

Welcome to NMDC's monthly news update. In this issue:

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and much more...

NMDC NEWS

Learning by Doing: How museums inspire and engage young people

Over 100 delegates attended the NMDC/ippr conference *Learning by Doing: How museums inspire and engage young people* at the Discovery Museum, Newcastle on 12 October. Involving policymakers and practitioners from education, youth services, and museums as well as young people and the community and voluntary sector, this event considered how to make the most of untapped resources, confronting head-on the challenge of engaging and reaching children and young people through learning and cultural opportunities offered by museums and galleries. Evaluation from the event showed participants particularly enjoyed the input from young people. There was also a showcase of good practice from ten museums and a panel discussion with Baroness (Estelle) Morris, Janice Lane from Culture and Sport Glasgow and Sue Wilkinson from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Presentations from the event can be found on the [IPPR website](#)

NMDC and ippr recently published the report [Learning to Live: Museums, young people and education](#), which addresses key questions about the role of museums and other institutes of material culture in young people's wellbeing and learning.

Tell us what you think of the NMDC Newsletter

It is six months since we introduced the new email and web format for this newsletter and we are keen to know what you think of it. Please complete our online survey: it should only take three minutes! [NMDC Newsletter survey](#)

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

DCMS funding confirmed for major cultural projects

Culture Secretary Ben Bradshaw MP has confirmed the Government's funding commitment to several major cultural projects, including £50m towards the extension of Tate Modern, £22.5m towards the creation of the British Museum's World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre, and £33m for the British Library's newspaper archive. £10m of new funding has also been announced for the new visitor centre at Stonehenge and £45m for the British Film Institute's National Film Centre. The promise of government funding has been crucial in enabling the Tate and the British Museum to leverage additional funding of £277.5m for these two world class projects.

In July, the press reported that funds already pledged by the Government were in jeopardy because of Treasury restrictions on end of year flexibility in the DCMS accounts. Giving evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 20 October, Ben Bradshaw explained to MPs how the funding 'black hole' had been filled: "The Treasury has allowed a £30 million draw down on the Department's end year flexibility pot this year and next year. The rest of that gap has been helped by their allowing our museums to dip into their reserves without that counting against the Departmental Expenditure Limit. The remainder of it will be met by what we propose to be £10 million of savings in the next financial year which we are currently discussing with all of our NDPBs and other bodies as well as efficiencies within the Department's own internal spend."

Questioned by John Whittingdale MP on the £10m savings to be made, Mr Bradshaw rejected the suggestion there would be significant reductions in revenue grants to NDPBs. He also said any potential cuts to Arts Council England (ACE) would "be very insignificant". Mr Bradshaw was also asked about Government support for tourism and extra ACE funding for organisations facing a reduction in private giving. [Transcript of proceedings](#) [DCMS statement](#) [Tate Modern](#)

[expansion](#) [British Museum World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre](#)

Conservatives propose new administrative status for national museums

In a speech setting out Conservative heritage party, Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt has proposed a new administrative status for national museums, and questioned whether the Heritage Lottery Fund might be merged with English Heritage. Mr Hunt said that under a Conservative government, museums and art galleries that are currently classed as Non-Departmental Public Bodies would be reclassified so they have greater independence from Government. He continued: "This will recognise their role as public organisations with responsibility to steward the nation's assets. But it will also allow them the independence to be truly effective and entrepreneurial fundraising bodies. They must have both the ability and responsibility to raise money both for capital projects and also for endowments to give them funding security over the long term." He added that "any new plans to build up endowments or other sources of private giving must be an additional pillar of funding and not a replacement for public funding. So for larger organisations we will also explore the possibility of long-term funding agreements, possibly stretching beyond 3 years, in return for a solid commitment to build up endowments and alternative income sources."

Mr Hunt reiterated the Conservative Party's commitment to return the National Lottery to its four original good causes and to reducing lottery administration costs, which they estimate could generate an extra £30-£40m for the heritage sector from 2012. Mr Hunt also mentioned the need to support philanthropy. In response to a question by Diane Lees, Director-General of the Imperial War Museum, he restated his commitment to a lifetime gifts policy but suggested it might not be possible immediately due to spending restraints.

