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Museum from Home



Baker Sis Kaur outside Sarehole Mill Bakehouse. Sarehole Mill is part of Birmingham Museums Trust, and has been providing the local community with food including freshly baked bread, since the lockdown began, from its repurposed gift shop.

#MuseumFromHome festival in partnership with BBC Arts becomes top trend in the UK

On April 30th the BBC ran a day-long #MuseumfromHome event across television, radio and social media, celebrating the work and collections of museums of all sizes across the country, exuberantly presented by museum freelance consultants Dan Vo and Sacha Coward. Highlights included experts from Royal Museum Greenwich discussing how humans have communicated throughout history, Horniman's Dr Jamie Craggs on breeding new coral in hope of reviving endangered reef systems, Quonya Huff of the National Mining Museum Scotland discussing the history of the mining community, Jess Turtle of the Museum of Homelessness describing how it is currently involved in a food outreach project, and the Science Museum's Sir Ian Blatchford describing how the museum is collecting objects relating to the social and scientific impact of the covid crisis. There was also a live feed capturing everything from short films to museum augmented reality projects and museum gardens. #MuseumFromHome was the top trending topic in the UK for most of the day, indicating that the event got the attention of a large audience. NMDC worked alongside Art Fund and the MA to help co-ordinate this event. We would like to thank every individual and every museum that got involved, bringing a little joy in difficult times, and reminding audiences of all we have to offer when lockdown ends. [BBC Arts](#) (live feed), [Museums Journal](#), [BBC](#) (Highlights)

Members' news

Coalbrookdale Costume Project makes scrubs for the NHS – and theatre technicians create a hospital

Since 2004, the Costume Project based at Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust has been producing historically accurate costumes for the sector, supplying clients including Historic Royal Palaces and The Fashion Museum. Now staff and volunteers at the project are repurposing their skills to produce scrubs for hospital workers as part of the Sewing for the NHS Shropshire project. Elsewhere, theatre technicians, usually occupied building sets or festival stages have been helping to turn a stadium in Cardiff into a 2000 bed hospital for coronavirus patients. Tom Feierbend, an arts company director who worked at the site said *"when a hospital needs to be built in a stadium that's not just a big empty room, it's the theatre, TV, and events industry that steps up."* [Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust](#), [Ironbridge Gorge](#) (costumes project), [BBC](#)

Sarehole Mill turns gift shop into community food shop, offering freshly baked bread

Sarehole Mill is a 250 year old watermill, a part of Birmingham Museums Trust and famous for its association with author JRR Tolkien. Since early in the lockdown, it has repurposed its gift shop to offer basic food items to the local community – particularly flour, which has sometimes been hard to find elsewhere; it has so far sold 1,300 bags. It has recently launched a 'Bake & Take' service offering locals to pre-order a loaf of freshly baked bread for collection – using Sarehole's Bakehouse which coincidentally opened a few weeks before the lockdown. Comedian Joe Lycett has been among the customers popping in to collect supplies. [Sarehole Mill](#) (Facebook), [BMT](#) (Sarehole Mill), [BMT](#) ('Bake & Take'), [Sarehole Bakehouse](#) (Instagram)

Kew Gardens seed bank helps restore rare herb largely destroyed in Australian bush fires

When Australian bush fires burned 25,000 hectares of land around the small town of Cudlee Creek near Adelaide, they also wiped out a large proportion of the clover glycine growing in the area – a small herb already listed as vulnerable before the fires. Fortunately, 12 years ago 1,200 seeds of the herb were sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew to be dried and cooled to -20°C and placed in its Millennium Seed Bank in West Sussex. Now 250 will be returned to Australia to replace what has been lost. Kew's Elinor Breman says *"It really does just show seed banks work. They've provided that insurance policy. Some people think of them as static places, and this shows when a species is in crisis, you can provide seeds to provide restoration."* Kew has also recently celebrated the completion of its seven year project to store 13 million seeds from UK native trees. [New Scientist](#), [BBC](#), [Kew Gardens](#)

National Archives makes its digital records free while its site remains closed

National Archives is making access to its digital records free for as long as its site at Kew remains closed. Each visitor is limited to 50 items over 30 days to cope with demand. National Archives is also holding free webinars in May and June to teach people how to make best use of the online service. [National Archives](#)

Images this month: satirical collagist Cold War Steve celebrates Birmingham

Birmingham Museums Trust has commissioned satirical collagist Cold War Steve (aka Christopher Spencer) to create an elaborate artwork celebrating Birmingham, inspired by BMT's database of copyright free images. It features well-known Birmingham figures including comedian Joe Lycett and cricketer Moeen Ali, alongside Duran Duran and activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, plus members of Black Sabbath. Initially intended to be unveiled at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, it has instead been published online. [BMT](#)

Emergency funding

Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund offers new funding in response to the virus

The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund has made changes to its funding offer to support museums through the coronavirus crisis. There will be £350k for new Sustaining Engagement with Collections grants, offering up to £30k per project up to a year in length. This will support 12 – 15 organisations in finding ways to keep people connected with collections while physical access is limited or impossible. The deadline for applications is 26th May. [Museums Journal](#)

Scottish Government launches new £65m support funds open to museums

The Scottish Government has launched two further funds to support business and tourism, both of which are open to applications from museums – the £45m Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund and £20m Creative, Tourism & Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund. [Find Business Support](#) (Pivotal Enterprise), [Find Business Support](#) (Creative Enterprises)

Fundraising in times of crisis – special magazine issue with advice for cultural organisations

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy has published a special issue of its magazine focusing on fundraising at times of crisis. In particular, pages 22 – 23 discuss how cultural organisations can use digital to stay in touch with donors, but also crowdfund art and outreach work to go ahead now and offer a positive story. It also highlights approaches across art forms, and proposes the idea of creating a digital 'private view' as one route to cultivating donors. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#)

Comprehensive cross-sector information at the Heritage Alliance Covid-19 Guidance Hub

Many organisations have published signposting to resources for the cultural sector; the Heritage Alliance document is among the most comprehensive, and is being continuously updated with new announcements from Government and sector support bodies. It encompasses related sectors from charities to the creative industries, and offers finance and legal support, and is therefore a good one-stop shop. [Heritage Alliance Covid-19 Guidance Hub](#)

Charity Commission publishes advice on managing virus-related financial difficulties

The Charity Commission has published new advice on how trustees should approach serious financial challenges caused by the coronavirus. It includes a framework of considerations ranging from safeguarding to selling assets to ways to minimise costs. [Gov.uk](#)

Chancellor agrees that venues can keep Gift Aid on cancelled events

Following discussion with the Charity Tax Group, Chancellor Rishi Sunak has agreed that cultural venues can keep the Gift Aid on tickets purchased for event subsequently cancelled because of Covid-19. [Fundraising.co.uk](#)

