

Welcome to the monthly news update from the National Museum Directors' Council. In this issue:

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And much more...

NMDC NEWS

NMDC membership expansion

NMDC is delighted to formally confirm that all 16 Renaissance Major Partner Museums are now members of the NMDC. Our new members are:

- Janita Bagshawe, Director of the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove
- Maria Balshaw, Director of Manchester City Galleries – representing the Manchester Partnership consortium
- Janet Barnes, Chief Executive of York Museums Trust
- Christopher Brown, Director of the Ashmolean Museum of Art & Archaeology – representing the Oxford University and County Museums consortium (Christopher has been an NMDC member since 2007)
- Kate Carreno, Deputy Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum – representing the University of Cambridge Museums
- Richard Evans, Director of Beamish Museum – representing the Beamish and Bowes Museum consortium
- Julie Finch, Director of Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery
- Camilla Hampshire, Museum Manager of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery – representing the Exeter and Plymouth consortium
- Steve Miller, Director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
- John Roles, Director of Leeds Museums and Galleries
- David Spence, Acting Director of the Museum of London (the Museum of London has been an NMDC member)
- Ann Sumner, Director of Birmingham Museums Trust (Birmingham Art Gallery & Museums was an NMDC member from 2007)
- Vanessa Trevelyan, Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
- Janet Vitmayer, Director & Chief Executive of the Horniman Museum and Gardens
- Hilary Wade, Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery – representing the Cumbria Museums Consortium
- Iain Watson, Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (Iain has been an NMDC member since 2007).

They join the 19 national museum members and Glasgow Museums as full NMDC members, alongside three associate archive and library members (the British Library, National Library of Scotland and the National Archives).

Following a consultation last year with members and stakeholders across the sector on NMDC's purpose, priorities and membership, members agreed to expand membership criteria to include the Renaissance-funded regional museums. Four of the Major Partners were already NMDC members – the Museum of London, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, the Ashmolean Museum and Birmingham Art Gallery and Museums – and the further expansion of membership aims to build on this very positive experience. Glasgow Museums also remains a member, as NMDC Directors agreed that Glasgow's unique status as the only major non-national museum service outside England meant it would be an obvious omission from a membership group representing the UK's major museums.

A successful first meeting of existing and new member Directors took place at the end of June, when members discussed NMDC priorities for the coming year in light of the expanded membership. It is hoped that widening NMDC's membership will offer an opportunity to develop the already strong

relationships between the UK's national and regional museums, and enable NMDC to be a clear voice advocating for the nationally-funded network of museums across the UK.

NMDC name change

During the NMDC strategy review it was noted that the term 'Conference', dating back to the foundation of the NMDC in 1929, is unhelpful and confusing - although members felt that the acronym NMDC is well-known and should be retained. It was therefore agreed to change the name of the organisation to the **National Museum Directors' Council**. This name change is now in effect.

MUSEUM FUNDING

Rising to the challenge - Heritage Lottery Fund strategic framework 2013-18

The Heritage Lottery Fund has published its strategic framework 2013-18 setting out it intends to invest £375m a year of lottery money and announced new funding streams and initiatives designed to enable a strong, robust sector to respond in new ways to the conditions it now faces. Speaking at the launch on 5 July, Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair, Heritage Lottery Fund said, "this is a framework, not a plan, the language is deliberate. It is to clearly set out the context for our investment over the next five years, but with the flexibility to continue to respond promptly to newly emerging needs that will inevitably arise in our changing world."