In response to a question about what 'streamlining' funding bodies might mean for the Arts Council and MLA, Mr Hunt said that the Conservatives are keen to avoid structural upheaval but do need to look at value for money and ensure no more than 5% funding is spent on administration. [Jeremy Hunt's speech](#)

Culture is Right: Blue Print for the Arts

The two-day *Culture is Right* conference also discussed the future of the arts and cultural sector under a Conservative administration. In a keynote speech, Shadow Culture Minister Ed Vaizey MP described culture as "the most efficient public service in the country" and said "public subsidy plays a vital role in pump priming arts organisations."

Ed Vaizey said he would reform the regulations surrounding giving, saying: "a key priority is to enable people to give works of art to the nation during their lifetime. In addition, we will simplify Gift Aid to make it much easier to sell its attractions to potential donors. We would also like to free up museums and other arts NDPBs so that they are able to acknowledge and celebrate their significant donors much more easily." He said also said the Conservative culture team were carrying out a review of DCMS quangos and looking at moving policy-making functions back to the Department.

Mr Vaizey said the Conservatives' policy for communities and local government could have a significant impact on culture and urged the cultural sector to look at *Control Shift, Returning Power to Local Communities*, the Conservatives' Green Paper on localism. There are two proposals there which have implications for the arts:

- A power to allow local people to trigger referendums if 5% of local citizens sign a petition in favour. This means cultural organisations with strong links with their local community are likely to have more secure funding than those that do not.
- Enabling local governments to identify money spent in their area by central government agencies, which will include the Arts Council. This means local authorities could stop major projects and redirect funds to other priorities for the community.

Arts Council England Chief Executive Alan Davey also spoke at the conference and called on any future government to maintain levels of investment in the arts because to do so is "rational, economically sound and essential to our quality of life." He pointed out that £1 of public money invested in the arts levers in £2 from elsewhere, creates jobs and contributes significantly to the fastest growing sector of our national economy. Roy Clare, Chief Executive of the MLA, reiterated culture is not a cost, but an opportunity. [Ed Vaizey's speech](#) [Control Shift, Returning Power to Local Communities](#) [Alan Davey's speech](#) [Roy Clare's speech](#)

1.5% funding increase for culture in Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government has increased the heritage budget by £2.2m as part of its drive to protect front-line services and counter the effects of the recession in Wales. The funding pot for tourism, the arts, culture, sports, Welsh language, museums, archives, libraries and the historic environment now stands at £147.4 million for 2010-11 – an increase of 1.5% on the 2009-10 figure. Extra funding will be targeted at helping key sponsored bodies achieve long-term savings. Each sponsored body will receive an extra 1.5% for running costs, to be targeted at restructuring and collaborative projects. [Welsh Assembly Government](#)

Scottish schools to get 'Cultural Champions'

Scotland's Culture Minister, Mike Russell MSP, told the Scottish National Party's annual conference in Inverness that he would work with the Schools Minister, Keith Brown MSP, to introduce "a new breed of cultural champions in our schools." The move will see artists go into classrooms and cultural champions will also work with schools and local authorities to bring together a number of key organisations, aiming to give every pupil a full appreciation of Scotland's diverse culture. [The Herald](#)

The Scottish Arts Council currently manages a network of Cultural Coordinators in each local authority area who work with museums, galleries, or other arts organisations. [More on Cultural Coordinators](#)

MUSEUM SECTOR NEWS

Behind the scenes at the museum: the effects of the recession

The Art Fund has just carried out its second nationwide survey of museums and galleries. It finds that more people are visiting museums across the UK and that they are spending more in the shops and cafes, but that income from other sources, especially public funding, investments and corporate sponsorship, is falling. 225 museums participated in the survey, the key findings of which are:

- 50% of UK museums saw an increase in visits, with 20% reporting a rise of over 10% on the same period last year. The rise was greatest in national museums – 66% saw an increase in summer visits.
- 45% of museums saw a knock-on increase in trading income from on-site shops and cafes (53% of national museums).
- 26% of museums saw cuts in funding. This was significantly higher in local authority funded museums – 34% saw a cut in council funding.
- 41% saw a fall in investment income, including 67% of national museums. Museums have also seen a fall in corporate venue hire.
- 22% of museums saw a fall in the number of paid staff.
- 25% have seen an increase in volunteers.
- Running costs are climbing with 30% of museums saying that they spent more than they did in the same period last year. Increases in utility costs were cited as a reason, as well as building works and maintenance.
- Museums are spending less on collecting: less than half attempted to add to their collections (down from 60% in the previous Art Fund survey). But where museums are acquiring, they are securing healthy discounts, often of 30% or more.

