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Members' news



'For Lo, Winter is Past' by Marion Adnams, 1963 oil on board. c. Derby Museums Trust.

Derby's Museum of Making receives £9.4m HLF support

HLF has confirmed its contribution of £9.4m towards Derby Silk Mill's transformation into a Museum of Making. The site of one of the world's first factories, manufacturing and making will be part of the museum's offer, allowing people to create objects and learn new skills. The process of designing the museum has itself been highly collaborative: so far 19,000 people have attended 190 events to contribute to the final plan. The museum aims to 'celebrate Derby's heritage as a city of makers' and raise the aspirations of future generations. £4m has also been contributed by Derby City Council. The museum will reopen in 2020. Derby Telegraph, Derby Museums Trust

Tristram Hunt calls for pedestrianisation of Exhibition Road following crash

V&A Director Tristram Hunt has called for the pedestrianisation of Exhibition Road following a car crash which injured 11 people on 7th October. The accident was responded to by armed police, who initially feared a terrorist attack. Currently 11 million people walk through the area each year which had a £30m upgrade in 2012 and has patterned street tiles and no raised pavements. Hunt, who described the current layout as 'confusing, dangerous and unsatisfactory' has been arguing for full pedestrianisation for some time, most recently during a speech the day before the accident. He said the V&A will now work with 'neighbouring organisations, residents and the council' to address the issue. A spokesperson for Kensington & Chelsea council said work carried out since 2011 and a 20mph speed limit had 'dramatically cut collisions' on Exhibition Road. ALVA, Evening Standard

NMRN conservator becomes Ambassador for Antarctic project

The National Museum of the Royal Navy's conservator Diana McCormack has been appointed the first Conservation Ambassador to the Antarctic Heritage Trust, which cares for the bases used by Antarctic explorers including Shackleton and Scott. She beat hundreds of other worldwide applicants for the voluntary post and will now spend six weeks on Ross Island, blogging her experiences for NMRN. She said *"the extreme temperatures make for a challenging conservation environment not just for the wooden huts themselves but the everyday contents found inside, including bedding, cans, diaries, food and drink. But I'm hoping that my experience of working on wooden ships like Victory which has its own battle with salt water...will hold me in good stead."* Shaping Portsmouth

Images this month: from a Singular Woman to a Grimm Christmas

Images this month come from current and forthcoming exhibitions at Derby Museums Trust. The Crafts Council Touring exhibition 'A Curious Turn' runs to 19th November, and involves a VR film captured by Derby Museums with help from a local company. 'ARTIST ROOMS - Richard Long: Drawn from the Land' and 'Marion Adnams - A Singular Woman' both open on 2nd December and run until 4th March. Also on 2nd December Pickford's House is running its annual tribute to the Georgian Christmas this year inspired by the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales first published in 1812. Derby Museums Trust

How to borrow a spaceship (and other more grounded loan opportunities)



Would you like to borrow this spaceship? Soyuz spacecraft, courtesy of the Science Museum Group.

Science Museum Group launches contest to display Soyuz spacecraft

The Soyuz spacecraft which returned astronaut Tim Peake to Earth will be touring various venues in the UK over the next two years. The Science Museum Group has now launched a competition, inviting venues to apply to display the capsule for three months between August – November 2018. There will be no hire or transport fees, although applicants will have to meet other costs, such as staffing and insurance. There is also an accompanying VR experience for which venues can charge an entry fee. The deadline for applications is 23.59 on 1st December. Science Museum Group

Government guidance on protecting objects on loan from abroad from seizure

DCMS has published guidance for museums borrowing loan items from abroad on how to ensure the loans are not seized by UK courts in cases where ownership is in dispute. Objects are protected from seizure when displayed in a museum or gallery approved by the Culture Secretary, where a list of loans has been published, and where the museum has carried out due diligence on the object. The guidance includes an application form to become an approved museum; once certified, a museum does not have to reapply to host every new loan from abroad. Gov.uk

Getting loan ready: free four-day British Museum course

The British Museum is holding a free four-day residential course to give in-depth training on borrowing from 23rd – 26th January 2018. The training is designed for people working or volunteering within the museum and heritage sector who would like to develop their knowledge of the loans process so that their organisations will be better able to borrow from national collections in future. Travel and accommodation bursaries are available for all delegates through the support of the HLF. There are only 10 places, and delegates will be chosen by the British Museum. Since the training has so far been delivered only in England, delegates from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be prioritised. The deadline for expressions of interest is 15th November. British Museum

One-day collections sharing sessions

The British Museum is also running a series of one-day collections expertise sharing sessions. Again, travel expenses will be paid. Dates and topics are:

- Integrated Pest Management: Pests, Risks and Habitat – 15 November 2017
- Eastern Pictorial Art Handling – 17 November 2017
- Exhibition Installation Scheduling – 7 December 2017
- Storage of Ethnographic Collections Material: Challenges and Solutions – 25 January 2018

Cultural economics

ACE publishes updated figures for the contribution of arts to the economy

ACE has published a second update of its Centre for Economic and Business Research (Cebr) report, first produced in 2013, which assesses the value of the arts and culture to the UK economy. In many cases the figures show significant growth since the initial report. However, the creative industries, museums and libraries remain outside this assessment. Findings include:

- In 2015 alone, the arts and culture sector grew by 10.4%, five times faster than the economy in general.
- It employed 131,200 people in 2015.
- For every £1 generated by arts and culture a further £1.30 is generated in the wider economy.
- Arts and culture industry contributed £2.6bn to the Exchequer in 2015, or £5 for every £1 of public funding. ACE, ACE (press release), The Times (paywall)

