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Renewing cultural policy



Images this month come from the Imperial War Museum's Fashion on the Ration exhibition, exploring staying stylish during World War II. *Ruby Loftus screwing a breech-ring, Dame Laura Knight.*

Warwick Commission reports

The year long Warwick Commission on cultural value has issued its final report, *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth*. The report is based on in depth interviews with sector leaders, evidence reviews and four commissioner evidence days. It argues that the UK needs a national plan for the cultural sector, organised across several government departments, similar to the Create UK industrial strategy. The main points include:

- The cultural and creative industries are increasingly important to the UK and offer a “*powerful cocktail of public good and commercial return*”.
- Cultural and creative industries exist in the same ecosystem and feed each other, the report calls for more explicit support for these interactions.
- The report says that culture is reaching an “*unnecessarily narrow social, economic, ethnic and educated demographic that is not fully representative of the UK's population*” and that this is harmful socially and economically. The diversity of the creative workforce by gender, ethnicity and disability has also contracted over the past five years.
- Children from poorer backgrounds are the least likely to succeed in the cultural and creative industries. The report calls for arts subjects in the Ebacc, and a cultural education for all up to the age of 16, as well as a ‘national vision’ for creative education in England, matching similar policy already produced by Scotland and Wales.
- Digital is becoming increasingly central to the cultural industries, with 51% of cultural organisations using it for revenue streams. A joined up approach to technological innovation is important as digital transforms how we live.

[Warwick Commission](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Association](#), [TES](#), [Telegraph](#), [Telegraph](#) (comment)

Ed Miliband gives speech promising Labour support for the arts

Labour leader Ed Miliband has given a speech at Battersea Arts Centre, saying that Labour would put the arts ‘at the heart’ of government. Referencing the Warwick Commission report, he expressed concern that there is no formal requirement for cultural education in schools, and said that to get an Ofsted ‘outstanding’ rating, schools would have to provide cultural opportunities. He repeated a commitment to free entry to museums and galleries and said Labour would work to increase the number of apprenticeships in the arts from the 1000 offered last year. Miliband also proposed stronger working between DCMS and other government departments on the arts, and the creation of a Prime Minister’s committee on the subject. Asked by a journalist from *The Stage* about the implications for funding, Miliband said, “*I’m not coming here tonight to make promises about funding... and I can’t make promises about what funding’s going to look like in the future. But what I can say is that despite difficult circumstances, I’m going to make sure we do everything we can to help the arts, and help put arts and culture at the heart of what we do.*”

Harriet Harman has also given a speech emphasising that cultural organisations would be asked to demonstrate outreach under a Labour government: “*the money that goes into an arts organisation is taxpayers’ money. Outreach and access are not options, they must be part and parcel. It must be conditional [to funding] and organisations should be accountable. Taxpayers will not be happy to finance something if they think it’s not anything to do with them, especially in hard times.*” [Labour Arts Alliance](#) (full text), [The Stage](#), [Simon Tait](#), [Museums Journal](#), [The Stage](#)

Rebalancing authors produce final report

The authors of the *Rebalancing our Cultural Capital* report have produced a final document, *A New Destination for the Arts* summarising many of the arguments of previous reports, and making final recommendations. The authors point out that lottery funding for the arts was £784m for 2009/10–2013/14 but is projected to increase to £1.2bn in the coming five years, and argue that the extra funds should be progressively switched to the regions by 2020, allowing growth there without cuts to the capital. It also asks whether tourists from overseas should pay for admission to national museums.