The next survey in March 2010 will focus on collecting activity. [Art Fund survey](#)

Two thirds of 5-10 year old children visited a museum out of school time last year

The latest figures from the DCMS *Taking Part* survey were published last month. The survey asked about visits outside school for 5-10 year olds, and asks 11-15 year olds about visits both with school and out of school. Key findings were as follows:

- 66.3% of 5-10 year olds had attended a museum in the past 12 months out of school time.
- 4.2 % of 5-10 year olds had been to a museum or attended an event at a museum out of school time in the past week.

- 59.7 % of 11-15 year olds had attended a museum or gallery in the past 12 months either in school or out of school time.
- 2.9 % of 11-15 year olds had been to a museum or attended an event at one either in school or out of school time in the past week.
- Within the 5-10 age group, boys have a higher rate of participation in museums than girls (69.8% and 62.7% respectively).
- Those from white backgrounds had significantly higher rates of participation than those from black or minority ethnic backgrounds in sport, heritage and museums for those aged 5-10, and in heritage for those aged 11-15. Those from black or minority ethnic backgrounds had significantly higher rates of participation than those from white backgrounds for both the 5-10 and 11-15 age groups in libraries. [Taking Part Child Survey](#)

Archive papers reveal national museums were targets for IRA

A confidential government file released by the National Archives last month revealed that the British Museum, National Gallery, Tate, National Maritime Museum and Imperial War Museum were potential bombing targets for an IRA gang in the 1970s. The museums were listed amongst other organisations in papers found a London flat used by the Balcombe Street gang when they were arrested in 1975. [The Guardian](#) [The National Archives](#)

MLA launch Peer Review guidance

MLA has developed a *Light Touch Peer Review* tool, outlining how to conduct a peer review. The guidance is based on MLA's past experience of facilitating peer reviews, working with organisations such as the Improvement and Development Agency. It provides an approach that supports improvement, is light on bureaucracy and can be adapted to local circumstance. [MLA website](#)

Will Gompertz talks about his new role as BBC Arts Editor

The Times has a detailed interview with Will Gompertz, Head of Tate Media, on his plans for BBC arts coverage in his new role as BBC Arts Editor. The Times also has a comment piece by Joan Bakewell, Chair of the National Campaign for the Arts and former BBC arts correspondent, offering her advice to Will on his new role. [The Times article](#) [Joan Bakewell comment](#)

National Heritage Science Strategy

The steering group developing the UK wide National Heritage Science Strategy has published the last of three reports written to underpin the development of the strategy. This third report is about understanding capacity in the heritage science sector and makes a range of recommendations on practitioner capacity and capability; access to information and infrastructure; and funding and its public benefit. Work is now underway on to develop the strategy and the steering group will discuss emerging ideas with the sector at a stakeholder meeting on 25th November at the New Armouries in the Tower of London. [Heritage Science Strategy website](#)

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Cultural cooperation agreement between Scotland and Kolkata

The Scottish Government and the Government of West Bengal have signed a protocol of cooperation on heritage issues. The agreement recognises the deep historical links between Scotland and Kolkata, and the need to maintain those links and the shared cultural and built heritage that exist as a result. The agreement will result in development of a programme of co-operation and collaboration between Scotland's national collections and heritage bodies, and the equivalent West Bengali organisations. The programme is likely to include sharing knowledge and expertise in areas like conservation, curation, digital archiving and laser imaging. [Scottish Government statement](#)

European cultural collections website wins Erasmus Award

The website *Europeana.eu* which brings together digital content from libraries, museums and archives across Europe has been awarded the Erasmus Award for Networking Europe. The international panel of judges described Europeana as a surprising and innovative interactive educational virtual exhibition, which has shortened "the way to an integrated cultural space of Europe". [Erasmus Prize announcement](#)

TRAINING AND SKILLS

Textile Conservation Centre closes

The Textile Conservation Centre will be closed by the University of Southampton on 31 October 2009. The Centre has trained over 250 textile conservators and 140 curators since it was established in 1975. The Centre, originally based at Hampton Court Palace, became part of the University of Southampton in 1998 and moved into purpose-built facilities the following year.

www.textileconservationcentre.co.uk

£2.85m HLF funding for training bursaries

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced seven projects under its existing Training Bursary Programme that are set to benefit from an additional £2.85m investment. The funding will immediately create over 220 additional training places. The funding includes £355,000 for the Institute of Archaeologists, £490,000 for the Institute of Conservation and £389,100 for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers to develop skills in the conservation of specialist habitats.