Cornwall Council releases £700k early to help support museums and culture

Cornwall Council has decided to release £687k in revenue grants for 2020 – 21 immediately to cultural organisations across the county, including many museums. It hopes that this will give those affected by the Covid-19 crisis 'the strongest financial viability possible'. It will also be flexibly renegotiating what each organisation has to deliver in return for funding. James Green, Director of Newlyn Art Gallery said *"cash flow is a critical strain on many organisations eager to act to support those who are dependent on them, not least their employees, artists and freelance technicians and educationalists, as well as their key suppliers. Cornwall Council has acted to provide real support, where and when it's most needed."* [Museums Journal](#)

Towards a National Collection: AHRC offers £19m for discovery projects

The Arts and Humanities Research Council has launched a call for up to five Discovery Projects which will be awarded up to £3m each to explore creating a single national collection for the UK. It aims to bring Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into closer contact with Independent Research Organisations (IROs) (which include some national museums) to work on projects together, harnessing new technology to 'dissolve the barriers between different collections'. There will be four open webinars in May and June to discuss the project further, with a final deadline for applications in November. [AHRC](#)

Next moves in digital strategy

Being a fox, not a giant panda: how effectively is the sector using digital resources?

Digital consultant Chris Unitt has been discussing the effectiveness of the cultural sector's use of digital so far in the corona crisis, and explores possible next moves. He asks whether in an 'increasingly flooded market' of cultural digital material, organisations will start collaborating with each other (and communities) rather than acting in competition – noting that 'Manchester and Bristol are ahead of the pack on this'. Historically, digital product from cultural organisations has not been aimed at creating revenue, but instead has been tagged as marketing or innovation. He comments *"I've long suspected that this is why it's not taken particularly seriously and tends to be a bit flabby"*. He asks whether organisations will regret a rush to release free content – but also how well digital content stands up consumed at home in competition with Candy Crush and the rest of the internet. Have some artforms become so overspecialised that they can only thrive in very particular circumstances - *"have they been encouraged to become giant pandas (which, don't get me wrong, I'm a fan of) when it's the foxes that'll thrive right now?"* Chris will be speaking at more length about these issues at a Zoom event on 6th May at 3pm. [Chris Unitt](#), [Chris Unitt](#) (zoom event)

Also: Chris is also offering a list of streamed cultural productions (and podcasts, festivals and groups of collection links) which have been appearing online since lockdown. [Cultural Digital](#)

A 'time of reckoning' for museum digital?

Apollo magazine has also been considering whether museum digital has 'come of age' in the corona crisis, and how it now ought to evolve. Thomas Campbell CEO of Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco recalls how following 9/11, dazed crowds visited the museums of New York as a reflexive response to disaster. Now a different set of circumstances draw people online, but he warns that *"for all the feverish diversity of content now on offer, the digital platform is often facile, superficial, and indiscriminating"*, nevertheless arguing that more technology may be the answer, with augmented and virtual reality being one route to bringing museums more convincingly to the digital realm. Meanwhile, RA's social media editor Adam Kozary emphasises that museums need to find ways to keep offering the personal – that, for most, a beautifully photographed collection item won't cut it when in competition with the rest of the web, but that an 'enthusiastic tour guide' – whether virtual or in person, encourages people to connect. He adds: *"luckily, there are people out there who are bringing their skills to bear. Freelancers such as Sacha Coward have been filming themselves sharing their knowledge and stories through #MuseumFromHome. People have been recreating artworks using what they have around the house (I saw a Madonna and Child recreated with a towel and a bulldog), and the campaign has been picked up and celebrated by the Rijksmuseum and the Getty Museum...many others are offering resources for homeschooling and learning new skills at home, including creative challenges. In short, plenty of museums have recognised that their audiences aren't necessarily waiting to be told about a Van Dyck painting"*. [Apollo magazine](#)

A brain to pick for smaller museums

Meanwhile, Alec Ward of London Museum Development and the Museum of London has a generous offer for smaller museums in need of digital advice. He writes: *"If you're an Accredited or Working Towards Accreditation Museum, based in London (non-national) I can help you out. Tbf, if you're not I'm unlikely to turn you away. Want to talk about anything from methods for engaging audiences to effective platforms for home working? [Drop me a line!](#)".* You can also receive regular free enlightenment through Alec's Digital Things mailing list. [Digital Things](#) (mailing list signup), [Twitter](#)

Facebook offers option to charge for Livestreams – and announces rival to Zoom

Facebook will be offering the chance to charge for its Facebook Live sessions, to 'support creators and small businesses' wishing to broadcast performances, classes or conferences. It is also launching Messenger Rooms, as an alternative to Zoom. [The Verge](#), [The Verge](#)

Employment



Benny's Babies by satirical collage artist Cold War Steve commissioned by Birmingham Museums Trust, inspired by BMT's digital image database.

Furlough plans may be extended on a sector-by-sector basis – with calls to allow part-time working

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has already extended the furlough scheme, which is currently supporting four million workers, until the end of June, but this deadline means that businesses must decide as early as mid-May whether to trigger a statutory redundancy consultation period of 30 – 45 days. Consequently, *The Times* reports that the Treasury is looking for ways to wind down the scheme through a sector-by-sector approach, so that the most affected jobs are supported for longer. There have also been calls from business for more flexibility to allow some furloughed workers to return part time. Industrial Museums Scotland also highlighted the importance of this in early April. Chair David Mann said *“The Job Retention Scheme is welcomed by all museums that we have spoken to – but the devil is in the detail. There are issues with the need to maintain security and care of collections, which mean any staff doing as little as one hour a week are ineligible in the current guidelines. In smaller museums, the benefits are less and the need for flexible working is greater, with one person having a host of roles, some of which are no longer required and others that are essential.”* [Times](#), [Museums Journal](#)

National museums top up salaries of furloughed staff to 100% following negotiation with Government

In late April, the Treasury told DCMS that ‘arm’s length’ bodies which receive grant in aid, such as many national museums, should not top up the salaries of staff furloughed on 80% of wages. However, following negotiations and the presentation of a unified case by museums to Government, the top ups have gone ahead. [Guardian](#) (Treasury ban), [Museums Journal](#)

‘Our World Without Culture’ campaign seeks Government funding of the creative industries

