Telegraph*, arguing that figures fell by 47,000 in 2017 and that Nick Gibb's figures did not include Design and Technology, which has lost 42% of entries since 2010. [CIF](#) (full text of letter), [Telegraph](#) (paywall), [Telegraph](#) (Nick Gibb article, paywall), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#) (detailed breakdown of funding), [Arts Professional](#)

Artists argue for arts in the EBacc

100 artists including 15 Turner Prize winners have written an open letter to the government protesting about the exclusion of arts from the EBacc. Signatories including Gillian Wearing, Grayson Perry and Jeremy Deller wrote *"a good education, and an education that will be fit for the 21st century, must be broad and balanced. The EBacc in its current form is not the way to achieve this... every child should have equal access to the benefits that the arts and culture bring not just a privileged few."* [The Art Newspaper](#), [Guardian](#),

Also: Educationalist Sir Ken Robinson, whose [short talk animated by the RSA](#) demonstrated that the best lateral thinkers among us are in kindergarten, has embarked on a new project with the Roundhouse arts venue in London. He has created a five-year plan aimed at doubling youth engagement at the venue, including a festival in February 2019 showcasing young people's work. He said 'these aren't trivial pursuits, they are a very important part of the health of young people and their development'. [Evening Standard](#)

Museums and maths: Kids in Museums offers a new resource

Parents and teachers often lack resources to help children develop maths skills outside schools, and museums may also be less likely to programme around maths than other topics. Kids in Museums has partnered with the family charity Maths on Toast to provide initial advice, guidance and resources. It demonstrates how maths can be fun, whether visitors are exploring the Secret Maths of Spies at Bletchley Park, measuring time with string at the Petrie Museum or exploring the Science Museum's new dedicated maths gallery. [Kids in Museums](#)

Also: The Museum of London has published a toolkit for entertaining museum visitors aged 0 to 5, which also comes highly recommended by Kids in Museums. [Museum of London](#)

Heritage Council forms to connect across government departments

Arts and Heritage Minister Michael Ellis has convened a first meeting of the Heritage Council, which connects the heritage sector with a wide group of government departments, including DCMS, DEFRA and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Historic England, the Heritage Alliance, HLF and the National Trust are among the bodies represented on the group. Michael Ellis said *"the Council will support government in the implementation of heritage policy in England and bring the sector's issues, challenges and opportunities to the attention of government such as planning, environmental protection, social and economic development, education, health and wellbeing."* Gov.uk

Brexit

Exiting the EU committee says membership of cultural bodies among 'key tests' for final deal

The Commons Exiting the European Union Committee has published a third report, listing 'key tests' which should be used to judge any deal reached with the EU by October 2018. It says that the UK should remain in a variety of EU collaborations including Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and the Galileo project (although the latter now may be at risk). The report adds that the UK must stay in *"other space and research programmes in order to support the work of our world-class academic institutions and the importance of cultural and educational exchange between the UK and the EU 27"*. Other issues covered include an open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic, no tariffs on trade, and no impediment on the flow of data between the EU and UK. Committee Chair Hilary Benn MP said *"our tests set a high bar but they are based on the Prime Minister's vision for our future outside the EU and the statement by the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis MP, that any new deal would be at least as good as what we have now."* Parliament.uk, Independent (Galileo)

Parliamentary debate on the effect of Brexit on tourism and the creative industries

A debate took place in the House of Commons on 17th April on the effect of leaving the EU on tourism and the creative industries. Speakers raised the loss of freedom of movement as a particular problem for the sectors. Arts and Heritage Minister Michael Ellis said that he is talking to the Department for Exiting the European Union on this point. *"It is important that UK and EU workers can quickly and efficiently transfer across member states on time-limited projects such as film co-productions, or as touring musicians and performers."* He added that it had been agreed that the UK will be able to continue to bid for EU funding streams, including those relevant to the creative industries until December 2020. Hansard

Brexit via the gift shop....

Eurosceptics are laying initial plans for a 'Museum of Sovereignty' to celebrate leaving the EU and to chart 45 years of Euroscepticism – from Tony Benn to the Maastricht rebels and UKIP. Project secretary and former UKIP spokesman Gawain Towler said he hoped to gather up 'speeches, mugs, ties and posters' so that an important part of UK post-war history is not lost. He argued that most academic study is dominated by Remainers. *"I've spoken to a couple of academics from the other side of the argument, who think it's a brilliant idea. There's a recognition that the academic debate is utterly skewed to the side that didn't pull it off. That's not good for comprehension and understanding."* Nigel Farage has yet to contribute, but Towler added '[he] has 15 years of UKIP in his garage.' FT, Guardian

International



Jurassic Yorkshire in VR. Photo: Anthony Chappel Ross

Humboldt Forum to pilot free admission for its first three years

The Humboldt Forum is a major new museum project opening at the Berlin Palace in 2019. It encompasses two existing museums and aims to “*bring together diverse cultures and perspectives and seek new insights into topical issues such as migration, religion and globalisation.*” Former British Museum Director Neil MacGregor is among its Directors. Germany’s new coalition government has announced the complex will pilot free entry for the first three years, which is still relatively unusual in Germany, although it will also offer some paid-for exhibitions. Eckart Köhne, President of the German Museums Association said “*I think permanent exhibitions should be free, and the federal government’s plan is a good initiative*”. Elsewhere in Germany museums which have chosen free entry have seen audiences grow substantially, including fivefold at the Landesmuseum Württemberg in Stuttgart. [The Art Newspaper](#), [Humboldt Forum](#)

