

In the March issue:

- [MPs debate arts funding outside London](#)
- [Arts Council's 'This England' report responds to debate on geographical distribution](#)
- [Beamish flourishes with visitors up 19%](#)
- [New 'your paintings' project documents public sculpture](#)
- [Museum visitor numbers down in Tyne and Wear following cuts](#)
- [Clare Prize Fund offers 500k for fellows with good ideas](#)
- [Immortalised in Jam Sponge: Art Fund launches Edible Masterpieces](#)
- [No Boundaries Conference looks at cultural futures](#)
- [March of the makers celebrates creative industries success](#)
- [Creating advocacy with the remorselessness of a high speed train](#)

...and much more.

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Section headings | [NMDC news](#) | [London and the regions](#) | [Members' news](#) | [Saving the landscape](#) | [Regional museums under threat](#) | [Commemorations](#) | [Awards](#) | [Adding to collections](#) | [Jam Today: novel routes to funding](#) | [Future of culture: broadening access, embracing tech](#) | [International](#) | [Events](#) | [Tech: big data gives human insights into whole cities](#) | [Education](#) | [Advocacy](#) | [Jobs](#) |

NMDC news

Working Internationally Conference 2014

NMDC, ICOM UK and the V&A held the second Working Internationally Conference at the V&A on 27th February. The sell-out event explored the practicalities of working internationally, looking at how to start projects, where to seek support and advice, how to manage projects and find funding. Giving the keynote speech, Mark O'Neill from Glasgow Life, showed how working internationally had had a positive impact on Glasgow Museums and their audiences. There were presentations from museums of all sizes and focus, including the Science Museum, Queen's Own Hussars Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum. Delegates looked at projects from Tate's Brazilian partnerships, to the re-development of Norman castles in Norfolk and Medway, and from deriving income from digital assets to borrowing objects from Chinese museums.

A digest of the conference will shortly appear on the ICOM UK website along with links to the British Council, UKTI, Creative Europe and the Collections Trust, who all took part in the event.

London and the regions

MPs debate arts funding outside London

A debate took place in Westminster Hall on 4th February to discuss the balance of arts funding between London and the regions. Opening the debate, Sheffield MP Paul Blomfield argued that an insufficient amount is spent outside London, and that this impacts on wider economic growth:

"We cannot consider the matter in isolation from wider economic trends. Last week, we saw reports that between 2010 and 2012, 217 000 new private sector jobs were created in London, whereas my city of Sheffield lost 7500. We are clearly not alone: private sector jobs have been draining away from the north to London and the south-east. There is a direct relationship because arts funding is important not just for our social life throughout the country, but for our economic growth."

MPs praised the effects of partnerships between major London institutions, such as the National Gallery and National Maritime Museum, and the regions but most argued that this was not enough to balance London's domination. MP for Exeter Ben Bradshaw also proposed that Arts Council funding should not be given to Councils which stopped supporting the arts: *"a..sensible approach would be for the Arts Council to base funding decisions, where possible, on continuing support from local government. That would reward good councils such as Exeter and deter bad ones such as Somerset."*

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey responded to criticism from regional MPs with a long list of successful regional arts projects but added *"To hon. Members who feel concerned, their message has been*

heard” and quoted Peter Bazalgette who has said that there is room for improvement and “judge us in two years time”. [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only), [Hansard](#) (full text)

Also: a survey run by Arts Professional magazine found that nine out of ten arts professionals are at least broadly in favour of more arts production outside London. [Arts Professional](#)

Arts Council’s ‘This England’ report responds to debate on geographical distribution of funding

Arts Council England has produced a report, *This England: How Arts Council England uses its investment to shape a national cultural ecology*, to respond to the critics of geographical distribution of arts funding. ACE says:

- Current geographical distribution of funds is 70:30 in favour of regions for lottery money and 60:40 for other funds.
- Although 42% of work is linked to a London postcode, only 8% of those funds are actually spent in London.
- Launching the document at *No Boundaries* ACE staff said that simply putting money into areas where there is no developed arts infrastructure doesn’t work: ACE instead uses programmes like Creative People and Places, which help a culture to evolve over time. However, ACE can only invest based on the applications they receive and these are very unevenly spread across the country.
- ACE is seeking to create a critical mass of creative centres across the country which in turn reach into more rural areas, such as the Stratford-on-Avon based RSC’s work with 400,000 children across the country.
- Regions are suffering from the double whammy of reductions to local authorities which average at 6.5% over two years, and reductions to national arts funding, and there is unlikely to be more money in the next few years.