The Creative Industries Federation has launched a campaign ‘Our World Without Culture’, highlighting the vulnerability of the cultural industries because of the virus, and calling for the Government to offer further funding to support the sector. Its recent survey shows one in seven creative businesses can only survive until the end of April, and only half have reserves which will extend beyond June. The campaign includes a social media dimension under the hashtag #OurWorldWithout. CIF’s CEO Caroline Norbury said that despite existing support thousands of creative businesses and individual freelancers are falling ‘through the gaps’. She added *“creativity is an intrinsic part of the UK’s cultural identity, and one of the things that the country excels at globally... For our sanity, our culture and our very sense of who we are, it is imperative that the UK’s creative industries are supported financially through this crisis.”* Meanwhile in the funded cultural sector, ACE CEO Darren Henley has pointed to the irony that it is some of the most previously resilient National Portfolio Organisations, which generated the largest percentage of their own incomes, which are most exposed to the economic damage from the coronavirus. [CIF](#), [CIF](#) (letter to Government), [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Surveys

DCMS Business impacts of Coronavirus survey

DCMS has launched a survey to measure the impacts of Covid-19 on the sectors it represents, and museums are encouraged to take part. Responses are anonymous and the survey should take 10 – 20 minutes to complete. The deadline is 23.59 on 15th May. [DCMS](#)

Call for evidence to the Parliamentary DCMS committee on Covid-19 extended to June

The Parliamentary DCMS Committee has launched an Inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors, considering both the immediate and long-term impact, and the effectiveness of financial measures in place to address it. It is holding oral evidence sessions during May and also welcomes written submissions to the committee. The deadline for evidence was initially 1st May but has now been extended to 19th June. [DCMS](#) (evidence submission form), [Arts Professional](#), [UK Parliament](#) (Inquiry overview)

CHWA survey seeks to build a national picture of culture, health and wellbeing

Nesta is conducting a survey of anyone delivering culture, health and wellbeing projects in the UK, on behalf of the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance and its equivalent bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The survey will cover both work before covid and in response to it, and aims to get a national picture of work, hone services on offer and give responsive covid support. The survey is anonymous, has 40 questions with tick box or short answers, and should take 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The deadline for completion is 9am on 11th May. [Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#)

APPG launches research project to increase diversity and inclusion

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity is going ahead with a year-long research project into 'what works' to increase diversity and inclusion in the sector, with initial meetings taking place virtually. Co-Chair of the APPG, Baroness Deborah Bull said *"this matters, because representation matters: if the workforce is skewed, then so is the message. In light of this current situation, which presents such a threat to our creative industries, we must double down on our efforts to identify ways to address this challenge."* The project's research partners will be King's College London, University of Edinburgh and the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre (led by Nesta). The Creative Industries Federation will provide communications support and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and NBCUniversal are covering funding. Paul Hamlyn's Chief Executive Moira Sinclair echoed the sense of urgency in pursuing the project: *"there is a danger that the current crisis could perpetuate inequalities, which makes this work all the more important. If we do not act, as we re-emerge, we run the risk of being irrelevant, of losing talent and of stagnating."* Submissions of evidence-based approaches to embedding diversity can be sent to the project at diversityappg@gmail.com. [Arts Professional](#), [CIF](#)

NLHF survey into sector needs

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is also holding a survey on the needs of the sector, running to July. Also see details of its newly launched digital training programme to support the sector during this period in the events section below. [NLHF](#) (survey in English), [NLHF](#) (survey in Welsh)

Art Fund seeks views to shape how it supports the sector

The Art Fund is also seeking views from museum professionals on how it can best offer support. Museum directors are being emailed separately – please contact the Art Fund if this is your role and it has not already been in touch. [Art Fund](#)

MGS seeks experiences in Scotland

Museums Galleries Scotland continues to collect experiences from the sector and encourages people to get in touch through its [survey](#) or at inform@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk.

No more reinventing the wheel: Centre for Cultural Value seeks to create evaluation that works

How do you capture cultural value in a genuinely useful way? How does the sector address the fact that many funders are suspicious of evaluation-as-advocacy while practitioners are frustrated at having to produce painstaking reports that gather dust with funders? Suggesting 'we'd go so far as to say there's an evaluation crisis in the sector' CCV's Ben Walmsley is now seeking to create training in good evaluation and build practices that don't reinvent the wheel. Following live workshops, CCV is seeking to capture more views and attitudes to evaluation to draw from in its work. The survey will take around 20 minutes to complete and has an extended deadline of 29th May. [Centre for Cultural Value](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Events



17th century segmental pomander in the form of a watch. Ambergris and other herbs and infusions were thought to ward off infection too, so often were carried in times of plague. From the collections of the Museum of London, now collecting artefacts related to Covid-19.

Emergency Power Hour: free short fundraising consultancy

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy is offering a free hour of consultancy for arts charities and CICs that wish to address income generation, fundraising strategy or donor cultivation in the light of Covid-19. The sessions are on offer until May 14th. The organisation is also offering day-long courses in business planning, fundraising strategy and reimagining strategies post-covid. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#)

Creativity and Wellbeing Week

Creativity and Wellbeing Week is moving online to take place between 18th – 24th May. Museums are encouraged to add events to an eclectic mix which ranges from family arts, drawing tutorials and yoga to a professional webinar on measuring health and wellbeing in museums. [Creativity and Wellbeing Week](#)

Museum lives in post-pandemia: thinking beyond social media

The Network of European Museum Organisations is hosting a webinar with museum strategist Sandro Debono asking how museums should approach living in a time of pandemic. Although most museums have turned to social media while shut, the event will ask if museums should think differently in bridging physical and virtual reality. It will also explore how museums can retain relevance when closed, and how they should keep their sights on their communities needs and ambitions. The event takes place on 6th May at 11am CEST (or 10am GMT) [NEMO](#)

NLHF launches its Digital Skills for Heritage scheme, with Arts Marketing Association support

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has brought forward its Digital Skills for Heritage programme, and has also launched a survey, running to 10th July to learn about the needs of the sector. Strands opening now include:

- The Digital Heritage Lab, aimed at small and medium-sized organisations, will focus on digital for fundraising, marketing, engaging audiences and working with online collections. It is already offering emergency surgeries and workshops, and will offer a full programme from June. This strand is run by the Arts Marketing Association. [AMA](#) (Digital Heritage Lab overview), [AMA](#) (Digital Heritage Lab webinars), [AMA](#) (surgeries)
- Heritage Digital will focus on digital tools and processes, intellectual property and data protection, engaging audiences and supporting organisations with digital marketing. This strand begins with digital guides from June and events from September, with a view to reaching 700 heritage organisations.