Meanwhile ten leading figures in the arts world have written to all MPs asking them to make manifesto commitments to a geographical distribution of arts funding. Signatories include David Anderson of National Museums Wales, former British Council Arts Director Sue Harrison and Chief Executives of several theatres. Speaking at the Vault Festival, Culture Minister Ed Vaizey argued for caution in per capita calculations: “*half of the organisations that have a London postcode are simply the HQs of organisations that work all across the country, so it’s a very unfair comparison to take arts organisations that happen to be based in London and divide [the money they receive] per head*

and say that's unfair". [GPS Culture](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Professional](#) (letter to MPs), [The Stage](#)

Creating a contract with Government for arts and culture

As the General Election approaches, the Royal Society of the Arts is partnering with Arts Council England, the British Council, What Next? and others to ask what should go into a 'contract' for arts and culture. A live streamed debate will take place on 11th March exploring the issues, which can also be followed at #culturalcontract on Twitter. Proposals covered will be around diversity, funding, education, talent & skills development, local and national cultural strategy, and leadership. Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of the RSA says, *"For many years I have tried to encourage a more grown up and rigorous conversation about arts and cultural policy. It's not that there hasn't been good work in this area, valuable research, important policy initiatives, passionate debates but yet, added together, it hasn't added up to a discourse worthy of the importance of arts and creativity to our nation and our lives"*. [ACE](#)

Members news

Whitworth Art Gallery reopens

The Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester has re-opened after two years following a £15m makeover, including the addition of new galleries. The *Financial Times* praised its *"intelligent, sustainable and elegant design"* which is also environmentally sustainable: *"careful and innovative engineering (in collaboration with Buro Happold) has allowed MUMA to avoid the usual battery of refrigeration, air conditioning and humidity control kit."* In the *Telegraph*, Mark Hudson praised the gallery, based in the deprived area of Moss Side, for becoming more welcoming to locals: *"the challenge of the gallery's...refurbishment has been to make the local dog walkers and footballers feel that the art inside is as accessible to them as it is to anybody else."* Opening displays included a Cornelia Parker exhibition, plus works by Turner, Blake and Sarah Lucas. [FT](#), [Manchester Evening News](#) (gallery), [Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#)

Tate St Ives among those receiving ACE windfall

A £6.5m underspend on the Arts Council's capital projects budget means that twelve organisations will receive extra help towards their capital projects. Tate St Ives is among the recipients with £500k towards its gallery extension. The largest grant of £2m is to Live Theatre in Newcastle, to acquire a new site. [Arts Professional](#)

Also: AIM has published a quick guide to donation boxes in museums, including Gift Aid issues, to help museums maximise gifts from visitors. [AIM](#)

Visitor statistics

Record museum visitors and fundraising for DCMS museums

DCMS has announced that 49 million visits were made to the 16 museums and galleries directly sponsored by the department last year. This is a 4% increase on the 47 million visitors during 2012/13 and the highest figure since records began in 2002. Other findings include:

- 20 million, or 42% of the total, were visits from overseas. This is a decrease of one million compared to overseas visits in 2012/13. The museums with the largest number of overseas visitors were Royal Armouries (68%), National Gallery (61%) and the British Museum (58%)
- There were 120 million unique visits to the websites of the DCMS sponsored museums
- 9 million visits were by children aged under 15, an increase of 3% since 2012/13
- Admissions charges for paid-for exhibitions increased from £31.2m to £36.7m in the last year, a 17.7% increase
- Trading income increased by 12% from £63.9m to £71.6m
- The sixteen museums received charitable giving of £252.4m in 2013/14, a 60% increase on the year before. Funds received by IWM were almost six times greater than the year before.

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid said, *"these new figures highlight once again the public's appetite for UK's incredible culture and heritage, and the continuing appeal of our world-class museums and galleries. The Government's investment to guarantee free admission for the national collections, along with stunning exhibitions and permanent collections, means that our great cultural institutes*

can be enjoyed by all.” Meanwhile, *Arts Professional* debates whether free museum admission for overseas tourists encourages them to come to an otherwise expensive city, or whether Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture Munira Mirza is correct in seeing this demographic as ‘not as price sensitive’. [Gov.uk](#) (headlines), [Gov.uk](#) (report and detail), [Arts Professional](#)

International tourism figures up by 6%

The Government has also announced record international tourism figures for 2014. Overseas visitors made 34.8 million trips to the UK last year, an increase of 6% on the 2013 total with spend up 3 per cent. Their combined spend is estimated at £21.7bn. Tourism Minister Helen Grant said, “*it confirms that our tourism strategy is working and highlights the important role the industry plays in the Government’s long-term economic plan.*” VisitBritain has said that it intends to ‘rebalance’ its 2015 marketing to encourage further growth in tourism to the UK regions. Chancellor George Osborne has committed £3.5m to creating tourist events across Yorkshire, with the aim of creating 2,500 more tourism jobs in the county by 2020. [Gov.uk](#) (tourism), [Arts Professional](#), [BBC](#)