Also speaking at the *No Boundaries* conference, Arts Council Chair Sir Peter Bazalgette said that some London-based organisations would have to do more to support the regions to justify their funding. [Arts Council](#), [Museums Association](#), [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only)

Charting the reach of national museums

Art Fund Director Stephen Deuchar, has written to *The Telegraph* to emphasise the role played by national museums in touring collections from larger to smaller museums. He says: “*The British Museum, Tate, V&A and the National Gallery no longer see themselves as carers solely of their own collections. Frequent loans of works of art and the sharing of curatorial expertise are now commonplace, and some spectacular exhibition initiatives are spreading the cultural wealth to all quarters of Britain.*” He cites the series of exhibitions which are part of the *Artist Rooms* programme, which have now reached 2.4m visitors in 60 museums outside the nations capitals. [Telegraph](#)

London dominates UK tourism spend

New data from the Office of National Statistics shows that tourism in London and the South East accounts for £50bn of the £125bn spent on tourism in the UK in 2011. The figures also show that:

- Tourism is most important as a percentage of all economic activity in Wales, followed by Scotland and then, the South West of England, London and the North West of England.
- Locally, Blackpool relied most on tourist income, followed by Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- 43% of spend came from day trips by UK residents, followed by 20% for UK residents spending one night away. 17% were overseas tourists.
- 8% of the total spend was on cultural, sport and recreational services.

[ALVA](#), [ONS](#) (short film)

Westminster Hall debate on creative economy

A Westminster Hall debate on the creative economy largely focused on three issues:

- Financial incentives, especially for film;
- Private copying exception, and illegal downloads; and
- STEM to STEAM (this effort to include the arts in core curriculum subjects is being particularly supported by Ben Bradshaw).

Urging the inclusion of the arts, Sharon Hodgson MP who chairs the All-Party Group on Art, Craft and Design in Education, spoke about reduction in art teachers and concern over the impact of discount codes. Access for state school students was discussed, as was extending school hours as it would allow more time for arts and sport (which is now being proposed by the Department for Education).

Shadow Minister for Culture Helen Goodman spoke. She mentioned Roly Keating's comments about creating a positive environment for creators and researchers (in relation to copyright), and she spoke about how difficult it can be to raise private finance outside the M25. [Hansard](#)

LGA calls for review of Lottery funding

The Local Government Association (LGA) has called on the Government to change the balance of lottery funding in favour of culture and sport. The LGA argues that as arts, heritage and sport are amongst the areas hardest hit by council funding cuts, lottery funding should be directed towards these areas rather than those sponsored by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) which are often duplicated in other areas of government spending. BIG is currently responsible for distributing 40% of funds raised for good causes, whilst arts, heritage and sport receive 20% each.

Councillor Flick Rea, Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board said *"Museums, leisure centres and heritage attractions could get a huge boost if the Government reviewed lottery funding and stripped out duplication with other Government programmes that is contrary to the founding additionality principle of the National Lottery...the Government's decision to continually focus its most severe cuts on councils, which deliver hundreds of services on which millions of people rely each day, is inevitably having an impact on the arts, heritage and sport, and the additional boost provided by lottery funding is ever more important."* [LGA](#)

Southbank scheme skates close to the precipice

The development plan for the Southbank Centre has reached an impasse, with the Southbank withholding £120m in development funding until a solution can be found which satisfies both the skateboarders (who have successfully campaigned for the preservation of the undercroft area as a skate park) and also allows the scheme to be commercially viable.

Southbank Centre Artistic Director Jude Kelly has called on interested parties, including London Mayor Boris Johnson, skateboarders and Southbank supporters, to come together to find a solution, saying that an extra £35m is needed if the undercroft is not to be developed commercially. The Southbank Centre's chairman Rick Haythornthwaite says that the scheme is now 'at a precipice'.

[Arts Industry](#) (subscription only)

Members' news

National Museum Wales acquires major works by John Piper

National Museum Wales has acquired a collection of works by mid twentieth century neo romantic artist John Piper, worth about £1m. The pieces have been purchased from a private individual through the support of Heritage Lottery Fund (£472,900), the Derek Williams Trust (£350,000) and the Art Fund (£80,000). The new acquisitions heavily feature Snowdonia, which was an inspiration to Piper in the 1940s and 1950s in particular.

David Anderson, DG of National Museum Wales said *"The success of the exhibition of works by John Piper in 2012 confirmed to us how popular the artist is to the people of Wales, and therefore how important it is to add to the representation of his work in the national collection"*. [National Museum Wales](#)

Also: The National Gallery has acquired its first major American painting, George Bellows' *Men of the Docks*. The \$25.5m purchase was paid for by a fund set up by Sir Paul Getty for the gallery. [Independent](#)

Beamish flourishes with visitor figures up 19%

Beamish has announced visitor figures of 589,474 for the past 12 months. The figures are the best in the museum's 43 year history, 19% up on the previous year, and almost double the numbers recorded 5 years ago. The museum has invested heavily in new attractions, including a 1940s farm which has just opened. Making tickets valid for 12 months has also had a significant effect.