There is also an in-depth Leadership Programme and one focused on 13 specific geographic areas: participants in these strands will be announced soon. [NLHF](#), [NLHF](#) (survey in English), [NLHF](#) (survey in Welsh), [NLHF](#) (newsletter signup)

Museum Showoff: the gig moves online

Museum Showoff, the previously live show of museum ideas in talks of five minutes or less, is moving online for its next event on 19th May. A line up of speakers is being organised to talk/dance/sing/tell jokes about a museum project, and short films under five minutes are also being accepted. Organisers say *"we welcome curators, retail people, funders, academics, visitor services assistants, fundraisers, volunteers, security folk... and anyone else who's got something to say about museums."* [Museum Showoff](#)

"If the sea destroys Venice..." conference asks big questions about the potential of digital

In early May, museum directors, academics, writers and AI specialists gathered online for a conference on 'New Technologies and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage'. Three 90-minute sessions covered big questions such as 'if the sea destroys Venice, can digital technology rebuild it?' 'How much does it matter if we are displaying originals or facsimiles?' – and how can digital be used as insurance? it featured speakers including Neil MacGregor, Founding Director of the Humboldt Forum, Science Museum Group's Director Sir Ian Blatchford, writers Bonnie Greer and Marina Warner and Brian Cantwell Smith, AI Professor at the University of Toronto. Recordings of all three sessions are available online. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Longer courses for lockdown

Some longer free courses are launching online shortly, which are of broad interest to museum professionals seeking to gain new skills:

- The Introduction to Content Design course explains how to apply principles of user centred design on digital content, also describing content design as a profession and how it is applied across government and the public sector. The course begins on 18th [Future Learn](#)
- University College London is offering a nine-hour course 'Culture, Health and Wellbeing: an introduction', exploring health and wellbeing provision within culture, giving examples of best practice and guidance on how to use evaluation to improve a service. The course has been created by the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance. There is no fixed start date. [UCL](#)

Department for Education launches new online learning platform

The Department for Education has launched a new online platform to help people build skills and job prospects during the coronavirus outbreak and beyond. Courses are on a range of levels, from basic digital and maths attainment to intermediate and advanced training including creating a professional online presence, social media for business and programming in python or coding for data analysis. [DfE, The Skills Toolkit](#) (dedicated website)

Possible futures

Living within limits: will the coronavirus be the beginning of a sustainable society?

Derby Museums Trust Director Tony Butler has written about the possible aftermath of the coronavirus, asking whether attitudes will change on everything from the importance of health and supermarket workers, to greater social equality and a re-evaluation of our place in the natural world. He points to the city of Amsterdam as a leader in rethinking as it formally adopts Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut Economics' model to shape the sustainable future of the city. Applying this thinking to museums, he notes that global cultural institutions have 'expanded exponentially' in the last 20 years, with the building of extensions, new sites and blockbuster exhibitions, sustained by corporate support and huge visitor numbers. He says that British cultural institutions, while not so exposed as those in the US 'may have grown too big for the State to save'. He argues that for museums to recover, they should have a bigger fund for emergencies as 'too many organisations have little or no cash reserves'. They should also contribute to a circular economy where materials are locally sourced and produced, prioritising local suppliers, and measure the carbon footprint of visitors, so that institutions are not just 'outsourcing' their carbon impact. Museums should also look at flatter management structures that directly address inequality, and governance that encompasses more than one viewpoint, such as the bi-cultural models in New Zealand. He suggests that the virus has revealed the limits of our economic model, but that by embracing limitations to exponential growth "[we] could help frame a new future for our cultural organisations to help us live more fairly together and in concert with the natural world." [Happy Museum, Kate Raworth](#) (Amsterdam City Doughnut)

Also: Council leaders says that the cancellation of this year's Edinburgh Festival is an opportunity to rethink the festival and reduce some of the 'unintended consequences' for the city such as overcrowded streets in one corner of the city and unaffordable housing due to short-term holiday lets. [Edinburgh News](#)

RSA survey finds that only 9% of British people want a complete return to 'normal' after lockdown

A YouGov survey commissioned by RSA's Food, Farming and Countryside Commission has found that 85% of people want to see at least some of the personal and social changes they have seen as a result of Covid-19 continue after restrictions lift. 51% say they have noticed cleaner air, 40% have a stronger sense of local community and one in ten have shared food or shopping with a neighbour for the first time. RSA's Chief Executive Matthew Taylor said

"it's right that the immediate emergency is the priority, but two things are important to note: firstly that the end of lockdown is ever more likely to be phase than a single event, which will take time to pass; and secondly that, amid the awful news and general doom, we must use this time to imagine a better future. This poll shows that the British people are increasingly aware that the health of people and planet are inseparable and it's time for radical environmental, social, political and economic change."

[RSA](#)

Lockdown 'a watershed moment for libraries' as membership soars

Library visits have shown a steady decline since Taking Part statistics began more than a decade ago, but the coronavirus has caused a reversal of the trend, with 120,000 people joining libraries in the three weeks since the virus began, an increase of 600% compared with the same period in the previous year. There has also been a 63% rise in the loans of e-books, e-magazines and audiobooks. Nick Poole of CILIP said this could be a 'watershed moment for libraries': *"Not only are we attracting an entirely new audience, we're able to demonstrate that the library is every bit as accessible online as it is in person. You don't have to walk through the doors to be a library fan."* In a piece assessing the prospects of the sector, he added *"the post-COVID society that public libraries will serve is unlikely to accept services that aren't much good at digital, or that still treat digital as somehow shiny, new and different... They will demand good bandwidth, quality content, opportunities to get connected, services which empower them to get creative, explore and share. Our new, bold articulation of the public library of the future will need to stop being a physical Victorian infrastructure with some technology attached. Instead, the idea of the 'library' must become synonymous with rich, playful and empowering digital experiences."* [Medium](#),

[BBC](#), [Medium](#), [Local Government Association](#)

Also: The British Library has reported on the latest progress of its two-year old project to create a single, unified digital presence for UK libraries. It says that the importance of getting it right means that delivery is still some way off, but the final result should both make digital search easier, and also amplify libraries and a social, physical space. [British Library](#),

Blockbusters, emerging work, permanent collections: will the emphasis in art museums change post-covid?

