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Reaching the regions

Arts Council responds to 'rebalancing our cultural capital'

The Arts Council has responded to the report 'Rebalancing our Cultural Capital' which argued that London gets too large a share of the available cultural funding. Chief Executive Alan Davey said that looking at per capita arts spend alone was misleading as 'London is not just for Londoners' but a national showcase. However, he acknowledged: *"There is more to do. We are about to go into an investment process for the next three years where we will target our money intelligently across England. We are already using specific lottery schemes that nurture art and culture where there is not enough, and reach more of the public through touring and digital distribution. It is also vital Local Authorities continue to invest alongside us as partners. Local Authority cuts remain the biggest threat to places outside London."*

In a more detailed five page response, the Arts Council added: *"It can be misleading to look at London's benefit per capita. Figures on Arts Council funding relate to where the organisation is administered from, not where its 'impact' is – so funding per-head for organisations and companies that are based in London but which tour or have a regional presence will not give an accurate representation."*

Meanwhile Peter Bazalgette has continued to emphasise the benefits of digital to pipe live arts events from London to regional cinemas. [Arts Council](#) (press release), [Arts Council](#) (pdf detailed response), [Evening Standard](#)

Arts Council Northern Ireland 'reaching most deprived regions'

ACNI has published its annual review, particularly highlighting its success in reaching more deprived regions with funding. Stand out statistics include:

- 79% of Arts Council investment went to the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland.
- 82% of adults and 90% of young people in Northern Ireland attended the arts.
- 25% of disabled people participated in the arts.
- The first Happy Days Enniskillen International Beckett Festival generated an estimated £2.5 million for Enniskillen, with 70% of visitors coming from outside Northern Ireland.
- 16,000 older people participated in arts activities through the Arts Council's Arts & Older People Programme [Arts Council Northern Ireland](#).

'England needs an arts plan' says Collections Trust CEO

Collections Trust CEO Nick Poole blogs that England should join Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in creating a national arts plan. He writes:

"The last time our industry managed to arrange itself behind a single, powerful proposition, that proposition became Renaissance in the Regions and triggered millions of pounds of new investment.

Aspirationally, a National Museum Strategy focuses us as a community not on what we have lost but on what we can build. It is our opportunity to state what we think we can achieve and why anyone should care... Neither Ed Vaizey, nor Maria Miller, nor Helen Goodman, nor Nick Clegg are able to reverse Government policy on Local Authority expenditure. They do not have the heft to make Treasury implement favourable taxation to support a culture of philanthropy. We cannot stop the process our industry is going through, but we can make decisions about its outcome." [Collections Trust](#)

Calls to 'move British Museum out of London'

A new report from the thinktank Civitas argues that drastic action is needed to alter the domination of the overheated South East in the UK economy. The publication is written by Patrick Diamond, a former Downing Street advisor to Tony Blair, says that too many people in Westminster are shoring up an old model of 'business as usual'.

He points out that moving some of the BBC's services to Salford have created a huge boost in the area. Suggestions for future development include moving the House of Lords and the British Museum to northern cities. [Civitas](#), [Arts Industry](#) (subscription view only)

'That end of the line sense of freedom' – Hull wins City of Culture 2017

Hull has been announced as 2017 City of Culture, defeating bids from Leicester, Swansea Bay and Dundee. Their bid, drawing on Philip Larkin and Tom Courtney for support, painted a picture of a city that is often overlooked, but which inhabitants are reluctant to leave. Planned events include:

- An opening ceremony with four 'rivers' of light, people and sound flowing into the city with 3,000 volunteers, elephants, lost trawlermen, and dancing white phone boxes.
- Artist-designed gateways and pictorial meadows with thousands of trees planted to form sustainable gateways to the city.
- A stadium event with spectacular lighting design and 500 dancers.

The win has apparently generated widespread enthusiasm in the city, with Hull football supporters singing 'You're only here for the culture' at away teams. It is hoped that the events will bring £60m of tourism to the city.