Huge success at National Railway Museum among ALVA's 2013 visitor figures

ALVA has published the 2013 visitor figures for the 56 leading visitor attractions which make up its group. The figures include:

- The new Library of Birmingham saw a remarkable 1,152,556 visitors in its first four months, with large queues for entry
- The National Railway Museum in York received 30% increase in visitors - largely because of a special exhibition drawing together its own Mallard with the other five surviving A4 class locomotives from around the planet
- The British Museum remained the most popular visitor attraction for the 7th year running with a 20% increase in its visitor numbers to 6,701,036
- The good summer brought an additional 8% of visitors to outdoor attractions
- The most popular free attraction outside London was the National Museum of Scotland with 1,768,090 visitors
- Zoos continue to be popular, with Chester Zoo leading with 1,409,249 visitors

[ALVA](#) (highlights), [ALVA](#) (all venues, ordered by popularity)

Walking in the air: RAF museum celebrates the past from above

For eighty years from 1919, the Hendon firm 'Aerofilms' captured images of the UK from above. The archive of the material was acquired for the nation by English Heritage in 2007, and since then there has been a long cataloguing and conservation project.

The completion of the work is celebrated this year with an exhibition at the RAF Museum and the launch of the Britain from Above website, where the public can explore many of the images. Mike Evans, Head of Archive at English Heritage said, "*Between 1919 and 1953, there was vast and rapid change to the social, architectural and industrial fabric of Britain, and Aerofilms provides a unique and at times unparalleled perspective on this upheaval.*" [Britain from Above](#)

British Library publishes its 2014 highlights

A short film and brochure has just been publishing showcasing recent innovative work from the British Library. It includes work with people setting up small businesses, creative projects for young people, and partnerships, such as with the Qatar Foundation to open up manuscripts related to the Gulf through digitisation. The Library is also beginning a project to archive all four million UK websites. [British Library](#)

Saving the landscape

Willows, willowherb and grass, and meadowsweet and haycocks dry...

It's three months short of a century since Edward Thomas took the train ride that inspired the poem *Adelstrop*, but while the 1914 war he fought in is being widely commemorated, much of the quintessential landscape he describes has vanished unnoticed, including about 98% of all wildflower meadows which once covered 7.5million acres.

Now the HLF is becoming involved in a project to protect plant heritage. They are offering £3m for the *Magnificent Meadows* scheme, which will preserve the remaining fragments of meadow. They are working closely with Plantlife, the National Trust, and numerous wildlife trusts. They hope to involve 500,000 volunteers over the next four years. Nicola Hutchinson for Plantlife said, "*Our aim all along has been to establish a programme and a profile for the 'Cinderella of the conservation world'. There has never been a grassland programme of this scale or ambition before and it is an amazing opportunity.*" [HLF](#), [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only)

Celebrations planned for 300 years of Capability Brown gardens

Planning has begun for major events and celebrations to mark the 300th anniversary of Capability Brown's birth, which will take place in 2016. The HLF has given an initial £139,000 in development funds to a partnership led by the Landscape Institute. Brown is associated with over 260 landscapes, many of which still retain features of his garden design. English Heritage, among others, expect to harness the support of thousands of volunteers during 2015 in preparation for the celebrations. [English Heritage](#), [Capability Brown](#) (dedicated project website), [HLF](#)

New 'Your Paintings' project, documents public sculpture

The Public Monuments and Sculpture Association has signed a partnership agreement with the Public Catalogue Foundation – the team which helped digitise a catalogue of all oil paintings in public ownership. The two organisations now intend to create a searchable digital database of sculpture in the UK created from the 11th century onwards. PMSA has already been recording outdoor sculpture through their National Recording Project which will be extended through the agreement. Meanwhile the Public Catalogue Foundation will track indoor sculpture. Further information: laura.marriott@thepcf.org.uk [Public Catalogue Foundation](#)

Wildlife groups suggest destroying all ivory artefacts

Wildlife groups have called for the destruction of all antique ivory objects as a way of combatting the poaching of elephants. A comment by Prince William (who has recently formed a coalition of wildlife charities) that he would like to see the Royal Collection's ivory destroyed has been reported widely by tabloids. This plainly won't happen, but ivory has been removed from display at all the homes of the Prince of Wales. [Independent](#), [Daily Mail](#)

