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NMDC news



Monte Civita by Elijah Walton, courtesy of Birmingham Museums Trust. Part of its new mindfulness oriented audio guide and resources.

Government launches new £250m Cultural Investment Fund

The Government has launched a new £250m Cultural Investment Fund.

The money includes:

- £125m for major infrastructure and maintenance work at museums and libraries in England.

- £90m to extend the work of the Cultural Development Fund for another five years, enabling another 20 locations to transform cultural and creative industries infrastructure.
- Additionally, there will be £18.5m towards new galleries at the National Railway Museum, York and £7m for Coventry's year as City of Culture.

Last month, Art Fund, NMDC and the MA called for greater Government investment in at risk museum infrastructure. Responding to the extra funding, Science Museum Director and NMDC Chair Sir Ian Blatchford said *"this fund will make a huge difference to regional museums that are doing superb work and is a welcome recognition of the importance of investment in our cultural heritage."* Kim Streets, Chief Executive of Museums Sheffield is among those hoping to take advantage of the fund. She said *"this is very welcome news...new investment would potentially put an end to ad hoc closures [at the Graves Gallery]. We would be in a position to display more great art in this city, more often, and people from all walks of life would be inspired to spend more quality time in their gallery."* [Gov.uk](#), [Arts Industry](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Arts Professional](#), [Arts Professional](#) (background from Jan 2019 – first round of Culture Development Fund), [Museums Journal](#)

Members' news



Planned new entrance for the National Portrait Gallery. Jamie Fobert Architects. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

NPG plans to tour 300 paintings each year through partnerships during its three year closure

The National Portrait Gallery will close in June 2020 for just under three years for its major upgrade work. During this time it has announced that it will tour 300 portraits each year across the country, from Cornwall to Edinburgh. The tour will include works that are rarely loaned, alongside a programme of events supported by Art Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The extensive programme includes a partnership with York Art Gallery in 2021, an exhibition of Tudor portraits curated in partnership with the Holburne Museum in Bath in 2022 and projects with National Museums Liverpool, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which will then tour to other venues. There will also be a new schools outreach programme 'Faces and Places' across seven London Boroughs accompanied by art shown in local schools, libraries and arts centres, plus further school art projects from Wolverhampton to Teesside. NPG's Director Dr Nicholas Cullinan said *"we look forward to hearing from other organisations who are interested in working with us during this time, so that we can make the most of this extraordinary opportunity to circulate a national collection as widely as possible in both innovative and collaborative ways"*. NPG has now raised £32.7m of the £35.5m needed for the upgrade, and is confident of raising the rest. Most recently, NLHF confirmed it will be contributing £9.4m towards the redevelopment of the site. [NLHF](#), [Art Newspaper](#), [Guardian](#)

Education

Durham Commission publishes findings after major study of Creativity in Education

The Durham Commission, a two-year research collaboration between ACE and Durham University, has published its report on Creativity in Education. The report focuses not solely on the teaching of subjects traditionally defined as creative, but rather on how creativity is a part of every subject, from arts to maths. In his introduction, Commission Chair Sir Nicholas Serota points to many countries including Finland, Australia, Singapore and Canada which are evolving the creativity-focused education systems which they see as a route to future prosperity: but argues that England lacks the agreed models, confidence among teachers and necessary resources to pursue this approach. The report makes a number of recommendations:

- A national network of 'Creativity Collaboratives' between schools consisting initially of nine pilot hubs before a national roll out in 2023. Leadership should come from senior management spreading good practice across schools, rather than being the remit of a few individual teachers.
- Government, Ofqual and awarding bodies should look at how creativity and academic rigour can dovetail. It says that both can exist harmoniously, but expresses concern that *"unless an aspect of creativity is specified in a particular syllabus, it is unlikely to be developed in busy, results-conscious schools."* It also points to the decline in the uptake of arts subjects since the introduction of the Ebacc, adding *"this in the opinion of the Commission, results in a serious imbalance in the all-round education of students."*
- English schools should participate in the PISA 2021 evaluation of creative thinking, with support from the Government. (PISA is an international education measure, due to be used in 90 countries in 2021, to measure the skills of 15 year olds in reading, maths and science).
- DfE should work with schools and higher education bodies to explore how creativity can be identified and measured across disciplines.
- Digital will be a huge part of children's lives, but they will need teaching to help them approach it creatively, with an awareness of its risks, and with the skills to adapt to technologies that do not yet exist.
- Specifically in arts subjects there should be a National Plan for Cultural Education alongside those already in place for music and sport, with arts as a substantive part of the national curriculum, rather than an add on.
- There are also specific recommendations for supporting creativity at preschool, out of school hours and in gaining technical qualifications to equip students for work.

Employers from a variety of industries – from car manufacturers to IBM spoke to the Commission about the value of young recruits with creative skills; other case studies point to wellbeing benefits for pupils. One headteacher who spoke to the Commission commented: *"students who spend all their day consuming things, through their smart phone... and are not doing, or making, or creating seem to be living an unfulfilling existence. If we can equip young people with the skills..whatever career they [take up], if they have a creative outlet in their life, even if they're not necessarily in a*

creative career, then I think we've done our job properly and we're more likely to turn out a more rounded well-balanced individual into society." [ACE](#) (full report), [Arts Industry, A New Direction](#) (analysis), [Arts Professional](#) (creativity hubs), [Oxford University](#) (overview of PISA 2021), [Creative Industries Federation](#)

