

In the this month's edition:

- [Natural History Museum receives largest single donation in its history](#)
- [Thalaba the Destroyer and other literary originals released by the British Library](#)
- [£72m from HLF for two new museums, secret caves, ecclesiastical hot spring heating and a night in a Georgian coaching inn](#)
- [Return of the Mack: outpouring of support following Glasgow Art School fire](#)
- [National Museum Wales embraces government's anti-child-poverty agenda](#)
- [Resources from 'Working Internationally' conference](#)
- [Pay and display: new campaign to pay artists for exhibitions](#)
- [Major works by Frank Auerbach gifted to nation under Acceptance in Lieu scheme](#)
- [Museums sweep the board at Arts & Business 2014 awards](#)
- [Leaked New York Times digital plan 'key document of this media age'](#)

...and much more.

Section headings | [Members' News](#) | [New Secretary of State interview](#) | [Funding](#) | [International](#) | [Cultural saviours: access and reach](#) | [Law](#) | [Awards](#) | [Conferences](#) | [Events to build fundraising capacity](#) | [Appointments](#) | [Education](#) | [Techspectacular](#) | [Communities and councils: work to keep museums open](#) | [Jobs](#) | [And finally...](#)

Members' News

Natural History Museum receives largest single donation in its history

The Natural History Museum has received a donation of £5m from Sir Michael and Lady Hintze, the largest single gift in its history. Sir Michael said *"our gift recognises the Museum's great value as a cultural and scientific institution, enjoyed by millions including ourselves. We feel privileged to be able to make a contribution towards securing this centre of scientific knowledge and research for present and future generations."* The museum has renamed its entrance the Hintze Hall, and the space will be redeveloped over the next five years to better reflect the museum's scientific work and collections. Culture Secretary Sajid Javid said, *"this donation is extraordinary not simply in terms of its scale, but also as a truly magnificent example of philanthropic investment."* [Natural History Museum](#), [BBC](#)

National Museums Scotland secured £4.85m for new galleries

National Museums Scotland has secured £4.85m from the HLF to implement the next stage of the Masterplan at the National Museum of Scotland. This grant now means £10m has been secured for the £14.1m project to develop ten new galleries, including for the National Museum's internationally important collections of Science and Technology, and Art and Design. The project will see a 40% increase in display space for 3500+ objects, including some which have not been on permanent display for generations, and will open in 2016. [BBC](#)

Thalaba the Destroyer and other literary originals released by the British Library

The British Library has digitised 1200 documents covering writers from the Romantics to the Victorians in a new public archive. They include original papers from Jane Austen, William Blake, the Brontës and Charles Dickens. Writing for the Guardian, the British Library's Roger Walshe says, *"we know students respond to the aura and authenticity of the real thing – literary manuscripts especially. Drafts and corrected manuscripts of classic works such as Oliver Twistor Jane Eyre make those texts seem more human, with handwriting itself providing a direct connection to the living author behind the work."* Primary sources also range from the [first appearance of a vampire](#) in English Literature (Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*), [the first Christmas card](#), and an [abolitionist poetry book for children](#). [Guardian](#)

V&A helps develop museum in China

The V&A are close to signing a mutually beneficial contract with a new museum at Shenzhen in China. The V&A will lend Chinese objects for the new museum's first exhibitions while it builds its own collection. There will also be a V&A gallery of contemporary design, featuring objects from London. V&A Director Martin Roth said, "*Shenzhen is one of the fastest growing cities in the world and its creative industries are central to this development. It is incredibly exciting for the V&A to foster a partnership with the China Merchants Group to develop a contemporary design museum in China that celebrates and reflects the country's creativity.*" [Museums Journal](#)

IWM launches huge collaborative Lives of the FWW project

The Imperial War Museum has launched a huge online collaborative project to explore the lives of more than eight million people who lived through the FWW. The public are offered often sketchy records of individual lives, and are invited to carry out further research using other online datasets and their own family histories. Presenter Dan Snow, who is an ambassador for the project said, "*we need to make it happen by uploading information about our First World War ancestors, piecing together their stories, remembering them and saving this knowledge for future generations.*" [IWM](#)

Find from Petrie's dig turns up in Cornish garage

An Egyptian pot dating from 3400BC, which was excavated by Flinders Petrie has been discovered in a Cornish garage. The owners contacted the Petrie Museum after watching a TV documentary on the archaeologist and being reminded of the 15cm high black topped pot in their garage. Curator Alice Stevenson was able to match the number 1754, visible on the base of the pot and the label, to grave records from Petrie's excavations in Naqada during the 1890s, now held in the museum's archives.