CITIZAN funding to protect fragile archaeology by the sea side

HLF has granted initial project support to Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) for the CITIZAN project which will record the fragile, nationally important archaeological heritage of England's coast and the foreshores of its tidal estuaries. Archaeology at risk includes prehistoric forests, Roman forts and villas, medieval ports, and abandoned ships. Centres will be set up in London, York and Portsmouth to support the work and a national network of volunteers will be created. Taryn Nixon, Chief Executive of MOLA said "we cannot halt the erosion or destruction of some of these sites but we can ensure that the information about the remains is not lost. By creating a standardised, web-based recording system and providing training and new skills, we see this as an extraordinary opportunity for people across the country to create a lasting record that will benefit us all for years to come." [HLF](#)

Consultation: better protection against criminal damage for Welsh heritage

From 2006-12 there were 119 reports of unlawful damage to scheduled ancient monuments in Wales, but only one successful prosecution under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 in the last 25 years. The Welsh Government is now consulting on plans to alter this act, so that a plea of ignorance is no longer an allowable defence. Views from interested groups should be sent to the Welsh Government's Heritage Bill Team by 14th April. [Welsh Government](#)

Regional museums under threat

Museum visitor numbers down in Tyne and Wear following cuts

Museums in the North East have seen declining visitor numbers following cuts in opening hours at several venues. They include a 17% decline at Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead and 14% at the Laing Art Gallery. Iain Watson, Director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums said, "In April 2013 opening hours at Discovery Museum, the Laing Art Gallery and the Shipley Art Gallery were all reduced as a result of the very difficult funding positions of the supporting local authorities. Not surprisingly this has had an immediate impact on visitor numbers but measures have been put in place to mitigate this". He added that weekend opening hours are now being reorganised to fit around visiting patterns. [The Journal](#)

Wirral Council gives more time to Williamson Art Gallery

Wirral Council has agreed to reduce the proposed cut of 55% to the Williamson Art Gallery this year, to give it more time to come up with a long-term funding plan. The gallery will still see its £600,000 reduced by 18% in 2014, and more in the longer term. Local MP Frank Field has set up an action group to attempt to save it. [Museums Association](#)

Other local cuts news

The Head of Culture, Arts and Heritage at Wolverhampton City Council, Corrine Miller, will take voluntary redundancy next year, and it is not yet clear whether she will be replaced. [Museums Journal](#)

Cuts of £220,000 have now been confirmed at Cardiff Story Museum, which will be met by leaving staff posts vacant, more static displays and a skeleton staff shared with the tourist information centre as well as greater use of volunteers. These are part of a wider package of £50m of cuts across Council services. [Museums Journal](#)

Kirklees Council has voted against Conservative proposals to explore selling off parts of their £36m art collection, which includes works by Lowry, Bacon and Moore and is housed at Huddersfield Art Gallery. [Museums Journal](#)

Swansea drives economy through supporting its cultural sector

Visiting the *Creative Bubble* project in Swansea, Welsh Culture Minister John Griffiths praised the city's long-sightedness in continuing to support the cultural sector in tough economic times. He said, "I want to see other authorities across Wales taking this approach to the arts in order to explore all other ways of delivering services and keeping facilities open. That might mean joint work, or contracts with the not-for-profit sector. Or, it might include pooling some resources with neighbouring authorities. That is already happening in some areas, for example with the Arts Connect initiative involving Bridgend, Merthyr, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan." [Wales.gov.uk](#)

Campaign to support tourism in flooded areas in the South West

DCMS has launched a £2m support package to help tourism businesses in the flood-hit South West get back on their feet. The investment will put experts on the ground in affected areas. VisitEngland will also be launching a campaign in March to market flood-hit areas to domestic tourists in the run up to Easter. VisitEngland Chief Executive James Berresford said, "the tourism infrastructure is largely unaffected. Perception is everything." [Gov.uk](#)

Also: English Heritage's downloadable publication on flooding and historic buildings is [here](#). [English Heritage](#)

Commemorations

Competition offers young a place on the Holocaust Commission

In January, the Prime Minister launched the Holocaust Commission to ensure that the UK has a permanent memorial to the Holocaust and to promote education for future generations. Politicians from all major parties will sit on the Commission alongside actress Helena Bonham-Carter and Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

A youth board has now been set up, and an essay competition launched to encourage under 21s to participate. One winner will also sit on the Commission's main board. [Gov.uk](#)

Zaha Hadid a contender to rebuild Crystal Palace

Last year Chinese billionaire Ni Zhaoxing agreed plans to rebuild an exact replica of Crystal Palace in Sydenham, at the site where it burned down in 1936. The complex will spearhead a massive regeneration of the park and the area. Now forty applications to carry out the work have been narrowed down to six, including ones from Zaha Hadid and David Chipperfield Architects. Final plans for the building and surrounding landscape will be submitted by the end of the year. [ALVA](#), [Guardian](#)