89% of Scots support heritage

A new report *People, Culture and Heritage in Scotland* has extrapolated further data from the 2013 Scottish Household Survey on participation and reactions to culture. Findings include:

- 91% of adults engaged in culture in 2013, 80% of them through attending a cultural event or building
- 54% agreed that ‘culture and the arts make a positive difference to my local area’, 17% disagreed
- 25% thought that ‘culture and the arts are not for people like me’, with 58% disagreeing
- 89% said that ‘It is important to me that heritage buildings and places (important buildings, sites and monuments) are well looked after’
- 32% visit museums or art galleries very or fairly often
- 18% had used museum or gallery websites in the past 12 months
- 41% of those with degrees or professional qualifications reported visiting museums and galleries during childhood, compared with 20% of those with no qualifications
- Disability, living in a deprived area or with a long term illness are also negatively correlated with museum attendance.

[Scottish government](#), [Arts Professional](#)

Prime Time at the Museum

BBC4 has announced a new museum-based quiz show fronted by Griff Rhys Jones. Each episode will be based at a different museum, with confirmed locations including the Ashmolean, Foundling, World Museum, Wallace Collection, Fitzwilliam, Museum of London, National Museum Cardiff and National Maritime Museum. The show will be part treasure hunt through the museums, and partly a playful attempt to confound expert panellists, as well as tell stories and explore unusual objects. Griff Rhys Jones said “*from Roman penknives to Canalettos, from enamelled reliquaries to model boats, we will be looking for connections, testing history, unearthing startling facts and putting real experts on the spot... This is a really exciting series to be involved with - pure joy.*” [BBC](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Negotiating the public gaze: from dippy to selfie sticks

Two articles in the *Guardian* explore the line between pleasing the public and the needs of curation. Historian Kate Williams reflects on the 30,000 strong petition to retain dinosaur cast Dippy in the NHM’s Hintze Hall, and argues that the controversy has ultimately been a ‘PR coup’ for the museum, as has the advent of Sophie the (real) stegosaurus at the side entrance. Meanwhile ‘selfie sticks’ are being banned at museums from the US to Madrid because of the danger of accidentally poking artworks. Other museums such as the Met are still debating the issue and do not yet have a fixed policy. [Guardian](#) (selfies), [Guardian](#) (Dippy)

Economics



Fitting recruits with clothing, Anthony Gross.

ACE reports on the economic impact of museums

The Arts Council has published a report, *The Economic Impact of Museums In England*, which tracks direct and indirect economic impact. Headline figures include:

- There are 2,635 organisations running 2,720 sites across England
- The largest number of museums (1,640) are independent, but DCMS and local authority museums have the greatest economic impact
- English museums generate £2.64 billion in income and contribute £1.45 billion in economic output to the national economy
- They employ a minimum of 38,165 people
- They generate £3 of income for every £1 of government funding.

The report also includes detailed case studies of museums including Beamish, York Museums Trust, Imperial War Museums and Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums. It describes how Beamish recovered from a 40% loss of visitors, became solvent and is planning to expand. It also tracks the direct and indirect spend of museum groups: for example, visitors averagely spent 36p in TWAM museums, but overall spent £7.75 on day visits in the wider economy, or £31.04 per day for longer visits. [Arts Council](#)

Longitudinal report links arts and health

A report based on several international longitudinal studies suggests a link between arts participation and health. The work by Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt suggests a beneficial effect on disease over time, including obesity, cancer and heart disease, with a knock-on effect for longevity. However, she acknowledges that there may be other hidden factors in play, especially socio-economic ones.

