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## Cuts

### Arts Council NI on the brink of cuts to already awarded grants



The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has told the 37 arts organisations funded by Exchequer funding to prepare for cuts of 5% to their budgets for this year. This follows an announcement of 2% cuts to all government departments, excluding health, by finance minister Simon Hamilton. The cuts have caused a ferocious row about priorities, with former ACNI director Dr Philip Hammond accusing arts minister Caral Ni Chuilín of “clearly [having] absolutely no notion of what is going on in the arts in Northern Ireland.” Chuilín recently found an extra £1m for selected arts projects.

Organisations are being asked for an account of the effect a 5% cut would have on them, before decisions are made in September. Will Chamberlain of one of the affected groups, Belfast Circus School said “We have to make £8k of savings for the remainder of this financial year and it was a big shock, to think that we had the security of a grant awarded to us back in March and then in August to find out that, no, that’s not the amount that we’ve been awarded after all”. ACNI is also seeking to reduce its running costs. [The Stage](#), [BBC](#), [Belfast Telegraph](#)

### Kirklees Council seeks 'commercial alternatives' to closing three museums

Kirklees Council has announced that it will be more than halving its budget for museums and art galleries by 2017/18, from £1m this year to £491k. It suggests that three out of the five museums it runs will close: Tolson Museum, Oakwell Hall, Red House Museum, Bagshaw Museum and Dewsbury Museum. The Council voted against closing the Red House Museum in 2012, while closing the Bagshaw Museum might mean the HLF recovering some of a grant made in 2009. Council leader David Sheard said: "We are putting this information out in full, earlier than ever before, so people have the chance to come forward with alternatives, but at a time when they can be costed to make sure they are viable." [Museums Journal](#)

### Protests from cultural organisations cut by ACE

Two arts groups which lost substantial funding from Arts Council England in the 2015–18 round are organising protests. The Orange Tree Theatre, a high profile casualty which lost all its funding on new Director Paul Miller's first day in the job, has organised a petition of 800 theatre workers including Penelope Wilton and David Tennant. An Equity spokesman said the theatre was likely to survive the cut, but that it represented a 'massive error of judgement'. Meanwhile supporters of the Black-E, which lost 35% of its grant despite being re-rated as 'strong' in disputed areas such as BME representation, are holding a protest including singing and dancing outside ACE's offices in September. [Liverpool Echo](#), [The Stage](#)

### Grassroots artists group calls on creatives to mobilise against cuts

Two hundred artists have formed a new group, the Artists' Assembly Against Austerity to protest against government cultural cuts. They include writer Blake Morrison and actor Maxine Peake and artist Peter Kennard. In a letter to the Guardian they write: "Our demands centre on four key issues: keep healthcare free at the point of need and resist privatisation; ensure equal access to arts education by scrapping student fees and ending cuts to creative subjects in schools and universities; provide affordable homes and studios by capping rents; and invest in the arts, which generate a significant cash benefit to the taxpayer. This means no more cuts to the cultural and heritage sectors and reinstatement of arts funding to pre-2010 levels, appropriately adjusted for inflation." [Guardian](#) (article), [Guardian](#) (letter)

### MA cuts survey deadline extended

The Museums Association has extended the deadline for its annual survey into cuts in the sector. They are particularly keen to get more responses from larger museum services. The new deadline for replies is 18th September. [Museums Association](#)

## Saving collections

### Three months to save Wedgewood's china



The Art Fund has launched a campaign to raise £2.74m from the public by 30th November 2014 to save the Wedgewood Collection, which is at risk of being split up and privately sold. When the Wedgewood company went bankrupt in 2009, the museum and its unique collection of china was listed as a saleable asset. Much of it dates from Josiah Wedgewood's creation of the firm in the 18th

century. The Art Fund has stepped in, and has been gathering funds to buy the whole collection and gift it to the V&A, who will then lend it back to the Wedgwood Museum. Most of the £15.75m has already been raised, but it is contingent on the last £2.74m being found within three months.

Tristram Hunt MP is one of the people who has rallied behind the cause, describing Josiah Wedgwood as the 'Steve Jobs of his day' combining design with commercial acumen and an interest in the issues of his time, from the enlightenment to the abolition of slavery. [Save Wedgwood](#), [Museums Journal](#)

### Good sports: unusual sporting buildings listed

Stranded like an exotic flamingo in the middle of a garden centre in Purley, a 1935 art deco diving board is all that remains of an elegant Lido which once existed on the site. It is one of a number of sporting heritage structures which have just received Grade II listings. They include a grandstand, also from the 30s, in Barnet, a squash court in Hammersmith and York Hall, Bethnal Green – a swimming pool and laundry with Turkish Baths in the basement. Culture Minister Ed Vaizey said "These new listings are a fine mixture of buildings and structures, providing a fascinating snapshot of how sport in the capital was enjoyed in years gone by. Each one of them is worth protecting, not just for their architectural value but also to help preserve the memories of glory, excitement and innocent fun they have provided for so many." [English Heritage](#)

