



Association of Independent Museums

Helping Heritage Organisations Prosper

www.aim-museums.co.uk APRIL 2020

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Comment

At the point of sending this Bulletin to press it has become clear that the Coronavirus outbreak will challenge us all, like nothing seen in peacetime.

Whilst the health of our friends and loved ones is of course our primary concern, the impact of this new virus on our communities and our organisations; on our *world*, is stark. In immediate response, AIM is working hard with sector partners to push funders and government to provide the support and flexibility independent museums will need during the difficult times ahead. We instigated and are in regular discussion with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Arts Council England and more to make the case for that support.

We are highlighting the reality of the challenges we face as an independent museum sector: that limited cash reserves threaten the survival of independent museums; that independent museums need grants not loans; that the repurposing of existing funds is required *now*; that collections are at risk and that the sector is not only critically important to local placemaking, but to the UK's sense of itself. Independents are enterprises by, with and for their communities. They act as a conduit for community investment. They stimulate social cohesion and will be an important part of rebuilding our country. Although now vulnerable they are, nevertheless, good citizens not bad businesses.

As you doubtless are, we are overhauling our plans. As well as advocacy, AIM is re-thinking its support activities and will be launching a campaign – #surviveandthrive – to house new approaches in delivering its work. We are looking to focus on the development and sharing of resources that clarify the quickly moving operational and funding contexts we are all now operating in. As part of this we will be looking to our members and our community to share their creativity, resourcefulness and resilience in the face of this new reality – skills that we are fortunate to have in abundance in our sector.

As independent museums we are part of the UK's DNA. We are what has drawn vast numbers of visitors to our towns and cities and shores in the past, what they talk of when they return home and what they will be seeking again in the future. We are this country's history, the stories we tell each other; the lessons we draw on. This will not change, but we need to ensure our organisations can survive these challenging times, to thrive in the future.

And through supporting and caring for one another, we will support our organisations through this.

**Andrew Lovett, Chair
Association of Independent Museums**



AIM Board made a number of new appointments when it met recently at The Fusilier Museum in the Tower of London.

AIM appoints Andrew Lovett as Chair and Marilyn Scott MBE and Caroline Worthington as Vice Chairs

A number of new appointments have been made at AIM Council following its Board meeting on 25 February.

Vice Chair; Andrew Lovett takes up the role of Chair with immediate effect. Marilyn Scott MBE and Caroline Worthington have been appointed as Vice Chairs.

Of his new appointment Andrew said

"I am honoured to have the support of the Board to take up this role and help lead AIM's work in championing and improving the impact, sustainability and relevance of independent museums, galleries and heritage organisations right across the UK.

The expertise and guidance AIM shares and the supportive network it has provided for over 40 years is incredibly valuable to our sector and I look forward to working with the team to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future. It is a cause close to my heart. I also thank Richard Evans for all he did as AIM Chair."

Andrew has 20 years senior-level experience working across the museums, leisure, arts, heritage and protected landscape sectors. He moved into museums after 11 years working for the Lake District National Park, joining York Museums as Head of Visitor Services in 1996. Senior roles at STEAM – Museum of Great Western Railway and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, NewcastleGateshead followed, before Andrew started his current role as Chief Executive of Black Country Living Museum, Dudley in 2009.

He is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Museums Directors' Council, the West Midland Mayor's Cultural Leadership Board, and Fellow of the Association of European Open Air Museums.

Caroline Worthington was curator of art at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter before moving to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. In 2003 she joined York Art Gallery as curator of Art, leaving to become the Director of the Florence Nightingale Museum in London in 2008. Caroline is currently Director of the Royal Society of Sculptors.

Director of The Lightbox, Marilyn Scott MBE has worked in museums, galleries and heritage attractions throughout her career; including roles at the V&A, the Science Museum and The National Trust. As well as a Council member for AIM, Marilyn is a respected consultant in the sector and has worked on AIM's Prospering Boards programme and is a mentor to a number of small volunteer-led museums seeking accreditation.

She is a Trustee of Brooklands Museum, The Weald and Downland Museum, The Mary Roxburghe Trust and Chair of ASpaceArts.

Director of AIM, Emma Chaplin

"Andrew's leadership and vision will help AIM build on the considerable progress it has made in the last few years, and with the additional support of our two Vice Chairs we feel the AIM Board is in a very strong position to continue to support our members and ensure a strong voice of advocacy for the independent heritage sector."

Sir Neil Cossons, AIM President, adds

"I am delighted with these new appointments; it is a clear demonstration of the calibre of those who support AIM in delivering its objectives and serving its members. With the stewardship of Andrew, Marilyn and Caroline I am confident the challenges of the future will be met with equal parts acumen, creativity and entrepreneurial vigour."