[Manchester Metropolitan University](#)

'Everyone an artist'

What Next? and the BBC launch year of creativity

The cultural sector network What Next? and the BBC have launched Get Creative, a year long campaign to encourage everyone to perform, make and participate in the arts. It was launched by BBC Director-General Tony Hall, accompanied by comedian Johnny Vegas (displaying his pottery skills by deftly making a teapot in one minute). The BBC will be showing programmes throughout the year to encourage the campaign, which is also backed by Fun Palaces and ACE, beginning with the radio debate 'are artists owed a living?'. The Get Creative call to action describes how organisations can sign up to take part. Tony Hall said, "*At its best the BBC is this country's greatest cultural force, it's local, it's national and it's global. And the BBC by its nature should be a force for all, everybody owns us. The BBC works best when it works with others.*" [BBC](#), [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only), [Radio 4](#) (debate, available for one month), [Get Creative call to action](#), [Guardian](#)

Also: The BBC is also committing to more arts programming generally, especially on BBC2, with more live events, and seasons planned on dance, film theatre and poetry. [BBC](#)

Fun Palaces reports on its first year

Fun Palaces, which encouraged communities to create an arts and sciences festival in pop up venues across the UK, has produced an evaluation of its 2014 event. The report found that 90% of those taking part want to run another event, and that only 20% of participants work in the arts and cultural sector, so the events are reaching new audiences for the cultural events and new organisers of these. Organiser Stella Duffy said, "*the expert simply reinforces the idea that the artist is other.*

The local person, on the other hand – perhaps not well-known or known at all, but expertly and compellingly enthusiastic – is a role-model who says: 'I am from here, I am like you and that means you can do this too.' The local enthusiast, rather than the flown-in expert, underlines the possibility that we can all be creative."

The organisers hope to make the core purpose 'everyone an artist, everyone a scientist' more clearly understood for the 2015 event, which takes place in October. Registration is open now for people who would like to run a Fun Palace this year. [Fun Palaces](#), [Fun Palaces](#) (take part 2015) [Guardian](#)

Ken Skates calls for Arts for All

In a speech to the Arts Council of Wales, Welsh Culture Minister Ken Skates has called for work to make Wales 'the most creative nation in Europe'. He said, "*I want to see new producers and new consumers, of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.*" He said that the Government would not "*remove government support and ask the arts sector to replace it with other forms of funding*" but that every option for additional funds had to be explored to ensure wider arts participation. [Daily Post](#), [BBC](#)

Arts Council Northern Ireland launches disability action plan

The Arts Council in Northern Ireland has launched a three year action plan to increase disabled participation in, and attendance at, cultural events. Currently 52% of disabled people are involved with the arts, a figure which they aim to increase by 5% by 2018. [Arts Council NI](#), [The Stage](#)

Fundraising

Art Fund launches sponsored museum walks

The Art Fund has repackaged the venerable institution of the sponsored walk as a fundraiser for museums. The Art Miles project launches at three museums, where after a £20 registration, participants walk around museums and their grounds to raise money. The first participants include the William Morris Gallery, and Dulwich Picture Gallery where the event also includes falconry. Participants are also encouraged to raise extra money by walking in fancy dress. [Art Fund](#)

Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grants

The Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grants fund, administered by The Art Fund, distributes £50k each year to allow curators to travel to expand their expertise. Minimum grants are £200, and there are no fixed deadlines for grants under £1.5k. [Art Fund](#)

Scottish funding deadlines announced for 2015

Museums Galleries Scotland has announced the deadlines for its grants for 2015. The first is the first round of the Small Project Fund which closes on 20th March. The Strategic Investment Fund closes on 24th April. [MGS](#)

AND launches Cultural Education Challenge

Seven out of ten visitors to London say they come for the culture, but many young people living in the city do not find it easy to access. A New Direction has launched a £900k, three year project to invest in nine ideas addressing the cultural education needs of young people. Partners receiving £100k grants are expected to provide at least 100% match funding. A Cultural Education Challenge group will steer the project over three years. [AND](#)