### English Heritage Angel Awards shortlist announced

English Heritage has announced the shortlist for the third year of its Angel Awards, supported by Andrew Lloyd Webber and celebrating the people who rescue English heritage sites. Next year for the first time a parallel scheme will be run in Scotland. The sixteen heritage projects on the shortlist range from prehistoric rock paintings in Yorkshire to a derelict church with secret murals. The public will now vote for winners in four categories, who will receive awards on 3rd November. [English Heritage](#)

### Collections Trust advice for museums becoming independent trusts

A number of local authorities are exploring the possibility of museums becoming independent trusts, often in response to government cuts. The Collections Trust says there have been a small number of cases where there has been a perceived conflict of interest between a local authority wishing to keep control of data associated with a collection, rather than hand it to a new trust. CT has issued guidance to deal with such situations, which concludes: "It is the Collections Trust's view, as the national professional association for Collections Management, that the loss of access to the collections documentation would represent a critical risk to the viability of the museum and its ability to fulfil its public and charitable task. We therefore encourage museums and Authorities finding themselves in this position to work together to agree a mutually satisfactory solution which permits the museum to fulfil this task." [Collections Trust](#)

### Trouble on't moor as Brontë Society members demand modernisation

Deep divisions in the Brontë Society, which runs the Brontë Parsonage Museum, have emerged, with two members demanding an Extraordinary General Meeting to remove trustees and organise modernisation. In a letter shown to the *Museums Journal* they write "financial reporting both of the society and its trading company, Brontë Genius, is months behind schedule...this is extremely serious for a business dependent on seasonal income." Director Ann Sumner left in June, but the post remains unadvertised. A spokeswoman for the trustees said "trustees welcome feedback from members and take the concerns of members very seriously and will therefore be responding formally to all members without delay." [Museums Journal](#)

### MA moots stronger sanctions for unethical cultural sales

In the past 25 years, only three local authorities have been barred from the Museums Association for breaches to its code of ethics: Derbyshire, Croydon and Bury. But following Northampton Council's controversial sale of its state of Sekhemka, only months after a similar decision by Croydon, the MA is now considering stronger sanctions. MA President David Anderson said "We have real concerns that this rogue sale will encourage other museums and local authorities to sell treasures." The MA will be convening a meeting of sector bodies in the autumn. [Museums Association](#)



## Thefts from the Motorcycle Museum

Almost all the trophies on the Motorcycle Museum's inventory have been stolen by thieves who broke in in late August. Museum Director James Hewing thinks that the largely nickel trophies were believed by thieves to have been made of silver. He added "*The trophies do have a significant value as trophies.*" A £20k reward has been offered for information leading to the discovery of the trophies. [Museums Journal](#)

## Education

### Update on the Welsh National Plan for Creative Learning

Welsh Culture Minister John Griffiths has released a short statement on the development of the Welsh National Plan for Creative Learning, implementing many of the recommendations from a report by Professor Dai Smith written a year ago. He said the recommendation to make creativity a core theme within the curriculum was still being considered, but a number of elements of the plan had been actioned and the government has agreed £10m in Lottery funding over five years to support this. Strands already in place include:

- An online toolkit to support teachers and arts practitioners to improve literacy and numeracy;
- A toolkit for arts and heritage organisations produced by Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales on 'narrowing the gap', to support continuing professional development;
- A best practice review of the arts in schools at key stages 2, 3 and 4, the first part of which, to be published in 2015, will look at good practice in the teaching and learning of the creative arts in primary schools, with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and reducing the effect of poverty on attainment.

[Arts Wales](#)

### Teaching history in 100 objects



The British Museum has drawn together museums from across the country to create a new teaching resource: *Teaching history in 100 objects*. Among the first 20 objects uploaded to the site are the Vale of York Viking hoard from York Museums Trust, a Wedgewood teaset from the British Museum and The State Entry into Delhi from Bristol Museums and Art Gallery. British Museum Director Neil MacGregor said "This project will enable every primary and secondary school child in the country to access museum objects from the magnificent to the mundane but all of which can teach us about our global history." [Teaching History 100](#)

## The pursuit of happiness

### Three more museums embrace happiness

The Happy Museum Project has commissioned three more projects, bringing the total for the happiness and sustainability project to 22. Manchester Museum is publishing a short guidebook likely to be called *The new rules of the playful museum*. It will explore how both venues and staff can become more playful, as well as exploring child and adult roles. The Lightbox in Woking will be holding an exhibition *Waste Not...* based on changing attitudes to sustainability, following a public collecting project. Reading Museum's project looks at how government funded museums are relevant to wellbeing, using methodology they have developed in previous projects. They will ask if economic growth should be at the expense of wellbeing. [Happy Museum](#) (click the green headline to download word document)