The pot was inherited from the grandfather of one of the finders, a taxi driver who claimed to have been given it in lieu of a fare in High Wycombe in the 1950s. Finds from Petrie's digs were spread very widely, and some fell into private hands. Now the pot is on display at the Petrie Museum until 14th June as part of its Festival of Pots. [Guardian](#), [Art Daily](#)

HMS M.33 handed over to National Museums of the Royal Navy

Hampshire County Council has signed the Deed of Gift enabling the handover of HMS M.33 to the National Museums of the Royal Navy. The County Council saved the ship, which served in the First World War Dardanelles Campaign between 1915 and 1918, for preservation in 1990 and it presently sits in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Having successfully bid for £1.79m from HLF towards her preservation, it is hoped members of the public will have access aboard HMS M.33 for the first time by 2015 to mark the centenary of the Gallipoli Campaign, at which she was a support vessel. [NMRN](#)

New Secretary of State interview

Sajid Javid interview in *Total Politics*

The new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Sajid Javid, has given his first interview since taking the post to *Total Politics*. In a wide-ranging interview, Javid recognises the importance of public funding for the arts and museums, and that the culture sector and creative industries are "*hugely important for the activity it provides in our economy*" but "*that it goes beyond pounds and pence. You have the intrinsic value of the arts, the social value. It's hard to, you don't want to, put a number on that. You don't need to necessarily*". The interview also covers the Centenary of the First World War, the BBC Charter and a prediction that England "*will do really well*" at the World Cup. [Total Politics](#)

Funding

£72m from HLF for two new museums, secret caves, ecclesiastical hot spring heating and a night in a Georgian coaching inn

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced £72m of major grants to six major sites in England. All are dependent on the outcomes of work from initial development grants. The work includes:

- A new visitor centre and four stonemasonry apprentices for Canterbury Cathedral
- Major work at Nottingham Castle, including opening the caves beneath and redevelopment of the museum and art gallery. The work is part of a wider plan to help the city attract more tourists.
- Bath Abbey, which hit the headlines last year when thousands of shrinking bodies made the floor sink, will get help to strengthen the building. There is also an ingenious plan to heat the Abbey using water from Bath's famous hot springs.
- A new £13m Blackpool Museum will be created in the Pavillion Theatre of the Winter Gardens.
- £12.8m has been earmarked by HLF for the first steps towards a Plymouth History Centre which will tell the story of the city, encompassing figures like Sir Francis Drake and first female MP Nancy Astor.
- Beamish has earmarked funding of £10.7m towards further evolving the site over several years. The changes will include covering time periods in living memory, creating training opportunities, and building a Georgian coaching inn where people will be able to use as a hotel overnight. They will also be creating a pioneering, dedicated activities space for people with living with dementia – 'Homes for Memory' - the first of its kind in a museum within the UK.

Richard Evans, Director of Beamish said, *"We are absolutely jumping for joy at this incredible news – here at Beamish – and to be honest we are all a bit stunned and can hardly believe it! The team here have worked so hard for the past four years developing this Remaking Beamish project – and I am so proud of what they have achieved together."* [HLF](#), [BBC](#) (Bath Abbey), [Beamish](#)

Alan Davey blogs on balancing budgets ahead of July funding announcements

In a blog on Arts Council England's website, Alan Davey has described the budgetary constraints that will shape the Arts Council's funding decisions, to be announced in July. He writes, *"In March we received applications from 876 organisations to become National portfolio organisations and from 26 museums for Major partner museum status. Together, those organisations requested a total of approximately £422.5m for 2015-16, against a budget of £355.2m"*

He said that Arts Council England has already decided not to increase the amount of money going to London in this round, and emphasised the importance of funding the eclecticism of the arts, from small grants to large festivals. He underlined the Arts Council's ongoing concern about cuts from local authorities saying, *"Many – places like Manchester, Durham, Hull or Bristol – understand why culture matters and try to maximise the amount they can spend on culture. We need others to keep the faith in the power of the arts, museums and libraries to transform communities into better places to live."* [Arts Council](#)

'Transparency data' shows Culture ministers diaries London centric

Arts Professional has tracked the transparency data for DCMS Meetings and Hospitality for January to December 2013, and reveals that culture ministers are much more likely to accept invitations within London. Ed Vaizey accepted 26 invitations, 23 of which were in the capital. *Arts Professional* continues: *"according to the official data, the majority of all arts representatives who met the Ministers during the year were based in the capital, and no arts organisations from the East Midlands or South East regions were involved in any meetings."* However Maria Miller's roundtable discussions on the arts did reach beyond London to organisations in Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. ACE said that DCMS has organised the participants for these meetings, but that it had 'made suggestions' about who to invite. [Arts Professional](#)