Meanwhile Leicester City Council says that it intends to hold the cultural festival outlined in its bid anyway, beginning in June 2014 and running until the end of 2015. [Arts Industry](#), [Arts Industry](#) (both subscription only), [Hull City Council](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#), [DCMS](#)

Touring seems likely for Burrell collection

MSPs have endorsed a Private Member's bill which would allow the Burrell Collection in Glasgow to tour for the first time. A final Act could be passed as early as next year to override the terms of the bequest, and allow the collection to be seen beyond Glasgow. Currently the collection receives around 30 requests a year for loans, which it is obliged to refuse. Visitors to the Collection have declined over the last thirty years, but it is hoped that a £45m makeover for the building and touring artworks during the closure will reawaken public interest. Councillor Archie Graham said "We have an agreement in place which fully addresses the concerns Sir William had about sending objects abroad whilst recognising that the shipping and conservation of such precious items has developed significantly in the 60 years since Sir William made his bequest to Glasgow." [BBC](#), [Museums Association](#)

New developments

New museum space for Gwynedd

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has given £1.4m to reopen the oldest bishop's palace in Wales as a museum. The building will now house Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery in a new form, with many previously unseen collections from across the city on display. Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF Wales, said: "Some elements of Bangor's long history are proudly visible to people who visit and live in the city, but other aspects, such as the excellent collections currently held by Bangor University and the Bishop's Palace itself have not been seen for a long time." They hope the new building will revitalise history participation across the county. [HLF](#), [BBC](#)

‘Goodbye concrete bunker’ – new Stonehenge visitor centre opens

The much-anticipated new presentation of Stonehenge is opening on 18th December. Visitors will now be able to enjoy a ‘360 degree immersive experience’ allowing them to stand among the stones at the new visitor centre, before walking or taking a shuttle bus which travels 2km to see the real thing. Meanwhile work is ongoing to remove the section of the A344 running closest to Stonehenge, as well as the old car park, returning the monument to a more natural landscape. [Museums + Heritage](#), [English Heritage](#)

Royal Academy to expand into Museum of Mankind building

The Royal Academy has been granted £12.7m by the HLF to extend into the old Museum of Mankind building to the rear of its premises. The uses of the new building will include a strong Learning focus. Beth Schneider, Head of Learning blogs *“with HLF funds, we will be able to exhibit more of the Collections onsite and online, provide glimpses of art being created in the RA Schools and delve into the role of art and artists in Britain today.”* There will also be new jobs, heritage traineeships and a 300 seat auditorium on a site covering 2 acres. [Royal Academy](#), [Heritage Lottery Fund](#)

Also: Sadlers Wells have announced that they want to create a new 500 seat arts venue in London to house more ‘edgy’ work. They are currently searching for a site and could be open by 2018. Praising Director Alistair Spalding’s transformation of Sadlers Wells’ fortunes over the last ten years, Taitmail comments *“In any other orbit, to talk as he does about ambitions for a new venue would look like pie in the sky. Coming from him, it’s a cake he knows he will be able to have and eat”*. [BBC](#), [Taitmail](#)

Geffrye Museum reaches agreement with local residents over Marquis pub

The Geffrye Museum has revised plans to knock down a Victorian pub as part of its expansion plans after listening ‘carefully to public opinion’. The museum’s initial designs were refused planning permission in May, and it now intends to find a new architect who will include the pub in the fabric of the new building. It also plans to create an entrance opposite Hoxton station, new spaces for the museum’s collections and a library, gallery, restaurant, conference facilities and a proposed garden gallery. [Hackney Gazette](#), [Geffrye Museum](#)

Correction

Last month we reported that HLF had awarded £499k to the V&A’s new Exhibition Road Project. In fact the sum was £4,999,000. We also referred to the scheme as ‘Albertopolis’ – this is actually the name given to the institutions founded by Prince Albert in the Kensington area. [HLF](#)

Simply in the red: ‘Money’s too tight to mention’

Arts Lottery funds down by £18m

Lottery funds for the arts have fallen by £18m in the first half of the 2013/14 financial year. This may be partly due to the loss of a ‘spike’ around special draws during the Olympics, but is also the result of a long term decline in people playing the Lotto game. It’s uncertain whether a rebranding of Lotto in October, which saw the price of tickets double, will help the revenue stream recover, or whether it will decline further. [Arts Professional](#)

Chris Smith says individual giving the key to a healthy arts sector

Writing for the Guardian, former culture secretary Lord Smith reflected on the last 15 years of arts funding. He said that while the patchwork of government funding and private philanthropy had worked to deliver a ‘golden age’ of arts, many of these sources of income are in long term recession. He argued that the best hope for a sustainable sector is a new focus on large pools of small donors, who can be reached for the first time through technology like DONATE. [Guardian](#)

Local government to retreat from arts and culture, says Joseph Rowntree

A bleak report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that the extent of local government cuts means that by 2015, some councils will be withdrawing from all but services to the most vulnerable, such as children and the elderly.