The strategic framework includes plans to:

- offer support for building organisational resilience in the heritage sector, through supporting the development of skills, including running a further round of the Skills for the Future programme;
- offering development funding and professional mentoring to develop robust projects and introducing start-up grants and transition funding for organisations needing to cope with new challenges;
- kick start philanthropy through providing endowments and smaller grants for capacity building and support for fundraising training;
- stimulate local economic growth with a new Heritage Enterprise scheme designed to fund partnerships – including social and private enterprises – to develop sustainable new uses for the most challenging historic sites;
- recognise the size and scale of the environmental impact of HLF funding by becoming the first major funding body to require carbon footprinting as part of the application process for projects over £2m;
- lead the way in encouraging the sector to use digital technology, by asking HLF-supported projects to make their digital content widely available at no charge. HLF will also fund stand-alone digital projects;
- decisions up to £2million pounds will now be made at a local level.
- extend HLF support for heritage in private ownership under the Our Heritage programme (£10,000 to £100,000) for physical works to heritage provided they achieve a step-change in terms of public access and engagement;
- continue to make applying to HLF more straightforward, with the introduction of Sharing Heritage – a new very simple grant programme for smaller projects needing £3,000-£10,000;
- create online communities to showcase good practice and encourage the exchange of ideas and innovations;

Other changes to HLF grant programmes include a further Collecting Cultures initiative in late 2013 to encourage a strategic approach to collection development and acquisition in museums, archives and libraries. [HLF](#)

HLF announces £27.4 for major museum developments

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced £27.4m funding for five major museum developments including its biggest ever award in Wales. The projects are:

- **Creu Hanes - Making History**, St Fagans: National History Museums, Amgueddfa Cymru - £11.5m to create a new visitor experience integrating national collections of archaeology and social history together in an open-air museum for the first time anywhere. The £25million plan will also receive £6m from the Welsh Government.

- **First World War Centenary Project, IWM London** - £4.5m to create ground-breaking new First World War Galleries, part of the Imperial War Museum's plans to mark the First World War Centenary during 2014-18.
- **Europe 1600 - 1800 at the Victoria & Albert Museum** - £4.3m for the project which will dramatically improve the exhibition space for these collections, restore the 1970s' style galleries back to their original Victorian Aston Webb design with over 50% more floor space.
- **The new Design Museum, London** –£4.65m for its move to the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington, which will conserve this architecturally distinct and 'at risk' building, and create a space which is triple the size of the museum's current home in Shad Thames.
- **Tank Museum – Access all Areas, Dorset** - £2.5m for the project to create a new Vehicle Conservation Centre and house 130 'at risk' vehicles, putting the entire collection indoors for the first time.

Initial support has also been awarded to four other major projects:

- *Connections: Science and Art*, National Museum of Scotland for a £4.8m HLF bid towards a £11.85million project to create eight new galleries to display its Science and Technology and European Art and Design collections.
- *Command of the Oceans*, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent for a £4.5m HLF bid.
- Gunnersbury Park Museum, London for a £3.8m HLF bid
- Norton Priory, Cheshire for a £3.9m HLF bid.

The HLF has awarded £1.42 billion to transform the UK's museums and galleries since the launch of the National Lottery 18 years ago. [HLF](#) [St Fagans announcement](#)

10 regional museums will be selected for £3.6m Museums and schools programme

Arts Council England has announced further details the Museums and Schools programme. As announced at the publication of the Henley Review of Cultural Education in February, the Department for Education will grant the Arts Council £3.6 million to deliver this programme over the next three years (2012-15). The programme will involve 10 regional museums, each working with a cluster of local schools. Each local museum and schools cluster will be linked to a National Museum, to bring "additional capacity and scholarship and enabling mutual sharing of expertise." This is a non-application programme and the Arts Council will identify partnerships in areas of low cultural engagement. Arts Council England announce further information on the partnerships and their locations in the coming months.

This programme replaces the DCMS/DfE funded Strategic Commissioning National/Regional Museum Education Partnership programme, which has run since 2003 and allocated funding to national museums to develop partnerships with regional museums to deliver museum education projects. [Arts Council England](#)

£7 million Digital R&D Fund for the Arts

Arts Council England has announced a £7m Digital R&D Fund for the Arts, in partnership with Nesta and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The Fund is intended to encourage collaboration between the arts, digital technology providers and the research community in order to undertake experiments from which the wider arts and cultural sector can learn. The funding will be made available over three years (2012/13-2014/5) and will support research and development projects that use digital technology to enhance arts audience reach and/or explore new business models. Approximately 90 projects will be funded up to a value of £125,000 each. The Fund opened for applications on 13 July and expressions of interest will be accepted continuously throughout the first two years of the fund.