Manifestos for the future of culture

CIF publishes its manifesto calling for an investment bank for culture

The Creative Industries Federation and Creative England have published a two page manifesto, outlining what is needed to support the creative industries sector, which continues to grow at twice the rate of the wider economy and is worth £100bn, including £46bn in global exports. CIF's proposals are aimed particularly at growing the sector in the regions, developing the workforce and supporting global trade. They include:

- Launch a £1bn Culture and Creative Industries Investment Bank, offering both commercial funding and repayable grants to support creative enterprises in the regions that most need them.
- Cutting business rates for cultural, music and heritage spaces, while devolving powers to develop creative clusters.
- A real term increase in public investment in the arts, and either maintaining or replacing EU funding.
- Creating a Future Workforce Commission, extending the Creative Careers Programme and reflecting the recommendations of the Durham Commission in embedding creativity in education.
- Giving the sector a greater say in what it values in international workers and creating a Freelance Visa, so it's possible to attract creative talent from across the world.
- Introducing a Sustainability Innovation Challenge to help use the sector's creativity to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

CIF says that it has sent the manifesto to all political parties, hoping to influence their promises if they form the next Government. [CIF](#), [Arts Industry](#)

Labour calls for distribution of Lottery funds in the areas where tickets are purchased

Shadow Culture Minister Tom Watson has called for the release of Lottery sales data so that money can be distributed in line with where the most tickets are purchased. He said "*areas that buy a bulk of National Lottery tickets, like our industrial towns and coalfield communities, feel they don't get their fair share of Lottery money for good causes in return*". Labour cites new research from the authors of the 2013 'Rebalancing our cultural capital' report, indicates that the West Midlands Combined Authority received £360m less from Good Causes in the period 2010 – 17 than it contributed to National Lottery sales in the period. A spokesperson for current National Lottery license holder Camelot said that publishing such granular data would give commercially sensitive data to rivals operating for-profit lotteries. [Arts Professional](#)

- We will be publishing a summary of the cultural offer in political parties' election manifestos in the early December issue of NMDC news.

Measuring visitor figures and economic indicators

Annual visitor figures for DCMS sponsored museums show 11% growth outside London

DCMS has published the 2018 - 19 annual visitor figures for the 15 mostly national museums which it directly funds, showing 49.8m visits, a 5.5% increase on the previous year and the highest figure since records began 15 years ago. Detail includes:

- There were 8.5m visits by children, up 5.9% from the previous year and comprising 17% of all visits. Science Museum Group again attracted the most child visits at 1.6m (a 2.2% decline from the previous year), followed by the Natural History Museum at 1.5m visits – an increase of 26.8% driven by its 'Life in the Dark' exhibition and its 'Kids go free' campaign.

- National Museums Liverpool had a particularly strong year with visits up by 20% to over 3.9m, driven first by its Terracotta Warriors exhibition, then by 'John and Yoko, Double Fantasy' which has run since May 2018. Together, museums outside London grew their audience by an average of 11%.
- The four sites making up the Tate were again the most visited, attracting over 8.1m, followed by the British Museum at 6.1m.
- 9% of visits were from overseas visitors, up 6.1% from the previous year, with the National Gallery performing particularly strongly and growing its overseas audience by 20% to 4m. Royal Museums Greenwich has the highest proportion of overseas visitors at 70%, the result of planned initiatives since its four new galleries opened in autumn 2018.
- Self-generated income was up by 5% from the previous year, from £275m to £289m. £61m of this came from admissions, an increase of 20%; £48.2m came from trade (down 2.5%).
- Combined website visits to the museums were 123.2m, more than a quarter of which, or 33.6m, accessed the British Museum site. This was a fall of 10.5% from the previous year – website visits grew for a majority of museums.

[Gov.uk](#) (overview), [Gov.uk](#) (full report), [Museums Journal](#)

Design Museum lays plans to recover from deficit and falling visitor numbers

The Design Museum has been addressing a deficit of £1.6m after visitor numbers fell by 16.5% to 518,000 in 2018 – 19. The museum received a rescue loan of £3m from the Conran Foundation in March and is now laying plans to create more popular shows; 'Stanley Kubrick: The Exhibition' has attracted 169,000 people since it opened in April, the highest footfall achieved to date by the museum. [Dezeen](#)

Economic impact of independent museums: new toolkit and sector overview

AIM has revised work it first carried out a decade ago to assess the economic impact of independent museums. The result is a new AIM Economic Impact Toolkit, which allows any independent museum to measure its own reach, plus a new report from AIM itself on the whole sector. Since 2009, AIM has grown by around a third, from 686 to 966 members, public funding has shrunk, and many local authority museums have transitioned to become trusts. At the same time, approaches to measuring the economic impact of culture have progressed. AIM's report finds that:

- The independent museum sector supports 6,000 FTE jobs or 8,900 direct jobs in total. 75% of these are drawn from the immediate vicinity of the museum, supporting local employment.
- However, as many as 30% of independent museums have no paid staff.
- 34,000 regular volunteers contribute half a million days per year worth £28m to the sector.
- 24m people visit the sites each year, including 10m from beyond the local area, spending £440m.