### Crowd rage: should we break up big museums to make them habitable?

Writing for AlJazeeraAmerica, Hrag Vartanian argues that the sheer scale of crowds at larger museums is unsustainable, and that institutions need to break up into multiple sites to preserve a good museum-going experience. He points to the Louvre, which is projecting visitor figures of 12 million by 2025, and argues that uneasy voices are emerging both from large museums and their visitors across the world. The head of visitor services at the Hermitage Museum says "*such a colossal number of simultaneous viewers isn't good for the art, and it can be uncomfortable and overwhelming for those who come to see the art*" while a visitor to the Vatican Museum writes "*Seriously, it would only take one person to trip or to cause some kind of mild panic or corridor rage ... it doesn't bear thinking of.*" The National Gallery limited the number of visitors to its Leonardo exhibition in 2011, at an estimated cost of thousands per day.

Vartanian argues that museums should build outposts instead of ever-larger HQs, modelling themselves after 'public libraries' instead of 'sports stadiums' (so that one institution might have several outlets in far flung corners of the same city). Acknowledging that large institutions from the Smithsonian to the British Museum are generous lenders he adds that there are still vast stored collections. Some countries are already following this route: "*Roughly 10 years ago, Greece embarked on an ambitious plan to disperse the treasures that were traditionally housed in one museum in Athens to locations across the country. This decentralization — a term they used for the process — of art helped place artifacts in their geographic context while spreading tourist dollars to remote areas. The same process has been undertaken in Cyprus. Even in countries where overcrowding is not a problem, such as Mali, decentralizing the national museum has had benefits.*" [Al Jazeera](#)

### Symphony wired into Kent forest to create 'singing' ecosystem

Two artists, James Bulley and Daniel Jones, have wired a symphony into the ecosystem of Bedgebury Pinetum in Kent. 24 speakers are hidden in an area of the forest, from the roots of trees to the canopy. Although part of the music is scored - "*the snare-drum rattle of the squirrel running up a tree, the soprano sax and clarinet piece of the goldcrest flying overhead, or the creaking melody of the tam-tam drums and body of a double bass of the giant sequoia tree*" - the order in which the music is played reflects what is going on in the forest, using a computer which tracks weather conditions and other ecological information. [Guardian](#)

## Cultural value

### Halfway house: AHRC's interim cultural value report

The Arts and Humanities Research Council is halfway through its three year project to explore the value of culture. The authors say that their exploration occurs at a time of changing perceptions: "*For nearly three decades, the value of cultural and artistic engagement has been articulated in instrumental terms: economic impact; urban regeneration; improved educational attainment; better health; reduced unemployment; and so on. While these might well be plausible registers of the benefits of culture and art, putting culture into the straitjacket of predefined outcomes and targets of this kind has all too often led to oversimplifications about both the benefits themselves and the role of arts and culture in securing them.*" Other issues noted by the AHRC include:

- Democratising access is back on the agenda, with many institutions questioning who is benefiting from current provision.
- Arts organisations have sometimes relied on poor evidence of 'value of culture' to secure ongoing funding – there is a recognition that this does not work against a background of severe cuts, and well provenanced evidence is essential.

A full report will be issued in autumn 2015. [AHRC](#)

### King's College tracks public attitudes to culture with new funding

King's College has received £110k from the Legacy Trust to track public attitudes to culture, and is currently setting up a consortium to deliver the project. It follows on from recent work to explore what culture adds to major sporting events. Some of the results of the first wave research include:

- High prices are more of a deterrent to sport than cultural events;
- 12% of people attend some form of arts or cultural event at least once per month, with 59% attending at least once per year;
- The top five types of cultural event attended in the past 12 months are films, exhibitions, public art installations, street art and theatre;
- Amongst younger people, aged 16 to 29 years, 49% consider themselves an 'arty person' vs 51% a 'sporty person';
- 54% of people think cultural events enhance sporting events of which they are a part.

Director of Cultural Partnerships at Kings Deborah Bull said "*The success of the Cultural Olympiad was a high point in public engagement with culture – with universal recognition of the value it could bring to major events. However, now that the organisations that made it possible have dissolved, there's a genuine risk we will lose this expertise.*" [King's College](#)

**Also:** The Cultural Institute at King's is also working with the Jewish Museum on a new community-led curation project, modelling an approach where local people lend objects for exhibitions alongside a museum's own collections. [King's College](#)

### Sajid Javid reflects on first few months in office

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid has blogged on his first eighteen weeks as Secretary of State for culture, a period which included major events such as the Commonwealth Games, launch of the First World War centenary commemorations and the Tour de France. He said that the UK's ability to host these major events was a significant factor in drawing so many overseas tourists. He also praised the creative industries, especially film, for their effects on tourism and the economy. [DCMS](#)

**Also:** Ed Vaizey has praised the beginning of tax relief for theatres, first announced in the budget last year. 250 production companies a year will benefit from the changes. He writes "*the UK theatre sector is a key attraction for tourism with visiting tourists spending at least £856m a year on arts and culture*". [DCMS](#)

### Cultural cities and productivity: new Nesta report

Nesta has published a paper linking the productivity of cities with the amount of culture they offer (this first appeared in longer form last year in National Endowment for the Arts publication book last year). They say that although this link has long been assumed, evidence has been thin. The study builds an econometric model drawing on solid literature about urban wage premiums and human capital externalities. Findings include:

- Workers will take a pay cut to work in cities with strong cultural clustering;
- Innovation spillovers from the creative sector affect the surrounding economy;
- Creative cities seem to be more productive (although the authors caution that it could simply be that productive cities attract creative industries).