Arts Council has also published its Creative Media policy, which sets out how it aims to stimulate a new era of digital access and growth in the arts and cultural sector. It identifies nine areas that will be the focus of Arts Council's digital and media activities: skills and training; talent development; media production; digital exhibition and distribution; archives and collections; data and metadata; rights and intellectual property; audience engagement and learning; business models and organisational development. The policy also provides greater detail on how £20 million of Arts Council Lottery funding, set aside in 2011 for digital innovation, has been and will be allocated including £8 million which is being set aside to allow for the possibility of The Space continuing as a freely-available digital arts service. [Arts Council](#)

Digital R&D podcast series for the arts and cultural sectors

The Arts Council has commissioned a series of six audio podcasts which explore innovative use of digital technology in the arts and cultural sector. The series, hosted by arts and culture broadcaster and journalist John Wilson, was launched on 16 July 2012 and is available for download monthly from the Arts Council's iTunes and SoundCloud channels. Each programme in the series will focus on one of the themes at the core of the new Digital R&D Fund for the Arts. The theme of the first podcast was user generated content, social media and audience curation, including a case study from the Imperial war Museum. [Arts Council](#)

National Funding Scheme to encourage mobile donations

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP has launched the National Funding Scheme, which aims to use mobile technology set to revolutionise how the UK's arts and cultural institutions are funded. The scheme founded by William Makower, Managing Director of digital consultancy Panlogic, was launched at the National Portrait Gallery on 3 July. The platform, which will be available from March 2013, will allow donations via several mobile means including: SMS text giving, System stored credit cards, Interactive voice/tone response (IVR), Near field communication (NFC) and Apps. The scheme's aim is to raise new funds for the sector through mass giving and enable "giving to tap into the point of high emotional impact (in the cafe after the exhibition, reading a plaque, at the encore etc.)"

In addition, the national system will have a registration platform providing all donors with a record of their donations and, for higher rate UK taxpayers, facilitation to make appropriate Gift Aid reclaims. Basic rate Gift Aid will be reclaimed by the charity behind the National Funding Scheme and be paid over to the recipient institutions. Subject to donor data opt-ins, institutions will be able to purchase donors' details. Additional marketing will be provided both by national communication campaigns and, again subject to opt-in, text messaging to registered users. [DCMS](#) [National Funding Scheme](#)

Funding for 22 Subject Specialist Networks

Arts Council England has announced the 22 Subject Specialist Networks that will share £174,600 funding in 2012/13. The fund has been increased by £24,600 from the amount originally allocated to the 2012/13 fund, in recognition of "the quality, ambition and range of work set out in the applications received." Funding will be invested in networking events such as study days or conferences, the development of digital resources, training, fellowships or mentoring schemes, and travel bursaries. Awards range from £2,500 for the Theatre Information Group to £13,000 for the Army Museums Ogliby Trust. There are 42 subject specialist networks across the UK according to the list on the Arts Council's website. [Arts Council England](#)

Rise in charitable giving

Charity giving in the UK has nearly doubled over the past decade, according to new research by Halifax. Donations in the UK - that have been subject to Gift Aid - have risen by 95% in real terms (i.e. after allowing for inflation) over the past decade from £2.0 billion in 2000/01 to £3.8 billion in 2010/11.

Charity donations grew strongly over the first half of the decade, rising by 60% (£1.2 billion) between 2000/01 and 2005/06. Since then growth has slowed significantly, rising by 21% between 2005/06 and 2010/11. Over the past year, charity donations have increased by 2.1%, less than a third of the average annual rise over the past decade (7.0%).