AIM Director Emma Chaplin said that the toolkit "*builds on previous releases, updating key datasets and offering even more levels of analysis. [It] enables heritage organisations to assess their impact with clarity, helping them highlight the ongoing and significant contribution they make to the economies of their local area, and thus also our national economy.*" [AIM](#), [M + H](#), [AIM](#) (press release)

Culture moves

Ed Vaizey has announced that he will not contest the coming election and will be standing down as Conservative MP for Wantage and Didcot. Vaizey was formerly Culture Minister for more than seven years, making him the longest-serving politician in that post, beating the record set by Jennie Lee, the first incumbent. In a resignation letter, he said that he will continue to work in the arts, creative industries and technology sectors. [Twitter](#) (resignation letter), [Oxford Mail](#), [BBC](#)

Shadow Culture Minister and Deputy Labour Party Leader Tom Watson has also announced that he will not seek re-election in December. He was MP for West Bromwich East. [Guardian](#)

Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan has said that she will stand down as an MP in the forthcoming December General Election. She has held the post of Culture Secretary since July. [Independent](#), [Museums Journal](#)

68 MPs have said that they will not stand for re-election - the [Evening Standard](#) has published a complete list.

Events



Portrait of Malala Yousafzai by Shirin Neshat, 2018 © National Portrait Gallery, London. One of the works which will tour while the Gallery is closed for refurbishment.

V&A Professional Development Courses – from courier training to exhibition design

V&A has announced a new programme of its professional development courses, with dates from this November – March 2020. There are 16 events in all, including:

- Working with contemporary artists and running a residency programme (one day)
- Programming for Lates, using V&A Friday Lates as a case study (one day)
- How to organise an exhibition (three days)
- How to organise public talks and events (half day)
- Managing and caring for your collection (one week)

Teaching is largely by V&A staff with some guest speakers. Ticket prices range from £45 - £65 for a half day course, £175 – 195 for day courses and £1.5k for intensive week-long training. [V&A](#)

Beyond: annual R&D conference for the creative industries

Beyond, the annual R&D conference for the creative industries is this year focused on AI and how it can improve storytelling and immersive experiences. The conference also looks at how algorithms can extract unforeseen value from archives and data sets – but may also harbour bias. Speakers include artists, tech leaders, academics and creative industries CEOs. The event takes place at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh on 20th – 21st November. Tickets are around £315 including VAT or £125 for an Early Career Researcher. [Beyond](#)

Nesta events: from crowdfunding to planning for an unknown future

Nesta has published its talks and events programme running through to March 2020. These include an event on the future of foundations, a practical lunchtime event on the latest thinking on crowdfunding, as well as talks on innovation, prototyping and making plans in the face of uncertain futures. Some events are free, others are £7 for lunch sessions. [Nesta](#) (full programme)

Clore and Happy Museum partner on leadership development day

'Leadership Development Day: Influence and Advocacy for Change' is a collaboration between the Clore Foundation and Happy Museum. Participants will learn how cultural leaders can become change makers in society, with a focus on concerns about environment, wellbeing, inequality and polarisation. Exploring influencing styles and the power of storytelling, it is suitable for freelancers and mid-career professionals. The event takes place at Derby Museum on 21st January. Tickets are £77 - £147. [Clore](#)

All inclusive: Championing accessible museums

The MA is holding a one day event to explore how museums can become truly inclusive spaces and become more accessible to the UK's 14 million disabled people, whether as staff, volunteers or visitors. Visitor figures from Taking Part and employment statistics from ACE consistently show a much lower representation of disabled people in museums than the population average. The event will offer practical sessions and debate to address this, with speakers including Guardian journalist and author Frances Ryan, Alex Cowan of the National Disability Arts Collection and Richard Jones of Accessible Wales. The event takes place at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff on 12th December. Tickets are £125, or £55 for student, retired, volunteer or unwaged. [Museums Journal](#)

M + H seek entries for 2020 Awards

Museums + Heritage has announced 13 categories for its 2020 Awards, including Learning Programme of the Year. It is designed to offer opportunity to museums of all kinds and sizes, and to an eclectic group of stand out individuals. In 2019, two awards went to the Florence Nightingale Museum, which commented 'this award is absolutely thrilling for a small team like us'. There was also a win for 99 year old WWI veteran, John Jenkins [from Portsmouth Museums](#) for his commitment to volunteering and sharing the D-Day Story with younger generations. Judges for 2020 include ALVA's Bernard Donoghue, IWM Director Diane Lees and RAF museum CEO Maggie Appleton. The deadline for entries is 31st January 2020. [M + H](#)

Awards



Dreamers, 1882 by Albert Joseph Moore, courtesy of Birmingham Museums Trust. Part of its new mindfulness oriented audio guide and resources.

Hearts for the Arts seeks local authorities who support culture for its annual award

Nominations are open for local authorities and cultural trusts which have championed the arts for the annual Hearts for the Arts Awards. Categories include best arts initiative, best arts project for community cohesion or wellbeing and two individual awards for a local authority worker and councillor. The deadline for nominations is 5pm on 8th November. The awards will be given at the LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference on 3rd March 2020. [For the Arts](#)

Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum wins Family Friendly Museum Award 2019

The Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum in Dunfermline has beaten a 14-strong shortlist to win the Family Friendly Museum Award 2019. Judges praised the museum for welcoming staff, colour-coded family zones, an all-year activity programme, sensory backpacks, hands-on exhibits and good facilities. The small museum tells the story of how Carnegie rose from modest beginnings to become the richest man in the world and a leading philanthropist. The museum's curator and manager Kirke Kook told *Museums Journal* that the museum has a £1k annual budget for children's events and a handful of staff, but that "our aim is to make everyone's visit interesting and fun every single day, and to be recognised for this at a national level is incredible. Our visitors often say that coming to our museum feels like coming home and we hope they continue to feel this way." [Kids in Museums](#), [Arts Industry](#), [M + H](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Developing museum policy

Realising the Vision: MGS review shows 30% growth in museum visits since 2015

Museums Galleries Scotland has produced a new evaluation report which looks at how the sector has achieved against its delivery plan from 2015 – 19. It shows how museums have adapted to the financial and political climate, which included an 11% decline in local authority spend on arts and culture, itself a response to a 9.6% loss in core grants from the Scottish Government. This has led to difficult decisions in the sector; at the same time, visits have grown by almost 30% in four years. Work highlighted by the review includes:

- MGS's Vocational Pathways Fund has made it easier to get affordable training, attracting a wider range of people into the sector. More recent projects have included the Skills for Success Programme and the 2019 Digital Marketing Modern Apprenticeship.
- It has developed inventive ways to store and share collections. For example National Museums Scotland and National Galleries Scotland are sharing a collections store in Edinburgh, which is also open to the public. 'Paisley: The Secret Collection' has become the first museum store on a public high street, again giving new opportunities for access. MGS also led a 2017 Sharing Collections Symposium, to support lending and borrowing, and joint working to produce a statement on museums and collections at risk in 2018.
- The wellbeing agenda in museums has developed, with projects including the Scottish Maritime Museum's Men's Shed, and Museums and Galleries Edinburgh's Young Carers in Charge project. The MGS conference 'Inequalities: Bridging the Gap' looked at policy to address inequity in education, health and wellbeing.
- MGS has also extended its partnerships work, both to work outside the narrowly defined sector with partners from theatre to health and tourism bodies, and to incorporate cutting edge digital in museum sites. Projects included the Edinburgh Wows Consortium, dedicated to bringing visitors to the city outside the festival season.
- MGS has also worked to develop an international audience, including sponsoring the European Museum of the Year Awards in 2015 and projects with Brazil and the EU.

MGS will publish its third delivery plan 'Going Further' in January 2020, informed by the concerns and ambitions of the sector and shaping work until 2023. [MGS](#) (blog), [MGS](#) (overview), [MGS](#) (full evaluation report), [Paisley: The Secret Collection](#)

Digital innovation for a new era

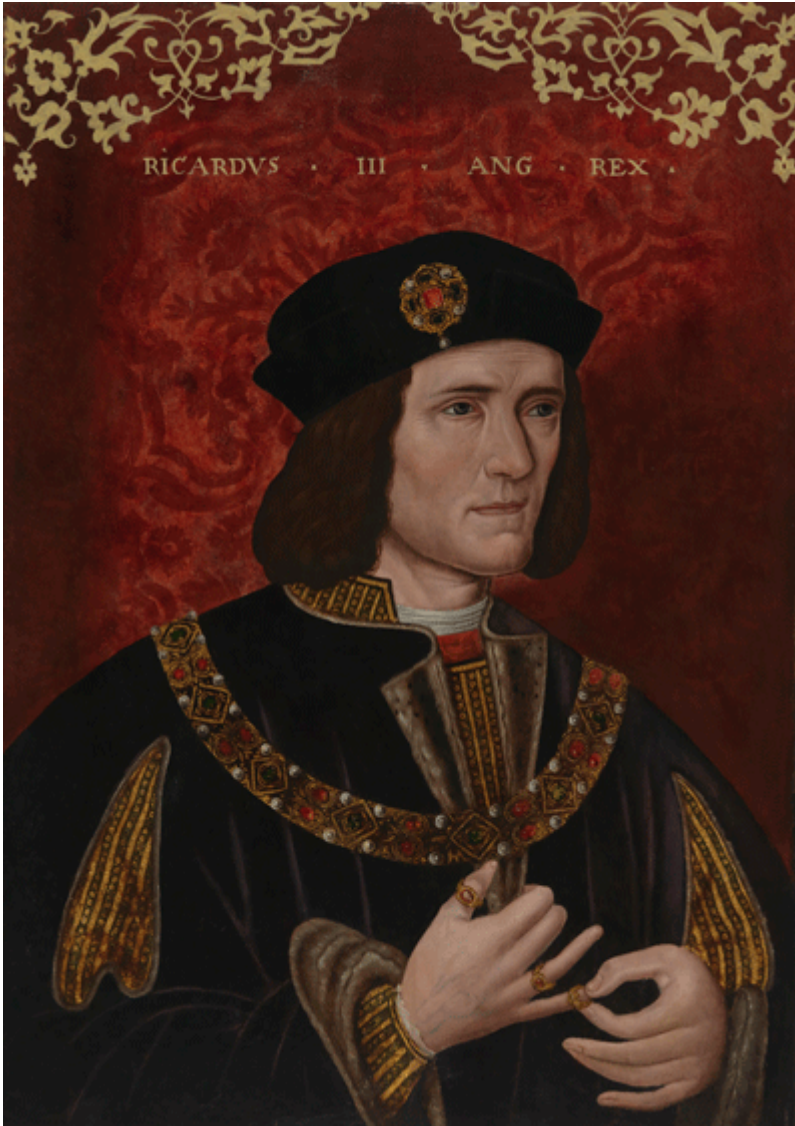
£19m fund shapes first steps towards a virtual national arts collection

A new £19m research programme will help the UK move towards creating an integrated virtual national art collection. Administered by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the project is called 'Towards a National Collection: Opening UK Heritage to the World'. It will invest in new ways of researching, accessing and displaying collections using technology such as visual search and AI, breaking away from text based search for the first time. Eventually it should be possible for researchers and the public to access collections as one seamless group. For the public, innovations such as VR and interactive exhibits will create sensory and emotional experiences for visitors, who will be able to access museum objects at home, in libraries and schools. Some technologies that the fund will develop are already embedded in major exhibitions – such as the 3D audio display at V&A's David Bowie exhibition and projection technology at the National Gallery's forthcoming Leonardo Exhibition which will show audiences the layers inside a painting. Arts Minister Helen Whatley said *"this funding will see cutting-edge tech enhance the visitor experience, providing exciting new ways for people to explore our history."* Within the next couple of weeks AHRC will be publishing detail of the programme including funding opportunities and guidance. Gov.uk, UKRI