Local authorities will have on average lost 30% of their spending power between 2008 and 2015 in England, and by 24% in Scotland. The cuts have struck the most deeply in the poorest authorities, who are around £100 per head worse off. One in ten of England's 353 authorities is in danger of going bust. The report points out that the poor will be hardest hit by cuts to cultural services: *"It needs to be constantly borne in mind that public services play a much more important role in the lives of people on low incomes compared to those living in more affluent circumstances. Poor people cannot replace a visit to the library or free museum with a visit to the bookshop or theatre."* [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), [Guardian](#)

New ways of approaching local government

As exceptional pressure on the budgets of local authorities grows, there have been moves from the Local Government Association and Nesta to look at new models that will decentralise services and find creative solutions to funding emergencies. Neither of their reports deal in much detail with museums, arts or heritage, but their approach may have a strong future influence on how the cultural sector is funded. One key proposal from the LGA is to give local people a meaningful vote on local tax and spending issues, and to share money more fairly across the UK according to need. One local Councillor Nick Paget-Brown argues that without a more decentralised, innovative culture, local councils will meet the same fate as the East German Trabant car: impressive in 1957, an ailing throwback by the early 1990s. [LGA](#), [Nick Paget-Brown's blog](#)

Victory on the Clapham Omnibus: volunteers 'crowdsource' new arts centre

In 2006, Clapham Library closed after 125 years and it was announced that the building would be put up for sale (and probably be turned into flats). An enormous community volunteering project has prevented that, and the building has now reopened as the Omnibus Arts Centre. The organiser says: *"The doors of the building were open from day one so that curious passers-by could have a tour and find out our plans. Word was spread through local media, community groups and colleges, and local businesses were approached for help, advice and resources – never underestimated how many people will say yes if you ask nicely."*

Assistance came from over 150 people, from parents whose children had used the library to students at Lambeth College who provided plastering and decorating skills. [Guardian](#)

National Gallery on leveraging value in collections

Judith Mather, Director of Buying at the National Gallery, has written a short piece exploring how to leverage the most commercial value from the gallery's collections. She talks about how branding high end food and drink as well as offering exclusive services like Print on Demand can work for a large venue. [Museums + Heritage](#)

Times hard, but sector not in crisis says Arts Council Chairman

In a speech to the Museums Association Conference, Peter Bazalgette explored the idea that the museum sector is in crisis. He said "Is there a crisis financially? We can't pretend that things aren't hard. Arts Council Grant-in-Aid from central government is down a third over four years, and local authority funding for the arts is also down, with cuts to arts and culture budgets predicted to be around 7% next year." However, he argued that the Museums Association's *Museums Change Lives* report "doesn't paint a picture of a sector fading away in dusty poverty – it gives us a vision of sector that is reinvigorating itself, though different sorts of partnerships – in funding, in skills, in thinking." [Arts Council England](#)

War salvage

DCMS to list hundreds of war memorials

Culture Secretary Maria Miller has announced that English Heritage will list up to 500 war memorials over the next five years. Liverpool Cenotaph has also just received Grade I listing – joining only two others currently with Grade I listing in the country.

Maria Miller said: "This centenary comes at a point where living memory becomes written history, so it is absolutely essential that our work to mark it speaks clearly to young people in particular." The huge number of war memorials in the UK have never been counted, but it is estimated that the 1,300 listed on the National Heritage list for England represent less than 10% of the total.

Meanwhile the Scottish government has also made £1m provision for the restoration of war memorials with the Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund. [DCMS](#), [Scottish Government](#)

‘Wales Remembers’ launched

First Minister Carwyn Jones has launched a Framework programme for Wales’ commemoration of the First World War and has made £850k available to support an educational programme around the conflict. Community activities, a website ‘Wales Remembers’ and work to explain to children the causes and consequences of the war will be central to the work. [Wales.gov.uk](#), [BBC](#) (programme detail by museum)

National Museums Scotland seeks tour partners

National Museums Scotland has created a touring exhibition *Next of Kin* which looks at the impact of loss and absence on families and communities. They are seeking partners who would like to display the exhibition in 2015–17. The exhibition is free, and £750 is also offered as seed money for events, marketing and communications and website material. Partners have to provide a three month slot, an exhibition area, surround events and evaluation. [Museums Galleries Scotland](#)

Also: DCMS have created a ‘street gallery’ touring exhibition. *Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace* will travel the country until 2018. [DCMS](#)

Resources – and programming to prevent ‘metal fatigue’

A New Direction have produced a comprehensive essay on the organisations funding First World War commemorations, alongside advice about how to approach the work and build long lasting partnerships.