The research concluded that UK donors gave an average of £223 per year, that retired people were most likely to give to charity and that cash collecting was the most popular method of donating money.

Cabinet Office confirms spending controls are permanent

The Cabinet Office has confirmed that spending controls, introduced as temporary measures in 2010, will remain permanently. These controls are applicable to government departments and arms length bodies, and cover areas including advertising, marketing and communications, ICT & digital, property, and HR & workforce (including the external recruitment control, consultancy, redundancy & compensation, and civil service learning). The Cabinet Office has also announced the appointment of Bill Crothers as Chief Procurement Officer. [Cabinet Office](#)

MUSEUM POLICY

Museums 2020 – creating a bold vision for UK museums

The Museums Association (MA) has launched its Museums 2020 consultation on 25 July asking the museum sector to come together to help create a bold vision for UK museums and their impact. The MA has published a discussion paper that draws on existing ideas, research and evidence to set out the key trends in museums and think about where museums might be heading – and what they need to get there. There is also a short summary paper. The overall suggestion is that "every museum can do more to have a beneficial impact on individuals, communities, society and the environment." The consultation runs until 31 October 2012. Museums 2020 workshops will be held throughout the UK in September and October 2012. [Museums Association](#)

Kids in Museums - Takeover day 2012

Kids in Museums is encouraging museums to register their interest for this year's Takeover Day on Friday 23 November. Takeover Day is an annual day when museums, galleries and archives invite young people in and give them a meaningful role. As well as raising the profile of museums, the event aims to help organisations understand their young visitors better and to build and strengthen relationships.

Kids in Museums can support participating organisations by offering downloadable resources and case studies, regular communications in the lead up, 'We're Taking Over' packs for young people and for staff to help plan events. A report on the 2011 event, describing what museums got up to last year and the benefits to museums taking part, is also available on the Kids in Museums website. [Kids in Museums](#)

Engaging the Artist's Voice: Museums, galleries and artists working in collaboration.

The British Museum, in partnership with Arts Council England, hosted a major conference for the arts and museums sectors on 29 June. The programme, developed in consultation with Turning Point South East Network included presentations, case studies and discussion on: Audiences and Artists: explorations into successful partnerships; the dialogue between objects and art and working with the artist's creative voice. Presentations from the event will be available on the Arts Council's website shortly. Meanwhile, a summary of Twitter conversation about the event can be found on the Arts Council's [Storify profile](#). [Arts Council](#)

Mobile Culture 2 presentations available online

The second Mobile Culture conference took place at Central Saint Martins in London on 17 July. Tate, Museum of London and Science Museum were among those sharing ideas for innovative use mobile technology as well as industry experts from Google, YouTube, The Guardian, Samsung, TripAdvisor, Foursquare, O2, Vodafone, Eventbrite.com. Speaker's presentations from the event can be found [here](#) [Mobile Culture 2](#)

Museums Showoff is back

Museums Showoff - where people who work in or love museums get to show us why in 9 minutes and in any way they like - will return in the Autumn. Already this year audiences of museophiles have enjoyed talks, comedy sets, videos, sketches, music, history lessons, handling collections and all sorts of exciting things. There are two more London dates – 27 September and 15 November - in the Wilmington Arms pub (in EC1) and one in Brighton on 20 September. For details and information on how to sign up to do a set, go to bit.ly/QgipRo [Museum Showoff](#)

London Beyond Sight

VocalEyes, who provide access to the performing arts, museums, galleries and heritage sites to blind and partially-sighted people, has asked eminent Londoners to audio-describe their favourite London landmark. The project coincides with the London Olympics and Paralympics and people can download the audio descriptions. One of the eminent Londoners is Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, who describes St Paul's Cathedral. [London Beyond Sight](#)

CULTURAL PROPERTY

Minister refuses temporary export licence for Joshua Reynolds' Omai

Sir Joshua Reynolds' painting of Omai will remain in the UK, following Culture Minister Ed Vaizey's refusal to grant a temporary export licence. The painting has been on display at the National Gallery of Ireland for more than five years and has only just returned to the UK. Mr Vaizey is acting on the advice of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (RCEWA), who recommended that permission be refused as the artwork has been identified as a national treasure and has already been out of the country on a temporary licence for a long period.