£14m bail outs for arts venues since 2011

The BBC reports on the 50 arts organisations who have received £14m in emergency funds from Arts Council England in the last three years because they faced 'immediate and serious financial risk'. Hull Truck Theatre company has been the largest recipient receiving £1.5m since 2011: its financial difficulties began after moving to a new building in 2009. The Bluecoat Liverpool received £500k and the ICA £349k. Recipients for this financial year have not been named because it might 'prejudice their commercial interests.' The Arts Council's Deputy Chief Executive Althea Efunshile said, *"with innovation comes risk and many arts organisations are operating on very small margins in a challenging economic environment. A grant of this nature indicates our belief in the future of the organisation and their ability to deliver on their artistic aims."* [BBC](#)

£2.2m for local Welsh libraries, archives and museums

Welsh Minister for Culture John Griffiths has announced £2.2m of funding for libraries, archives and museum. £1m will be used to modernise nine libraries and £400k will be used to enhance the marketing offer of Welsh museums. £140k will also be given to archives to widen access to their resources. Kids in Museums will receive a grant of £34,870 to increase children's participation in museums. [Wales.gov](#)

Barbican backs arts-techno startup Fish Island Labs

The Barbican Centre has set up a new creative industries colony, Fish Island Labs, in East London. It echoes the model used by large technology companies which back small startups as a way of generating new ideas. The project will cost around £3m to run in its first year and is also being supported by private and voluntary sector groups and universities. They are seeking 50 emerging practitioners whose collective work will encompass sculpture, installations and physical performance, alongside computer coding, film editing and digital art – free spaces are being offered to particularly talented applicants. [Arts Industry](#)(subscription only), [Barbican Fish Island](#)

Return of the Mack: outpouring of support following Glasgow Art School fire

A serious fire at Glasgow School of Art has destroyed about 30% of its contents. One eyewitness, the Provost of Glasgow, writes, *"There's huge sadness in the city. I saw people openly weeping in the streets. This was more than just a building. Iconic in terms of the world's built heritage, the Mack was also part of this city's heart and soul."*

The School says, *"The main part of the damage is in the 1907-09 part of the building (the west wing). At this point it is not possible to confirm the extent of the impact beyond the fact that the library and studio above were sadly lost in the blaze, although it seems certain that the infrastructure of the Mackintosh Lecture Theatre is intact."*

The School is developing 'Phoenix' bursaries, in partnership with the Scottish Government, to help any student whose work has been seriously damaged or destroyed in the fire to recreate it. Minister Alex Salmond also announced match funding of up to £5m for donations made to help restore the building. He said, *"The 'Mack' is an extraordinary building. It is an architectural gem and the artistic heart of Glasgow. It can and will be restored, and everything which can be done must be done to deliver this."* [GSA blog](#), [Scotland.gov](#) (Alex Salmond), [Scotland.gov](#) (Fiona Hyslop), [Thurible](#), [MGS](#) (update 30th May)

International

Resources from 'Working Internationally' conference

A summary of the 2014 Working Internationally Conference - organised jointly by ICOM-UK, NMDC and the V&A - [is now available on the ICOM-UK website](#). NMDC is also a partner in an ICOM-UK-led project to help develop capacity for regional museums to build international links and projects. That project is supported ACE's Strategic Support Fund.

IFACCA seeks views on its strategy to 2018

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies is preparing its 2015–18 plan and is seeking views from members and non-members about its activities. The survey is short, and will take five minutes to complete. [IFACCA](#)

From Russia with love: results of Visit Britain international survey

Visit Britain has announced the results of a survey in which 20,000 people from twenty nations were asked what they would most like to do in the UK. Findings include:

- London remains the most popular draw, but those most keen to visit are from European nations - France, Germany, Italy and Poland;
- Chinese and Russians would rather visit 'historic British cities' other than London;
- 45% of Chinese would also rather head for rural areas, as would Swedes, Canadians and Australians; and
- Coastal areas have been identified as a key driver for tourism in coming years, and 48% of Egyptians and 40% of Turks said that they would rather be beside the seaside in the UK.