Wolfson and DCMS give £3m to museums

In a joint project, the Wolfson Foundation and DCMS have given £3m to museums and galleries across the UK. 25 venues received money towards renovation and improvement projects. The projects include £160k for the renovation of IWM Duxford American Air Museum, £200k for the Museum of Zoology at Cambridge University for its Wonders of the Animal Kingdom exhibition, and £51.45k for a Vikings exhibition at Tullie House. [Gov.uk](#), [Wolfson Foundation](#)

Iconoclasm

Parliament debates cultural destruction in Iraq and Syria

Robert Jenrick MP led a debate in the House of Commons on the continuing destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq. He said that 4000 sites of historic interest are now in the hands of ISIL, and that they have most recently taken the library at Mosul, destroying many books. The looting and destruction is the most extensive since the end of the Second World War. Locally curators and site guardians are risking their lives in an attempt to save heritage. Some looted material is appearing on Ebay, and in Munich, Germany.

Jenrick recommended a diplomatic effort, through the UN, Turkey, and royal connections to Gulf State rulers. He also suggested a commission into the issue, drawing on the 'unparalleled expertise' of the British Museum, and provide modest funds for training by Skype and in person. He said that creating inventories was crucial, and also described local work to digitise heritage to preserve it. He added that it may be easier to track 'dark and dangerous' ISIL funding networks through antiquities. The Minister for Europe, David Lidington, said that a new Security Council resolution requires all states to prevent trade in Iraqi and Syrian looted cultural artefacts. He said that the Government remained committed to turning the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict into law when there was parliamentary time. [Hansard](#) (from 1.29pm), [Heritage Alliance newsletter](#) (scroll)

Museum bodies deplore destruction at Mosul Museum

ICOM and museums around the world have responded to images of ISIL fighters apparently destroying ancient statues in the Mosul museum. ICOM said that it was "*deeply concerned for the safety of museum professionals in Iraq and mourns the loss of invaluable cultural heritage due to this reprehensible attack.*" The British Museum said it was difficult to verify what was happening in the film in the absence of further information, and Channel 4 has suggested that many of the objects were plaster reproductions. However, a seventh century stone bull is likely to have been an original.

Meanwhile the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad has reopened, 12 years after being looted. The ceremony was brought forward in response to events in Mosul. [Channel 4](#), [ICOM](#), [BBC](#), [Museums Journal](#)

V&A exhibition explores a history of politics, objects and destruction

The V&A's free series of displays *All Of This Belongs To You* will include the remains of the *Guardian* laptop containing information from the former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, which was destroyed at the request of GCHQ. The Museum told the *Guardian* that it hesitated because of the highly political nature of the object, but that "*the decision was helped along when a senior colleague, a medieval scholar, pointed out that the V&A had objects deliberately destroyed in the Reformation and the English civil war which were preserved for their damage and the story they told without the museum having to take sides.*" [Guardian](#)

Guidance on arts and censorship to be published

Index on Censorship is producing a series of information packs explaining the laws on sensitive issues and free expression in the arts. The guides, supported by the Arts Council, will be published in May. Julia Farrington, who is running the project said *"arts professionals rarely get any training in legal issues that impact on freedom of artistic expression. These guides will should give people more confidence in making decisions, with greater awareness of their legal rights and the role of the police."* She cited the closure of the Barbican show Exhibit B and anxiety over images of the prophet Mohammed as examples of situations where cultural bodies may need guidance. [Index on Censorship](#), [Index on Censorship](#) (detail)

Events



Jacqmar scarf, 'salvage your rubber'.

Getting involved in the Magna Carta commemorations

The Heritage Alliance is running an event at the Houses of Parliament for organisations interested in creating events to commemorate 800 years since the Magna Carta. The event is free, and runs from 3 – 4.30pm on 30th March. Booking essential. [Heritage Alliance](#)

FutureFest

Nesta's flagship annual event FutureFest is taking place on 14th – 15th March, to explore the future of money, globalisation, democracy, machines, money – and excitement. Speakers range from Baroness Helena Kennedy to Dame Vivienne Westwood and Edward Snowden. Tickets are from £40 for a day pass. [Nesta](#)