AIM 2020 Conference cancelled

AIM Conference 2020 has been cancelled following the Coronavirus outbreak advice issued by the UK Government on March 16.

The Conference will return, bigger and better, on 17-19 June 2021, in Port Sunlight. All Conference delegates and exhibitors will be refunded.

AIM Director, Emma Chaplin

"Obviously this is disappointing news, but the Conference Team is currently in discussions with the 2020 speaker roster seeking to find a way to share their experience, advice, expertise and guidance across AIM's communications and future activities.

AIM is currently working hard to refocus its 2020 plans and sector support activities, with the intention of launching a range of #surviveandthrive guidance to support members and partners during these particularly challenging times."

www.aim-museums.co.uk

Supporting your organisation during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Our primary concern remains the well-being of our members, their staff, volunteers and visitors so for the very latest medical guidance, do check the advice available on Public Health England and NHS websites.

In order to address concerns around the organisational impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak AIM is regularly consulting with a range of members and partners on the collation of business continuity advice and will review and update related information at www.aim-museums.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19

Your input

AIM is currently talking to DCMS and other sector bodies, gathering intelligence and advocating for appropriate support for museums. If you have specific issues you would like us to be aware of contact us on info@aim-museums.co.uk

A practical guide for charity finance professionals

AIM partners, Charity Finance Group (CFG) have put together a practical guide for charity finance professionals covering business continuity planning, cashflow management and insurance. You can access this at cfg.org.uk/coronavirus_guide

Business resilience checklist

Are you facing immediate issues? The following checklist may help members consider their current situation and plan for not just the present, but any challenging times.

1. Make sure your Board is fully aware of your situation and any foreseen challenges, early.
2. Keep communications open – ensure your staff, volunteers and any trade union are appraised of the situation.
3. Prepare a worst-case scenario cash flow and update it regularly. Depending on the financial stresses in your organisation, consider updating it weekly.

4. Have an early conversation with your bank to see what support it might provide – overdraft facilities, for example.
5. Talk to any significant grant providers (e.g. ACE, your Local Authority) early. See if grants can be paid earlier than planned but remember to have regard to cash flow later.
6. Talk with your most significant creditors and see what can be done to stage or even delay payments.
7. Identify your non-fixed costs. Can you reduce, delay, or even consider stopping them? Can you delay projects or similarly non-essential spending? Review the need for any new recruitment. Could it be delayed?

8. Step-up your credit control processes. Make sure that you are on top of any money that you are owed and watch for signs of financial distress from your significant debtors. Consider asking for upfront payments and/or larger deposits e.g. for any group or corporate bookings.
9. Draw on experienced financial expertise to assist in your understanding of the situation.
10. Be clear about your immediate liquidity. Avoid getting into a spiral of decline, especially if this is a short-term problem. And be ready for when things improve, too.

www.aim-museums.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19

Front cover

The Martin Parr Foundation is a public photography gallery, library, studio and archive centre. It exists to promote the legacy of photographers making important work focused on the British Isles, and to champion overlooked and emerging photographers. Since opening in October 2017 it has hosted 14 exhibitions and 50 talks including David Bailey, Don McCullin, Marketa Lusackova, Alec Soth and Sian Davey amongst others. Its library houses over 5000 photobooks and the Foundation is building up an extensive archive collection, preserving work of national importance. See page 19 for more.



We spoke to Kate Bellamy, Director of Museums and Cultural Property about 'Let's Create' Arts Council England's 2020-2030 strategy.

Let's Create – Arts Council England outlines its vision for the next ten years

The result of considerable consultation with museums and more – over 6000 were involved in workshops and public conversations – Arts Council England's 2020-2030 strategy 'Let's Create' is focused on driving change and innovation, broadening access to culture and enabling individual creativity at all life stages.

"This is the first ACE strategy that has been written from the outset with museums in the mix, says Kate Bellamy, Arts Council England's Director of Museums and Cultural Property, who sees museums as well placed to deliver on the strategy's outcomes. The first of which – *Creative People* – with its focus on supporting everyday creativity, benefits from a broad definition of that creativity.

"Our emphasis on knowledge and skill as well as the more artistic side of being creative plays well to museums. Through the knowledge and inspiration their collections provide, many museums can and do engage and support people in being creative, in many different ways."

Outcome two – *Cultural Communities* – is focused on place, already a recognised area of strength for museums. However, driving ever greater impact through collaboration is seen as providing further opportunities for the sector, says Kate.