[Heritage Lottery Fund](#)

Museums invited to bid for apprenticeship funding

The Creative Apprenticeship scheme has been successfully piloted for a year by a consortium Liverpool's leading cultural organisations, led by Tate Liverpool. The programme gave ten apprentices paid, on-the-job training at cultural institutions while studying for NVQs in Community Arts Management. Three of the ten have secured jobs in host organisations. Another three have secured places on related Further Education courses, one is working as a freelance and one is working in the commercial creative industry sector.

New funding from the MLA is now available to create apprenticeships in museums across England. The Creative Apprenticeship scheme developed by Creative & Cultural Skills is designed to open up entry routes into museums. The MLA will fund up to 50 apprenticeships providing £5,000 towards the employment costs for each year of an apprentice's employment, up to a maximum of two years, over the period 2009 to 2011. The deadline for applications is 4 December. [MLA website](#) [Liverpool pilot scheme](#)

Student Volunteering Week 2010

Volunteering England's Student Volunteering Week 2010 is taking place from 22-28 February. The theme for this year is *Inspiring futures; connecting communities*. The week will focus on the professional and personal skills an individual can develop through volunteering, as well as the benefits that volunteering can bring to universities, colleges and communities. Additionally, it will highlight the benefit of student volunteering to businesses and employers, focusing on key messages around the increased employability of students who volunteer. [Volunteering England](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

Research reveals positive link between heritage and well-being

English Heritage has published *Heritage Counts 2009*, the annual report on the state of the historic environment in England. The report includes new evidence that heritage can have an impact on wider social issues such as people's sense of well-being and community cohesion.

The report also reveals that visitor numbers over the past year were greater than expected. While there was a small drop in visitor numbers at National Trust and English Heritage sites in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08, overall visitor figures to historic properties were up in 2008 (2%) and gross revenue was also up 6%. In the first half of 2009, visitor numbers at historic sites have continued to grow. Visits to National Trust pay-for-entry sites were up 18% in April-August compared to last year, and English Heritage visits were up 30% over the same period. [Heritage Counts 2009](#)

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

Museums, libraries, archives and other organisations providing learning outside the classroom activities for children and young people are being invited to join the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) as a member. The Council oversees the LOtC Quality Badge and hopes that a strong membership base will raise the profile and promote the benefits of learning outside the classroom. Members will be in a position to influence the future direction of the Council. [Council for Learning Outside the Classroom](#)

Creative Scotland's flexible business model unveiled

Creative Scotland has unveiled its business model, setting out the structure and operational design of the new cultural development body, which is due to be formed in the first half of next year. The new model proposes an executive team of six, fourteen portfolio managers and a flexible pool of over 30 Development Officers. A programme of staff exchanges and secondments will ensure the organisation shares knowledge and learns from its partners across Scotland. Creative Scotland will replace Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen. Creative Scotland Chair Ewan Brown said: "The proposed new business model requires fewer roles than there are at present, but there will be no compulsory redundancies." [Creative Scotland](#)

UNESCO UK

A refreshed Culture Committee of the UK National Commission for UNESCO has been appointed following a recruitment campaign this autumn. Professor Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, has agreed to continue as a member for a further term to allow for continuity. Dr Jonathan Williams, Keeper of Prehistory and Europe at the British Museum, has joined the Board. The first meeting of the new Committee will be on 18 November 2009. [UNESCO website](#)

12 public art commissions across the UK for 2012

Arts Council England and London 2012 have announced the winning art commissions for *Artists taking the lead*, one of the major projects for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. There will be twelve projects, one in each English region and in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, sharing £5.4m funding. Projects include LED panels on the roofs of bus-stops in London, a floating watermill arts space on the River Tyne and a spinning column of cloud and light in Birkenhead. [Artists Taking the Lead](#)

Arts to bridge the health gap

The Improvement and Development Agency (I&DEA) has highlighted the ways in which Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and the local NHS are using art to help in engaging the public.