Welsh Museums Festival

The Welsh Museums Federation has announced that the Welsh Museums Festival – run for the first time in 2014 – will be repeated this year from 24th October – 1st November. Grants for those participating in the festival will be announced shortly. An evaluation of the 2014 event has just been published. [Welsh Museums Federation](#)

Also: The Scottish Festival of Museums is taking place on 15th – 17th May, and there is still time for Scottish museums and galleries to register for participation. [MGS](#)

Call for papers: British Museum's Curator of the Future

The British Museum is holding a free one day conference on 13th April to explore the idea of the 'Curator of the Future'. They are seeking proposals for papers by 6th March. Topics include: The Curatorial Survival Kit - how to survive and thrive in the changing professional landscape; A Brave New World - the impacts and opportunities for curatorial practice; and the Next Generation - supporting the current and future curatorial work force. [British Museum](#)

Creative Europe information events

The Creative Europe funding programme offers opportunities for co-operation and exchange between arts, culture and heritage organisations across different European countries. A series of free events across the UK during March, will give an introduction to the funds available and how to apply. [Creative Europe](#)

Advice from the Home Office for working with international artists

The Mayor of London is hosting a special event for cultural organisations working with international artists. The Home Office and Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture will be present, answering practical questions on visas and sharing best practice. The event takes place from 2 – 4pm on 17th March. [Eventbrite](#)

Refloating the Ark: natural history collections and environmental sustainability

A two day conference *Refloating the Ark* will look at how to reconnect the public with environmental issues via natural history collections. The event asks how museums can encourage pro-environmental behaviour. The second day focuses on scientific research in collections, and how to fund it. The event is at Manchester Museum on 17th and 18th June, tickets are £25 (one day) or £40 (both days). [Museum Development North West](#)

Fundraising for arts and heritage organisations conference

The Institute of Fundraising has created a specialist conference for arts and heritage organisations, taking place on 16th March at Toynbee Hall, London. Speakers are from institutions including the British Museum, Science Museum, Norwich Cathedral and *Guardian*, and will present a wide range of scenarios and approaches. Tickets are £250 for non IoF members, but £75 for small organisations. [IoF](#)

Resilient Leadership programme

The Arts Council in partnership with Black Country Living Museum are offering a resilient leadership course running throughout 2015. ACE will cover the £7k majority cost for each participant, with those taking part contributing £350. Most candidates will be from the East and West Midlands, but four places are available to those from elsewhere in England. The course emphasises commercial and entrepreneurial as well as leadership skills. The course runs from May 2015 – March 2016. [BCLM](#)

Eighth Annual Conference for Arabic language and culture

This conference includes workshops on how to introduce the teaching of Arabic in schools, professional development sessions and the chance to network with other Arabic teachers. It is supported by the British Council, Qatar Foundation and Greater London Authority. It takes place on 25th March at SOAS. Free, but booking required. [British Council](#)

Retirements

Sandy Nairne has retired from the NPG, eulogised in slightly teasing verse by the poet Andrew Motion, praising his stamina, good memory and stylish hat. [Art Newspaper](#)

Janet Barnes has announced that she will retire as Chief Executive of York Museums Trust in November after 13 years in the job. [Museums Journal](#)

Douglas Connell will retire as Chair of Museums Galleries Scotland. [MGS](#)

Cuts - and resilience



Blackout accessories for sale, Selfridge's, London c.1940, Ministry of Information Photo Division photographer.

Arts Council announces recipients of £17.5m Museums Resilience Fund

The Arts Council's Museums Resilience Fund has distributed £17.5m to 88 museums across the country. The fund aims to develop potential in museums of all sizes, and a number of awards are for the development of Subject Specialist Networks. Recipients included London Transport Museum, for organisational development (£844k), and Hampshire Cultural Trust (£885.5k) for a Kick Start Project to bring local museum services to a sustainable operating model. £350k has been awarded to the Association for Cultural Enterprises to roll out a three year Retail Resilience Programme teaching buying, visual merchandising and shop staff skills. Two projects in which NMDC is a partner - one led by ICOM UK and another by the British Council - have also received funding. [ACE enterprises](#), [Arts Council](#)