Speakers at this year’s Museums Association conference emphasised the importance of programming which extended beyond battlefields to prevent visiting publics getting ‘metal fatigue’ over the four years of commemorations. Among the HLF’s first grants is £95k to the Peace Pledge Union who will be telling the story of 16,000 conscientious objectors to the conflict. [Museums Association](#), [A New Direction](#), [HLF](#)

Digital

Digital culture in museums – reach, but not revenue

A new report has been published by Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) describing the effects of digital innovation on arts and cultural venues. They interviewed 891 bodies. One participant, Tate Modern, commented ‘Digital activity is forcing us to rethink out creative practice. For over a hundred years our activity has been grounded in displays in buildings. The affordances of digital means we are rethinking this.’

Findings include:

- Almost 75% of organisations see digital as essential to marketing.
- 60% see it as essential for preserving and archiving.
- 47% are creating works specifically for digital spaces.
- Museums are far less likely than other cultural groups to report positive impacts from digital. 37% say it helps them reach a bigger audience, compared with 51% of other groups. 29% say it helps reaching an existing audience, compared with 47% of other groups.
- 31% of performing arts venues report a major positive impact on revenues, compared with just 3% of museums.
- Five types of digital work have been adopted by significantly more organisations in the past 12 months. These are: standalone digital works of art, simulcast streaming, using cloud computing to host data or content, accepting online donations and digital experiences designed to be used alongside exhibitions.

The report also focuses on the habits of the ‘cultural digirati’ who are 3.2 times more likely to see financial rewards from their digital engagement. [Arts Professional](#), [Native](#), [Arts Industry](#), [ACE](#)

From app to 'augmented reality'...

The Museums Journal reports this month that the rush for museums to create smartphone apps has slowed down, with the realisation that simple replacements for audio guides or closely copying apps from other sectors may not be what museum visitors want.

The University of Surrey's new development, created alongside several museums and art galleries, offers one possible future for apps more closely tailored to museums. It allows users to point smart pads and phones at artefacts and paintings and have them instantly recognised by the technology, which will then offer everything from a simple 'museum label' to detail and video about the artist – and the capacity for users to 'take the museum home with them' by storing the stories and pictures they like best. The Watts Gallery, Lightbox, Historic Royal Palaces and Surrey History Centre are among those involved. [Youtube](#), [Museums + Heritage](#)

Whatever floats your boat...

A children's educational game created for the ss Great Britain as part of their Arts Council funded Museums and Schools project with the Science Museum has been shortlisted for two prizes at TIGA's Games Industry Awards. The game, with graphics from Aardman Animations, shows a frequently grumpy and demanding Isambard Kingdom Brunel giving advice as you attempt a series of practical challenges, like boat building. [Arts Council](#), [Play Full Steam Ahead](#)

All archaeology, one app

Wales has become the first country in the world to put all its archaeology onto a single app. 'Archwillio' allows smartphone users anywhere in the country to discover the vanished history beneath their feet from Roman buildings to Iron Age forts. It draws from thousands of archaeological records and took a year to create. It is already attracting interest from UK counties keen to add it to their tourism offer. [BBC](#)

Measuring the sector

'Tourism the 'bedrock of the British economy'

A new report *Tourism: jobs and growth* commissioned by VisitBritain describes how tourism has become crucial to the UK's economic health. Christopher Rodrigues, VisitBritain Chairman said "Tourism has become a bedrock of the UK economy – generating a third of the UK's net new jobs between 2010 and 2012 - and still has the ability to grow at levels that will lead other industries out of the economic slowdown." He suggested that by 2025 tourism could have grown by a further 56% in real terms. Tourism was worth £127bn in 2013, equivalent to 9% of GDP. The industry supports 3 million jobs, 9.6% of the total. [DCMS](#), [VisitBritain](#)

Two English Heritage reports focus on skills shortage for heritage

English Heritage's annual report *Heritage Counts* which measures the heritage sector this year focuses on skills needs and the risk of knowledge loss. Chairman Sir Laurie Magnus writes: "[There has been] an alarming decline in heritage and building conservation skills, which are essential if the heritage sector is to remain one of the engines of growth for the English economy. *Heritage Counts* research shows that 60% of the cultural heritage organisations have no training budget and 42% expect skills to be lost and not replaced due to retirement (with over half of those expecting this to occur within the next five years)."