Art museum leaders have been discussing likely changes to the ways that museums will operate post-covid. In a podcast with *The Art Newspaper* Tate Director Frances Morris said that everyone would be changed by the experience of lockdown on return – from front of house staff to visitors, and that the future offer would be shaped by that. She also said that the virus had imposed a much-needed period of reflection, with environmental concerns even more to the fore. She discussed whether blockbusters may need rethinking, or rebalancing against other programmes in the future: *"I love blockbusters... they are trust builders... they reach hard to reach audiences. In themselves they can be wonderful things, but the danger is that they crowd out the other things that are hugely important, or that are alternative, emerging, minority interests... the things we need to drive the future. The whole ecosystem will collapse if we don't bring on new perspectives... if we don't cast light on artists who have fallen outside the canon"*. She argued that museums must collectively make judgements together rather than in competition if blockbuster culture is to shift – also considering how to bring the same excitement to events and permanent collections that is invested in the blockbuster approach. Meanwhile Susan Lubowsky Talbott, who has led a variety of art museums across a long career, suggests that expensive building projects and 'costly commissions from celebrity artists' are likely to be curtailed. She also says that although European museums with government support, and those with endowments are likely to do better, any large museum relying on tourism and exhibition admissions to earn a living will need to change its model. She adds *"small museums that rarely present blockbuster shows nor depend on revenue from admissions have the advantage; they are inherently nimble, used to working with small budgets and tuned into the needs of their more circumscribed communities."* [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (podcast), [Art Newspaper](#)

Some independent museums 'may not survive' coronavirus says AIM Director

AIM's Director Andrew Lovett says that independent museums which run as a business and charge for entry may be among the most economically at risk from the coronavirus. The Florence Nightingale Museum in London is among those appealing for more help. Although it has furloughed all but 2.6 posts, it is still costing £20k each month to sustain the museum during lockdown. It is hoping to retain some income through its online presence attracting shop sales and donations. Lovett told the BBC that it was inevitable that some will *"just run out of cash and go to the wall... their incomes have crashed straight away, they also don't have huge cash reserves or working capital."* He added that the government's Job Retention Scheme had temporarily saved many attractions, and would allow some good outcomes if the scheme continues until re-opening. Meanwhile Director of the Charles Dickens Museum, Cindy Sughrue, said that problems were likely to continue after the end of lockdown, with few overseas visitors: *"we're expecting our admissions in summer to be 25% of what they were last year. I anticipate it will take at least a year to rebuild visitor numbers"* Helen Bonser-Wilton, CEO of the Mary Rose Museum has also described the economic reality of an attraction which has core costs of £2.2m each year, whether it is open or not. *Museums Journal* reports some covid fundraising success by individual museums – with Creswell Crags having raised £19k by early May towards a £50k target. However, these examples of relatively modest giving do not so far offer a roadmap to organisations with large needs and no income. [BBC](#), [Museums Journal](#), [ALVA](#) (Mary Rose), [Museums Journal](#) (fundraisers)

Also: A plan for a £4m art gallery in Dorset has been an early cultural casualty: the Paddock Project gained approval from Dorset Council last June, but has now been scrapped by the Sherborne Arts Trust. [BBC](#)

Coping with lockdown

Government launches £750m programme to address loneliness

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has announced a £750m package to address loneliness and social isolation during the lockdown. It will be led by bodies such as Age UK, which will be helped to work with NHS Voluntary Responders in communities, but will also activate a network of charities businesses and public figures, with participants including ACE, Manchester Museum and Libraries Connected. There will also be a public campaign with the hashtag #Let'sTalkLoneliness. Smaller, community-based organisations in England helping people to stay connected will be a priority for funding still to be allocated. [Gov.uk](#), [Let's Talk Loneliness](#) (dedicated website)

NEMO publishes snapshot of European museums in mid-April

The Network of European Museum Organisations has published a snapshot of how museums across the continent were coping with the covid crisis in early to mid-April. It found that:

- 92% were closed with exceptions in Sweden, Albania and Austria – with expected dates for reopening ranging from mid-April to September in Romania, depending on how fast the curve of the virus has progressed.
- Most museums are reporting loss of income: with the majority losing €1k per week (30%) or up to €5k per week (25%). However, really big institutions such as Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam are reporting losses between €100k – €600k per week.
- Museums in tourist regions are facing exceptional losses of 75 – 80%.
- 30 respondents said they feared that their museums would have to close permanently, including sites in Spain, Austria, Hungary and Albania. This is in line with global research by ICOM, suggesting that one in ten museums may not reopen.
- International exhibitions are postponed and lending and borrowing is suspended for the year.
- A majority of museums have not laid off permanent staff and 70% have given staff new tasks – but freelance contracts are on hold.
- 20 countries have emergency funding on the way or in place – but 15 countries have no emergency funding scheme available.
- 40% of museums have noticed an increase in online visits.

NEMO is also a signatory to a letter initiated by Greens in the European Parliament, saying that culture is even more important during lockdown and that the EU should set up an 'adequately funded stimulus package' for European cultural creatives. [NEMO](#), [Museums Journal](#), [NEMO](#) (letter), [New York Times](#)

MA statement outlines what museums will need to support reopening

The MA has published a statement on reopening museums, which it says may be a 'risky and difficult' process with financial and operational problems likely to arise. It says that museums should continue to receive emergency funding over an extended period, especially those unable to reopen because their sites do not allow for social distancing. When it is appropriate to reopen, Government should give unambiguous messages on the safety of visiting, and museums should be part of a campaign to encourage visitors to return. As well as financial viability and public confidence, some museums will face additional problems such as absence of older volunteers who may need to continue to self-isolate, availability of staff and the barriers to reviving temporary exhibitions - which may be a particular problem for venues relying mainly or wholly on these for programming. [Museums Journal](#)

40% of respondents tell Collections Trust they cannot access collections data

A survey by the Collections Trust has revealed that 40% of 265 respondents cannot access collections data remotely, hindering them from working from home. Some larger organisations able to access data remotely said that only senior managements with access to a laptop with a VPN were able to see collections databases. 113 institutions without access highlighted the organisation's own IT infrastructure as the main barrier to access. [Collections Trust](#)

UNESCO hosts meeting of 130 culture ministers to consider the international effects on culture

UNESCO has convened a meeting of culture ministers and vice-ministers from 130 countries to consider the global effect of the coronavirus on culture. World Heritage Sites are currently shut in 90% of countries. The meeting agreed that arts and culture are among the most overlooked sectors and that emergency funding is essential to protect the sector. [Museums Journal](#), [UNESCO](#)

Survey to track cultural consumption under lockdown until late May

A group of researchers including the Intellectual Property Office and Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre will be tracking 1,000 people over six weeks to measure their consumption of cultural content. Results from the first week suggest a modest rise in streaming compared with the previous three months, up 3% for music but up 12% for film. Consumers also 'seem to be embracing' artforms less strongly associated with digital since lockdown, including theatre and looking at art online. 8% of respondents said they had looked more frequently at museum-generated content online, compared to before lockdown. [Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre](#)

Routes to reopening

NEMO publishes dynamic European museum reopening map

The Network of European Museum Organisations has pulled together a map of when museums across Europe are planning to reopen, with some sites in Germany, Lithuania, Serbia and Croatia already open to the public. Each country on NEMO's map comes with a narrative, outlining the complexities of what 'reopening' really means – for example, only a couple of states in Germany have currently reopened some museums, and actual reopenings will be constrained by the availability of safety supplies (such as a plexiglass shortage in Germany) and reaching a level of public confidence which will make reopening worthwhile. Swedish museums have remained open throughout, but with a limit of 50 on visitor numbers. The UK has not yet set a date when openings may begin. A few more detailed examples capture how museums are approaching the situation:

- In late April Brandenburg was the first of sixteen German states to allow some museums to reopen – beginning with small, rural sites, with limits on visitor numbers. A few other states are looking at re-openings in early May. David Vuillaume of the German Museums Association said *"we think it will take longer for museums which are major tourist destinations to open, there is a financial issue in that increased hygiene and security measures will incur higher costs, but there will be very few visitors because of a lack of tourism, and therefore little income."*
- Austria hopes to reopen on 18th May, after shops under 400sq m reopened in the country in late April. However, *The Independent* reports empty streets as most people have so far decided to stay at home.
- The newly refurbished Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art in Japan opened in early April, but with use of face masks by staff, regular disinfection, admission by advance reservation only to

restrict numbers and with staff taking the temperature of all visitors. [Museums Journal](#) (paywall)

- The Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels plans to reopen on 19th May with measures including a one-way circuit, no audio guides to reduce the risk of contamination and a quota of admissions per hour. [Art Newspaper](#), [Arts Professional](#)

[Art Newspaper](#) (Germany), [NEMO](#), [Art Newspaper](#) (Notre Dame), [Independent](#) (Austria), [NEMO](#), [ASVA](#) (Guidelines for reopening from Germany)

UK public most opposed to reopening the economy before the virus is under control

Recent research across 14 countries by Ipsos Mori found that people in the UK are the most strongly against reopening the economy if the virus is not under control. 72% of people in the UK also said that they would be nervous about leaving their homes, even if businesses reopen. This suggests that regaining public confidence will be as important as Government guidance in the successful reopening of public spaces. [Ipsos Mori](#)

Making catering work: from outdoor restaurants in Lithuania to experiments with plexiglass

A day out to a museum is often entwined with visits to restaurants and cafes, whether on site or in the surrounding area. However, the hospitality industry is among those struggling the most to find a viable re-opening model while respecting social distancing. Many say that imposing gaps between tables make it unaffordable to trade. However, a few solutions are emerging. In Vilnius, Lithuania, the city mayor has offered 18 plazas and squares where food businesses can set out tables and serve customers free of charge. Evalda Šiškauskienė of the Lithuanian Association of Hotels and Restaurants said that it 'came just in time' and allows the city to "accommodate more visitors and bring life back to the city streets, but without violating security requirements". Meanwhile Milan, which is a month ahead in terms of its coronavirus trajectory, is planning to reopen with temporary cycle lanes and expanded pavements, keeping cars out of the city, and again allowing business to spread outside. Deputy Mayor Marco Granelli said "we worked for years to reduce car use. If everybody drives a car, there is no space for people, there is no space to move, there is no space for commercial activities outside the shops." Elsewhere, Austria's reopening guidance includes mask-wearing waiters, and Parisian restaurants are experimenting with plexiglass dividing eating areas. [Guardian](#) (Lithuania), [Guardian](#) (car free Milan), [Guardian](#) (overview of how European food businesses are adapting)

Four hour waits for flights and increased ticket prices?

An early analysis of what flying will look like post-pandemic include suggestions of four-hour waits for flights as passengers undergo health screening, and pricier flights with only a percentage of seats filled to keep passengers apart. Andrew Charlton of consultancy Aviation Advocacy told *The Times* "even if it starts raining vaccines tonight, we are still looking at two years at least to get back to levels seen before the outbreak, and it is probably going to be more like five years." One proposal currently being considered by Government – and contested by the aviation industry – is the idea of a two-week quarantine for those entering the UK. Other models include the operation of flight 'travel bubbles' between areas of the world that have successfully contained the virus, for example between Australia and New Zealand. Meanwhile, major European tourism destinations remain uncertain whether summer visitors will arrive, and if so in what numbers. For museums, this suggests an audience profile with fewer visitors from abroad, but relatively more UK residents seeking holidays at home. [Times](#), [Guardian](#) (European tourism prospects), [Herald Scotland](#), [CNN](#)

Better ventilation and rolling quarantines? culture adapting to living with the virus

The *Chicago Tribune* has been asking how the arts sector will adapt if a vaccine for coronavirus is 18 months away, and older audiences are reluctant to return – especially as ‘socially distanced’ audiences will not be a viable business model for those dependent on full houses. There may also be models of ‘rolling quarantine’, in which cultural activities open, but in the knowledge that they may need to close rapidly – favouring simpler, moveable cultural products, reminiscent of the Middle Ages ‘when plague was rampant’. However, this is difficult in a sector now built around far less flexible models. One theatrical company that will be running a live season this summer, the Massachusetts-based Barrington Theatre Company, is taking out 70% of seats and requiring the audience to wear masks, but only expects to break even on costs despite simple staging and tiny casts. British design firm Charcoalblue is already addressing likely changes with clients, suggesting that “*all new arts buildings will need better ventilation, bigger lobby space, and no crushes at the bar at intermission*”. Meanwhile in a piece for *Arts Journal* focused largely on performing arts, academic Andrew Taylor draws the distinction between ‘tightly coupled’ and ‘loosely coupled’ planning for cultural events. ‘Tightly coupled’ organisation relies on a string of interrelated services and specialisms to work together, with fixed schedules. This approach has been typical of major cultural events, but only works well in a relatively predictable world. He suggests that cultural events will now need to move to a ‘loosely coupled’ model, where elements can be removed and timings change without this causing the whole event to fail. [Chicago Tribune](#), [Arts Journal](#), [New York Times](#)

Keeping collections safe

‘This museum has not closed, in the way it’s closed now, ever’ – V&A discusses good security under lockdown