Nesta offers £250k funding to develop courses helping workers to adapt to the digital age

In the five year run up to 2017, half of all EU employers changed their working practices in response to technology – and by 2030 it is likely that this trend will increase, meaning that an estimated six million in the UK, especially in low wage jobs, will need to reskill. Now Nesta has opened the Career Tech Challenge Fund, which is open to any charity or business that has an approach that can retrain some of the workforce. Ideas do not have to be completely original, but must be new to their target audience, and must be adaptable into an online course of 15 – 50 hours. Nesta will offer successful applicants £250k each to develop their idea as well as offering hands on support. The deadline for applications is 9th December. Nesta, Nesta ('Precarious to prepared' manifesto)

Funding



King Richard III by Unknown artist © National Portrait Gallery, London. On tour during the gallery's refurbishment.

John Ellerman Foundation opens new round of £500k fund to support curatorial practice

The John Ellerman Foundation is opening a new round of its Museums and Galleries Fund which supports regional museums to enhance and sustain curatorial development, with a view to attracting a wider public. The Foundation typically gives grants around £87k and expects to award five or six this year. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 29th November. [John Ellerman Foundation](#)

Strong competition as Heritage Horizon capital bids are many times larger than fund

NLHF's capital projects fund, Heritage Horizons, has received 146 first stage applications for a total of £1.3bn for its first year. In total, the fund has £100m to distribute over three years, meaning that applications greatly outstrip available support. However, CEO Ros Kerslake said that this is positive as showing that the new light touch expressions of interest stage has encouraged more organisations to consider applying. Applicants have responded to NLHF's strategic priorities of landscape and nature, heritage at risk and inclusion: Kerslake said 'early indications are that we are seeing some very interesting and exciting ideas'. Shortlisted applications will have to submit a development phase application by September 2020. [M + H](#), [NLHF](#)

Also: NLHF's £3m contribution towards Coventry's year as City of Culture in 2021 will be spent on a focus on the natural environment, with a programme of events in parks and at heritage sites and a plan for lasting improvements to the city's natural assets. [NLHF](#)

MGS offers travel bursaries to help Scottish cultural workers attend SSN meetings

Museums Galleries Scotland has launched new travel bursaries to allow professionals working in accredited museums to attend Subject Specialist Network meetings across the UK, to support peer learning and expertise across the sector. Up to £500 is available for accommodation and travel per trip. The fund is open all year with no deadline for applications. [M + H](#), [MGS](#)

Windrush Day Grant Scheme 2020

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has launched a fund of £500k to mark Windrush Day, helping communities to commemorate and educate people about that generation. Although the focus is on 22nd June 2020, events until December 2020 are eligible for support. Individual grants range from £2.5k - £25k. The deadline for applications is 11.50pm on 8th December 2019. [Gov.uk](#)

Grants available for fundraising training for networks

Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy is offering grants up to £2k for training of museum networks in fundraising skills through an event, conference, seminar or introductory meeting. £1k is available for a single event for groups of a minimum of ten people or £2k for at least 20 people. Events must take place before 14th March 2020. The deadline for applications is 15th November. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#)

Also: Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy has also published the latest issue of its quarterly magazine, with a focus on fundraising in the cultural sector. It includes a look at how VR can be used to attract funders with immersive storytelling. [Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#)

Preserving heritage

Arts Minister says it is of 'paramount important' to keep £3.5m Joseph Wright painting in the UK

An export bar has been placed on 'Two Boys with a Bladder', a work by Joseph Wright of Derby, painted around 1768 – 70. Wright was one of the major painters of his time and often captured scientific and industrial subjects by candlelight: the bladder, blown up like a balloon in this image, was a popular toy for children at the time. Arts Minister Helen Whatley said that it is of 'paramount importance' to retain the painting, valued at £3.5m, in the UK. The export bar lasts until 16th January 2020, with a possible extension to 16th May 2020. [Gov.uk](#)

Government plans community-driven campaign to preserve local heritage

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced a new campaign to support the preservation of local heritage, by asking all local authorities to draw up a list of buildings with significant historical and cultural value. To complement the plans Historic England will launch a public campaign on local identity in Spring 2020, exploring what defines heritage. In a written statement, Jenrick said that although the listing process has protected many buildings, it has never been completed, with the result that "*many buildings that are important locally have gone unrecognised and are not protected from development*". He said that the Government was now wishing to encourage greater listings with the 'most ambitious new heritage conservation campaign since the 1980s'. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will also provide £700k to help ten English counties identify areas to be protected. [M + H](#), [Parliament.uk](#) (written update from Robert Jenrick), [Gov.uk](#), [Historic England](#)

HMS Invincible among sites removed from the Heritage at Risk register, with help from NMRN

Historic England has published its annual Heritage at Risk register, which now includes more than 5,000 vulnerable sites at risk from material damage or inappropriate development. The Grand Quarter in Leeds and some prefabricated Victorian lighthouses have been added this year. However, some sites have been removed from the list, including the wreck of the HMS Invincible which has been stabilised on the seabed after a three year excavation project which involved the National Museum of the Royal Navy alongside MAST and the University of Bournemouth. Artefacts from the wreck are now being showcased in the touring exhibition 'Diving Deep - The HMS Invincible 1744'. English Heritage has also published a new digital map, making it easy to search for at risk sites across the country. [Guardian](#), [English Heritage](#) (map), [NMRN](#)

Bridges over Brexit: Irish museum projects responding to borders and political uncertainty