[ALVA](#)

The very big picture – cultural policy quick facts from across the world

How does the UK's cultural policy compare with other countries? The International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies has published a summary of the key documents for 210 countries worldwide. A database is also in the pipeline which will allow free access to all these documents. The material will complement IFACCA's existing database of analytical cultural policy profiles. [IFACCA](#)

Cultural saviours: access and reach

Pay and display: new campaign to pay artists for exhibitions

A new campaign, Paying Artists, has launched to encourage publicly funded galleries to pay artists a fee for displaying their work. The campaigners argue that

- In the UK, 71% of artists get no fee for contributions to public exhibitions.
- Artists are, on average, earning only £10k per year from their artistic practice, and have seen a decrease of £6k in real income since 1997.
- In many other countries, artists do receive payment: in Poland a fee directly linked to the average working wage, in Norway a payment depending on the number of works and length of exhibition. In Canada there is a legal obligation to pay artists.
- 63% of UK artists have turned down exhibition opportunities because they cannot afford to work for nothing, and the situation risks damaging the work and careers of promising young talent who feed the profitable creative sector.

The Paying Artists campaign has already attracted the tweeted support of Peter Bazalgette who said "Arts Council England wholeheartedly supports the #PayingArtists campaign". [Guardian](#), [Paying Artists](#)

The morning after the night before: Museums at Night in review

Museums at Night has released statistics from their sixth annual event. 200,000 people visited 700 events at 500 venues. In addition, an hour long BBC4 programme gave coverage to diverse events, ranging from photographer Rankin's one day shoot-and-show exhibition at a Nottingham allotment, an exploration of Rembrandt with young students at the National Gallery, and innovative art made from burnt toast. Luminous pictures of Liverpool's Light Night Festival were also popular on social media. [BBC](#), [Arts Industry](#), [Twitter](#) (Light Night Liverpool feed)

Scottish museums plan to become blythe and byordinar cantie the day

The Happy Museum community of practice is being extended to Scotland (where it will also be referred to as the 'Cantie' Museum after Burns: "*Contented Wi' Little and Cantie Wi' Mair*"). Representatives from Scotland's major cultural bodies were present at the launch event, alongside Ben Twist of Creative Carbon Scotland who spoke about the dual shift to a smaller carbon footprint and from a culture of consumption to one of flourishing. A core group is developing further ideas, and welcomes contact from interested Scottish museums.

Meanwhile the wider UK project has had ACE funding confirmed for the next year and has held a symposium to help participants 'share aggressively and steal with pride'. Organiser Tony Butler said that £0.5m investment in 22 projects - including Daniel Fujiwara's research into the economics of happiness - had demonstrated the Happy Museum punching 'well above its weight'.

One participant said "some of the most exciting and imaginative work in the sector is happening under the Happy Museum banner. It's definitely bigger than the sum of its parts and I think it's been quite influential. People now see that wellbeing is a way of growing museums. What's really clever about it is that it spots potential recruits and believers and exposes them to all sorts of challenging ideas. It is as much a learning and development programme as it is about exploring the ideas." [Happy Museum](#) (Scotland project), [Happy Museum](#)(symposium report)

Major works by Frank Auerbach gifted to nation under Acceptance in Lieu scheme

The most significant privately owned collection of works by Frank Auerbach has been gifted to the nation under the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, and will soon be on public display for the first time. The collection belonged to Lucian Freud and includes 15 works in oil and 29 works on paper. It covers Auerbach's career since the 1950s and includes *Rebuilding the Empire Cinema, Leicester Square, 1962*, a masterpiece reflecting Auerbach's fascination with the rebuilding of London after the Second World War. The works are showing at Manchester City Art Gallery until 10th August, and will then go to Tate Britain until early November, before being allocated to museums across the UK. [Arts Council](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Law

Copyright exceptions in a nutshell

On 14th May the House of Lords voted on new exceptions to copyright relevant to museums. In a blog for the Museum Development Network, Naomi Korn gives a simple and succinct summary of what these changes will mean for museums in practice. The new rules will make it easier to provide access to people with disabilities, copy material for the purposes of preservation and use in-copyright material for non-commercial purposes. [Museum Development Network](#)

Also: Oxford Aspire are offering a copyright and digitisation workshop on 3rd July. [Oxford Aspire](#)

New rules to rein in ticketing scams

New rules will be enforced from 13th June to protect buyers of tickets for cultural events from scams by resellers. The rules are particularly aimed at musical performances, and require ticket selling sites to show the seat number of the ticket and in some cases the price printed on the ticket. Co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ticket Abuse, which advised the changes, Mike Weatherley said that the changes were a first step forward, and further protections were needed. [BBC](#)