Access to work in the museum sector

Museum salaries 7% below market average

Research by the Museums Association for its Salary Guidelines 2017 indicate that workers in the sector earn 7% less than the market average for similar jobs. Junior roles are the most affected with learning roles 13% less well paid and curatorial and collections management work 25% behind. The research, funded by ACE, raises questions about whether continuing low pay at entry and the expectation of postgraduate qualifications will allow the sector to develop a more diverse workforce. The MA's Director Sharon Heal said *"we know that a narrow entry path can squeeze people out, especially if it is combined with recruitment that focuses on mirroring the workforce that we already have."* Museums Journal

Unpaid work experience (prohibition) Bill

The second reading of the Unpaid work experience (prohibition) Bill, a private member's bill brought by Lord Holmes of Richmond (Con), took place on 27th October. The Bill aims at banning unpaid work experience lasting for more than four weeks. The Heritage Alliance has expressed reservations: it says the economic value of heritage volunteering paid at the minimum wage is estimated at £520m for 2015 – 16. However, in his introduction Lord Holmes said *"the Bill as currently drafted will have no impact on the great work that volunteers do for many different organisations and many parts of our society. However, I hope that it will stop long-term unpaid internships that some charitable and third-sector organisations provide."* He said only 4% of young people polled said they could take up unpaid work with no financial difficulty and only 10% of employers said that they would employ fewer interns if a minimum wage after four weeks was enforced. The Bill drew speeches of support from across the political spectrum. The government has also released recent polling data from the Social Mobility Commission showing 72% of the public support a change in the law, and 80% want internships to be publicly advertised, not arranged informally. Parliament.uk, Parliament.uk (Hansard transcript), The Stage, Gov.uk

Creative Industries Federation publishes Global Talent Report

The Creative Industries Federation has published its Global Talent Report which assesses the impact of Brexit on the sector. Subtitled 'why the UK's world-leading creative industries need international workers and how to attract them', it explains that 75% of 250 businesses contacted by CIF employ EU nationals. The reliance is unevenly distributed across the sector, with an average of 6.7% of the creative workforce overall rising to 25% for architects and 30% for visual effects workers. Statistics (pg. 13) show that figures for EU employees in the museum sector are not currently available, but data is given across other arts sectors. CIF

Government to publish Brexit impact report for museum sector

The Department for Exiting the EU has published a list of 58 sectors for which it has produced impact studies. These include museums, galleries and libraries as well as many areas of the arts, including film, music and the performing and visual arts. The government initially said the detail of the reports would remain secret so that negotiations can be 'conducted in a safe space'. However, it has now said it will publish the reports after some redactions. At the time of writing, the exact nature of the Brexit reports is uncertain, and Brexit Secretary David Davis says the material is not in the form of 'discrete impact assessments'. BBC, BBC, Independent

Also: Scientists have been told that if the UK leaves the EU with no deal, they will have to leave EU joint projects such as Horizon2020. Many Horizon2020 programmes which will extend beyond March 2019 have an application deadline of December 3rd this year. Wellcome Trust Director Jeremy Farrar said *"uncertainty about whether British researchers will be eligible for grants after we leave in 2019 is already having a chilling effect."* ScienceBusiness, TES

Museums Accreditation review FAQs

The Arts Council intends to open its plans for a 'light touch' Museums Accreditation review for consultation later in the year, but in the meantime has published some FAQs to guide museums, in particular giving advice to those expecting to renew accreditation in 2018, and those with changing governance structures. ACE

Appointments and resignations

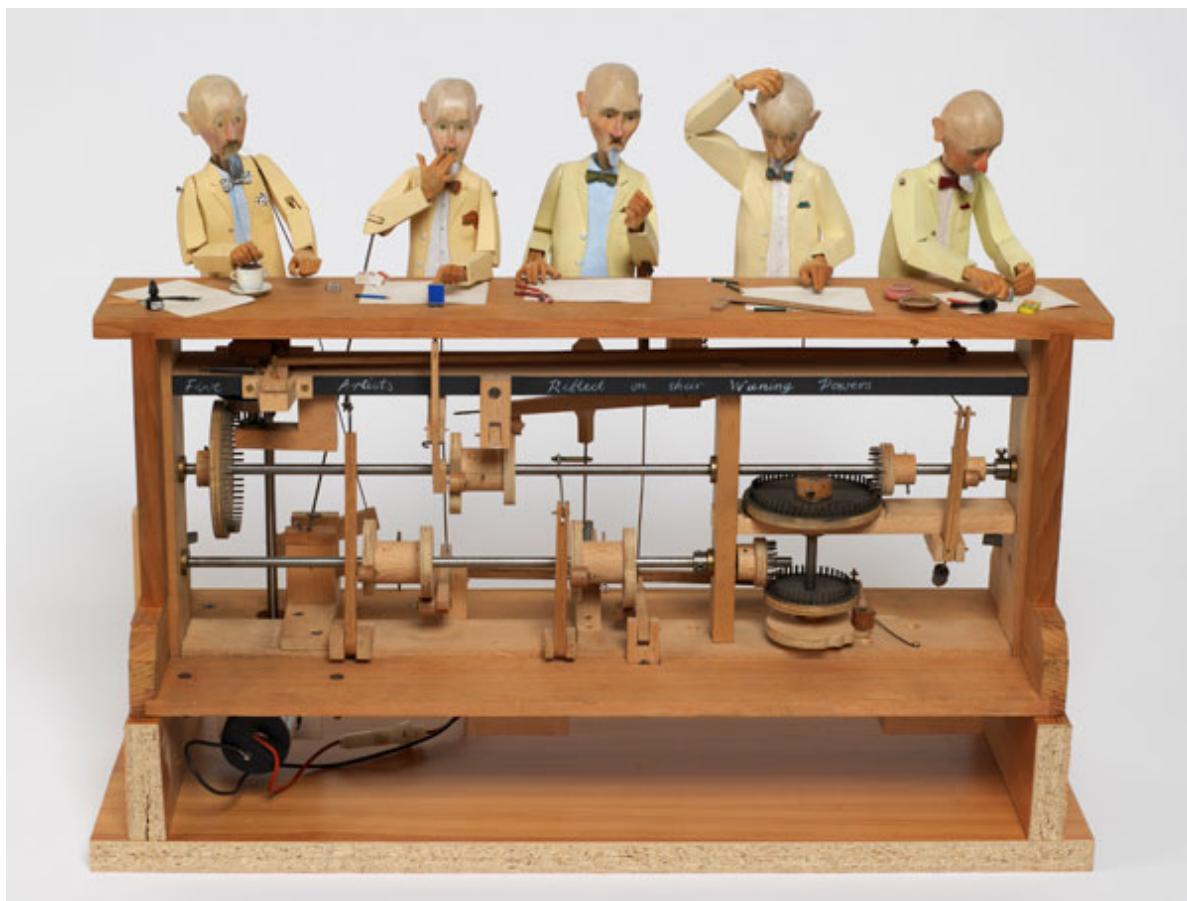
Alistair Hudson has been appointed as the new Director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery, a post which he will take up in the new year. He is currently Director at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Museums Journal, University of Manchester