Cultural Protection Fund small grants (and a virtual tour of Ksar Saïd)

It is now possible to take a virtual tour of the Ksar Saïd Palace in Tunisia, using a 3D online model which is one of the first completed projects of the Cultural Protection Fund. The highly decorated palace is being used as a resource for schools across Tunisia. The fund’s £100k small grants project remains open, with funding deadlines every three months (the next is in June). [Palais Ksar Saïd](#), [British Council](#)

Survey: Happy Museum goes international

Happy Museum is hoping to widen its community of practice and make international links with organisations also interested in themes of community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. It has therefore launched a scoping exercise to find out what other institutions are doing and if there is a demand for an international network. If you know of museums or museum professionals likely to be interested internationally, please pass this survey along. [Happy Museum](#)

A pixel in history: museums, technology and the long view

Mapping the museum digital skills ecosystem

'One by One' is an AHRC funded research project aimed at bringing digital literacy to museums of every size. Its approach includes discovering how museums are skilling up staff already, finding out what museums still need, and testing out prototypes. The project, which runs to 2020, has published its phase one report 'Mapping the museum digital skills ecosystem', published by the University of Leicester and Culture24. The report found that:

- Few museums are systematically assessing and developing digital skills or offering in-house formal training.
- Nevertheless, museums roles are changing in response to digital, with an increasing number of specialist roles available, and new departments and structures emerging.
- Some digital skills have become part of 'everyone's job' with ad hoc and informal skill sharing.

The report comments that *"while all case study museums provide some ad hoc digitally oriented skills training (such as presentation skills, talking in front of a camera, blogging and tweeting) there is little evidence of coherent, sustainable programmes to upskill staff in relation to digital. Overall, digital skills development suffers from a lack of clear visibility and articulation of gaps and goals"*. This is often linked to a leadership that is not deeply digitally literate and fears investing in the wrong thing. Time and money also constrain institutions from creating a plan to upskill whole staff bodies, rather than on a project-by-project basis. The next phase of the One by One project will start testing practical activities to build digital literacy in museums. [University of Leicester](#), [ALVA](#), [M + H](#)

Archaeology: a paradigm for innovation in the future

Nesta Director Geoff Mulgan has blogged about how archaeology, despite being often concerned with the deep past, is a paradigm for how societies should solve problems in the future. He writes *"archaeology has a surprisingly strong history of innovation, from aerial photography to infrared, carbon dating, to pioneering the reconstruction of lost languages; DNA to Isotope analysis to photogrammetry, satellite imaging to LIDAR, 3D modelling to dendrochronology, new hybrid sub-disciplines like archaeoastronomy, archaeological geophysics, medicine, ecology..."* It also draws on the collaborative economy with DigVentures, which blends crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, and mobilises collective intelligence – for example in the Thames Discovery Programme which has 500 volunteers monitoring the Thames shores. He argues that we are moving towards an age of 'Collective Intelligence Assemblies', where the vast descriptive power of AI meets crowdsourced human understanding. This will not just illuminate the relics of lost civilisations, Mulgan says, but the 'pluralistic, multiple, hungry, hypothesis testing spirit of archaeology' can be applied to contemporary problems from stagnant growth to inequality, developing models with complex answers, which can analyse an issue from multiple points of view. [Nesta](#)

Also: Mulgan has also published two seven minute films on histories of innovation. He argues that before 1800, innovation mostly surfaced as new military technology and structures glorifying rules. More recent innovation comes from teamwork, not isolated geniuses. He also argues that whereas projects like Concorde poured the resources of society into making improvements for a small privileged elite, new developments are now more likely to be democratic. Nesta's free talks continue in the run up to FutureFest at Tobacco Dock, London on 6th–7th July. [Nesta](#), [Nesta](#) (FutureFest)

GDPR begins on 25th May

As the General Data Protection Regulation laws come into force on 25th May, DCMS has published a self-assessment test from the Information Commissioner's Office so that organisations which have not yet taken action can assess whether their systems will be legal after that date. [Gov.uk](#)

'Milking the meme': The Museum of English Rural Life wins twitter

Adam Koszary, project manager and tweeter at the Museum of English Rural Life, unexpectedly catapulted the museum to fame when his image of an extremely solid looking ram, with the comment 'look at this absolute unit', attracted 100,000 likes. He says 'we will of course plan on milking this meme for as long as we can', and has since been producing [Star Wars chickens](#) and [flying cows](#) among more standard tweets about the history of the countryside. Still, MERL has some competition from the National Library of Scotland, which is also using laconic tweets to punch above its marketing budget. [M + H](#), [National Library of Scotland](#) (18th century lightsabre mashup), [Twitter](#) (Adam Koszary), [AV Club](#)

Also: Russell Dornan, digital producer at V&A Museum of Design, Dundee, has written about the growing usefulness of Instagram as a way of reaching museum audiences. The platform now has 400 million users, typically aged 16–29. There are around 500 museums now represented on the platform. [Museum-id](#)

Jobs

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

- [Head of FuturePlan programme - V&A](#)
- [Visitor Experience Supervisor - Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery](#)
- [Bioinformatician - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Headley Trust Intern \(Finds Liaison Assistant\) - York Museum Trust](#)
- [Collections Officer - The Wallace Collection](#)

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

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