Loosening cannons: divers plead guilty to taking valuables from historic wrecks

Two divers have pleaded guilty to 19 offences stretching back to 2001, in which they removed a variety of valuable material from shipwrecks off the Kent coast. This included 8 bronze cannons, 3 propellers and lead and tin ingots from craft ranging from German submarines to an East India Company vessel. They used explosives and sophisticated cutting material to loosen the loot. The Marine and Coastal Guard reminded the public that all material found in UK territorial waters must be reported to the Keeper of the Wreck. The men will be sentenced on 2nd July. [Gov.uk](#)

New EU Directive makes object return easier

A change to an EU Directive will make it easier to return objects unlawfully moved from one member state to another, if the object was moved in 1993 or later. DCMS believes there will now be a rise in the number of applications for repatriation. Previous returns have included a 14th century manuscript returned to the UK from France, and the return of some ancient medals to Finland in 1999. [Museums Journal](#)

Awards

Museums + Heritage winners

Winners of the 2014 Museums + Heritage Awards have been announced. The V&A won the 'best of the best' award as well as prizes for innovation for its interactive museum map and best temporary exhibition for *David Bowie is*. The Horniman's filmed and wryly tweeted walrus move won best marketing campaign, and the Grant Museum's [Micrarium](#) of tiny creatures won for best project on a small budget. The Mary Rose Trust won prizes both for best permanent exhibition and best restoration. National Museums Liverpool won best educational initiative for its [House of Memories](#), which targets carers for people living with dementia. [Guardian](#) (in pictures), [Museums + Heritage](#)

Museums sweep the board at Arts & Business 2014 awards

Arts & Business has announced awards for six of the best arts and business collaborations. Museums feature heavily among the winners. They include:

- Hull Angels Business consortium awards for the successful Hull City of Culture bid
- Fellows Auctioneers & Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (Culture Coventry)
- Hornby PLC & National Railway Museum (for the 10k and above sponsorship award)
- Sennheiser & Victoria and Albert Museum (for digital partnership)
- Samsung & British Museum (for the long term partnership award). The British Museum's Samsung Digital Discovery Centre has come into its own with the launch of the new *Mummies* exhibition – children have been using the tech both to print off their own 3D mummy-themed objects, and to create short digital films where mummies 'talk' about their lives and history.

Additionally, *Time Out* founder Tony Elliott has been awarded Arts & Business' Goodman Award, which celebrates business people who have demonstrated a long term commitment to the arts. Accepting the award, he emphasised his commitment to the new and emerging, saying "*I have no interest whatsoever in contributing to the inflated budgets of London's and the UK's large cultural institutions. My £1,000 or £5,000 donation hardly registers with any of them. But figures like that change the world for new, innovative, fleet of foot operators. That's a really worthwhile thing to support. It's vital that people like you in the business community are prepared to look at anything. Don't just back the safe and established things... Be bold.*" [Arts & Business](#), [Telegraph](#), [British Museum](#)

Conferences

Archives 2.0: saving the past, anticipating the future

Later this year, the National Media Museum will be hosting a two day conference on the strategic acquisition and management of visual archives by cultural institutions. The event encompasses both photographic and moving footage, mixed archives, equipment, correspondence and ephemera, analogue and digital. Archives may belong to practitioners, companies and individuals as well as museums. The conference takes place on 25th and 26th November and bookings will open in July. More details in the meantime from archives2.0@nationalmediamuseum.org.uk [National Media Museum](#)

ACE supports first Tourism Society conference

Arts Council England is supporting the Tourism Society's first Tourism symposium, taking place in Liverpool in early June. It focuses on the generation of business, growth, employment and professional development through culture. Andrea Nixon, Director of Tate Liverpool, and John Kampfner, Director of the Creative Industries Federation, are among the speakers. It takes place as part of the wider Festival for Business – the biggest concentration of business events in 2014. [Arts Council](#), [International Festival of Business](#) (bookings)

'The People Formerly Known As The Audience'

The Arts Marketing Association's 2014 conference, *The People Formerly Known As The Audience*, will take place in Bristol on 22nd – 24th July. It will explore how people have transformed the way they interact with culture in a digital age – becoming critics, journalists, bloggers, funders and artists/collaborators themselves. The conference brings together 500 cultural professionals to explore how to adapt. [Arts Marketing Association](#)

The Un-Straight Museum

The Museum of Liverpool is hosting an international conference on 15th and 16th June to explore the role of curators and cultural institutions in promoting diversity. Speakers will come from Sweden, Germany, United States and Finland as well as the V&A and Tate. [Homotopia](#)