Nick Merriman has been appointed Director of the Horniman Museum, and will take up the post next May when current Director Janet Vitmeyer retires. He is currently Director of Manchester Museum. Museums Journal, Horniman

Dea Birkett will be stepping down as Creative Director 14 years after founding Kids in Museums. Kids in Museums

The Director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions Bernard Donoghue has been appointed as the Mayor of London's Ambassador for Cultural Tourism. ALVA

The future uses of natural histories



'Five Artists Reflect On Their Waning Powers', Paul Spooner, 1983. Todd White Art Photography. At Derby Museums Trust until 20th November.

An Ark of new species: discovering new animals in natural history collections

New Scientist reports that natural history collections in museums have become as important as forays into the wild for discovering new species. More than 1000 new species of beetles are identified each year in the collections of the Natural History Museum alone, but snakes, amphibians and even large mammals have been newly identified through museum holdings. 75% of new finds in nature are found to be already in museum collections somewhere in the world. This is partly because of the painstaking business of identification and classification: on average this takes 21 years across all organisms. Misclassification is also a risk: a plant research project by the University of Oxford and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in 21 countries found half of all species had been wrongly named. The article also explores risks to natural history collections, from underfunding, to the April 2016 fire which destroyed the National Museum of Natural History in New Delhi. However, there are also some extraordinary finds: a new species of ape was collected by the American Museum of Natural History in 1917, but misidentified until earlier this year, when it was named the Skywalker hoolock gibbon. On a more micro scale, a beetle collected by Darwin in 1832 languished unclassified in the Natural History Museum for 180 years until finally receiving the name *Darwinilus sedarisi* - its discoverer had been listening to audiobooks of comic writer David Sedaris as he wrote the tiny creature's description. *New Scientist* (paywall)

Also: The Natural History Museum's Annual Report reveals that in 2016 - 17 it gave researchers around the world access to more than 3.2m biodiversity records on 47,000 species. NHM

ICOM monographs series begins with 'Future of Natural History Museums'

ICOM is publishing a new series of monographs 'Advances in Museum Research', focusing on different types of museum and diverse areas of activity. The first book 'The Future of Natural History Museums' edited by Eric Dorman has just been published. It explores the changing role of these museums as global biodiversity declines, as well as discussing the effects of new technology. ICOM, Pittsburgh lectures

Whale killed by plastics accessioned by Norwegian museum

A goose-beaked whale which was washed up dying on the west coast of Norway has been accessioned by the University Museum of Bergen. A post mortem showed that the creature had been made ill by plastic bags and microplastics. Zoologist Dr Terje Lislevand said 'the whale's stomach was full of plastic bags and packaging with labels in Danish and English.' Its skeleton will now be preserved and displayed at the University of Bergen. University of Bergen

New museums and transformations

Museum and former synagogue to receive £2.9m to double in size

Manchester Jewish Museum is to receive £2.9m from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards its plans for a £4m upgrade. The museum is housed in a former synagogue, built in 1874 by Jewish textile merchants with Spanish and Portuguese architectural influences. The work will double the size of the museum with an extension to house new galleries, learning spaces, a shop and café. The museum holds over 30,000 objects from personal letters and photographs, to Torah scrolls concealed from the Nazis. Chief Executive Max Dunbar said "*these stories remind us what happens when people, politics and religion drive us apart – and how a city like Manchester can bring people together.*" Work begins at the end of 2018, and the upgraded museum will reopen in 2020. HLF, Museums Journal, Manchester Jewish Museum