Since 2016, the Irish Museums Association has been actively exploring the potential impact of Brexit on the museum sector in a partnership with Ulster University called 'Bridges over Brexit'. Now in a publication of the same name, it looks at cross-border projects between museums which have produced exhibitions addressing border issues and difficult histories. These include:

- a cross-border project in 2017 to excavate the Monaghan Spitfire, which crashed just inside the borders of the Irish Republic in 1942.
- a touring exhibition 'Crossing Lines' featuring new and recent work from the Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre and NMNI was conceived as a response to the challenges of Brexit. It has been shown by two institutions, the F E McWilliam Gallery & Studio and the Highlanes Gallery, which were both established through cross-border partnership and 'for whom Brexit threatens the very basis upon which both institutions were founded'.
- 'Making the Future', a cross-border cultural programme based on museum objects which runs to 2021. It is designed to explore the legacy of the past, while promoting positive relations between Northern Ireland and the border counties.

[Irish Museums](#)

Soft power

Government extends Cultural Protection Fund with £10m to focus on natural disasters and climate change

The Government has announced an additional £10m to extend the Cultural Protection Fund which has already received £30m investment since 2016 and is administered by the British Council. Previous rounds of funding have supported work in areas including Syria and Iraq where tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been at risk from conflict. The new round, beginning in 2020, will have a focus on natural disaster and climate change. This was particularly prompted by the loss by fire of the Museu Nacional in Brazil and around 20 million collection items in 2018. The new round will also continue to support existing projects, as well as up to £100k available for new work in Syria, Libya and Yemen. [Gov.uk](#), [British Council](#), [British Council](#) (Syria, Libya, Yemen)

UK overtaken by France in annual soft power index, but maintains its position on culture

The UK has slipped to second place in the annual Soft Power 30 index published each year by the strategic communications agency Portland. The report said that although the UK continues to perform strongly on 'engagement, culture, education and digital', less positive responses under government and enterprise suggest that 'the process of Brexit may finally be chipping away at British soft power'. The index is driven by a variety of factors including 35% measured through international polling, to gauge a country's reputation for culture, cuisine, tech products, friendliness, luxury goods, foreign policy and liveability, and on this measurement, the UK moved down from 6th to 10th place. However, its global appeal is maintained by strong brands from Ed Sheeran to Harry Potter and tourism driven by museums, galleries and theatres. UK Universities also continue to attract the second highest number of international students globally. France moved up to the top spot which it last held in 2017. Despite its own domestic turmoil, its strength lies in its 'vast diplomatic network' including the highest number of diplomatic cultural missions. Germany, Sweden and the US took the next three spots in the index. [Arts Professional](#), [Soft Power 30](#)

Royal Society says that Brexit uncertainty is 'hurting UK science'

The Royal Society says that ongoing uncertainty about Brexit is harming UK science, with the UK's annual share of EU research funding falling by a third, or €0.5bn since 2015 and a 40% drop in UK applications to Horizon 2020. Royal Society President Venki Ramakrishnan also pointed to 35% fewer scientists coming to the UK through key schemes. He said "*people do not want to gamble with their careers, when they have no sense of whether the UK will be willing and able to maintain its global scientific leadership.*" [Royal Society](#)

York is most 'culturally vibrant' UK city according to European Commission report

The second edition of the Cultural and Creative Cities monitor has been published, tracking 190 European cities using 29 indicators to measure their attributes and development. York scored top in the UK for cultural vibrancy. Reyahn King, CEO of York Museums Trust and chair of York Cultural Leaders Group said that the city's strength is in combining heritage assets with 'cutting edge contemporary creativity'. [Arts Professional](#), [European Commission](#) (cities monitor), [European Commission](#) (UK city stats)

Also: Lonely Planet has listed England as the second best country in the world to travel to for 2019, beaten only by Bhutan. It particularly cited coastal areas in Northumberland, Norfolk and the South West. [BBC](#)

Re-openings and museums at risk

Future of Falconer Museum uncertain as Moray Council seeks external trust to run it

The Falconer Museum in Forres, Scotland is the last museum still being funded by Moray Council, which has ceased almost all arts and culture funding over the past six years. Now the Council says it can no longer pay the Falconer's £80k annual grant, but has agreed to delay closure for a longer period while it seeks a trust to run the venue. The museum currently has 2.5 FTE staff caring for a collection that ranges from archaeology to natural and social history. Aaron McLean, Chair of the Council's policy and resources committee said "*we all acknowledge the excellent work done by the museums service in promoting the Falconer as a destination, and I'm hopeful that this can be built upon by working with others such as Museums Galleries Scotland and more local organisations to produce a model that sustains the museum and the collection held by the service.*" The Friends of the Falconer Museum volunteer group have been heavily involved in defending the venue and keeping it open, but Chairman John Barrett said "*we are a group of volunteers who raise money to support and highlight the museum – we do not have the time or ability to run it full time.*" [Museums Journal](#), [Falconer Museum](#)

Aberdeen Art Gallery reopens after £34.6m upgrade with interactive collections wall

Aberdeen Art Gallery has reopened after £34.6m major work to upgrade the site, which has been ongoing since 2015. Aberdeen City Council Co-Leader Jenny Laing said "*the new art gallery is going to blow people away. They're going to understand why it was important for our city centre regeneration that we spend money on this project. I definitely think it will rival the V&A. The quality of the collections we have in Aberdeen, it needs a building to showcase it.*" However, the council still needs to raise an additional £5.6m towards the cost, which was over the original budget. NLHF, the UK Government and BP contributed alongside the City Council's own £14.6m investment. The gallery now has 19 galleries instead of 11 and will be displaying three times as many works from its collection. The new design also features a digital collections video wall, which visitors can use to influence future exhibitions by favouriting objects. [Aberdeen Evening Express](#), [Aberdeen Art Gallery](#), [MGS](#) (video wall, see page 22), [BBC](#), [STV](#) (short film), [Aberdeen Evening Express](#) (funding)