Creativity, Health and Well-being: Exploring art as a therapeutic tool within museums

A day-long symposium at MOSTYN Cymru on 26th June, for artists, curators and museum professionals, asks what art has to offer health, healing and well-being and vice versa. The event is free, but booking is essential. [Eventbrite](#)

Events to build fundraising capacity

Trusts and Foundations training

Oxford Aspire's latest round of free training for museum professionals includes a repeat of its excellent Trusts and Foundations one day fundraising course, this time taking place at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge on 25th June. Booking is essential and tickets are very likely to sell out. [Oxford Aspire](#)

Catalyst Cymru kicks off with roadshows on increasing fundraising capacity...

Catalyst Cymru – Heritage Fundraising is a new three year scheme funded by HLF to encourage heritage organisations in Wales to become more sustainable by increasing their fundraising capacity. Roadshow events introducing the scheme are taking place across four venues in Wales from 18th June – 8th July, led by funding experts. [WCVA](#)

... and the Heritage Alliance announces workshops for England scheme

Meanwhile the Heritage Alliance has partnered with the Institute of Fundraising to run training days in nine cities across England from early June – 8th July. The workshops cost a nominal £20 per head and are open to for any member of staff, volunteer or Heritage Open Day organiser, from a heritage or community group who delivers fundraising activities. They cover fundraising with corporates, individuals, trusts, and other donors. [Heritage Alliance](#)

Also: The Heritage Alliance's fourth free open debate will be on the subject of *Heritage and Philanthropy: turning public passion into pounds*. It will take place on 24th June in Birmingham – tickets are free but booking is essential. [Heritage Alliance](#)

Arts Council of Ireland's RAISE fundraising project is working

The Arts Council of Ireland's three year RAISE programme has succeeded in increasing sponsorship for 11 organisations in its first year. In 2012, they raised €1.98 million in voluntary income and sponsorship in the organisations, with the figure rising to €2.51 million in 2013. Investment in the organisations included hiring 11 professional fundraisers and creating a capacity building programme. [Arts Council of Ireland](#)

Appointments

The Culture Secretary, Sajid Javid, has appointed seven new Commissioners to English Heritage who will be in post from 1st June. They are Alex Balfour and Victoria Harley for terms of 3 years; Sally Balcombe and Prof Martin Daunton for terms of 4 years; and Victoria Barnsley OBE, Prof Michael Fulford CBE and Michael Morrison for terms of 5 years. [Gov.uk](#)

Education

Curriculum hours in schools: history up, arts down

Figures from the Department of Education show that there have been significant shifts in the number of taught hours for cultural subjects since 2010, probably as a result of the changing syllabus. The figures include:

- EBacc subjects like History and Geography have shown rises of between 7 – 11% since 2010;
- Design and Technology has seen an 11% drop in teachers and taught hours;
- The number of Drama teachers has fallen by 8% and taught hours of Drama by 4%; and
- Overall the number of arts teachers in schools have fallen by up to 11%.

Commenting on the findings the Cultural Learning Alliance said, *“the decline of arts subjects in England’s schools is especially worrying given the wide ranging transferrable skills children gain from studying the arts.”* [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

National Museum Wales embraces government’s anti-child-poverty agenda

The Welsh Government has been working to make sure that children from poorer backgrounds get access to culture and that this in turn enhances their life chances. Now National Museum Wales has published a resource pack for museums based on consultations last year. It highlights the key to successful arts participation projects including:

- Partnerships – *“for example, educational institutions, Pupil Referral Units, young mums’ groups, homelessness organisations, young offender teams/prisons, The Salvation Army, Barnardo’s, organisations working with children with specific disabilities.”*
- Showcasing the work of children and young people through community arts organisations gives them recognition and confidence
- High quality activities for children of all backgrounds
- Exit strategies for when projects end – what can children do next?

The report also advocates ‘programme bending’ – using mainstream sources of funding for cultural work which is also a social intervention. For instance, Glyncoch in Wales was identified as one of Wales’ most deprived communities in the last census, with half of all adults having no qualifications. An arts programme monitored by the People and Work Unit was shaped to give adults confidence to find work and travel outside the area, while there were inbuilt opportunities for young people to develop skills. Benefits included lowered local crime rates and improved school attendance among Year Seven pupils.