The painting was refused a permanent export licence in 2003. Tate had offered to buy the painting having secured an anonymous private donation to meet the "fair matching price" of £12.5m recommended by the RCEWA. This offer was refused and the owner subsequently applied for temporary export licence for 6 and a half years.

In June, the Government announced plans to changes to the Export Licence scheme that would see temporary export licences for national treasures only being granted for a maximum of three years, with no extension. This follows concerns about the use of temporary licences to undermine the export control system. [DCMS](#)

Personal effects of Scott of the Antarctic acquired for nation in lieu of tax

A unique collection of objects associated with the polar explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott RN has been acquired for the nation through the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme. The collection includes medals, papers and sketches, a sculptor's model and the only known oil portrait. Acceptance in Lieu allows taxpayers to pay their inheritance tax by offering objects of outstanding importance to the nation. Tax of £378,700 has been settled by the acceptance of this offer. All the medals have been temporarily allocated to the British Museum. Both the oil portrait and maquette have been temporarily allocated to the National Portrait Gallery. These papers and sketches have been temporarily allocated to the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. [Arts Council](#)

Also

English Heritage has provided a grant of £276,000 for an 18-month research project on the Staffordshire Hoard. The Mercian Trail partnership, comprising Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Birmingham Museums, Lichfield District Council, Staffordshire County Council and Tamworth Borough Council, has also contributed £68,000 to the research programme. [English Heritage](#)

AWARDS

Marsh Awards for Excellence in Gallery Education 2012

Nominations have opened for the Marsh Awards for Excellent in Gallery Education, now in their second year. Engage and the Marsh Christian Trust are seeking nominations of individuals who have exceeded the expectations of their role, by showing dedication or innovation in their work. Nominees should be working in learning in or for a visual arts organisation or gallery of any size or scale, anywhere in the UK and can freelance, salaried or volunteers at any stage of their career.

Four awards of £500 each will be offered to the winning individuals, to be spent on their Continuing Professional Development. Nominations should be made by a colleague or a representative from an organisation who has worked with the nominee. The deadline for nominations is 10am on Friday 31 August 2012. [Engage](#)

Nominations now open for The Prince of Wales Medal for Arts Philanthropy 2012

The Prince of Wales Medal for Arts Philanthropy is awarded in recognition of a sustained contribution to our nation's cultural life over a period of time, or in recognition of a major gift. The Medal is awarded to five individuals or couples each year. Arts organisations can nominate up to three living individuals or couples for the Medal. If not selected, the individuals or couples may be nominated in subsequent years. Recipients can be UK or foreign nationals, and may support cultural activities in the United Kingdom or UK artists or organisations presenting overseas. The final recipients will be selected by a group of distinguished artists, following a short listing process undertaken by a panel of chief executives in The Prince of Wales's Arts Advisory Group. [Arts and Business](#)

CULTURAL SECTOR NEWS

£2m plans to end to boring boundary signs and boost Olympic tourism legacy

On 16 July, Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt announced plans for a £2m pilot scheme to create new county boundary signs that are intended to showcase the region's best features. The plans are part of the Government's on-going strategy to boost the country's tourism industry on the back of the 2012 Games. The scheme, funded by DCMS and the Department for Transport, will be piloted in Cornwall, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon, Norfolk and North Yorkshire. The new signs, which could include photographs are intended to "give a fresher and more welcoming feel to England's regions."