Holocaust memorial design published

The winning design for a new Holocaust memorial and learning centre, to be built next to Parliament, has been published. Adjaye Associates led the successful bid. The exterior is divided by 23 'fins' which require the visitor to choose a solitary path down one of a multiplicity of routes to a central area, with a learning centre below ground. The structure will be placed at the far southern end of the gardens to allow most of the area to continue to be used as a park. Meanwhile IWM has welcomed the monument, but has questioned the inclusion of an education centre less than a mile from its own Holocaust gallery, where it has advanced £33.5m plans for a 'digitally enabled learning and events suite'. Director Diane Lees said *"we urge the reconsideration of the creation of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's learning centre... as it will very much divide the public offer on learning about the Holocaust."* The Foundation's Chair Sir Peter Bazalgette said the two locations had 'distinct yet complementary objectives' adding 'we see no reason why the two cannot continue to work together'. ALVA, Guardian

Also: A new book by Rebecca Abrams 'The Jewish Journey' traces the history of Jewish people through 4,000 years using 22 objects from the Ashmolean. Object range from a jasper seal the size of a thumb made in the 8th century BCE and a bronze cauldron made in England in 1260, 30 years before Jews were expelled. Guardian

Public viewing gallery for conservation work of Dorset County Museum

Dorset County Museum has received £11m from the HLF to transform its spaces, including exhibition, learning and research areas. There will also be specially designed archive and conservation workshops with a public viewing gallery, so visitors can see what is often the private, practical work of the museum. Only 1.5% of the museum's four million items are currently on display; far more will be on view after the development. The museum has to raise a remaining £1.6m for the project to go ahead. Dorset County Museum, Museums Journal

Southend Council plans new £40m museum

Southend Council has appointed an architect to create a new £40m beachfront complex which will include a museum as well as a planetarium, shops, a restaurant and multi-storey car park. The museum will tell the history of the River Thames and particularly feature the 'tomb of the Prittlewell Prince' and a recently rediscovered 17th century shipwreck. Councillors have visited venues including the Jorvik Centre and Museum of London to gain ideas and inspiration for the project. Publishing lavish pictures of the planned four galleries and extensive steel and glass exterior, local website Love Southend, also reports on local scepticism as previous plans from Southend Council have run out of steam. ALVA, Love Southend

Events



'Monkey Harvest', Marion Adnams, 1945, oil on panel.

Heritage Day 2017

The Heritage Alliance is holding its annual Heritage Day this year on 5th December at the RSA, London, featuring a speech by Culture and Heritage Minister John Glen. Tickets are £50 for members and £30 for non-members. Heritage Alliance

Portable Antiquities Scheme event

A one-day Portable Antiquities Scheme event, 'PAST Explorers' will look at how data from 1.2m objects on the PAS database is being used to unlock new historical insights. The event takes place at National Museum Cardiff on 18th November. Tickets are free but registration is essential. British Museum

'Preparing to prosper' AIM events

AIM is launching a new publication, 'Preparing to Prosper' this autumn, which draws together case studies and learning from its 'Hallmarks of Prospering Museums' programme. There will be three launch events:

- 11 Cavendish Sq, London, 6th December, 2 – 6pm, followed by drinks
- Fazeley Studios, Birmingham, 17th January, 11.30 – 4pm
- St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, 30th January, 11.30 – 4pm

Each event will feature Paul Hamlyn Chief Executive, Moira Sinclair, plus speakers who have effectively used Hallmarks at their museum or heritage attraction. Tickets are £25. AIM

The Learning Curve: leading a learning museum

GEM is offering an advanced workshop for directors and learning staff exploring how to run a 'learning museum' in the broadest terms, and describing how learning can permeate areas from fundraising to community engagement and social enterprise. The course is devised and led by Nick Winterbotham, a former Chief Executive of a number of museums. There is a choice of three dates: York on 23rd November; Stowmarket 14th December; Dudley 2nd February 2018. Tickets are £75 or £100 for two when a director and learning officer attend together. GEM

Great Exhibition of the North update

Branding materials are now available for the Great Exhibition of the North which takes place in Newcastle-Gateshead from 22nd June – September 2018. New aspects of the programme have been announced including transforming the Great North Museum into 'a fantastical immersive space' and making the Sage Gateshead a home to 'great musicians of every genre' during the exhibition. Potential partners are invited to see how they can take part via the new website. Great Exhibition

Civilisations Festival: Welsh dates for digital workshops

Further digital workshop dates for museums taking part in the BBC's Civilisations Festival have been announced. These are:

- Cardiff, National Museum – 9th November
- Bangor, Storiol Museum – 14th November
- a further workshop in Belfast is now likely to take place on 20th November

Email connectedstudio@bbc.co.uk with 'Civilisations' in the subject field if you are interested in attending on any of these dates.

Museums participating in the festival will have free access to make use of digital technology either owned or licensed by the BBC, some of which appears on its experimental 'Taster' platform. The strands include:

- 30 or so highlight objects from museums will be 3D photographed to appear on a curated site of downloadable augmented reality. Users will be able to see your star object sitting in their own environment through smartphones or tablets.
- Turn images and audio into simple storyboards benefiting from the footfall from large BBC audiences
- SOMA Live Capture to easily broadcast museum events BBC
- A VR platform which turns film into immersive reality and allows users to find their own way through a story. Techcrunch
- SeenIt which allows museums to collect short films from a wider audience and curate them into a storyline connected to your collections. SeenIt

There is more background detail, including how to sign up your museum on the NMDC website. It is essential to complete the form here to receive communications for Festival partners - signing up does not commit your institution to taking part.