The findings also include:

- Staffing for conservation officers has fallen by 33% in local authorities since 2006 and 18% for archaeological officers.
- The main skill set that was felt to be missing across the cultural heritage sector is IT and digital (37%) skills, including social media, web optimisation, website management and website design.
- However there are also likely to be increasing skills gaps in the field of traditional building, where the workforce are significantly older than in the rest of the construction industry. There has been a 72% drop in the recruitment of apprentices since 2006.
- The HLF/English Heritage *Skills for the Future* scheme ran from 2009 – 13 to improve skills and some of the funded projects are still running.

In response to the problem, English Heritage has launched Heritage Practice, a new programme from January 2014 bringing together 22 courses offering 400 specialist training places with Oxford University Department for continuing education. English Heritage will also make over 300 new training places available free to Local Authority staff as part of its Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) programme of short courses.

English Heritage have also produced a second and even more detailed report in partnership with Creative and Cultural Skills and drawing from information from over 1,000 employers – the *Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment Skills Survey*. [Heritage Counts](#) (pdf), [English Heritage](#), [Creative Blueprint](#)

Also: ICON have just announced new funding for 12 internships at locations including Manchester City Gallery and the National Trust. They last between one and two years and begin in either February or April 2014. [ICON](#)

2% increase in DCMS visitor figures

DCMS has posted 2012 visitor figures for museums it directly funds, including the Tate, British Museum, Royal Armouries and Science Museum Group. There were 47 million visits to all 16 museums, with visits from overseas tourists up by 4%. Maria Miller welcomed the figures, saying *“They clearly rebut the doom-mongers who predicted that our hosting of the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2012 would inevitably lead to a slump in visits to non-sporting venues. The truth is, 2012 was a boom year for UK sport and culture.”* [DCMS](#)

Survey: sustainability in the cultural sector in the next decade

Sustainable creativity group Julie’s Bicycle are running a survey until 5pm on 13th December into expected trends in sustainability for cultural organisations over the next decade. They are looking for responses to the ten minute survey from directors and senior managers of cultural organisations.

All participants will be invited to an event in spring 2014 to announce the results and discuss next steps, and will be entered into a prize draw for a case of English champagne. [Survey](#), [Julie’s Bicycle](#)

Education

Scotland publishes National Arts Strategy for young people

Scotland has published its first ever arts strategy for young people aged 0–25, *Time to Shine*. The new plans come with a £5m fund, to be opened in the new year, to help young people take part in and go to see the arts. A new digital platform will be created to showcase and connect youth art projects. A National Youth Advisory Group will also be set up.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Fiona Hyslop said *“It is not only about providing enhanced access opportunities for all of Scotland’s young people but it goes further to support meaningful career pathways for our talent of the future; be it on stage, the screen, behind the scenes or in our world-leading creative industries.”* [Creative Scotland](#)

Also: Scotland also hopes to inspire a new generation with a major visual arts show in 2014, featuring 100 leading visual artists in 60 venues across the country. The £2m show has been planned for over two years and will be called ‘Generation’. [Scotsman](#), [Museums Galleries Scotland](#)

Sky Academy to reach a million under 25s by 2020

Sky TV have launched a new initiative to offer training and build self-belief in the under 25s with a new ‘Sky Academy’. Working with schools and other partners, and drawing on their own strengths in the media they will offer scholarship schemes, work experience, and three Skills Studios to develop interactive curriculum-based skills. There will also be a major arts and creativity project announced in 2014. [Arts and Business](#)

Arts vs 'outstanding' but...

An event organised by A New Direction looked at the new landscape for arts teaching, focusing particularly upon drama. There are still persistent rumours that some 'soft' subjects may no longer be classed as GCSEs with Ofqual's Glenys Stacey saying "we know that there has been some concern in recent days about whether some subjects will continue to be available. We plan to consult in the New Year on principles for allowing subjects to be included as GCSEs."

Participants at AND's event spoke of the 'trade off' between league table scores and continuing to support non-Ebacc subjects. One teacher said "On the one hand we're free to set our own curriculum, on the other we'll get punished in the performance tables. We've decided to take the hit. We could have forced everyone to take geography and history if we wanted. Sometimes you've just got to take the higher moral ground and do what is right. It will bring our inspection grade down; it will bring our league table position down." [A New Direction](#), [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

...new research shows that 'Arts makes you smart'

Studies showing exposure to the arts and good outcomes can usually only show co-incidence rather than cause and effect. But a new US study in a large area that acquired a museum for the first time has been able to point to much firmer evidence. When the \$800m [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](#) opened, many more schools wanted to take up slots for free visits than the museum could immediately cope with. Social scientists therefore ran an experiment, dividing the children by lottery into those who would attend at once, and those who would have to wait some months to visit. After the first phase of the project, all students were tested for critical thinking skills, social tolerance and historical empathy, and those who had visited the museum outstripped the control group. They were also 18% more likely to make use of a coupon to visit the museum again with their families. [New York Times](#)