Glasgow consults public on the future of the People's Palace

Glasgow's City Administration Committee has approved £750k in support for the People's Palace Museum. The money will partly be spent on making the adjacent Winter Gardens glasshouse safe over the long term, after safety concerns relating to the structure caused the People's Palace to close for a period in 2018. However, there will also be work to revitalise the displays, which tell a social history of Glasgow, with involvement from local people who will take part in consultations from January 2020. It is anticipated that the museum will be used to assist in the City's wider priorities including health and wellbeing and citizen and democratic engagement. [Glasgow Life](#), [Museums Journal](#)

Also: The Trimontium Museum is to receive £394k from the South of Scotland Economic Partnership towards £1.25m plans to upgrade the site, and attract more tourism to the border town of Melrose. The museum will also develop a learning programme to allow visitors to contribute to archaeological research. [Trimontium Museum](#), [Scottish Government](#)

Museums and wellbeing



Blakesley Hall's lavender gardens, courtesy of Birmingham Museums Trust, part of its new mindfulness guide.

National Academy for Social Prescribing launched with £5m support from Government

The Government is contributing £5m to create a new National Academy for Social Prescribing which will support schemes that help people improve their health by accessing cultural and sports activities. The new body will provide advocacy for social prescribing, develop best practice, standardise the range and quality of activities on offer and bring together partners from many parts of civic society including housing, local government, sport and culture. Arts Council England is already involved in the work. Currently only 60% of Clinical Commissioning Groups have adopted social prescribing; now the NHS plans to appoint 1000 trained social prescribing link workers by 2020 – 21, and aims to use them to direct 900,000 people to community based activities. Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, welcomed the idea and said that local facilities such as 'museums, libraries, leisure centres and parks' would help achieve great impact. However, he added "*we are concerned that there is no funding model to support the activities that people are referred to. The current model is comparable to sending people to pharmacists, but not funding the medication.*" Next April, LGA will be publishing a handbook for councils on using cultural and leisure services to deliver social prescribing. [Gov.uk](#), [Local Government Association](#), [M + H](#)

King's begins world's largest ever study on the impact of arts on health

King's College London has received £2m from the Wellcome Trust to begin the largest ever study into the effect of arts interventions on physical and mental health. It will bring together artists, London hospital trusts and community centres across Lambeth and Southwark to offer three interventions: mother and baby singing sessions, dance for Parkinson's and music, song and spoken word for those recovering from stroke. The work is aimed to build up the evidence base sufficiently to be able to scale up arts for health as an approach. [King's College](#)

Gallery audio tours address mental health and mindfulness alongside art

King's College London and the McPin Foundation have created a new audio tour of the National Gallery which combines a tour of the art with young people's experiences of mental health difficulties. Works by Van Gogh, Cima, Crivelli and Joseph Wright of Derby are considered in the tour. Meanwhile, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery has launched a 'Be Mindful' audio guide, encouraging visitors to 'slow down' and contemplate paintings such as paintings like 'Monte Civita' by Elijah Walton. [M + H](#), [BMT](#)

NCVO publishes new safeguarding guidelines

NCVO has published new safeguarding resources as part of the DCMS-supported Safeguarding Training Fund. These are aimed to improve safeguarding practice among voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and prevent harm, abuse and neglect. [NCVO](#)

Towards reliable access: disabled people and museums

'You have to be particularly determined to go' – gallery visiting as a disabled person

In two articles for *Apollo Magazine* Richard Sandell, Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester and Chris Ingram, founder of the Ingram Collection of Modern British and Contemporary Art reflect on the barriers to museum and gallery visiting for disabled people. Ingram, who became a wheelchair user following a stroke, describes frequently broken lifts, labels not positioned to be easily read, obstructed views and (at art fairs) ramps that can only be used with assistance. He writes: "*I do still enjoy going to museums and art fairs – but going as a wheelchair user lessens the experience, without a doubt. It's a hell of a disadvantage; you have to be particularly determined to go.*" Meanwhile, Sandell describes how the Wellcome Collection enlisted the experience of a wide range of disabled people in creating its new gallery 'Being Human', which has included not just BSL and audio, but a layout to enable equitable use by all visitors. Sandell comments that new builds and major refurbishment projects are too often still allowed to go ahead with designs that do not pay attention to the needs of disabled people. Ingram's own art collection is currently on medium-term loan to the Lightbox in Woking, which has worked hard to improve access, with programming including audio-described tours for visually impaired people and work to take art to local care homes. [Apollo Magazine](#), [The Lightbox](#) (Ingram Collection), [Wellcome Collection](#) (Being Human exhibition)

Museums and galleries adopt app to make venues more welcoming to disabled visitors

A new app called 'Welcome' is allowing museums and galleries to offer a better experience to disabled visitors. Users contact venues ahead of their visit to request support and give details of their requirements. Gallery and studio Edinburgh Printmakers says that this has driven visitor numbers, with repeat visits from disabled people. Molly Soar adds *"the app has also established a group of regular customers who met through the app and now return to experience the new exhibits."* [Arts Industry](#)

Consortium offers tailored help in embedding inclusion in museums

The Disability Collaborative Network has joined a wider group of consultants called EMBED with a view to offering more tailored support to museums to become more disability confident and better at supporting disabled people in the sector as employees or visitors. It offers an intersectional view and can tailor its advice to smaller museums. [DCN](#)

Parents of children with special needs significantly more likely to find cultural sites unwelcoming

A survey of 2,000 parents has found that those with children with special needs were significantly more likely to find museums, arts venues or heritage sites unwelcoming or unfriendly. 11%, or around 200 of those surveyed had special needs children. The survey found:

- 29% of parents with special needs children said they were made to feel unwelcome at a venue, in some cases to the point of being asked to leave, compared with 13% of parents not in that group.
- 42% said they experienced unfriendliness compared with 22% of other parents.
- The percentage varied by attraction type – around half of stately homes were criticised by parents of special needs children for not doing enough (49%) compared to 46% of art galleries and 35% of museums.