Volunteer Makers

The group 'Volunteer Makers' has now published the full programme of speakers for its free event at the fringe of the MA conference on November 17th. Speakers from TWAM, the Geffrye Museum, Corinium Museum and others will explain how they have benefited from a digitally-driven, skills matched, micro-volunteering programme. Volunteer makers

GDPR guidance and courses

Various cultural sector and charity bodies have published materials useful to museums working towards compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, which come into force next Spring. These include:

- AIM has published a short guide for small museums. The guide does not cover every aspect of the new rules, but focuses on the most important aspects that small museums should be considering now.
- The Information Commissioners Office has set up an advice service aimed at smaller organisations.

- The MA is running a course on 8th December encompassing copyright and GDPR.
- NCVO has broadcast a webinar covering the topic which is available online.
- MOOC provider FutureLearn is offering a more general free four-week online course on GDPR.
- M + H is also offering a free webinar

AIM, M+H, FutureLearn, ICO, Museums Journal, NCVO

MA museums survey reminder

The deadline for completing the MA's annual Museums Survey is 24th November. It takes around 15 minutes to complete and is 'the best way that a museum can contribute to the MA's regional and national advocacy efforts'. Museums Journal

Museum Shop Sunday

The Association for Cultural Enterprises is promoting 26th November as 'Museum Shop Sunday'. Museum shops are encouraged to join a countrywide campaign to promote their goods in the run up to Christmas, with suggested events including book signings, 'meet the maker', food or drink tastings and giveaways. It also suggests setting up a 'museum crawl' where museums co-ordinate a route for visitors across a wider area. The site offers downloadable branding and resources for those wishing to take part. Association for Cultural Enterprises

Takeover day: starting small

The annual Kids in Museums Takeover Day is on 17th November in England. There is still time for museums which have not previously taken part to get involved, and Kids in Museums suggests a handful of simple ideas for institutions wanting to put a toe in the water with a small number of participants. AIM, Kids in Museums

Funding

Pilot project finds matched crowdfunding increases donations by 17%

Last August, Nesta and the Arts Council launched a pilot scheme to discover the effect of match funding on 59 arts and cultural crowdfunding projects. The Nesta report 'Matching the Crowd' found that average donations grew from £63 to £74 compared to similar projects without institutional support. Overall £251.5k was donated by ACE and HLF, while 4,970 individuals gave £405.9k. Of the public donors, 20% had never previously backed an arts or heritage project, and 80% had not backed that particular cultural body. 1% of backers gave 24% of the money. Culture Minister John Glen called the pilot 'very promising' adding "*by using crowdfunding platforms, groups can also access a range of additional benefits, including stronger partnerships, increased volunteering and public feedback on their campaigns*" Civil Society, Nesta

Scottish Festival of Museums Fund now open

Museums Galleries Scotland's Festival of Museums Fund is now open for applications. Sums of between £300 - £1500 are available to fund up to 75% of the cost of events. The deadline is 24th November. MGS

Charities Aid Foundation publishes annual analysis of giving

The Charities Aid Foundation has published its annual analysis of giving, using data from 2016. It finds that giving is growing, women are more likely to give than men, and younger people are less likely to give than older groups. Museums are not sifted into a separate section: arts receive 2% of giving, conservation, environment and heritage 7%. Religious and medically-linked causes receive the largest percentage of donations, each at around 20%. CAF

Scottish government contributes £5m to Burrell Collection redevelopment

The Scottish government has announced that it will be contributing £5m to the £66m improvements to the Burrell Collection building in Glasgow. The art museum is currently closed to 2020. Chair of Glasgow Life David McDonald described the support as 'a ringing endorsement for our ambitious plans'. Scottish government

Looking deeper into the mind



From ARTIST ROOMS: Richard Long. At Derby Museums Trust from 2nd December.

Interviewing the amygdala: National Trust uses MRI machine for research

In the first piece of research of its kind, the National Trust has used Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the brain (fMRI) to pin down how people respond to places. The work was carried out in partnership with the University of Surrey and Walnut Unlimited, focusing on brain areas including the amygdala, which processes emotion, and the Parahippocampal Place Area (PPA), which responds specifically to places. 20 people were scanned and a larger group of 2,000 people were interviewed about place. The study found:

- The PPA responds more strongly to 'meaningful' rather than ordinary places.
- The amygdala responds more strongly to meaningful places than it does to valued objects, such as photographs or a wedding ring.
- 78% of people are drawn to places which are meaningful to them, which in the study was 42% urban and 21% rural areas, and which related either to childhood memories, friends and relatives or the present.
- The research suggests that places support people in four areas: wellbeing, nostalgia, security and survival. Self-identity is also an important aspect of valued places: 86% say the place is 'part of them' and 58% agree they 'feel like I belong' when visiting.

The unchanging nature of some heritage sites was valued by some people quoted in the report. Jan says: *"I have been coming to Blaise Castle since I was a child and it's never changed in all the years I've been visiting. I love that, because it means it's the same in my memories as it is in real life, and I can recreate the memories easily when I visit. It's my safe place and I'd be very sad if it were to change."* National Trust, Guardian, Telegraph

DCMS champions mindfulness at work

Speaking at a conference on mindfulness attended by 20 MPs from 15 countries, Sports Minister Tracey Crouch revealed that the practice is used at DCMS and has become 'very important in terms of policy development'. Another fan, Tim Loughton MP said "*mindfulness is not a universal panacea but it certainly can help in the fight against the epidemic of mental illness.*" Some museums have also embraced mindfulness: for the past four years Manchester Art Gallery has developed its Mindful Museum project with a variety of audiences from primary school children to newly qualified teachers, mental health service users and the long term unemployed. MAG staff have also trained other museum bodies including Museums Galleries Scotland and the National Gallery in the practice. Guardian, Manchester Art Gallery