Reflecting on the work on his blog, National Museum Wales Director David Anderson writes, *“it is our task to create something new: a National Cultural Service for Children. Like health, education, housing and every other universal service, children’s cultural participation must be developed locally, if it is to be effective, but within a national framework.”* [National Museum Wales](#) (anti poverty resource pack), [National Museum Wales](#) (companion document with writeup of the findings from the seminar day), [Assembly Wales](#) (a discussion of the work around children, culture and poverty), [David Anderson’s blog](#)

Making museums autism friendly

Museum blogger, and parent of a 10 year old with Aspergers, Claire Madge says that people with autism may often avoid museums, but that staff awareness can transform the experience of autistic visitors. Predictability and planning to avoid, for example, galleries with sudden noises, can help autistic visitors feel comfortable. She draws from resources written by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and gives high praise to the Science Museum’s [Early Bird Autism Session.Tincture of Museum](#)

Kids in Museums Takeover Day now spreading across the arts

The popular and successful Kids In Museums Takeover Day, which allows children to offer advice and help with the running of museums over a couple of days each November, is now expanding to cover the arts. Funding from Arts Council England means that participation will now extend to Historic Royal Palaces, the Barbican, Sadler’s Wells and Oval House Theatre in London, and Firstsite in Colchester. Catherine Townsend for Kids in Museums said, *“organisations can contact us to get on our mailing list and find out about the support we offer. There are case studies on our website and we also run sharing meetings across England and Wales.”* [Museums Journal](#)

Techspectacular

Portsmouth plans 'hovering heads' spectacular

As part of the Portsmouth Festival, the city will be projecting the film *Faces* featuring 60 modern residents telling the story of the city up to the outbreak of the FWW. But uniquely the screen will be huge and holographic in quality, giving the impression of giant heads floating above the city. Naval serviceman and participant Graham Brown said, "*It was a surprisingly intense and unique experience. No doubt the finished film is going to be awesome as a historical piece and educational performance.*" The piece premieres from 20th June. [Portsmouth Festival](#)

Culture24's painting emulation project is Van Go

The idea behind Culture24's new project Van Go Yourself is simple enough: choose a famous old painting from the project website, recreate it photographically with yourself as the model as exactly or creatively as you like, and post the results to social media. The project, intended to reconnect people both with art and their sense of humour, is supported by the Europeana Creative project. Culture24 Director [Jane Finnis](#) made the *Telegraph* with her more urban can-do feminist take on Settegast's *Portrait of a Young Italian Woman*. Elsewhere, Eckersberg's *Bella and Hanna* has been [restyled with a T-Rex](#), while a class of A level students have posed for *The Last Supper* [in their science lab](#) on the eve of their exams. By mid May the project was recording a '+7 million impact' via [Twitter](#). [WeAreCulture24](#), [VanGoYourself](#), [Telegraph](#)

Leaked New York Times digital plan 'key document of this media age'

The New York Times' often anxious-sounding assessment of its digital strengths and weaknesses, and the marketplace it operates in, has been leaked and widely discussed in the US media. Neilson Journalism Lab described it as the 'key document of this media age'. While some of the document discusses problems unique to the shift of newspapers from print to online, there are wider resonances for any cultural organisation with a significant online presence. The leaked report says:

- Homepages on larger sites are increasingly unimportant, with users more often entering the site on subpages that reflect their interests. Despite this, it is hard to resist pouring resources into the homepage.
- Curating and repackaging old content, tied to specific events is effective. The *New York Times* has an archive stretching back to 1851, but it was another outlet, *Gawker*, who generated readership from relevant *NYT* archive content following the release of the film *12 Years A Slave*. The paper did though score a huge hit by repackaging love-related material for Valentine's Day. [In this respect the NYT echoes the Collections Trust point that 'creating value is the new digitisation']
- Tagging is important - allowing users with a specific interest to follow a theme over time – but often neglected.
- It argues for 'valuing replicability' – innovating technically in ways that can be continually used for new content, not just one big prestige project – as BuzzFeed has done with its 'quizzes' technology.
- The paper wants to position itself as supplying 'long view' content of museums, books and theatre – topics where the market is not yet commercially saturated elsewhere.
- It highlights the dangers of a gulf between content producers who do not understand digital and an undervalued digital team.