The study concludes that although a positive link between economic benefit and creative cities exist, it's a more subtle link than some have assumed.

Meanwhile the Marches Network, which represents museums in the West Midlands, has used the newly reformulated AIM Economic Impact toolkit to explore the relationship between their museums and the surrounding economy. They conclude that museums generate £373m per annum in the regional economy, and for every two people directly employed, three more jobs benefit. [Marches Network](#), [Nesta](#)



## Events

### Working Internationally Regional Project workshop (North)

Part of the Working Internationally Regional Project, this one-day workshop is for regional and local museums and galleries who are in the early stages of international working or interested in finding out more about it. It is supported by ICOM UK, NMDC, the British Council, AIM and Heritage Without Borders and takes place on 24th September at Leeds City Museum. The aim of the workshop is to enhance the confidence and skills of delegates to develop international work. The four main workshop sessions will include:

- Case-studies on international work, exploring working with limited resources as well as developing more ambitious projects and partnerships.
- An overview of funding options for international work.
- Facilitated group session to develop ideas for international work, building on existing projects or ideas.
- Practical how-to session looking at up to three specific areas of international work.

Tickets are £35/£25 (for smaller museums). [ICOM](#), [Eventbrite](#) (booking and further details)

### Resources for Welsh Festival of Museums

The Welsh Museums Federation are offering resources for all museums in Wales interested in participating in the Welsh Festival of Museums in October. They are also offering small grants for any museum needing help with printing posters or banners (while funds last). [Welsh Museums Federation](#),

### Heritage Show + Tell in Yorkshire

The next Heritage Show + Tell event, where people have three minutes each to describe their projects, is taking place at Leeds City Museum on 2nd October. Contact [ccsmghinfo@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ccsmghinfo@leeds.ac.uk) to pitch a project for inclusion, or to ask for a full programme when it is complete. [CCSMGH](#)

### Museums Computer Group: 'Museums Beyond the Web'



The Museums Computer Group has announced its annual conference, taking place at the Natural History Museum on 7th November 2014. It will explore how the 'web' has shifted away from websites and even from mobiles and apps to wearable technology and the 'internet of things'. Talks include On Dartmoor Nobody Can Hear You Google, about tech in places with limited signal, and Oxford University Museum's Box of Delights app, which explores the conceit of a museum audio guide usurped by supernatural forces. Tickets are from £75 for members, £150 non-members. [Museums Computer Group](#) (programme), [Museums Computer Group](#) (how to persuade your boss to let you go)

### Still time to book for 'Survival of the Fittest'

Places are still available for *Survival of the fittest – resilience and sustainability in museums*, an event by London Museums Group on 18th September at the Southbank Centre. Speakers include Nick Poole from the Collections Trust, exploring what museums need in place in order to be responsive and agile; Sholeh Johnston from Julie's Bicycle on how to build a more sustainable future for the museum sector; Shân MacLennan and Chloë Bird from the Southbank Centre on why Southbank Centre's Heritage creates its resilience. The event is free but booking is essential.

[London Museums Group](#)

### Sign up for 'Ask A Curator' Day

The Twitter-based campaign #AskACurator day drew a surprising amount of interest from a wide public in 2013, and is now back on September 17th 2014. Organiser Mar Dixon is inviting curators to sign up for as short or long a time as they can spare on the day. [Mar Dixon](#)

### FutureEverything Festival planned for 2015

FutureEverything is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a festival on 26th–28th February 2015 in Manchester Town Hall. The event brings together artists, designers, city makers, activists, technologists and business people as well as taking over spaces across the city, with exhibitions, interventions and public participation. [Future Everything](#)

### Be Very Scared: The British Library Goes Goth

The British Library is launching the UK's largest exhibition of gothic literature, opening on 3rd October. *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination* includes manuscripts and rare editions of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, as well as the work of contemporary writers influenced by the genre from Angela Carter and Mervyn Peake to Clive Barker and Sarah Waters. Related events include The Sorting, the Library's Halloween Late, in which you can discover whether you are a saint or sinner in a 'funeral inspired experience'.