Museums Association publishes annual cuts survey

95 museums, broadly representative of the sector, have responded to the Museums Association's annual cuts survey. Findings include:

- 52% experienced a cut to overall income, the highest since 58% in 2011, the first year of the survey
- One in ten museums said they had considered selling part of their collection
- 35% said self-generated funding had risen, and 40% reported it has stayed the same
- 53% of museums have cut full time staff, the highest figure since the survey began
- 25% reduced the number of free events, and 36% saw a decrease in school visits

- National and local authority museums were most likely to report a fall in income over the previous year, including 55% of all local authority museums, and seven out of 11 nationals who responded
- Geographically Scotland and Central England most frequently reported decreases in overall income at 90% and 60% respectively

There was concern about the cumulative effect of cuts over several years, with one Welsh respondent commenting "*all the 'shaving' that can be done has been done, so now whole services are in danger of being cut.*" [Museums Journal](#)

The return of entry fees?

York City Council has announced cuts 50% of the budget for the York Museums Trust in 2015/16. Chief Executive Janet Barnes said, "*this latest reduction of £500,000 means York Museums Trust's income has dropped from £1.5m to £600,000 in three years, a 60% cut. The City of York Council have helped to counteract this deficit with funding for capital projects. However, York Museums Trust, like many other museums and galleries, is having to rethink the way it is run. York is fortunate to have a strong visitor base which should enable us to operate more as a cultural business than as a cultural service.*"

The group will consider whether to roll out entrance fees or a membership scheme across some sites in coming months. Meanwhile, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery are considering proposals for a £5 entrance fee for non-local visitors from May. The Council hopes that this will save £200k per year. [Museums Journal](#), [Museums Journal](#) (York), [Museums Journal](#) (Brighton)

Portable Antiquities Scheme cut by 6%

The British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme which records treasure finds across the UK is under threat from funding cuts. The Museum received 6% less funding this year, and has been supported instead by an emergency grant from the Headley Trust. It is also at risk from cuts by local authorities: a third of the 31 authorities who partner with the museum on the scheme say they will have to withdraw if their funding is cut further. Last year the Portable Antiquities Scheme recorded 113,962 finds, and there have been more than a million since it first opened in 1997. [Guardian](#), [Arts Industry](#) (subscription only)

Councillors vote to close Snibston Discovery Museum

Conservative councillors in Leicestershire have won a vote to close Snibston Discovery Museum, which they hope will save £900k. Opposition councillors have disputed the level of saving, while a group called Friends of Snibston are contemplating a judicial review of the decision. [Museums Journal](#)

Decision on selling Orpington Priory delayed for three months

Bromley Council will delay for three months a decision on whether to sell Orpington Priory and turn Bromley Museum into an unstaffed display in the library. Bromley MP Jo Johnson was among those welcoming the delay. He said, "*Orpington's heritage is very much entwined with The Priory. It must remain a landmark and a part of Orpington's future, and the collection must remain accessible to people, especially Orpington's schoolchildren.*" [News Shopper](#)

Walsall Museum goes into storage

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council has voted to remove the £70k running costs of Walsall Museum as part of £29m in cuts. The museum will close from the end of March and its collections will go into storage. There has been a further £70k cut to the Local History Centre. However, the Council is also conducting a feasibility study for a single heritage centre, and will seek £6.2m in funding. Councillor Khizar Hussain said that the Borough has lacked space to show more than a fraction of collections and has ambitions to make them more accessible for education and general public access in the longer term. [Museums Journal](#), [Walsall Advertiser](#)

Also: Ipswich is in the early stages of planning a £23m makeover of its arts offer – combining Ipswich Museum, the Wolsey Studio theatre, Ipswich Art School and the High Street Exhibition Gallery. A café, shop and performance space are planned, and the work could be complete by 2019 if funding is found. [BBC](#)

Awards

English Heritage Angel Awards open for 2015

The English Heritage annual Angel Awards are open for applications until 26th April. Based around the Heritage at risk register, they offer awards for those involved in restoring places of worship, industrial heritage, individual craftsmanship and the best rescue of any other site. [English Heritage](#),