Awards and prizes

Call for entries – Museums + Heritage Awards 2014

Museums + Heritage have issued a call for entries for their 2014 awards. The deadline is 7th February 2014. Twelve entry categories include awards for customer service, exhibitions, marketing campaigns, touring exhibitions, sustainability, trading & enterprise, international work, education and restoration and conservation work. [Museums + Heritage](#)

Jodi Award Winner Announced

The winners of the 2013 Jodi Awards, which celebrate the use of technology to make culture more available to disabled people, have been announced. Awards for access planning and user engagement went to the IWM Duxford exhibition *Historic Duxford* and to the Vocaleyes' *London Beyond Sight* project which audiodescribes an eclectic mix of the capital's cultural attractions. Among the commended projects was [Bedding Out](#), in which arts activist Liz Crow challenged the Bedroom Tax and the recent doubling of disability hate crime in an installation piece. [Jodi Awards](#)

Marsh Awards given for excellence in gallery education

Four specialists in gallery education have each won awards of £500 for excellent work. Projects include the National Portrait Gallery Schools programme run by Clare Gittings, which reaches 15,000 children each year, and Spacex Exeter's children's programme, for which Jenny Mellings has delivered over 1000 workshops. [Engage](#)

'Fifty for free' – short breaks in historic properties

The Landmark Trust is offering 50 free holidays, retreats or charity business meeting short breaks in renovated historical properties. They are inviting charities to either apply for the space themselves, or nominate community heroes, carers, struggling families or other deserving groups. The holidays will take place next March and the applications deadline is 4th January 2014. [Landmark Trust](#)

Nominations open for British Archaeological Awards

Nominations have opened for the annual British Archeological Awards which will be presented at the British Museum in mid July. Categories include best overall project, best community engagement project, best innovation and best public presentation of archaeology. The deadline is 28th February 2014. [British Archaeological Awards](#)

Support for Welsh artists and curators embarking on international careers

Wales Arts International (part of Arts Council Wales) is offering grants to Welsh artists launching international careers. These are primarily funds for overseas visits. The fund also supports curators – last year one curator, Sam Perry, undertook a three month placement in Fluxfactory, New York. The fund is open from 2nd December. [Arts Wales](#)

First international winner for Turner Prize

London-based French artist Laure Prouvost has won the Turner Prize with her video installation piece *Wantee*. The film takes the audience on a journey to find Prouvost's fictional grandfather, and is based on her 'obsession' with television, which she was not allowed to watch as a child. The judges said that the piece was "outstanding for its complex and courageous combination of images and objects in a deeply atmospheric environment". [Museums Association](#), [BBC](#), [Guardian](#),

Two prizes for Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

The British Guild of Travel Writers has given the new Mary Rose Museum one of its top prizes in its annual tourism award. Other top winners were among the world's most ambitious cultural projects, Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum and the rebirth of the Tren Crucero railway linking Ecuador's coastal Guayaquil with its World Heritage Site capital Quito. The whole of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard has also won gold in the annual Beautiful South tourism awards. [Historic Dockyard](#) (Mary Rose), [Historic Dockyard](#) (Beautiful South)

£30,000 creative arts bursaries from the Sky Arts Academy

Five bursaries of £30,000 are being offered to artists, creative writers and creative producers aged 18–30. The deadline is 5pm on Friday 6th December. [Ideastap](#)

Appointments

Michael Simpson has been appointed Head of Visual Arts and engagement at the Lowry, following the death of founding artistic director, Robert Robson, in September. He will work alongside a yet-to-be-appointed director of theatre. [Lowry](#)

Ruth Mackenzie has been appointed to oversee the development of *The Space* – the digital arts platform created by the BBC and Arts Council which is now being relaunched. Mackenzie was previously director of the Cultural Olympiad. [The Stage](#)

Tamalie Newbery has become the new Executive Director of the Association of Independent Museums. She was previously a Director of Lightbox for some years, and then a sector consultant. [AIM](#)

The Arts Council is seeking a museum expert to fill a vacancy on their National Council. The time commitment is up to 15 days per year. The post is not remunerated, but expenses will be paid. Deadline for applications is 16th December. [Arts Council](#)

Funding

CyMAL grants now open for applications

CyMAL's Innovations and Development grants for the Welsh museum sector are now open for 2014/15. They welcome applications in the areas of increasing access and equality, caring for collections, community engagement and service enhancement, workforce / organisational / partnership development. There are minor changes to the grant programme, e.g. duration of the grant and new opportunities such as the commemoration of the First World War. [Wales.gov](#)

HLF offers £5m in new round of 'Collecting Cultures' programme

HLF has announced a further £5m for a scheme to allow museums to develop their collections with targeted acquisitions and an emphasis on enhancing knowledge, skills and public engagement.