The programme takes place in the context of a general outbreak of the undead across the museum sector during August – from Zombie night at tiny Bursledon Brickworks to National Museums Scotland's immersive *Zombies In the Museum* event and the Bowes Museum's Murder Night. [British Library](#), [British Library](#) (autumn listings)

## The process of museum redesign

### Derby Silk Mill's collaborative rethink

Derby Silk Mill was a museum that risked senescence through lack of investment "*full of old exhibition cases...and a hotch potch of rooms in varying conditions*" and closed its door for redevelopment in October 2013. Hannah Fox, now the manager, launched the innovative Re:make project which asked the community – from teenagers to people at Farmers Markets – what the silk mill meant to the town and harnessed their good ideas. When the museum reopened later in 2013 it was at first completely empty, and audiences helped with decisions about collection, exhibitions and case design. However, as Jasper Visser comments: "*Although the audience is invited to discuss everything, this is not a populist redevelopment project. In fact the Derby Silk Mill stays surprisingly true to its history and heritage. The site has always been about design, working together and innovation. These values haven't changed, but the methods to act upon them are now radically different.*" [Museum of the Future](#)

### Museum visitors to swim with the fishes?

A new prototype visitor attraction, designed in Hong Kong, may offer the opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in pools with projections which give the impression of swimming among some of the planet's more complex ecosystems. Lined with LED screens, the pool would offer live feeds from areas such as the Bahamas, Maldives and Great Barrier Reef, as well as sound conveyed by hydrophones. [ALVA](#)



## Committee appointments

### Museum Accreditation Committee seeks Chair

The Museums Accreditation Committee is appointed by Arts Council England to consider applications under the Accreditation Scheme for UK museums and galleries. ACE is now seeking a Chair for the Committee, who should have recent senior management experience in the museum sector. The post is an honorary one for three years, with the potential of a three year extension. Applications close on 10th September. [Arts Council](#)

### Heritage Lottery Fund seeks regional committee members

The Heritage Lottery Fund is seeking regional committee members in Northern Ireland, Wales, the East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber. They are keen to receive applications from people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences with an affinity for a country or region's diverse heritage. The closing date is 29th September: for an informal chat before applying, contact [decisionmakers@hlf.org.uk](mailto:decisionmakers@hlf.org.uk) [Heritage Lottery Fund](#)

## Scotland

### Arts sector prepares for referendum vote

*The Art Newspaper* reports that the Yes campaign is more prominent among cultural sector workers, with playwright Alan Bissett saying "2014 could be Scotland's 1966, our greatest historical moment of cultural triumph". Others however have signed an open letter in support of staying a part of the UK, and identify themselves as part of an international art scene. Simon Groom, Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art said that the Scottish art scene is 'relatively small' and contains many artists not born in Scotland whose perspective is international. David Shrigley and Lachlan Goudie are among the artists represented in the enormous 'Generation' exhibition, who will vote no, and Martin Boyce and Nathan Coley both say they do not identify as Scottish. [Art Newspaper](#) (this article subscription only)

### Culture Summit now online

In August the second Edinburgh International Culture Summit brought together 25 international government delegations plus arts leaders and culture experts. The theme was culture as a source of trust, and organiser Sir Jonathan Mills said "*The theme of the 2014 Summit has been somewhat provocative. At a time when economic systems have become forces unto themselves, and struggle to be perceived as either transparent or trustworthy, the thought that the creative outpouring of our civilizations might fill such an ethical vacuum and become a currency of trust seems appropriate, if a little confronting.*" Speeches and short films from the summit are now online. [PR Web](#), [Culture Summit](#) (links to transcripts and films), [Museums Journal](#)

### Scottish Household Survey shows slight increase in cultural engagement

The Scottish Household Survey has reported the results for 2013. Statistical findings include:

- 91% of households engaged in some sort of cultural activity, up from 90% the previous year.
- Excluding reading for pleasure, the figure becomes 49% in 2013, compared to 48% the year before.
- Women are 3% more likely to attend cultural events than men, and 7% more likely when trips to the cinema are excluded.
- 31% visited museums, 28% a historical or archaeological place and 20% galleries – museum attendance is up 2% on 2012.
- Attendance at a cultural event is highest among 16-24 year olds at 91%, remains at over 80% for those 59 and under, and gradually drops off to 54% for the over 74s.

[Scotland.gov.uk](http://Scotland.gov.uk)

## The Politics of Paint

### 'Thanks Banksy': £403k picture saves Bristol Boys Club

In April a piece of Banksy's distinctive stencil art *Mobile Lovers* appeared on the wall near Bristol Boys Club, and was promptly crowbarred off by club leader Dennis Stinchcombe, who planned to sell it to raise the £100k needed to keep the club open. An ownership row followed, since the wall belonged to Bristol City Council. The picture was displayed at Bristol Museum while the views of the artist were sought. Following a letter from Banksy, confirming that he wanted Bristol Boys Club to raise funds from it, the picture has sold to a private buyer for a record £403k. The BBC reports that as well as securing the future of the club, it has transformed its ambitions: in addition to providing boxing and sport, street art is now a regular feature of the club's activities. They have now created their own piece of the graffiti where *Mobile Lovers* was briefly displayed, telling the story of the events surrounding the picture. In the lefthand corner of the mural it says 'Thanks Banksy' in big letters. [BBC](#), [Arts Industry](#)