Awards

Clore Prize fund offers 500k for fellows with good ideas

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the Clore Duffield Foundation is offering a prize fund of £500k to current or former Clore Fellows. The money will be dedicated to "backing the most creative and inspirational projects that its Clore Fellows can devise". The organisers won't cover match funding, general appeals or business as usual, but are otherwise open-minded: "The Foundation does not intend the Prize to be prescriptive in terms of criteria. We want to be inspired by your life-enhancing ideas and plans to help people to realise their potential. How do you plan to change people's lives for the better?" Applications are open until 6th June. [Clore Prize Fund](#)

Leadership programme for mid-career professionals in cultural education

Engage is inviting applications for their cultural leadership programme for 2014/15, which is aimed at mid career professionals working in education in the cultural sector. There is a fee but bursaries are available from the Arts Councils of England and Wales. The programme consists of a professional development plan, two residentials, mentoring and a group projects for participants. The deadline for applications is 10am on Monday 17th March. [Engage](#)

Tate becomes first museum to enter Stonewall's top 100 employers list

Tate has entered the Stonewall's top 100 employers list for 2014. The list celebrates organisations which are welcoming and supportive of their LGBT employees. Simon Feeke, Head of Workplace at Stonewall, said, "*We are delighted to see Tate feature as the first museum in the Top 100. The hard work of the committed members of their LGBT Network, as well as those within Human Resources and senior roles in the organisation, has seen Tate take huge strides this year and make an impressive jump in their ranking.*" Activities which supported their improved ranking included embedding diversity in all staff training programmes, flying a rainbow flag over Tate Britain during Pride weekend, and a very popular programme of public events such as *AfroQueer* and *Queer Britannia*. [Stonewall](#)

Awards for first time South American travel for curators

Curators International has announced travel grants for curators wishing to visit South America. Priority will be given to those who have not previously travelled to the region and who would like to make connections for the first time. Deadline for applications is 1st April. [Curators International](#)

Creatures of the night to roam Tate Britain

Tate has funded the first year of the new IK Prize, which offers a £10,000 prize plus a £60,000 production budget for a technologically innovative project to enhance galleries. The first winners are design studio The Workers, who have developed robots that will roam the galleries of Tate Britain by night. They will be remote controlled by users over the web who will 'see' through the robots using live streaming. This will allow crowd-free access to exhibitions. Tomasso Lanza for the Workers said, "*It was incredible seeing this once crowded space now completely empty of people except ourselves, surrounded by all this amazing art.*" [Telegraph](#), [BBC](#) (with short film)

Wales volunteer of the year awards launched

The Wales Volunteer of the Year awards honour exceptional adult and child volunteers as well as trustees. The deadline for nominating a volunteer is 11th April. [WCVA](#)

AIM announces recipients of BIFFA grants for industrial heritage

Biffa grants have given the Association of Independent Museums £1.5m over three years to support museum infrastructure projects which help to tell the story of industrial heritage. Recipients in the second round are:

- Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust - £120,000 for a Discovery Centre in the complex
- Brunel Museum – to restore public access to Brunel's entrance shaft to the Rotherhithe tunnel - £122,000
- Underfell Yard Trust, Bristol - £122,000 to give public access to the working Victorian Hydraulic Pump House
- The Arkwright Society - £115,000 to create public access to Sir Richard Arkwright's first mill which led to the birth of the factory system.

Adding to collections

Case List for Treasure Trove Scotland now released

Treasure Trove Scotland has now released its list of discovered items for March 2014, and is inviting museums to acquire them for their collections. The objects include medieval brooches, prehistoric flint blades, fragments of Bronze Age swords, axe heads and rings and Roman brooches. [Treasure Trove Scotland](#)

Export bar saves 2012/13

As we reported last month, a large number of cultural objects which receive temporary export bars are still eventually sold abroad each year. However, the 59th Annual Report on Export of Objects of Cultural Interest recalls some of the saves for 2012/13: six treasures with a value of £11.2m. They include George Stubbs' *The Kongouro from New Holland* acquired by the National Maritime Museum, and a Chinese porcelain casket, acquired by the Bowes Museum in County Durham. [Arts Council](#)

Prism fund reopens for applications

The Arts Council's Prism fund which supports non-national museums which wish to acquire objects of scientific or industrial significance, has now reopened. It offers grants up to £20k, or 90% of the acquisition's value. [Arts Council](#)

Jam Today: novel routes to funding

£4m awarded to Cornish foundry in programme to address 'market failure'