Voting open for most inspiring museum

The *Guardian* and Museums + Heritage Awards have again partnered on a prize for most inspiring museum in the past 12 months. A shortlist of five museums will now go to public vote: they are Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the People's History Museum, Kelmscott Manor, King Richard III Visitor Centre and The Haslemere Education Museum. Voting closes on 20th March. [Guardian](#)

Apply for an artist for Museums at Night

Museums at Night has announced the names of six contemporary artists available for attending Museums at Night events. They are Alinah Azadeh, Luke Jerram, Pure Evil, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Gillian Wearing and Davy & Kristin McGuire. Museums can bid for an artist for an event with a deadline of 20th March. [Museums at Night](#)

Surveys

Paying artists survey

The Paying Artists campaign has launched a survey inviting artists, galleries and curators to input thoughts to help set a rate for artists' fees. Previous research found that the majority of interested parties believe that artists should be paid for exhibitions. The survey runs until 20th March. [Paying artists](#)

Welsh museums and local authority funding – share your views

The Expert Panel currently researching the effect of changes to local authority funding and structure on museums in Wales is holding an event for museum sector workers to give their views. They are seeking views on the effect if local authorities withdraw from museum funding, and on the future role of local museums in Wales. The event takes place on the afternoon of 11th March at Merthyr Tydfil. Tickets are free. Alternatively, submissions can be made online. [Eventbrite](#), [Wales.gov](#)

VisitEngland's annual Visitor Attractions survey

VisitEngland has recently launched its Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions, which is open to all attractions in England. Museums and galleries should receive one copy of a unique survey per venue by email or post by the end of March. All participants will receive their own report, benchmarking performance against similar participating attractions. The survey attracts considerable media interest. If your museum does not receive a questionnaire, or if you have any other questions about the survey, contact AnnualAttractionsSurvey@visitengland.org

Collections

Ed Vaizey blocks the travels of St Paula

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has placed an export bar on Claude Lorrain's *A Mediterranean port at sunrise with the Embarkation of Saint Paula for Jerusalem* in hope of finding a UK buyer to match the £5,066,500 asking price. The picture, bathed in dawn sunlight, features an unusual subject for 17th century art. The bar is in place until 1st May, with a possible extension to 1st November if there is a serious intention to raise funds. [Gov.uk](#)

Two collections donated through the Cultural Gifts Scheme

Two collections have been donated to the nation through the Cultural Gifts Scheme. A rare Italian photography collection, consisting of 40 images by six photographers, has been given to Tate. Sir Nicholas Serota said, *"since 2000 Tate has made a strong commitment to photography and we are delighted to bring this very significant group of Italian photographs into the collection."* A collection of 327 pottery items created by major potter Alan Caiger-Smith has been given to Great Dixter House in East Sussex. [Arts Council](#)

Tech

One stop shop website for war memorials launched

A website has been launched to record all war memorials in the UK, and carry information on sources of funding for their upkeep. The website will eventually include modern memorials, including those to conflict in Afghanistan, and is a partnership between Imperial War Museums, Civic Voice, English Heritage and the War Memorials Trust. The site is the latest of a series of cultural projects to be funded with fines from the LIBOR banking scandal. [Gov.uk](#)

Nesta reflects on three years of digital R&D

Since 2012, Nesta and the Arts Council have collaborated on a digital R&D fund, allowing museums and arts organisations to road test innovative new technology. Recent projects include an immersive street-based digital game at Sheffield Doc/Fest, attracting over 2,000 people. Learning points from the early projects include the importance of having contingency funding if things do not work out technically the first time around, early user testing and getting calls to action right to persuade people to join in. Final reports, toolkits and videos based on the projects will be published throughout 2015. [Nesta](#)

Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- [Digital Content Officer - Royal Armouries](#)
- [Collections Care Curator - National Army Museum, Stevenage](#)
- [Researcher Executive - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Windows Services Infrastructure Analyst - V&A](#)
- [Head of Content and Community - British Library](#)
- [Facilitators x 2 - National Museum of Rural Life](#)

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

, [ACE Enterprises](#)

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