### Out, damn spot: Hirst seeks to destroy early painting

Meanwhile the artist Damien Hirst is involved in a legal row over an early 'spot' painting which he applied directly to the wall of a house in Fulham in 1989. The house has now changed hands, and a dispute rages about whether the image should be returned to Hirst so that he can destroy it, or whether it can be sold by the homeowners for an estimated £1-2m. 1,500 spot paintings have since been created to Hirst's specifications by his assistants; the Fulham image is rare in being actually painted by the artist. [The Art Newspaper](#) (this article subscription only)

### Fitzwilliam proposes Regional Buyers Club

The Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum Tim Knox has written for the *Art Newspaper* about his attempt to set up a consortium of regional museums to buy Poussin's *The Infant Moses Trampling Pharaoh's Crown* after it was sold to a foreign buyer, but had an export ban imposed. Knox wanted a regional museum group to share the painting, with each displaying it for two years in rotation.

Ultimately the attempt was withdrawn since only the Ashmolean, Bowes and Fitzwilliam could commit, and HLF had recently given the Oxbridge museums generous grants for paintings. But Knox remains interested in revisiting the idea. He writes "*previous acquisition partnerships – such as the one formed between the National Gallery and the National Museum Wales in 1989 to buy Poussin's The Finding of Moses – have always been very much dominated by the national institutions. It was an attempt to do something for ourselves, to galvanise a new sense of pride and fellowship among regional galleries and address the startling disparity of funding between London and the regions... I hope that the idea of a consortium of regional museums, which could acquire objects and form something of an antidote to the monopoly of the big national institutions, might one day ride again.*" [The Art Newspaper](#) (this article subscription only)

### Selfie with Sunflowers

The National Gallery has changed its rules to allow photography in its galleries, bringing it into line with other major institutions such as the Tate. The Gallery said "*as the use of Wi-Fi will significantly increase the use of tablets and mobile devices within the Gallery, it will become increasingly difficult for our Gallery Assistants to be able to distinguish between devices being used for engagement with the Collection, or those being used for photography. It is for that reason we have decided to change our policy on photography.*" Flash photography will continue to be banned, as well as snapping some copyright protected works.

In a story for the *Guardian*, adorned with inept selfies in front of the gallery's iconic artworks, journalist Zoe Williams argues that social embarrassment is most likely to keep visitors' selfie habits in check. As she lined herself up with a Rembrandt "*the disapproval in the room flooded towards me. I thought I heard someone hiss. It was like that bit at the end of Dangerous Liaisons when Madame de Thing is booed at the opera.*" Meanwhile the *Independent* asks if, in the internet age, visitors are still able to give pictures the time and attention they deserve. [Guardian](#), [Telegraph](#), [Independent](#),

## Barbican accused of 'complicity with racism' for Human Zoo

Eight thousand people have signed a petition against the touring art installation *Exhibit B*, by Brett Bailey, which includes semi-naked black people in shackles. They are asking the Barbican to cancel the show before it opens for four days on September 23rd. Bailey says the exhibition is intended as a meditation on slavery and the 19th century phenomenon of the 'human zoo'. It has already attracted protests elsewhere in Europe, particularly Berlin, and divided opinion at the Edinburgh Festival. Leading the protests, journalist Sara Myers said "*I want my children to grow up in a world where the barbaric things that happened to their ancestors are a thing of the past. We have come a long way since the days of the grotesque human zoo - we should not be taking steps back now. If Brett Bailey is trying to make a point about slavery this is not the way to do it. The irony gets lost.*"

The Barbican's head of theatre Toni Racklin said "*the piece aims to explore the relationship between Western powers and Africa, ranging from exposing the abhorrent historical attitudes to race during the colonial era to questioning how far our society has moved on, by holding up a mirror to contemporary issues such as the current treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers.*" [Daily Mail](#), [Guardian](#)

## Blogging the art world

Charles Samarez Smith, former National Gallery director and NMDC member and current Chief Exec of the Royal Academy, has launched a blog exploring the art and architecture that surrounds him, from underpass graffiti to railings, Paddington Station and country gardens, in the UK and abroad. [Charles Samarez Smith](#)

## Erasing a history of the world

### Web savvy Islamists spread fear through misinformation and cultural destruction

Shrines, mosques and mausoleums were destroyed across Iraq during August by IS (Islamic State), and the archaeological sites of the Nineveh Plains are also at risk. There are also fears that Islamists may be making use of the online media, including listservs, of groups set up to protect Iraqi culture in order to create a destruction hit list. US-based Charles E Jones who runs one such list says "*I'm quite conscious of the fact that I moderate a resource that is most likely being read by some of the people causing the destruction*". However, it also seems likely that IS is claiming to have destroyed some ancient landmarks and artefacts which are actually still intact. Lamassu, a 3,200 year old half human winged statue is among the objects believed to have survived after all.