AHRC publishes report on university cultural research and mental health

Mental ill health makes up 20% of the disease burden in the UK – more than cancer and cardiovascular disease – and is the most common reason for people taking time off work. AHRC has published a new report 'Exploring Mental Health and Wellbeing' which explores cross-disciplinary work at four universities drawing together science and culture to better support wellbeing. Professor Martin Halliwell said "*museum and gallery research can lead to new ways of curating images that help to break down stigma barriers that cling to terms like mental illness*". The report also breaks down the disciplines given grants by AHRC for mental health-related work, and found that six went to cultural and museum studies, four to visual arts and five to history projects, together a significant proportion of all grants. AHRC

Also: The Arts Council of Wales has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Welsh NHS Confederation. The MoU aims to promote the contribution of arts to wellbeing, reducing pressure on NHS services. Arts Council of Wales

Museums on Prescription win award

The Museums on Prescription programme, which is the first to directly link museums with referrers from health and social care, has won a Royal Society for Public Health Award in the Arts and Health category. The project is a collaboration between seven museums, University College London and Canterbury Christ Church University. It created creative programmes for lonely older adults aged 65 to 94 and assessed the impact on wellbeing. The British Museum, the Beaney and UCL museums were among the participants. The judging panel said "*Museums on Prescription stood out as a sustainable and cost effective programme which empowers organisations that already exist to work in a new way.*" RSPH

Tourism

VisitBritain reports 8% rise in overseas tourists in first half of 2017

Figures from VisitBritain show an 8% rise to 23.1m in overseas visitors to the UK for January – June 2017, with the average expected to be around 6% for the whole year. Domestic UK holidays also rose by 7%. BTA Chairman Steve Ridgeway attributed some of this success to the £40m Discover England fund, launched by the government in 2015, which encourages tourism-related organisations to work together to create attractive bookable holidays. He added "*you cannot just build a strong, resilient industry on a weaker currency. We must continue to invest in developing world-class tourism products*". VisitBritain

Also: VisitBritain has published its 2016 – 17 Annual Review, with the highlights condensed into a three-minute film. VisitBritain

VisitEngland offers new website helping tourism venues write an accessibility guide

20% of potential visitors to tourist attractions are disabled, and 54% of these say they avoid visiting new places when it is unclear whether their access requirements will be met. Only 7% of this audience will be wheelchair users, and offering access for those with many other types of impairment is often overlooked by venues. VisitEngland has created a new website allowing visitor attractions to fill in a template with their offer, and then link to it from their own website, providing clear and comprehensive advice. The Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow found a 200% increase in people accessing the information using the new format. Accessibility Guides website, AIM

Valuing heritage in a 'placeless' world

As part of the Ironbridge Gorge Trust's 50th anniversary celebrations, Loyd Grossman, Chair of the Heritage Alliance, gave its Annual Lecture, 'Heritage in a Post Truth World'. The whole lecture is available on the Ironbridge Gorge YouTube channel. He said that although 'heritage' may appear to be a static concept, it is shifting along with the 'meta trends' which are also shaking up world politics. He identified the shrinking state, death of expert opinion, people power and globalisation as shaping forces. The definition of what heritage is has moved out of the hands of 'highly intellectual architectural historians' such as Nicholas Pevsner to a much wider group: a shift typified by a popular campaign to save the Brutalist architecture of Preston Bus Station from demolition. It now has Grade II listed status. Education has therefore become even more important: *"if the public are increasingly going to define what heritage is, we want them to know what they are talking about"*. Globalisation has led to a 'placeless world' – where Dubai is almost indistinguishable from Shanghai, and UK high streets are increasingly cloned. In this context, the UK's large number of heritage buildings (housing most of its major institutions) are a significant advantage. Grossman argues that London 'tenaciously holds on' as a world financial centre, because people prefer it to Frankfurt; similarly business start-ups in old buildings succeed more frequently than those in new builds. Grossman argues that this is not just about nostalgia – examples from the past provide concrete inspiration for the future. Nevertheless, despite the economic and creative power of heritage, governments of all parties have needed reminding of the value of heritage as a core asset, not an add on. Ironbridge Gorge

Places at risk

Brighton Pavilion Gardens among the new additions to 'Places At Risk' register

Historic England has published its annual 'Heritage at Risk' list of places and buildings in danger of decay or destruction. 387 places were removed from the 2017 list and 328 added. Bedlam Furnace at Ironbridge Gorge was removed from the register after a protective canopy was erected over its brick structure. Brighton Pavilion Gardens was added; its character is at risk partly because of the higher footfall of visitors, but also because of modern urban fittings from litter bins to signage and lighting. Historic England is now working with the local council to 'redress the balance'. Historic England, BBC, Ironbridge Gorge

Trees designated 'living war memorials' may be chopped down in Sheffield

23 trees planted in Sheffield as monuments to pupils from Western Road Council School who died in the First World War are scheduled to be chopped down as part of Amey's controversial tree management contract with Sheffield Council. The Imperial War Museum and War Memorials Trust have recognised the London plane, lime, sycamore and ash trees, which were planted in 1919, as 'living war memorials'. Artist Dan Llywelyn Hall, who painted the Queen in 2013, is leading a painting protest in the street to draw attention to the fate of the trees. Guardian, War Memorials Online

Also: Shetland Amenity Trust, which runs Shetland Museum and Archives has run into deficit in the past couple of years and is now contemplating cuts which may involve job losses. The body has 90 employees. Museums Journal