DIGITAL

Government publishes Copyright Strategy

The Government has set out plans to reform copyright in the UK, developing a number of policy announcements made in the Digital Britain report. A strategy document, © *The Way Ahead: A Strategy for Copyright in the Digital Age* states that the UK will:

- Take powers to allow "orphan works" that have no clear owner to be used without fear of criminal liability.
- Enable a system of copyright licensing on an opt-out rather than opt-in basis, as is successfully practised elsewhere in Europe.
- Act to monitor the behaviour of collecting societies.
- Signal its readiness to consider sympathetically Europe-wide moves to let non-commercial users use copyright works without fear of legal complications.

[Strategy document](#) [Ministerial statement on copyright strategy](#)

Free webcast of conference sessions on social media and museum data exchange

Five sessions from *MCN2009*, the international conference of the Museum Computer Network, will be webcast free of charge on 12-13 November. Offsite participants will be able to join the Q&A sessions for each using Twitter. Subjects include *Tweets to Sweeten Collaborations for Archives, Museums and Libraries*, and *Libraries, Museums and Archives: From Collaboration to Convergence*. [MCN2009](#)

Culture 24 shortlisted for award

The new Culture 24 website is now live. The site has also been shortlisted for website of the year by the [Good Web Guide](#), the winner of which will be announced on 6 November. www.culture24.org.uk

PHILANTHROPY

Review to improve arts philanthropy in New Zealand

The Government of New Zealand has announced a task force of high-profile donors and fundraisers to investigate ways to improve philanthropic giving in the New Zealand. The task force's members, including high-profile donors and fundraising experts, will look at a range of areas, such as examples of philanthropic giving overseas and ways to publicise existing tax incentives to benefit the cultural sector. [Creative New Zealand](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Sharing information on climate change and the historic environment

The Historic Environment Review Executive Committee has set up a new group to bring together information and expertise on climate change across the heritage sector. The group is currently mapping the range of activities in which the heritage sector is already engaged. Olivia Morris, External Affairs Officer at National Trust, is collating the data and is keen to hear of any museum initiatives including:

- Research into impacts on the historic environment from climate change and work following on from this (e.g. adaptation);
- Research into the energy performance of historic buildings/ wider historic area and related measures to reduce it;
- Activity on own estate – case studies, projects and initiatives;
- Behavioural change – engagement and outreach;
- Communications;
- Advice and guidance;
- Policy and advocacy.

To participate please send a brief outline and contact details to olivia.morris@nationaltrust.org.uk

Additional funding for Low Carbon Buildings Programme

The Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) grants for the installation of microgeneration technologies have been extended until April 2011. LCBP Phase Two has received an additional £35 million of funding, which is to be made available for public sector buildings and for charitable bodies. Grants of up to £200,000 per site are available for solar, wind, ground source heat pump and biomass renewable energy technologies. A series of free events are being run throughout the UK from November 2009 to January 2010, to explain the application process and the technologies involved. For more information email events@bre.co.uk [Low Carbon Building Programme](#)

IN PARLIAMENT

Scottish cultural collections budgets and disposal of museum collections

In the Scottish Parliament, Rhona Brankin MSP asked about the impact of real-term cuts to the budgets of cultural collections in 2010-11 and the "double whammy" of the prospect through the Public Services Reform (Scotland) of Ministers having the power to dispose of museum collections. Culture Minister Michael Russell MSP said Ms Rankins' comments were "hysterical nonsense." He said, "the budget for the cultural collections will still increase from £98.9 million to £99.7 million in cash terms between 2009-10 and 2010-11." He continued, "the national collections are in good form, there is constructive discussion between me and the national collections, and we are absolutely determined that they should grow and develop." [Scottish Parliament](#)

British Museum Act 1963 (Amendment) Bill dropped

Andrew Dismore MP has dropped his Private Members Bill which proposed giving the Secretary of State for Culture the power to require the British Museum to transfer artefacts from its collection.

The Bill was on the Order Paper 16 October, to resume the adjourned Second Reading from 15 May, but there was not enough time for debate on that day. [Parliament website](#)

Government considers extending duty to report treasure finds

The clauses of the Coroners and Justice Bill referring to treasure finds were debated in the House of Lords on 26 October. Lord Redesdale, Lord Howarth of Newport and Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn spoke in favour of an amendment that would extend the duty to report treasure finds to anyone that acquires the objects as well as the finder. Responding for the Government, Lord Bach persuaded the peers to withdraw the amendment on the basis that the Government would explore how this change might be introduced at the Third Reading of the Bill on 4 November. Lord Bach also said the Government would not support another amendment that proposed introducing a new offence of dealing in undocumented archaeological objects. [Parliament website](#)