Speaking to the *Art Newspaper*, academic Benjamin Isakhan of Deakin University said there was a strong link between cultural destruction and ethnic cleansing: "*central to the IS ideology and action is the desire to rid the world of a complex and cosmopolitan past. It is a type of cultural 'Ground Zero', cleansing the perceived blasphemy of the past: from the ashes a new, holy and serene Islamic caliphate will emerge. Any monument or motif, any artefact or architecture, any shrine, church or mosque that contradicts their strict and austere vision must be torn down and destroyed.*" [Art Newspaper](#)

### UNESCO responds to continuing cultural destruction in Syria and Iraq

Meanwhile UNESCO has issued a statement covering cultural destruction in Iraq and the 'heavy toll' of three years of fighting in Syria. Summarising its response to these crises, UNESCO emphasises the importance of international collaboration with groups including the International Council of Museums to prevent looted goods reaching foreign markets and to prevent further damage in Iraq. UNESCO has also helped to rebuild mausoleums in Mali, destroyed in 2012, as an important facet of peacemaking. The UNESCO report continues:

*"Anyone who has seen the pride and joy of the local community as rehabilitation advances can understand that there is much more at stake than old stones. It is also about strengthening the resilience and confidence of an entire society, restoring an environment that fosters reconciliation and hope in the future. Culture is a bond that motivates people to work together for a better future. Cultural heritage is also essential for citizens to regain a sense of shared purpose and common identity when the conflicts are over."* [UNESCO](#), [Hyperallergic](#)

## Slavery and the British Country House

The wealth and power of the British country house also came with links to the slave trade, and in 2009 English Heritage began to explore this history with a conference. Now they have produced a book on the subject in partnership with the National Trust and Economic History Society. The book is £50 in print, but free to download from their website. [English Heritage](#)

## Funding

### Crowdfunding: advice in a nutshell



The *Guardian* has brought together arts professionals experienced in the art of crowdfunding to offer a succinct new guide. They argue that crowdfunding isn't just a passing fad: "£3bn was raised globally last year through crowdfunding – entertainment and the arts raised £600,000 of that. According to the World Trade Organisation, crowdfunding will be worth £216bn in 10 years, which would make entertainment and the arts worth £43bn." The advice highlights the hard work, video and importance of rewards that is vital to making most crowdfunding work, and warns fund seekers not to overrely on the outlier perversity which, for instance, led 6,911 people to invest \$55k in [potato salad](#). [Guardian](#)

### Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund offers £1m

The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, managed by the Museums Association, is offering £1m to help museums develop a better understanding and use of their collections. Grants can be used for research into collections, conservation, collections review and initiatives to develop the use of collections. Individual grants are from £20k to £100k and the deadline for first round applications is 12th September. 15 of the applicants will then be asked to make fuller round two applications. The MA's collections co-ordinator Sally Colvin said "The fund is competitive, but we always look for exciting projects. If you have an idea for working with significant collections, and using them to make an impact with audiences and communities then get in touch." [Museums Journal](#)



## Annual results

### Visit England survey finds cultural attraction visits up by 5%



Visit England has published its annual survey of visitor attractions. Results are self reported, some venues have opted out and other prefer to remain anonymous, so published results represent some exclusions. The results for 2013 include:

- Visits overall are up by 5% since 2012.
- The top ten most visited paid for attractions were: Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Flamingo Land, Chester Zoo, Windermere Lake Cruises, Kew Gardens, London Zoo, Stonehenge and the Houses of Parliament/Big Ben.
- There was a 7% increase to paid attractions in 2013, compared to a 3% decline in 2012.
- The most visited free attractions were the British Museum, National Gallery, Natural History Museum, Tate Modern, Brighton Pier, Science Museum, V&A, National Portrait Gallery, Old Royal Naval College and Tate Britain.
- Visits to museums and galleries are now almost 50% higher since free admission began in 2001.
- Venues with greatly increased visitor figures since 2012 included Bristol Museum, most popular outside the South East (up 17%), the British Museum (up 20%) and the National Railway Museum, which was the second most popular outside the South East and saw an increase of 30%.
- 8% of those surveyed increased their permanent staff in 2013, and 6% decreased them. The number of volunteers used continues to rise.