The HLF has awarded £4m to the Harvey's Foundry Trust to renovate a Cornish foundry site. The Grade II 19th century buildings will now be conserved and adapted for commercial use. The funding comes as part of the HLF's Heritage Enterprise scheme which has been created to combat 'market failure' – where the cost of repairing a historic building means that it has fallen out of use. [HLF](#)

Immortalised in Jam Sponge: Art Fund launches Edible Masterpieces

The Art Fund is encouraging its supporters to raise funds through baking cakes inspired by art on May 9th. It offers recipes and suggestions to help the public recreate Mondrian in marshmallows or Hirst in hundreds and thousands. The cake art will then be raffled, or shown in private views. Participants will be encouraged to show off their work on social media. Top fundraisers will also be entered for a lottery to receive prizes from the fund. [Art Fund](#)

Crowdfunding: harnessing Heath Robinson

Two museums give an account in Museums + Heritage of their experiences of seeking crowdfunding: one for a permanent exhibition of Heath Robinson related material which raised £33,000, and another for a temporary exhibition of Gavin Turk's work, which raised £8000. Each project worked through Kickstarter and developed a series of rewards for those donating funds. Success seems dependent on finding projects which will fire the public imagination. Geoffrey Beare of the Heath Robinson Trust said, "*traditional funding routes were proving very difficult. There is a worldwide appreciation of Heath Robinson's work and crowdfunding would enable us to reach out to that audience and demonstrate the breadth of support that exists for our project.*" [Museums + Heritage](#)

Donations by tweet rising

Donation platform JustGiving reports that donations via Twitter are becoming increasingly popular. They report that over 100,000 donors made charitable donations driven from Twitter last year, totalling £2.5m. This is a rise of 70% from the previous year and 448% since 2011. The sharing aspect of twitter is also important: when a person tells their social network that they have donated, this averagely generates another £3 in further donations. Most traffic from twitter to JustGiving comes from mobile devices. [Charity Digital News](#)

Museum events: gift wrapped for the Christmas market

Culture24 has entered a commercial partnership with Activity Superstore to sell museum events as 'activities' over Christmas, with vouchers redeemable from January 2015. They are inviting museums to register an interest in taking part. They say, "the envisioned range of offers will be aimed at families, young adults and adults and will cover subject areas such as science, history, archaeology, art and literature and natural history." Boxes featuring the experiences will be sold in major retailers such as Boots and WH Smiths. [Register interest here](#), or contact Sophie@culture24.org.uk

MGS launches fundraising training scheme

Museums Galleries Scotland have received a £452,000 training fund from Heritage Lottery Fund which will allow workers in the Scottish cultural sector to skill up in fundraising. The 3 year training programme will provide guidance, toolkits and support through peer networks. Organisations involved are MGS, Archaeology Scotland, Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) and Greenspace Scotland, with the consortium led by Arts & Business Scotland. [MGS](#)

Future of culture: broadening access, embracing tech

Warwick Commission launches cultural value discussion with debate

The *Guardian* reports in some detail on the first of three 'provocation' events at the beginning of the Warwick Commission's year long examination of the cultural sector. Participants, led by BBC economist Robert Peston, identified several aspects of the arts as a whole system which they thought should be revolutionised: particularly the overwhelming demographic of white middle class people as producers and consumers, resistance to new relationships, distance from the general public and hence being a sector which politicians hesitate to defend. Robert Peston said, "*We are still talking about a broadly paternalistic system, when paternalism disappeared everywhere else 20 years ago.*" [Guardian](#), [Arts Professional](#), [BOP](#)

No Boundaries conference looks at cultural futures

Meanwhile the Arts Council and British Council staged *No Boundaries* – a conference which looked at the future of the arts, with a particular focus on the effects of digital and the expectations of youth culture. The whole conference was livestreamed and is still [available online](#) – including a vision of the purpose and innovations of 'new libraries' from Brian Gambles, Director of the Library of Birmingham. Nii Sackey of Bigga Fish and Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, both echoed themes of privilege, gender, ethnicity and class in the sector, while Nicholas Lovell, author of *The Curve (how to make money when everything is going free)* discussed new ways of persuading people to fund culture. Run simultaneously from two cities (Bristol and York), the event also explored how evolving technology is beginning to allow people real engagement with each other from different locations. [No Boundaries](#)

March of the Makers celebrates creative industries success

A new report and short film from IPPR summarise many of the statistics about creative industries' success despite the recession. The report says that 2.5m people are working in the creative industries, which has outstripped every other industry except one in terms of growth since 2008. Recommendations include:

- The government should provide leadership with a single body being given responsibility for developing the sector
- A new British Investment Bank should be created with sufficient knowledge to invest in the sector
- Tax relief should support talent and innovation, especially where there is a risk of losing out to overseas competition
- Employer led training programmes should be rolled out across the sector, with a strong path from education to the industry
- Government should spend more time and resources on creative clusters outside London.