Lloyds rethinks plan to close its museum of money

Lloyds Banking group has decided not to close its Museum on the Mound in Edinburgh, following criticism of the plan in the Scottish Parliament by Labour MSP Kezia Dugdale and by a Green local councillor. 50,000 people visit the seven-room museum each year including many schoolchildren. The building also houses the headquarters of the Bank of Scotland. Chair of Lloyd's executive committee Philip Grant said *"the group received a number of representations that made clear the depth of feeling about the value of the museum and its education work in particular"* Museums Journal, Green Party, Herald Scotland

Also: The Scotsman has published a list of small and often overlooked museums in Edinburgh. Scotsman

Cinema Museum and former Lambeth workhouse building faces closure

The Cinema Museum in Lambeth faces closure, after the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust indicated it is seeking to sell the building to the highest bidder. The site was formerly Lambeth workhouse, and Charlie Chaplain lived there for some time as a child with his impoverished mother and brother. The museum has previously tried to come to an arrangement to buy the building. 12,000 people have signed a petition asking the NHS Trust to reconsider. A spokesperson for the Trust said *"we are exploring options for the potential sale of the site. As part of this, we are in discussion with the Cinema Museum. We are aware of the Museum's situation and recognise the importance of its heritage and the contribution it makes to our local community. As a public body, it is our duty and aim to sell these properties so that we maximise the value of these assets."* Evening Standard

New networks



A Georgian Christmas, returning to Pickford House on 2nd December.

UK Pleistocene and Palaeolithic

British Museum staff have set up a new forum for the archaeological and scientific understanding of the Pleistocene and Palaeolithic record in the United Kingdom: PALNETUK. It aims to support communication and networking across the sector to improve its approach to the human and environmental records of the Ice Age. As a first step in developing this network they invite interested colleagues to join the mailing list, hosted by JISCMail – to subscribe, email the words "SUBSCRIBE PALNETUK" to PALNETUK-REQUEST@JISCMail.AC.UK

Disabled people in museums: exhibitions and access

A new mailing list has been formed to connect those working on aspects of deaf, autistic and disabled people's relationship to museums and archives. The list embraces both work on the history of disabled people's lives and exhibitions about them, as well as access issues – from getting into the building to the way museum exhibition information is presented. Increasingly there is an overlap between digital, haptic, augmented and virtual reality and disabled access and storytelling as technologies open up new possibilities. The list is aimed to broadly connect all these issues, as well as access to work in museums for disabled people. Organisers encourage people working on any facet of this agenda to join. A growing number of national museums are participating; the list is initially being managed by the History of Place project. To join send an email with "SUBSCRIBE DIMU" in the header to DIMU-REQUEST@JISCMAIL.AC.UK. History of Place

Young people's cultural and digital learning

Taking Part statistics show large number of younger people using digital creatively

DCMS has extracted further data from its 2016 – 17 Taking Part survey. The two reports focus on Heritage and Digital engagement (but not museums in this batch). Digital statistics showed that:

- 1% of children engaged in creative digital activities in the period, including creating computer games, animations and websites.
- 7% of adults used digital technology in this way, rising to 21.7% for under 24s.
- The chances of uploading creative writing, film or video to the internet was twice as high for BME than white groups.
- The upper socio-economic group was roughly twice as likely to upload creative material than the lower socio-economic group.

Gov.uk

Also: DCMS recently held a consultation on the content and regularity of Taking Part reports, and received a small number of responses. It has now published the issues raised and its responses. The quarter two release will now be replaced with a mid-year dashboard. DCMS will discontinue its release on Export bars, as this is duplicated in the annual report of the Reviewing Committee. Gov.uk

CLA briefing on why the arts are essential for workforces of the future

The Cultural Learning Alliance and Nesta have published a three-page briefing paper summarising why the arts, as well as science and technology will be essential for future workforces. 'STEAM – why STEM can only take us so far' argues that we have moved from the information age to the innovation age and that an *"analysis of online job advertisements shows that many employers today already demand creative and design skills in combination with tech, support, and teaching skills, pointing to a STEAM skills agenda."* A dense mixture of comment from people prominent in business and the arts, and references to the latest research, point to the ways in which creativity gives an innovative edge. For example, Nobel Laureates in the US are 22 times more likely to be involved in performing arts than scientists in general. The paper is the first of a series of briefings from CLA, each partnering with a major thinktank. CLA

Young people, the ecosystem they live in and cultural engagement

A report from the London-youth-focused policy group A New Direction explores young people's connection to culture not as an isolated series of interests, but in the more rounded context of the whole ecosystem they live in. 'Caring for Cultural Freedom: an ecological approach to supporting young people's cultural learning' asserts that *"cultural interests do not come into being and operate in a vacuum. They are subject to ongoing processes of enablement, constraint, encouragement"*. The report identifies 'supported autonomy' as a central goal: young people instinctively reach for free choice, but need a partially supported environment. It also argues that mentoring is an effective way of overcoming inequalities in life chances. A New Direction

International

USA withdraws from UNESCO

The United States has said it will withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at the end of 2018, arguing that the body is biased against Israel. The US also owes UNESCO around £500m which has become a contentious issue. The US hopes to remain a non-member observer state to contribute expertise on issues from press freedom to cultural protection. The US previously left UNESCO under Reagan in 1983, rejoining in 2002, and cancelled its substantial contribution to UNESCO in 2011 when Palestine became a full member. Daniel Weiss, CEO of the Metropolitan Museum said *"The Met and countless other museums have successfully partnered with Unesco, an organisation that has earned the respect of nations and communities worldwide for bringing together curators, conservators, and a range of other scholars... Although Unesco may be an imperfect organisation, it has been an important leader and steadfast partner in this crucial work. The Met remains deeply committed to productive engagement with Unesco."* Independent, Museums Journal, Telegraph (paywall), The Art Newspaper (podcast), TIME