[Suzanne Fisher Murray](#), [Buzzfeed](#), [Nielsen Journalism Lab](#), [Collections Trust](#)

Bristol launches citywide history attractions website

A new website brings together major Bristol museums with historic houses and Bristol Records Office into a single website, creating a visitor's one stop shop for the city. It includes a link to all the collections held by Bristol City Council. It follows the trend for museums packaging themselves in groups, which has also been recently modelled by Thames Valley Museums. [Bristol Museums](#), [Thames Valley Museums](#)

Material from Museums Get Mobile

If you missed the Museums Computer Group hive mind expertise on museums and mobile at their recent conference, it has now published write ups and slides – from responsive design to the British Museum's innovative projects. [Museums Computer Group](#)

Also: The National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam has created a Google maps style 'Streete view' by combining 17th and 18th century city maps with drawings of individual buildings and landscape. You can see the results [here.NMMAmsterdam](#)

Autocaptioning in R&D

Supported by Nesta's R&D fund, a handful of theatres are about to trial new technology which allows performances to be automatically captioned as they happen live. Previously captioning for deaf audience members has required manual captioning. A trial at the National Theatre and Ambassadors Theatre Group will run for the next 12 months. [The Stage](#)

Communities and councils: work to keep museums open

Cynon Valley museum may not be close

Following local authority cuts of £70m, Rhonda Cynon Taff Council had intended to close Cynon Valley Museum and save £350k. However, following strong local opposition and a demonstration the museum has been given a temporary reprieve, and interested parties now have twelve weeks to submit a business plan. Campaigner David Davies said, "*This is the only accredited museum in Rhonda Cynon Taff. There is no place of wider historical significance in South Wales.*" The campaigners have also argued that the museum brings £1m in benefit to the local economy. [Museums Association](#), [Wales Online](#)

Weekend reprieve for museum, but summer strikes likely in Hull

Hull City Council has revised their plans to close the Hands on History Museum to all but pre-booked school parties: the museum will now be open to the general public at weekends, at least for the time being. However, a sample vote by the GMB union with 40 museum staff has found them unanimously in favour of strike action: a full vote on summer strikes is now taking place. Staff are unhappy with £150k cuts to museums in the city, recently chosen as City of Culture 2017. Councillor Terry Geraghty said Hull had little choice in the face of a £28m deficit. [Hull Daily Mail](#) (museum reprieve), [Hull Daily Mail](#) (strikes), [Arts Industry](#)(subscription only)

Northampton risks becoming second council in months to lose accreditation

As Conservative-led Northampton County Council prepares to sell the museum's Egyptian statue of Sekhemka, battle lines around the sale have become more firmly drawn. At a council meeting on 20th May, the council's Labour group made one more attempt to stop the sale. Cllr Danielle Stone said, "*The Sekhemka statue was gifted to the people of Northampton in 1880. It is a significant historical artefact, which has been hidden away for too long.*" She argued that it could attract tourism.

Meanwhile the Arts Council has warned that Northampton could follow Croydon in having its accreditation withdrawn if the sale goes ahead in July, saying "*we have been very clear about these concerns in discussions with Northampton*". Leader of the Council David Mackintosh said "*We have been keeping Arts Council England informed of our actions and plans and acting accordance with the ethical guidance issued by the Museums Association. We see no reason why we should not retain our accredited status.*"

If the sale goes ahead, the city will receive 55% of the proceeds – the rest will go to Lord Northampton, whose great-grandfather originally gifted the sculpture to the city. He initially opposed the sale. [Northampton news](#), [Arts Industry](#)(subscription only)

Visual Arts and Galleries Association to close

Two years after losing ACE funding, the Visual Arts and Galleries Association (VAGA) is to close. The organisation had focused on advocacy and professional development after losing its funding. Chairman of VAGA, Godfrey Worsdale said that work around curatorial travel and research remained essential to the sector's future, and that he hoped that other organisations would progress this work. [Museums Journal](#), [VAGA](#)

Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- [Retail Product Demonstrator, part time - Museum of Science and Industry](#)
- [Head of Visitor Services - Sir John Soane Museum](#)
- [Poussin Project/Research Assistant - University of Cambridge Museums](#)
- [Assistant Curators - Imperial War Museums](#)
- [Intern, Asian and African studies - British Library](#)
- [Development Manager, 14 - 18 NOW - Imperial War Museums](#)

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

And finally... museum takes collections on a pub crawl

When the Museum of Natural History in Oxford closed for a year for essential building repairs, they did not mothball their specimens. The *Goes To Town* project meant that museum objects popped up all over the place: a penguin in the fishmongers and a bank vole in the bank. But, feeling that they were still not reaching their often elusive 18 – 24 year old audience, they went to look for them in the pub. Eight pubs hosted natural history quiz sessions across Oxford, complete with real specimens from the collection. Now the museum is open again, it is running similar 'pub quiz' style evenings aimed at students back on its own premises. [Oxford Aspire](#)

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