[IPPR](#)

International

British Council UCL Museum Training School

The British Council and University College London have jointly launched the [Museum Training School](#) (MTS). The Museum Training School has been created to meet the need to train a new generation of museum leaders and the synergy of the British Council and UCL will provide a unique learning experience tailored for an international market. Participants will hear from leading UK museum professionals and have access to the British Council and UCL's world class collections.

The courses are designed for mid-career museum professionals (with a minimum of three years' experience) who have ambitions to be leaders. The themes of the four courses are the ones which we are most frequently asked for:

- How to develop exhibitions;
- How to develop school and learning programmes;
- How to develop community engagement programme; and
- How to build local, national and international partnerships.

ICOM surveys serious bomb damage at Egyptian museums

A car bomb exploded outside the Islamic Museum and National Library of Egypt on January 24th, and the International Council of Museums has now visited to explore the severity of the situation. The whole museography of both institutions has been destroyed, and in the Islamic Museum 164 out of 1,471 objects on display have been destroyed or badly damaged. UNESCO has already set aside \$100,000 towards the rehabilitation of both institutions. [ICOM](#)

Brain drain to US threatened for UK curators

The *Art Newspaper* reports that an increasing number of curators are leaving London museums for doubled salaries in the US. These include five London curators headhunted by the Met, and four specialists from the Tate who have gone to the States. George Goldner for the Met, says that the trend has accelerated in the last two years, and that the London cost of living and 'greater professional opportunities' in the US are also factors. [Art Newspaper](#) (subscription only)

Also: The *Washington Post* reports that 57% of US museum directors are now women in a piece in which women leaders of major institutions recall how the demographic has shifted away from male majorities in the course of their careers. [Washington Post](#)

Boris pursues Guggenheim

London Mayor Boris Johnson is seeking another large art institution to be part of the new cultural hub being planned for East London alongside the V&A. He is now in the very early stages of a conversation with the Guggenheim Foundation. [Art Newspaper](#) (subscription only)

Cornelius Gurlitt launches website

Cornelius Gurlitt, the 81 year old at the centre of a scandal about 1280 pieces of 'degenerate' art discovered in his flat, has denied that the paintings are Nazi loot and has launched a website to defend himself. So far only six people have come forward to make a claim on the paintings, and his lawyers claim that only 3% of the paintings may be open to claims. The case has already prompted suggestions for changes to German law to extend the 30 year limit on restitution claims. [Guardian](#), [Gurlitt website](#) (in German)

Events

Newcastle Lates invites participants

Programming is well underway for 'Newcastle Lates' a 'free culture crawl around Newcastle and Gateshead' on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th May. It is the largest Museums at Night event, and the first to join up venues across an entire city, which will be linked by a special bus service. Events include tea in secret gardens, and a chance to make everything from pottery to space craft. [The Late Shows](#)

Free conference on maintaining Welsh war memorials

One Voice Wales is hosting a conference on 27th March about maintaining war memorials, particularly in the light of the First World War Centenary. The Minister for Culture and Sport will be attending. Admission is free, but booking is essential. [One Voice Wales](#)

Drinking About Museums

The next Drinking About Museums event for those who want to connect across the sector is in Covent Garden on 18th March and includes Stewart Russell from Twitter UK. [Eventbrite](#)

‘Green is the new Black’ – Green café in Birmingham

A free event, on 19th March, will explore how to communicate sustainability issues to museum visitors and implement them with staff. It is part of an ongoing programme in the West Midlands. All welcome but there are priority places for West Midlands museum workers. [Greening Museums](#)

Tech: big data gives human insights into whole cities

What social media says about our relationship with historic buildings

Hundreds of thousands of photographs taken every year at historic sites are geotagged and then uploaded to social media sites like Flickr or Twitter. The data from these uploads is being extracted for the first time, and offers a snapshot of which buildings are drawing the most tourist interest. Grade I buildings have significantly more photographs taken in their vicinity, and it appears that St Paul’s Cathedral is the most photographed building in London. The density of Grade I buildings and people in some parts of Central London is so great, that it’s hard to always track location and target, but work is ongoing to be able to read the data more accurately. [Nesta](#)

ENUMERATE survey on European museum digitisation reports back

The ENUMERATE Survey Report on Digitisation in Cultural Heritage Institutions 2014 is a third major study into the current state of digitisation in Europe. It draws together data from 33 European countries and 1,400 institutions. Findings include:

- Only 26% have a digital preservation strategy endorsed by management
- 48% don’t yet have a long term strategy for digital preservation – libraries are frontrunners in this
- Average spend on digital collections is 295,000 euros, with an average of eight people per institution working on digital preservation
- 51% of institutions measure the use of digital collections.