New Yorker publishes on connection between Sacklers and opioids

The *New Yorker* has published a long piece detailing the ownership of Purdue, the private company which produces Oxycontin and other opioids, by many branches of the Sackler family. Over-prescription of the drugs has been associated with an addiction crisis in the US. The article argues that this raises ethical question for the many cultural bodies and museums which have benefited from Sackler philanthropy. *New Yorker*

British Museum loans to Zayed National Museum affected by construction delays

In 2009, the British Museum signed a ten-year contract to loan 500 artefacts to the planned Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi. However, construction delays mean that work has not yet begun on the museum and loans will not take place under the current contract. The loan agreement, which would have been valuable financially as well as in terms of cultural diplomacy for the British Museum, may still take place under a future contract. *New York Times*

Cultural Protection Fund shows signs of success

The Art Newspaper has interviewed the British Council's Stephen Stenning about the first two years of the Cultural Protection Fund, and reports that the scheme's success is attracting international interest. Stenning says allowing smaller partners to work directly with bodies such as universities and ensuring that every project has a partner in-country has been essential. He adds that *"our definition [of heritage] is not just what experts say it is but what people value or see as their identity and what they want to pass on to future generations"*. This means that projects support intangible heritage – the songs and recipes of Damascus – as well as its buildings. Yazidis displaced by the conflict in Syria have been trained in documentary film-making, and Syrian refugees are receiving training in the stonemasonry skills that will eventually be needed to restore their country. The Fund is also exploring and safeguarding archaeological sites in Egypt and South East Turkey. There has been international interest in adapting the approach for other crises such as natural disasters and as an alternative regeneration model to the schemes which aim to attract tourists. *The Art Newspaper*

Also: The World Monuments Fund has published its annual list of 25 prominent places at risk – from the piers at Blackpool, at risk from climate change, to the Souk of Aleppo burned in the Syrian Civil war and the Surkur cultural landscape, which is being damaged by Boko Haram. *The Art Newspaper*

UK government to 'ban the sale of ivory regardless of age'

The Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced that there will be a more complete ban on ivory sales in the UK, to help protect elephants, 20,000 of which are killed each year for the illegal ivory trade. Previously in the UK, items created before 1947 were exempt as were pre-1990 artefacts with certificates. Now these will also be banned, to make it harder for poached ivory to slip under the radar. A small number of exceptions will remain for musical instruments, items of significant cultural value, and those with a very small ivory component. There will be a 12-week consultation on the plans until 29th December. *Guardian, Gov.uk*

Collections, losses and disposals

One of our washing machines is missing

The *Telegraph* has reported on items stolen or missing from museum collections. Many of the thousands of items may be of low monetary value and mislaid in the stores, although there are a few major losses, such as a £750k Cartier diamond ring, which was found to be missing from the British Museum in 2011 and officially registered as lost this year. More prosaically, the Science Museum cannot currently locate a Hotpoint washing machine. Science Museum Group Deputy Director Jonathan Newby said *"any object that we can't locate is unfortunate but this does come down to the record-keeping of museums. In the past, record collections started with a card index hand-written, then transcribed into databases that are now not what you would expect from a modern system."* Lost and mislaid items remain a tiny fraction of the billions of objects held by UK museums. *Telegraph* (paywall)

Culture Minister defends NRM train disposals in Commons debate

A recent debate in the House of Commons, called by Kelvin Hopkins, MP for Luton North, explored whether the National Railway Museum was right to dispose of three steam engines to charitable bodies running heritage railways. Culture Minister John Glen said that he would not revisit the disposals, which he described as a curatorial decision rightly independent of government, and emphasised that *"the decision making process is not random, but clear and well considered, with a number of checks."* The disposals de-duplicate the collection, allow heritage railways to tell a regional story, and in one case to undertake extensive repairs. Several MPs who spoke were clearly also historic railway enthusiasts, including Kevin Brennan, Labour MP for Cardiff West and Shadow Arts and Heritage Minister, who said *"I had some real hands-on experience of working on the railway, and can tell the House that lifting lines and packing ballast under the tracks and sleepers quickly convinced me that politics was a much better profession to go into."* Hansard

MGS says collection sales by Moray Council would be unethical

Moray Council has approval an initial plan to explore selling museum collections, despite intervention from Museums Galleries Scotland to say that such a decision would be unethical and risk museums' losing Accreditation. At the same meeting, Moray Council agreed to enter into talks with MGS to seek alternative solutions. It previously cut its arts budget by 100% in 2013 as it faced a £30m budget cut, making it the first Scottish local authority to completely withdraw from culture. The Council is exploring the idea that money raised from sales would pay for a new business model for the museums, such as transfer to a trust, or continuance of the existing service with a cash asset. In a statement, MGS said it *"recognised the current financial climate means that museums' governing bodies face difficult choices in trying to maintain services, and [has] extended an offer to Moray Council to assist them in navigating the issue in a way that is both ethical and sustainable in the long term."* Museums Journal, MGS

Jobs

A selection of jobs from across the NMDC membership this month:

- Curator, Non-mammalian tetrapods - Natural History Museum
- FOI Manager - The National Archives
- Development Editor - V&A
- Masterplan Project Director - National Railway Museum
- Head of Visual Arts Section - British Library

A complete list is available on our website [here](#).

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