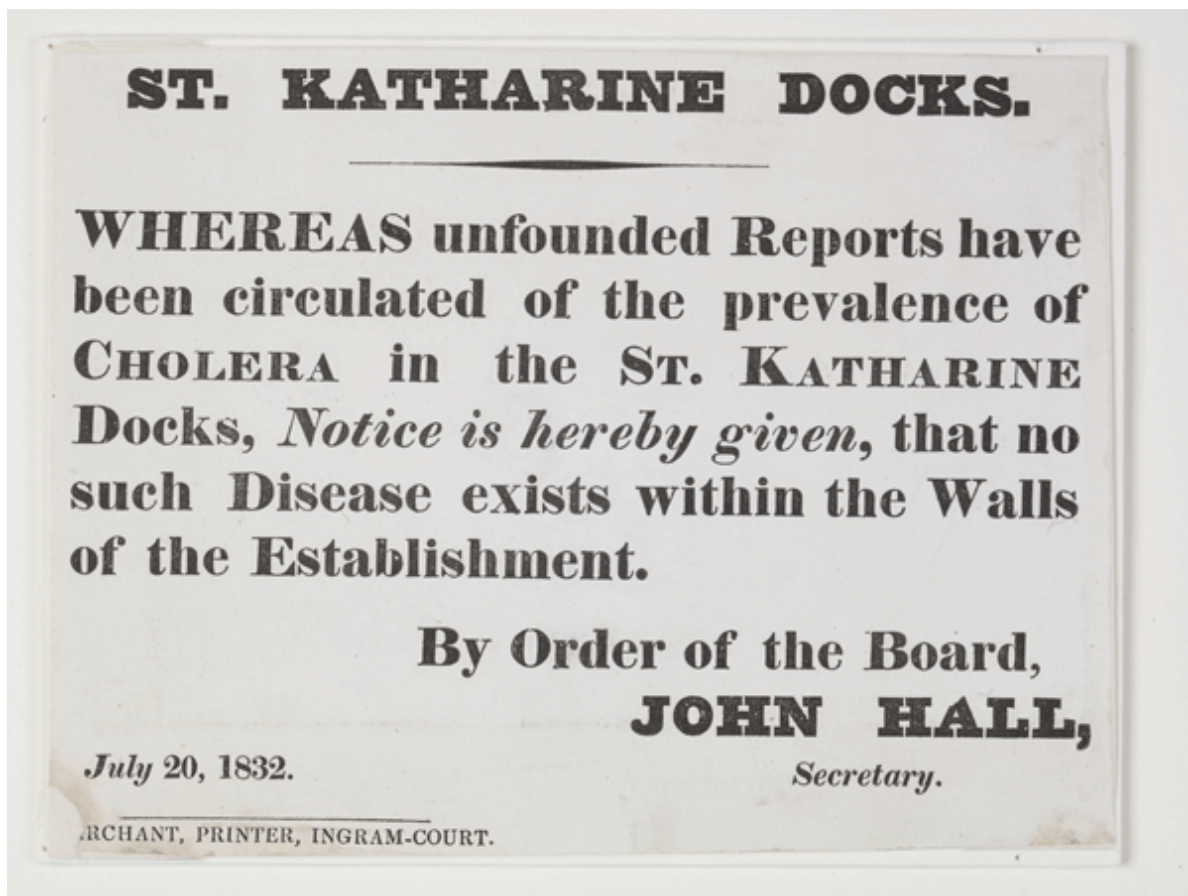
Following the theft of a Van Gogh from the Singer Laren museum in the Netherlands last month, *The Art Newspaper* podcast asked whether collections are more at risk during the lockdown. Art journalist Martin Bailey speculated that there might have been lower staffing at Singer Laren, but says that the lockdown will also have made the thieves more conspicuous. (In a piece on art thefts, *Esquire* also explains that ‘the chances of recovering *The Parsonage Garden at Nuënen* are thankfully fairly decent.’) By contrast, at the V&A, Director of Cultural Heritage Protection and Security Vernon Rapley says that the closure represents a ‘security heaven’ with the museum as a ‘sleeping beauty’ protected by thousands of alarms and cameras as well as increased patrols by security staff. V&A has been planning for various disasters for many years, including at its 2018 conference ‘Planning for the Unthinkable’ and has a 25-strong crisis management team which has met monthly for the past decade. Rapley adds that international connections have been important in assessing how to re-open “*we’re learning from countries coming out of this, how they are dealing with it, because this re-mobilisation is new to us. This museum has not closed, in the way it’s closed now, ever. So coming out of that and being ready for our public again is something we are now learning from our international colleagues and friends.*” [Art Newspaper](#) (podcast), [Esquire](#) (theft of Van Gogh), [Art Newspaper](#)

Also: The only tenant at La Pedrera, Gaudí’s modernist site which usually attracts 1.4m visitors each year, has been describing what it is like to be one of the few people still permitted in the building – alone for the first time in 30 years, but enjoying new freedom to wander about in pyjamas. [Guardian](#)

Lockdown safety and salvage plans: London Fire Brigade gives advice about the care of heritage buildings

London Fire Brigade has issued practical advice to owners of historic buildings about tactics to avoid fire, especially now that a majority of sites are closed. Its suggestions range from using LED lightbulbs to removing waste from around the outside of buildings. It also encourages venues to have a salvage plan, which can be used by the Fire Brigade for strategy planning if called to an emergency. In February, 25 fire engines were called to the Law Society and succeeded in containing a fire in the modern parts of its building, saving its historic library. In September 2019, firefighters attended a flood at the Marx Memorial Library and helped rescue more than 1000 books. The Library’s Manager Meirian Jump said “*The Brigade was absolutely wonderful, arriving in four minutes after we called 999. Twenty minutes later, crews were in our basement rescuing items in an incredibly sensitive and upbeat way. Workable salvage plans are so important. The better the salvage plan, and the more you can anticipate, the better you will be able to respond.*” [London Fire Brigade](#), [Museums Journal](#), [London Fire Brigade](#) (advice page, protecting historical London)

Collections



Printed cholera notice issued by the Secretary of St Katharine Dock Company, dated July 20th 1832. From the collections of the Museum of London, which has material relating to many previous disease outbreaks and is now embarking on a Covid-19 collecting project.

Exeter City Council votes to repatriate Blackfoot Regalia from RAMM collections

Exeter City Council has voted to repatriate Blackfoot Regalia, previously in the collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, to the Siksika Nation in Canada. The regalia includes a buckskin shirt, pair of leggings, knife with feather bundle, two beaded bags and a horsewhip, which once belonged to Chief Crowfoot, a late 19th century Blackfoot leader. The regalia changed hands in 1877 as part of a treaty, but in desperate circumstances when the Blackfoot nation were at serious risk from starvation and unequal partners in the negotiation. The Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park first made the request for repatriation in 2015, and will now hold the regalia on loan from the Siksika nation. Councillor Rachel Sutton said *“when considering the claim for repatriation, the council recognised that the original injustices still reverberate today with First Nation Canadians. Giving back Crowfoot’s regalia returns control to the Siksika Nation over their cultural identity, dignity and authority and is the right thing to do.”* Chief Crowfoot said *“the returning of this regalia will contribute to healing and reconciliation and the Great Chief’s spirit can rest easy once all his belongings are gathered from the four corners of Mother Earth and returned back to his home.”* [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#), [RAMM](#), [M + H](#), [Devon Live](#)

British Museum brings forward new online expansion, while National Gallery grows online visitors by 2000%

The British Museum has launched its newly expanded collections database earlier than planned to serve audiences under lockdown. The new version includes four million objects, two million images, 280,000 published for the first time and a ‘deep zoom’ function. It is the largest update since the collection was launched in 2007. Meanwhile, the National Gallery has been attracting a 2000% rise in online visitors. [Arts Industry](#)