[ENUMERATE](#)

Tales of a City: Leeds Data Mill launches

Leeds has launched a ‘datamill’ project, bringing together major anonymised data sets together about everything that affects the city. Although not specifically a cultural sector project, culture will inevitably be part of the mix, as it becomes possible to see more clearly how business affects culture affect jobs et cetera. Data owners are asked to load anonymised stats up to the mill, and they invite “web developers, data scientists, app developers, graphic designers, and storytellers with the skills to transform data into apps, websites, visualisations or analysis that others can use.” The scheme holds the potential to be a powerful advocacy tool for the effect of museums on a single civic space. [Leeds DataMill](#)

SyncTank supports geeks in residence

SyncTank is an events programme in Scotland which seeks to link cultural organisations with technical innovators. It has just announced its 2014 Geeks in Residence programme, where developers and designers are placed with five forward looking cultural organisations including Edinburgh Art Festival. Each ‘geek’ will be given a bursary of £6000. The applications deadline is 6th May. [SyncTank](#), [Guardian](#)

Collections Trust launches Spectrum DAM partner scheme

Collections Trust has launched its Spectrum DAM partners scheme. This will help the Trust to support museums in understanding the importance of integrating DAM into their Collections Management practice. A Spectrum DAM Partner will offer confidence to museums in the procurement of software through their association with the trusted, industry-wide Spectrum standard. [Collections Trust](#)

Education

Why study the arts?

The Cultural Learning Alliance has produced a handy Prezi drawing together all the evidence of the benefits of an arts education – including ‘it makes you cleverer’ and ‘it helps you get a degree and a job’. They invite other organisations to borrow and reuse the material. [Cultural Learning Alliance](#)

FWW engagement centres launched

The Arts and Humanities Research Council has announced five First World War ‘engagement centres’ which will provide academic support to community commemoration work. They are:

- Voices of War and Peace – University of Birmingham
- Gateways to the First World War – University of Kent
- Living Legacies 1914-18 – Queen’s University Belfast
- Everyday Lives in War – University of Hertfordshire
- Centre for Hidden Histories – University of Nottingham.

They will become part of the FWW Centenary Partnership which is led by Imperial War Museums. [Heritage Lottery](#)

Advocacy

Creating advocacy with the remorselessness of a high speed train

Blogging for the Collections Trust, their Chief Executive Nick Poole looks at the lessons that can be learned from the now-successful bid to make the HS2 rail link a reality against fierce opposition. His ten suggestions include:

- The importance of multiple organisations speaking with one voice across geographical regions
- Scaring politicians with the idea that they will otherwise be left behind (‘every other successful country has a high speed rail link/developed museums infrastructure’)
- Push your supporters to the front line: “Find out who wants and loves what you do, survey them and then tell the world what they say”
- When it seemed like HS2 would be cancelled, its backers hired tough, high end PR: “They mobilised opinion-formers, brought in the business community and garnered support in the House of Commons. They consulted, held forums, commissioned research. Museums don’t do this stuff - we’re too nice.”

[Collections Trust](#)

Taking over the twitterverse

#FossilFriday, #TrilobiteTuesday and #Museumselfie day have all generated huge museum PR on Twitter in the last year. Now @MarDixon is helping to create the first UK Twitter #museumweek event. Each day of the week participating museums will post material from their collections on a single theme, creating a perfect symphony of eclectic objects and stories. #Museumweek runs from 24th– 30th March. Many museums have already signed up: just fill in the googledoc to express an interest for your institution. [Googledoc](#)

Also: Culture themes is also inviting museums with dinosaurs in their collections to tweet under #MuseumDinos on March 12th. [Culture Themes](#)

CyMAL visitor survey shows support for Welsh Museums

CyMAL has produced a ‘top up’ survey which complements the Wales Visitor Survey for 2013. It shows public support and commitment to Welsh museums, with statistics including:

- 84% believe museums are “friendly and welcoming places” in 2013, a rise of 9% since 2011
- 56% of overseas tourists have visited or plan to visit a museum during their trip to Wales (compared to 27% across the UK)
- visiting museums was the third most popular activity for tourists to Wales (23%) - with the most popular being a visit to the beach (42%) [Wales.gov.uk](#)

Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- [Purchase Ledger Assistant - Imperial War Museum](#)
- [Researcher - Life Sciences - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Art Handling Technician - National Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Regional Museums Development Manager - Norfolk](#)
- [Gallery Enabler \(Thinktank\) - Birmingham Museums](#)
- [Collection Registrar \(Displays\) -Tate](#)
- [Exhibition Officer - University of Cambridge Museums](#)

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

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