The Government also wants to improve traditional tourist brown signs – to ensure that "the process for allocating them is more consistent and transparent, focuses on genuine tourist attractions rather than on local services, and supports the growth agenda." A review of the existing guidelines is currently being undertaken. [DCMS](#)

Visitor Attractions Conference 2012

The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) will be holding the Visitor Attractions Conference on October 11th at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London. Bookings can be made online. [Visitor Attractions Conference](#)

The Audience Agency opens

The Audience Agency, the new single national audience development agency, has opened. The Audience Agency has replaced All About Audiences and Audiences London Plus. It will have an offices in London and Manchester, and be supported by a network of Regional Directors and associates. The Agency will begin by consulting across the cultural sector, including through a series of roadshows in all English regions between September and November 2012. [The Audience Agency](#)

Rhannu: Knowledge Sharing amongst Welsh Museums

The Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales is launching a series of online resources for museums over the next couple of months. The first section supports *Rhannu: Knowledge Sharing amongst Welsh Museums*, recently launched by the federation. It includes a list of people across the museum sector in Wales who are prepared to use their experience to support colleagues. This information is arranged under strategy headings. It also includes links to useful resources within and beyond Wales. [Rhannu](#)

London Museums Group blogs

In LMG's July blogs, Georgia Vossou, the Conservator at Westminster Archives shares a story of a project that had limited funds but was organised with passion and commitment, and following Tony Butler's blog last month, Katharine Ford of GK Partners writes about how museums run successful business models that provide social capital as well as profit. [LMG blogs](#)

Digital Copyright Exchange Feasibility Study published

The IPO has published the Richard Hooper's Digital Copyright Exchange Feasibility Study, *Copyright Works: streamlining copyright for the digital age*. The report highlights good work already underway to address some of the complexities of copyright and makes a series of recommendations, the main one being the creation of a Copyright Hub. A Copyright Hub would provide information and copyright education, registries of rights, a marketplace for rights (as a licensing solution) and resolving problems with orphan works and mass digitisation. The report includes Tom Morgan (NPG) and Vanessa Minet's (BM) Digital Content Exchange for Museums proposal. [Copyright Works](#)

World Cities Culture Report

A new report commissioned by the Mayor of London examines the cultural offer of 12 cities around the world – Berlin, Istanbul, Johannesburg, London, Mumbai, New York, Paris, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney and Tokyo – and concludes that world cities are as important in culture as they are in finance or trade. The report uses 60 measures of cultural activity to give an insight into each city's cultural strengths, and finds that London's position is strong in almost every category, with a great stock of cultural infrastructure and high participation and attendance rates. The next report is planned for publication in 2015 with a larger number of cities and a programme of related events. [World Cities Culture Report 2012](#)

APPOINTMENTS

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP has appointed **Bruce Minto** as the new **Chair of National Museums Scotland**. Mr Minto is a corporate lawyer and co-founded the leading corporate law firm Dickson Minto. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of National Museums Scotland since October 2010 and has also served as a member of its Charitable Trust Board. He led the fundraising campaign for the £46m refurbishment of the National Museum of Scotland. Mr Minto replaces outgoing Chair Sir Angus Grossart. [Scottish Government](#)

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt has appointed **Aideen McGinley** former Permanent Secretary of the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure in Northern Ireland has been appointed to the BBC Trust, the governing body of the BBC. He has also appointed **Sonita Alleyne**, previously non-Executive Board member for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to the Trust. [DCMS](#)

Sir Mark Walport has been appointed as the Government's new **Chief Scientific Adviser**. He is currently Director of the Wellcome Trust and was previously Professor of Medicine and Head of the Division of Medicine at Imperial College London. He will take up post on 1 April 2013 once the Government's current Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir John Beddington, completes his term of appointment. [Cabinet Office](#)

Jo Quinton-Tulloch has been appointed **Head of Museum at the National Media Museum**. She is currently Head of Exhibitions and Programmes at the Science Museum and will be fully in her new post by the end of September.