Contemporary art in museums SSO invites newsletter subscribers as it considers new projects

Arts&Heritage is an ACE-funded Sector Support Organisation that forges collaborations between museums, heritage sites and artists, creating contemporary commissions to tell heritage stories in new ways. It is continuing conversations about future work throughout this period, and invites interested organisations to sign up to its newsletter, which includes case studies and opportunities - with a view to re-starting commissions as soon as is possible. [Arts&Heritage](#) (newsletter signup in footer)

Museums launch formal Covid-19 collecting projects

Dozens of institutions are now collecting the coronavirus, from national museums to local authority archives. A few examples include

- The Museum of London has collections relating to many previous epidemics in the city, from smallpox to influenza and is now collecting the coronavirus. It is focusing on the themes of transformed city spaces, the effect on key and homeworkers and how children are reacting with their schools closed. Senior Curator Beatrice Behlen says *"this is a major moment in the capital's history and we want to collect a range of objects, from clothing to hairclippers, from diaries to memes that reflect the physical and emotional response of Londoners to COVID-19"*.
- The Museum of the Home's 'Stay Home' collecting project will focus on what home life looks like during the pandemic. It is inviting the public to document its home life during lockdown.
- The Science Museum is beginning collecting including the letter sent to the nation by the Prime Minister, and magnets which got accidentally stuck in a scientist's nose as he tried to create an anti-virus device. Posters, hand sanitiser and invitations to cancelled weddings are also being added.
- Stockton Council is among many collecting from its citizens, asking locals to contribute 'pictures, videos and stories' about their experiences.
- Whereas some museum collecting on Covid-19 is not aimed for immediate display, the V&A is about to launch an online series 'Pandemic Objects' examining how unremarkable objects have become charged with meaning because of the virus. The museum will also explore how some kitchen cupboard staples are being re-evaluated.
- Historic England asked people to capture their experiences in the seven days from April 29th – May 5th to capture a 'moment in time' for the first time since the Second World War. Ten artists and photographers also carried out commissions during the period. HE's Director of Regions Claudia Kenyatta said *"during this time of necessary lockdown restrictions, we are asking the public and some of our most talented contemporary artists to help us record history...we want people to show us their experiences of lockdown, how communities have come together and life has changed for us all."*

Science Museum, [Bedford Borough Council](#) (local authority archive collecting), [Telegraph](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Historic England](#), [M + H](#) (Museum of London), [Museums Journal](#) (Museum of the Home), [Stockton Council](#), [Guardian](#) (V&A), [Twitter](#) (multiple institutions highlight their projects) [Science Museum Group](#)

Younger and more global volunteers support Museum of East Anglian Life

People with spare lockdown time, from Italy to Taiwan as well as many from the UK, have been flocking to help the Museum of East Anglian life transfer 40,000 of its paper records to the museums online collections. Lockdown has also changed the age profile of volunteers, with 85% being 20 – 34 year olds looking for purposeful activity. [Museums Journal](#)

Education

Learning at home – shorter sessions to aid concentration online, but uneven provision

The earliest children are likely to return to school in the UK is 1st June, with September as another possibility. In the meantime, *The Times* reports that remote schooling has been unevenly available, with private schools more likely to be offering a coherent schooling timetable: only 23% of state schoolchildren are receiving 'live and recorded lessons every day' – about half the rate of the private sector. April, the Government announced that it would provide laptops and 4G routers to children who do not have access at home so that they can continue to learn, but these will not arrive until June. Schools are providing an online learning curriculum, varying from a full school day to enhanced homework. Commentators and education charities are offering a variety of perspectives on what works.

- University teacher Margaret Chapman surveyed her students on how they are faring with online learning under lockdown, and received a high number of replies from people struggling with concentration – 'can't read, can't think'. She describes how she has responded with shorter tasks, videos and podcasts rather than long reading assignments. [Chronicle of Higher Education](#)
- Schools offering live online classes seem to have come to similar conclusions, with some offering shorter lesson sessions, with breaks in between to aid concentration.
- Meanwhile education charity A New Direction is offering a series of blogs on how to have creative, pressure-free learning experiences in the home, ranging from dance to creative collaboration at a distance and 'how to turn your home into a museum', from building a museum to curating displays on a bookshelf or windowsill. [A New Direction](#)
- The Education Endowment Fund has produced a new review of evidence on home learning. Its findings include that getting classes to respond to each other, as well as the teacher, can help children to learn. [Education Endowment Fund](#),

[Sky](#) (laptops for schoolchildren), [Times](#) (unequal school provision)

Get your cultural education resources noticed by teachers

Two projects are offering ways for organisations with cultural education resources to add signposting to aggregator websites, which will make materials easier to find by teachers and others preparing lessons under lockdown.

- London-based cultural education charity A New Direction (AND) is running, LookUp, which helps London schools to navigate, search for and engage with cultural organisations. In the light of the coronavirus AND has added new functionality to allow organisations to share their resources with teachers and schools.
- Meanwhile ACE is working in collaboration with BBC Learning to source quality arts and cultural content to help children learn at home. Fill in the form to give information about your materials to ACE, which will then share with the BBC.

[A New Direction](#) (overview), [ACE/BBC](#) (submit your resource to BBC Learning), [A New Direction](#) (Look Up)

Locked down and offline: Towner Gallery and Greater Manchester send creativity packs

When lockdown began, most cultural organisations turned to digital as the main route to reaching audiences still open to them, but this has left behind those who are either not online, or making hard choices between 'food or data'. However, a number of organisations have found routes to creating non-digital projects. The Towner Gallery, Eastbourne is delivering creative art bags to vulnerable households, containing sketchbooks and pens – plus pre-stamped postcards so recipients can send some of their artwork back to the Towner. The packs are delivered in collaboration with organisations providing vital services. This work has complemented Towner's online work, including setting art challenges via Instagram.

Julie McCarthy, a Great Places Manager, is encouraging work along similar lines across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, aimed primarily at vulnerable young people such as care leavers. She says that cultural organisations "*have rushed to keep in contact with their audiences, but it's created a wall of white noise which is quite difficult to navigate unless you already have a relationship with an arts or cultural organisation.*" She is coordinating dozens of organisations

including The Lowry to create physical creativity packs. The first sets, with a theme of resilience and self-care, will be delivered in early May, followed by a second looking forward to what the world is going to be like and how recipients can move forward. McCarthy says *"it's really important that the packs have the right messages in for young people. But it's also just sending them something, and them getting something in their hands; the strong message from that is you are not on your own, and you've not been forgotten."* [Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#) (Towner)

Jobs

A few posts are being advertised this month:

- [Research Assistant, Marine Invertebrates - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Conservator - National Army Museum](#)
- [PhD Studentship - IWM](#)

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

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