Fiona Talbott, Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives at HLF, said "HLF's *Collecting Cultures* was a ground-breaking scheme when it was launched in 2007. It enabled applicants for the first time to purchase what they needed to develop collections strategically. Initially designed for museums, *Collecting Cultures* is back and has been extended to include archives and libraries."

The Collections Trust added: "In a time when it is very difficult to secure direct investment in strategic collections development, the new investment in *Collecting Cultures* is a great leap forward. The first phase allowed participating museums not only to acquire works, but to take a hard look at the way they collect and the broader benefits of developing a collection and its associated knowledge. We could not be more delighted at the news."

Grants are from 50k–500k and applications must be received by noon on 2nd May 2014 for decisions in September. [HLF](#), [Collections Trust](#)

Latest Strategic Touring grant recipients announced

Thirteen projects share £1.7m of funding in the latest round of ACE's strategic touring programme. The money is designed to bring work particularly to regions which rely on touring to provide cultural programming. Recipients include Freedom Studio's *Home Sweet Home*, an immersive, participatory intergenerational theatre project, and a collaboration between the ICA and three Midlands venues to create new exhibitions. [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only)

Collections and museums – saves, additions, losses

National Portrait Gallery launches largest ever campaign to retain Van Dyck

Van Dyck's final self portrait was created while working in the court of Charles I, a few months before his death aged only 42. For 400 years it has been in a private collection in the UK, but was sold to a private US collector earlier this year. DCMS has applied an initial export bar of three months to give the National Portrait Gallery and the Art Fund time to raise the £12.5m to retain it in the UK in a public collection. It is the National Portrait Gallery's largest ever fundraising campaign. Director Sandy Nairne says "Van Dyck is the artist who comes to Britain and changes British painting. If you think of Tudor portraits rather stiff and formal, he sweeps that away, and this self-portrait reflects that extraordinary change." [Save Van Dyck](#) (Art Fund/National Portrait Gallery website)

Also: DCMS has also put an export bar on a death mask of Napoleon, to see if £175,000 can be raised by a UK buyer by early next year. The mask is very rare in that it was almost certainly taken by Francis Burton, a British surgeon in attendance at the death of Napoleon, on 7 May 1821. [DCMS](#)

V&A discover hidden Constable oil sketch

Conservators have discovered a new Constable oil sketch as they prepared for the V&A's forthcoming *Constable: The Making of a Master* exhibition. It was concealed beneath a lining canvas on the reverse of *Branch Hill Pond: Hampstead*, and is believed to have been painted around the same period. Constable quite frequently used both sides of canvas for artworks, but not all of these were noticed when the V&A acquired the works in 1888. The new discovery will be among those on display when the exhibition opens in September 2014. [Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#)

Treasure trove finds at all time high

998 finds of treasure were found in the UK in 2012, making this the greatest number of finds since statistics began 5 years ago. 92% of finds were by people using metal detectors. [Gov.uk](#)

Two more local councils consider selling collections

Bradford Council is the latest to consider selling off some of the city's collections in order to fund frontline services. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland says that collections left sitting in storage could instead fund youth services. Local MP George Galloway has condemned the plan as 'cultural vandalism'.

Meanwhile Southampton Council says that it would consider selling off some of their art collection 'as a last resort' to pay to repair the leaky roof of the City Art Gallery. They have previously co-written a letter with Croydon Council, asking Ed Vaizey to relax the rules for disposing of local collections. [Museums Association](#), [Bradford Telegraph & Argus](#)

Police and heritage scientists to the rescue

A new strategy has been launched by the Association of Chief Police Officers to combat organised gangs who steal art. The report says that there is a correlation between crimes committed and relevant anniversaries – so the forthcoming First World War commemorations make thefts of relevant memorabilia more likely. They add that many more thefts are simply opportunistic:

“A clear example of this can be seen in the theft of Henry Moore’s ‘Sundial’ sculpture from the Henry Moore Foundation in Perry Green, Hertfordshire. In July 2012, it is doubtful that thieves realised the shiny garden ornament they were stealing from a house adjacent to a country lane was a nationally significant work of art worth £500,000 when they later sold it to a Cambridgeshire scrap metal dealer for £46.50.”