The British Museum is inviting applications for two Trustee positions. The Museum is seeking candidates with a senior level international legal background and/or ability to raise funds or provide access to potential financial supporters in the UK or overseas. [British Museum](#)

The National Trust is seeking members for its London & South East Advisory Board and Midlands Regional Advisory Board. They are seeking people with knowledge, experience and contacts in one or more areas of policy/practice/operations relevant to the Trust's strategy; a good understanding of the geography the region, its natural, cultural and social assets; and sufficient time to make a constructive contribution. The appointments are for three years and members may be reappointed twice. [National Trust Governance](#)

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Planning Permission granted for V&A's Exhibition Road Project

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has granted planning permission for the V&A's £41m Exhibition Road project. The V&A has also announced that £25m has now been pledged for the project. The design by architects AL_A will transform a previously inaccessible back-of-house space into an open courtyard for installations, events and a café, create a new purpose-built underground gallery for exhibitions and a new entrance from Exhibition Road. It will also mean the current exhibition galleries can be restored to display more of the permanent collections. Building work is planned to start in 2013 and complete by the end of 2015, opening to the public in 2016. [V&A](#)

British Library and Qatar Foundation announce £8.7m partnership.

The British Library and Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) have unveiled a partnership that aims to transform people's understanding of the history of the Middle East, and the region's relationship with Britain and the rest of the world. The £8.7 million project will digitise more than 500,000 pages from the archives of the East India Company and India Office, in addition to 25,000 pages of medieval Arabic manuscripts and make them all freely available online for the first time. The digitisation will take place over the next three years at the British Library, in close cooperation with the new Qatar National Library, and much information will be available in both Arabic and English. The work will also lead to the creation of up to 43 new jobs, as well as involving a team of more than 30 from the Library's existing staff. [British Library](#)

British Museum assists return of stolen artefacts to National Museum of Afghanistan

843 heritage objects have been returned to the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul with the assistance of the British Museum and help from the Ministry of Defence. The objects include items made in three separate seizures by the UK Border Force as they were being smuggled into the UK, as well as another group from other investigations by the Art and Antiques Unit of the Metropolitan Police. These objects were identified as originating in Afghanistan by the British Museum and were stored at the Museum for safekeeping and recording until their return to Kabul. Additional objects were saved by private individuals. In 2009 UK Border Force in conjunction with the British Museum and the International Red Cross returned 1490 seized objects, thus bringing the total number of objects returned to over 2,330. [British Museum](#)

Brazilian President and UK Government sign letter of intent at Science Museum

On 26 July, President Dilma Rousseff of the Federative Republic of Brazil and David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Sciences signed a historic letter of intent at the Science Museum aimed at fostering greater co-operation between the UK and Brazil, particularly in the areas of education, science, technology, trade, investment and the innovation arena. The letter also highlighted Brazil's wish to work closely with the Science Museum in the development of a Brazil Science Museum, as well as on programmes to help train science teachers, museum curators and in museum management, prior to Brazil hosting the Olympics in 2016. [Science Museum](#)

Science Museum i:Trans participation project

The *i:Trans - Constructing Our Selves Through Technology*, a three-month project at the Science Museum has given 17 young transgendered individuals between the ages of 13-25 an opportunity to travel from across England to participate in a series of workshops. Carried out by Gendered Intelligence with the Science Museum Arts Team between January and June 2012, the workshops enabled them to form a group and make and respond to a range of Museum artworks and exhibitions that addressed themes of identity, science and technology. Their completed artwork was shared at a showcase event on 16 June to an audience of approximately 50 people, made up of family, friends and members of the transgendered community. Jay Stewart, Gendered Intelligence facilitator, was invited to speak about the project at the Museum's June Lates event. [i:Trans blog](#)

National Media Museum movie screen transformed by Super Hi-Vision technology

Working in partnership with the BBC and Japanese broadcaster NHK, the National Media Museum is now one of only three places in the UK where visitors can experience the Olympics in Super Hi-Vision. The technology is the next generation of television, providing wide angle views, a picture quality of 16-times higher definition than a standard HDTV and the impression of 3D imagery. Surrounded by a fully immersive sound system, viewers feel as though they are part of the games. [National Media Museum](#)