Vicki Buchalik, founder of community and consultancy 'Hard Days Out Made Easy' which advocates to make visits easier through reasonable adjustments, said that many venues are only starting to address these issues. However, she praised initiatives such as NHM's Dinosauria, which opens the museum to children on the autistic spectrum before public opening hours. Responding to a written question on the topic, Arts Minister Helen Whatley also pointed to free entry for carers and those with special needs to English Heritage sites. [Ecclesiastical](#), [Guardian](#), [Museums Journal](#), [Parliament.uk](#)

Environment



Anne Boleyn by Unknown English Artist, late 16th century based on a work of circa 1533-1536, © National Portrait Gallery, London. Touring during the gallery's refurbishment.

Spiders in the rafters, moss on the roof: cultural buildings and biodiversity

Julie's Bicycle has produced a new report exploring how cultural spaces can respond to the biodiversity crisis, with a particular focus on green infrastructure, single-use plastics and moving away from unsustainable products such as palm oil. However, it also discusses how the UK is 'one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world' and asks how cultural organisations can support ecosystems, both directly and by example. Areas it identifies for action include:

- Capital planning - which might involve commissioning ecological surveys, integrating biomimicry concepts into architectural briefs, adopting rainwater harvesting, green roofs and walls or supporting surrounding green spaces for wildlife, in urban as well as rural areas.
- Programming – which can range from citizen science projects to building bridges between indigenous and other types of knowledge and pursuing partnerships with environmental organisations. It also encourages cultural organisations to involve local politicians in programmes which address these issues.
- Procurement – it offers links to a series of factsheets on considerations when buying everything from fish for onsite cafes, to biofuels or printing services.

Anthony Roberts, CEO of Colchester Arts Centre which features in the report said *"we want to rethink the building as a shared space, a space we share with all the various plants, bugs, birds, the moss on the roof, the spiders in the rafters, the flowers in the graveyard. If we rethink the building in this way we can rethink the organisation into a place where we can ask the questions that contribute to the debate and understanding of what causes climate change."* [Julie's Bicycle](#)

Also: In Norway, as elsewhere, ice patch archaeologists are struggling to keep up with the rate of glacial melt and recover ancient artefacts which are emerging from the ice after centuries or millennia. The University of Oslo's Museum of Cultural History has catalogued over 3,500 objects from the ice in the past 15 years. [Medium](#)

California wildfires draw attention to Getty's well-adapted architecture

In late October, California wildfires which drew very close to the Getty Museum led to fears that the collection was at risk. In response, the museum blogged about how the centre, opened in 1997 is 'a marvel of anti-fire engineering' from its well-irrigated gardens to fire resistant stone structure. Elsewhere in California, art evacuation is becoming seasonally routine, putting pressure on emergency storage. A number of museums near the fires are currently closed. [Getty Institute](#), [The Art Newspaper](#)

Climate Heritage Network aims to involve cultural organisations in UN climate change negotiations

The newly formed Climate Heritage Network, which launched in Edinburgh in late October aims to bring a network of heritage, museum and cultural organisations into conversation at government level and make them a more visible force in international climate change negotiations such as the forthcoming UN COP25 conference in Chile this December. To date, only a handful of cultural organisations have had a presence at these events, compared to what organiser Andrew Potts describes as a "whole choir of NGOs from transport or agriculture bringing their voices to those debates". Organisers point to sites at risk as diverse as Easter Island statues, Shackleton's hut in Antarctica and Blackpool's three piers. World Monument's Fund's John Darlington adds "let's get on the front foot and broker conversations with communities and governments. We have the opportunity to make those decisions—about what we keep, what we lose—but we need to be honest about that debate." [Art Newspaper](#), [Climate Heritage Network](#)

Britain 2050: AR installations show outcomes for NT properties without action on climate

The National Trust has commissioned Augmented Reality installations for six of its properties, showing what the historic sites will be like by 2050 if there is insufficient action to address climate change. It gives a vision of properties fallen into disrepair in a heavily polluted environment. NT's climate change advisor Keith Jones said that climate is already an issue and the Trust's 'biggest threat'. He added "we've seen overheating at some National Trust places in the South East, pests and diseases harming ash trees, and landslides and flooding at many sites." [Telegraph](#), [Somerset Live](#) (installation at Montacute House)

Jobs

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

- [Museum Archivist - Natural History Museum](#)
- [Project Manager \(Boston Spa\) - British Library](#)
- [Programme Director - National Railway Museum](#)
- [Benioff Project Curator of Oceania - British Museum](#)
- [Cultural Events Producer, Talks and Spoken Word - British Library](#)
- [Project Co-ordinator: Migration, Heritage and Belonging \(PT\) - Royal Museums Greenwich](#)

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

Arts Council England is also seeking a [Director, Museum and Collections Development/Midlands](#) in Birmingham and an [Assistant, Museums and Cultural Property](#) in London.

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