EVENTS

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month 2010

The national pre-launch of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month 2010 will be held at the British Museum on 19 November. The event will include a collections spotlight with sessions on objects in the Museum's collection with a relevant LGBT theme; a best practice showcase; a teacher's surgery and a reception attended by Culture Secretary, Ben Bradshaw MP. Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month takes place every year in February. [Further details](#)

UK Maritime Heritage Forum

The second UK Maritime Heritage Forum will take place on 2-3 December at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. The Forum brings together existing maritime heritage groups to share experiences and knowledge, and encourage dialogue and engagement between institutions with maritime collections. All museums and archives with maritime holdings are invited to attend. [Further details](#)

APPOINTMENTS

Steve Davies MBE has been appointed as the new Director of the **National Railway Museum**. Steve Davies is currently Director of the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester, a post he took up in August 2008. He previously had a career in the Army and, while serving in Sierra Leone, used his free time to establish the Sierra Leone National Railway Museum, which opened in 2005. Steve Davies will join the NRM in the New Year. **Andrew Scott**, who is retiring as NRM Director, is staying on as Acting Director of the NRM's parent organisation, the **National Museum of Science & Industry** until the summer of 2010. [more](#)

Rachel Mulhearn has been appointed as the new director of the [Merseyside Maritime Museum](#). She was previously Curator of Maritime History and Deputy Head of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. She began work at the museum as a volunteer in the archives in 1988.

The **Bishop of Liverpool, Rt Rev James Jones** and Liverpool barrister **Nisha Katona** have been appointed to the board of **National Museums Liverpool**. [more](#)

The Prime Minister has reappointed **Edwin Davies OBE** as a Trustee of the **Victoria and Albert Museum** and **Christopher Woodward** as a Trustee of the **National Heritage Memorial Fund**.

NEWS FROM NMDC MEMBERS

Major museum projects transform visitor experience

The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the oldest public museum in Britain, reopens on 7 November following a major £61m redevelopment. The project has been partly funded by a £15m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The new building, designed by Rick Mather Architects, doubles the museum's display space with 39 new galleries, including four temporary exhibition galleries. There is also a new education centre, state-of-the-art conservation studios and Oxford's first rooftop restaurant. A new display strategy for the collections, *Crossing Cultures Crossing Time*, will enable visitors to discover how civilisations developed as part of an interrelated world culture. The reopening has attracted much positive press coverage, including a leader in the **Guardian** highlighting the growing popularity of museums. [more](#)

The Ulster Museum reopened to the public on 22 October after a three year £17m redevelopment project. Although no extensions were added to the original footprint of the building, the new museum now has an extra square kilometre of exhibition space, including the new three-storey *Window on Our World* exhibition area. The new interior has been split into three main zones around the themes of art, nature and history. The project has been funded by £11.2m from Stormont's Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, £4.7m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a further £1.3m from trusts, foundations and private donations. The reopening coincided with the 80th anniversary of the opening of the museum in 1929, when it was known as the Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery. Since it opened, the museum's Girona restaurant has become one of Belfast's most popular eating places serving more than 8,500 meals in the first week. The museum will have new visitor hours, open all day on Saturday and Sunday but closed on Mondays, except bank holidays. Speaking in the **Northern Ireland Assembly**, Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure said he was sure the public will "appreciate that the project has been time and money well spent". [more](#)

The **Great North Museum: Hancock** will be officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh when they visit Newcastle upon Tyne on 6 November. The Great North Museum has already attracted more than 500,000 visitors since it opened its doors to the public in May. Newcastle University led the £26m Great North Museum project, in partnership with Newcastle City Council, the Natural History Society of Northumbria, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. [more](#)

Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC) has reopened after a major expansion. The state of the-art-stores hold the Museum's collections in pods - environmentally-controlled, energy efficient storage spaces. The building also contains office space, conservation studios, laboratories, workshops and a publicly accessible reference library. This phase of the development of GMRC has cost £12.8 million, with Glasgow City Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund providing the funding.