Visitor numbers to Fort Nelson up 54%

Visitor numbers have jumped by 54 per cent, following the £3.5m redevelopment of the Royal Armouries Museum at Fort Nelson. A total of 20,128 people passed through the doors of the Victorian fort, near Fareham, during April, May and June. This compares with 13,092 at the same time last year. [Royal Armouries](#)

Ulster Museum records busiest month ever

The Ulster Museum is celebrating after achieving its busiest month on record. During June, the museum welcomed almost 74,000 visitors - the highest monthly footfall since refurbishment in 2009. The increase in visitors is attributed to the major exhibitions currently on display: 'Age of the Dinosaur' and 'Ten Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci'. [National Museums Northern Ireland](#)

Tate Modern Tanks open

The Tate Modern Tanks opened on 16th July. They mark Phase I of the Tate Modern Project and are the world's first galleries to be dedicated to live art, performance, film and installation. The opening commission (in the the Maja Hoffmann/Luma Foundation Tank) is by the Korean artist Sung Hwan Kim. *Art in Action* (taking place in the southern Tank) is a rolling programme of projects involving about 40 reknown and emerging artists from around the world. The commission and *Arts in Action* will run until 28th October. [Tate Modern Tanks](#)

This Exquisite Forest

Tate and Google have launched *This Exquisite Forest* - an online collaborative art project which can be accessed via a website and a physical display at Tate Modern. Seven artists represented in Tate's collection have created short animated sequences, and visitors to the website and installation are invited to draw and continue the sequences. [This Exquisite Forest](#)

Tackling Child Poverty conference at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales hosted a one day conference on 17th July to discuss how cultural organisations may help tackle child poverty. Wales has the highest level of children living in poverty in the UK with one in three children being affected and this conference was part of National Museum Wales's strategy for increasing participation in cultural activity by children and families in poverty. Speakers included Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage in the Welsh Assembly, and Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales.

RAF MUSEUM Website

The Royal Air Force Museum has officially launched its new website. New features incorporated into the website include: a rolling podcast series that will be linked directly to various aircraft within the Museum's collection; virtual tours of signature aircraft within the Museum collection; galleries containing behind the scenes glimpses of major openings and unveilings at both museum's sites; plus the ability for online visitors to pin pages of interest, comment directly on the Museum's collection and 'like' their favourite aircraft and artefacts. [RAF Museum](#)

Also

The Science Museum's Writer-in-Residence Mick Jackson has published a short memoir, *My Running Hell*, about his on-going battle to stay relatively fit. The piece was commissioned by the Museum as part of his residency to tie in with the season of sport in London this summer. To celebrate its launch, Mick read excerpts and signed copies of the book at the Museum's July Lates event. A limited number of free copies were also distributed in the Museum on 26 July.

NMDC JOBS

Over 2,400 jobs at leading museums around the UK have been advertised on NMDC's job site www.nationalmuseumjobs.org.uk over the past four years. Current vacancies include:

- Casual Art Handling Technician, Tate
- Astronomy Education Manager, Royal Observatory Greenwich
- Digital Operator, IWM London
- Head of Exhibitions and Programmes, Science Museum
- Senior Shipkeeping Technician, Cutty Sark (Royal Museums Greenwich)
- Compliance, Audit and Review Manager, National Library of Scotland

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

AND FINALLY

If you don't have tickets to the Olympic Stadium but want to find out more about the Olympic Cauldron, you can see Thomas Heatherwick's model and prototype which have just been added to the V&A's exhibition, *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary*. It's not the V&A's first association with the flame - their Deputy Director, Beth McKillop, was selected to carry the Olympic Torch through Croydon. [More](#)

This newsletter can also be read online at <http://nmdcgit.nmdc.webfactional.com/news/newsletters/>