More than £300m of cultural artefacts are stolen in the UK each year, but such thefts are often a low priority for police. The *Art Newspaper* says that only 1.5% of stolen art is recovered globally. However new technology like GPS and metal marking, and stronger partnerships may reduce the heritage crime rate.

The Heritage Science Forum has invited the police to work alongside heritage scientists to develop new ways to deter thieves [Heritage Science Forum](#), [Association of Chief Police Officers](#), [Art Newspaper](#)

International

Britain signs cultural agreement with China

Culture Secretary Maria Miller has signed an agreement with China for five years of cultural exchanges. Commitments also include artists attending major arts festivals in each country, and the creation of training programmes for Chinese museum managers, curators and conservationists. [Gov.uk](#)

Iraq museums to reopen for the first time in over a decade

Iraq's National Museum in Baghdad is expected to reopen next year, while in Basra a new museum is being created in Saddam Hussein's former palace, with help from the British Museum who are offering staff training and advice. In Baghdad, the greatest challenge is recataloguing collections: so far 50,000 are recorded, a tenth of the total. [The Art Newspaper](#)

Ownership of 'Nazi hoard' art becomes complicated

Cornelius Gurlitt, the 80 year old son of a German wartime art dealer says that the pictures found in his possession belong to him and that he does not intend to donate them to a public museum. A complex picture of potential claims is emerging, and the *Art Newspaper* says that in the case of 'degenerate art' forcibly removed by Nazis from museums, the museums may have no right of restitution. Gurlitt has come to an agreement with one claimant, selling a picture and splitting the proceeds. However paperwork, which Gurlitt's father falsely claimed had been destroyed in an air raid, has been found with the paintings and may offer clues to their history. [Guardian](#), [Art Newspaper](#)

Croydon Riesco achieve half of hoped for price at Hong Kong auction

After long controversy Croydon Council has sold 17 pieces from the Riesco Collection in Hong Kong – but achieved only about half the sum it had hoped to get from them: £6-7m after fees have been paid. Seven remaining lots are unsold, but may find buyers post auction. MA Director Mark Taylor said “Effectively what Croydon is doing is casting itself into cultural wilderness. No donor, no sponsor will want to get involved with them”. Croydon Council have found some backhanded support however from the critic Brian Sewell on the grounds that “Nobody is likely to go and look at them [in Croydon] so they might as well be put to good use.” [Museums Association](#) (auction), [Museums Association](#) (Croydon cultural future), [Croydon Advertiser](#)

Drop in cultural participation in Europe

A new Europe-wide survey shows a drop in cultural participation since 2007. Those who describe themselves as regular culture consumers have dropped from 21% to 18%, while those who never consume culture has risen by 4% to 34%. Nordic countries including Denmark, Finland Sweden and the Netherlands have the highest levels of participation. Lack of money and time, and lack of interest are the main reasons given for not taking part. [Arts Professional](#)

Events

Discover and Explore advisor training

Supported by Kids in Museums, Arts Award are offering training for people over 25 who would like to become advisors for their 'Discover' and 'Explore' arts awards. Participants will learn how to be the primary assessor for young people's work for these prizes. Courses run on a variety of dates in regions across the country. [Arts Award](#)

Federation of Museums Wales conference

The Federation of Museums and Arts Galleries in Wales have announced their 2014 conference, with a theme of 'Innovation in Adversity'. Speakers include the Minister for Culture and Sport John Griffiths. It takes place on March 6th in Cardiff Story museum. No details are currently available online, so please email john@arenig.demon.co.uk for details and an application form.

Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- [Terra Foundation Research Fellow in American Art - Tate](#)
- [Year Course Director: Art and the City, Ancient to Modern - V&A](#)
- [Conservator -Archaeology - Museum of London](#)
- [Curatorial internship -Modernism in St Ives - Tate St Ives](#)
- [Manager, X Ray CT lab - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Participation Project Manager: Art,Science and Exploration - Royal Museums Greenwich](#)

See the full selection of current jobs at NMDC members' organisations [here](#).

And finally...

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has produced an online advent calendar, drawing heavily on its natural history collections. Traditionally jolly, snowy and Christmassy on the outside, all sorts of worms and diseases lurk within, only a few of which they have worked out how to cure. Don't open December 1st unless you really don't like reindeer... [LSHTM Festive calendar](#)

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