Alongside the reopening of GMRC, a new tool to help people find specific objects is also being launched. *The Collections Navigator* is an online tool which is designed to be a first step for people researching specific items in Glasgow's collection. [more](#)

The **Royal Armouries** has received a grant of £1.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the Fort Nelson site, home to the national collection of historic artillery. The project will see improved visitor facilities and galleries, and will provide state-of-the-art education opportunities at the Fort, which overlooks Portsmouth Harbour. In addition to the HLF grant, progress has also been made with the campaign to raise the additional £1.5 million match-funding needed to realise the project, with funding secured from the Garfield Weston Foundation and the DCMS Wolfson Foundation Galleries Improvement Fund. [more](#)

40,000 people visited the Staffordshire Hoard at **Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery**. Almost 65,000 people visited Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery throughout the 19 day display of the Staffordshire Hoard, making it the most successful exhibit in the Museum's history. The hoard goes on display at the British Museum this week. [more](#)

Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales has published *A positive contribution to life in Wales during the recession*, a discussion paper setting out the role the museum can play in supporting the

Welsh economy. It is estimated that Amgueddfa Cymru's total economic impact is £83m of output and £53m of gross value added. The document outlines the museum's recent achievements, from outreach to scientific research, and also highlights free admission and volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships at the museum. Read more on Director-General [Michael Houlihan's blog](#).

The [National Wool Museum](#) in Dre-fach Felindre welcomed the most visitors ever in one day on Saturday 26 September, with 750 visitors. A food festival was held at the Museum on that day with activities including cooking demonstrations, competitions and a clog dancing workshop. [more](#)

The [British Library](#) achieved a platinum rating and two awards in the Disability Standard awards 2009. The Employers Forum on Disability awarded the Library the Disability Confidence Award and the Best Public Sector Employer Organisation. [more](#)

Lord Young of Norwood Green, Minister for Employment Relations, met apprentices from the Royal Air Force Museum Apprenticeship scheme during a visit to the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre at [Royal Air Force Museum Cosford](#). The scheme, now in its fourth successful year, provides a work-based training and development for 16–24 year olds who have left full-time education. Two days a week are spent at college and three days are spent in the workplace. [more](#)

[The National Gallery](#) has launched *Sounds of the Gallery* tour, a new audio tour for which pieces of sound art have been created in direct response to paintings in the collection. [more](#)

The *Ancient Humans in Britain* project which brings together international team of scientists from the [Natural History Museum](#), [the British Museum](#) and 8 major universities, has received £1.1m funding from the Leverhulme Trust for the 3rd phase of its work. The project has already made ground-breaking discoveries, such as dating human occupation of Britain back as far as 700,000 years. [more](#)

[Tate](#) and Legacy Trust UK have announced the first ever Tate movie. *The Tate Movie* will be the first of its kind - an animation film made by and for children across the UK. Tate will work in partnership with a national network of museums and galleries, teachers and children's services, to offer as many children of all abilities and from all backgrounds the chance to showcase their creativity on this high-profile platform. The film will be made in collaboration with Aardman, the animation company behind Wallace and Gromit, and Fallon, the creative agency that originated the concept. [more](#)

Pioneering research by [Tate](#) has provided vital information for conservators and artists about the properties of acrylic-based paints. The three-year Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project enabled the expansion of the first major in-depth study of these paints anywhere in the world. Acrylic emulsion paints and primers have been extensively used by artists since the 1960s and account for approximately 50% of paint sales over the last 30 years. [more](#)

The [Imperial War Museum](#) is working with servicemen and women to record and share their frontline experiences in Afghanistan. *War Story* will use innovative collecting techniques across a range of digital media to allow active service personnel to record their personal stories as part of the Museum's national collection relating to contemporary conflicts. Working in co-operation with the Ministry of Defence, Imperial War Museum staff will support participants to expand on existing new media channels already used to record the military experience. [more](#)

Don't forget to tell us what you think of the NMDC Newsletter

Please take a couple of minutes to complete our quick online survey and give us some feedback on this newsletter. It's anonymous! [Go to NMDC Newsletter survey](#)

NMDC JOBS

Our [jobs website](#) has details of over 25 current vacancies at museums around the UK including:

- Senior Estate Manager, Victoria & Albert Museum
- Curator, East and Central Asia, National Museums Scotland
- Art and Object Handler, National Maritime Museum
- Paintings Conservator, National Museums Liverpool
- Community Programmes Coordinator: Transformation, British Museum

For details of these jobs and many more visit www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk

And finally...

Eyebrows were raised in the House of Commons when shadow Chief Secretary Philip Hammond accused the Government of wanting to sell off "the Tate" when what he meant to say was the "Tote." [Hansard record](#)

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