[Visit England](#), [Museums Journal](#)

### London the most expensive city for culture – except museums

A report *The Cost of Culture* published by Post Office Travel Money tracks the relative costs of a cultural break in various European cities. Warsaw is the cheapest, at £69.95 for the combined cost of single tickets for ballet, opera and classical concerts, a top museum, an art gallery and a heritage attraction. London is the most expensive at £256.25. However, within that figure there is great variation: London opera and ballet hovers around £100 for some tickets, while museums such as the British Museum and Tate where there is no charge are listed among the highlights. Elsewhere in Europe, the most expensive museum is the Vatican at £13.20, and the most expensive art gallery is the Van Gogh Museum, at £12.38. [Museums Journal](#)

## Largely positive feedback for Arts Council Wales

Arts Council Wales' client and stakeholder customer survey 2014 reports generally positive reactions to the funding body, with 80% of respondents saying that it is effective and relevant. Negative issues raised include lack of support for arts education and a lack of clarity around funding decisions. It is rated most highly at raising arts profile, providing expertise, widening participation and developing the arts in local communities. 15% think it is not effective at influencing entrepreneurs and decision makers: Chief Executive Nick Capaldi said that ACW will be publishing advocacy reports to begin to remedy this. [Arts Professional](#)

## Museums Association publishes annual report

The Museums Association has published its annual report. The Association's membership has grown for the sixth consecutive year and now stands at 6,350 individual members, 573 institutional members and 262 corporate members. [Museums Journal](#)

## Tech: tracking digitisation, going 3D

### 2014 survey tracks the impact of digital

The Digital R&D Fund, which is collaboratively supported by ACE, Nesta and AHRC, is launching the second year of its survey to see how digital is impacting the cultural sector. 6,000 survey invitations have been issued, but if your organisation has not been contacted they invite you to get in touch.

Although digital engagement is widespread, the 2013 survey indicated that only 11% of respondents said they were reaping financial benefit from it. The fund says: *"twelve months on, the picture may well be very different. The potential for big data and open data has been explored in blogs and forums across the country, and exciting concepts like wearable technology and the internet of things are gathering pace."* [ArtsDigitalR&D](#)

### What the doctor ordered: how collaborative digitisation projects support library culture

In July, the Wellcome Library and JISC announced that nine libraries would be collaborating to digitise 15 million pages of 19th century medical books. Writing for the *Guardian* Wellcome Library Director Simon Chaplin reflects on the benefits for history research – but also the wider implications for the sector. He says that by the end of the project, there will be a much clearer picture of what Victorian medical texts were 'canonical' and which peripheral.

He argues that such large projects are still worthwhile, even though Google is planning to digitise all of the 129,864,880 books ever printed. Acknowledging that Google is valued as a collaborative partner by many cultural institutions, including the British Library, he argues that it is important to have a more broadly owned cultural economy. He adds: *"by embracing the opportunities digitisation offers to give more people more access to more books, libraries are ensuring that no one company or organisation can exert a monopoly. By making digitised books freely available, they ensure that no other library is disadvantaged and that there are as few obstacles to access as possible. Well-planned, collaborative digitisation can allow libraries to share the burden of preservation so we don't all end up jealously hoarding the same dwindling stock of physical books."* [Guardian](#)

### Print yourself a palace – or a crustacean

The use of 3D printers is becoming ever more ambitious as a US man printed off a (small) 3D castle in his garden, and says he has plans to print a 2 storey house next. At the other end of the scale, museum conference attendees in Germany learned how to print finely detailed crustaceans as a way to improve academic study of some of their more sophisticated appendages. [Independent](#), [Smithsonian](#)

### Millennia in minutes

The journal *Science* has published a study which tracks cultural influence over time in Europe and America, by plotting the places of birth and death of 150,000 prominent figures. It spans 2,600 years of history, from Ancient Egypt, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the ascendancy of London, Paris and New York, and finally a concentration of cultural talent in Hollywood. A five minute animation shows cascading life arcs of birth and death through history, drawing on data from Freebase, 'a community curated database of people, places and things'. [Wired](#)

### This month in pictures

Images this month are courtesy of Beamish, whose [Agricultural Power from the Past](#) event runs until Sunday; the multi-museum resource [Teaching the history of the world in 100 objects](#); and the image of artist [Desmond Haughton](#) by Nahem Shoa is courtesy of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, which has just acquired the image through the generous donation of the artist. Shoa says he hopes that the gift will contribute to the positive representation of black people in museum collections.

### And finally...

Archaeologists are celebrating the excavation of a Roman toilet seat discovered near Hadrian's Wall. Dating from the 2nd century, it is believed to be the only surviving wooden loo seat ever discovered from the period. Director of excavations at Vindolanda, Dr Andrew Birley, said "*Now we need to find the toilet that went with it as Roman loos are fascinating places to excavate - their drains often contain astonishing artefacts. Let's face it, if you drop something down a Roman latrine you are unlikely to attempt to fish it out unless you are pretty brave or foolhardy.*" [BBC](#)

### Jobs

Current vacancies on the NMDC jobs website include:

- [Director of Development - Fitzwilliam Museum](#)
- [Knowledge Quarter Project Manager - British Library](#)
- [Locomotion Manager - National Railway Museum at Shildon](#)
- [Head of Estate and Facilities - Royal Armouries](#)
- [Community Engagement Manager - National Museums Scotland](#)
- [Volunteer Guide Lecturers - the Wallace Collection](#)

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

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