"Where we might want to challenge, or consider stretch, is around partnerships. How might museums better connect with organisations that share similar aims or are looking to work with similar people: schools, healthcare providers, housing associations or the criminal justice system for example? What more could museums be doing that would help amplify their work and take it to new people?"

Being innovative, collaborative and international underpins the strategy's third outcome – *Creative and Cultural Country*. The focus here is on driving best practice, exploring new ways of working and encouraging the cross fertilisation of ideas. The strategy encourages us to ask ourselves, how might museums make even more dynamic use of their collections? How can we make them

more relevant, even more interesting, even more useful to people?

Four investment principles around Ambition and Quality, Inclusivity and Relevance, Dynamism, and Environmental Responsibility support achieving these outcomes, with a delivery plan released later in the year.

As ever, boards of trustees will play an integral part in responding to the new Strategy, according to Kate.

"The investment principles set out what we'd hope to see in the organisations we invest in. We'd expect board and leadership teams to monitor their development and impact, continually driving improvements and quality. We also know we have some way to go to in making sure that the diversity of our country is reflected not only in terms of the people working in and leading our organisations, but in their work and how they engage with people.

And we need to encourage the use of digital technology to ensure museums are dynamic and responsive to the challenges of the next decade.

Environmental responsibility is something everyone is concerned about, but what does this mean for our organisations? We need to consider how museums might apply initiatives such as Julie's Bicycle's museums framework."

"At the same time, we are looking at how we apply these principles in the Arts Council. We're on a journey too; we're all on a journey and we all need to get better."

National Lottery Project Grants are available for accredited museums to support Museum practice projects that support the new ACE strategy. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate

New plan to celebrate and shape work of Scotland's Museums and Galleries launched

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has launched the third and final delivery plan for the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries with Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop, representatives from the sector and partner organisations.

The Delivery Plan follows hot on the heels of last week's publication of A Culture Strategy for Scotland, which celebrates the transformative power of culture in Scotland and places museums and galleries firmly at the centre of delivering inspiring and diverse cultural activity.

The punchy new plan sets out how MGS and the sector will continue to achieve the ambition of the ten-year national strategy, *Going Further*, and respond to current challenges and opportunities in 2020-2022. Through their work, MGS will bring emphasis to developing sector resilience, workforce development, responding to the climate emergency and increasing digital capacity and infrastructure.

MGS has already started to pave the way for these priority themes with a revamped workforce development programme, MGS Skills Academy and Knowledge Exchange, offering



Lucy Casot, CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, and Ray Macfarlane, Chair of Museums Galleries Scotland Board with the new Delivery Plan to celebrate and shape work of Scotland's museums and galleries.

formal and informal learning opportunities. The recently announced £250K award from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop Forum Connections is a key component of MGS plans to develop the resilience of museums across Scotland.

Lucy Casot, CEO of Museums Galleries Scotland said:

"I am pleased to share this Delivery Plan which clearly sets out how MGS will work with museums, galleries and partners across Scotland and beyond to celebrate impact, develop skills, nurture progression and reinforce aspiration.

This is very much a collective endeavour and each organisation will respond to the Delivery Plan in its own way. Going forward, I encourage museums and galleries to regularly share their work with us to continue to inform our support and enable us to celebrate and bring attention to their achievements."

David Mann, Director of the Scottish Maritime Museum said:

"This new delivery plan, the final part of *Going further*, is more focused on working with the sector on key areas important to it. In particular, continuing the excellent workforce development programme and increasing the sector's digital capacity, but more importantly developing a resilient and sustainable museums and galleries sector and showcasing the crucial role it will play delivering the new culture strategy."

AIM Biffa Award History Makers exhibitions open



Three exhibitions opened recently following support from the AIM Biffa Award History Makers Scheme. Through the scheme, which is managed by AIM, Biffa Award gives grants to museums, galleries and cultural facilities so that they can tell the stories of some of our lesser known historical figures.

Noor Inayat-Khan: A woman of Conspicuous Courage – Commonwealth War Graves Foundation

The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation (CWGC) marked International Women's Day by launching a new interactive way for families and young women to explore the story of the remarkable spy princess, Noor Inayat-Khan.



Noor Inayat-Khan: A woman of Conspicuous Courage – Commonwealth War Graves Foundation.

Noor's tale will be told at CWGC's Runnymede Air Forces Memorial in a new digital exhibition *Noor Inayat-Khan: A Woman of Conspicuous Courage*.

The digital exhibition, developed with the help of young women from the Girlguiding Association in Berkshire, has turned the story of this inspiring female heroine of the Second World War into a ground-breaking experience and learning resource for young women, shaped by young women.

Armed with a false passport and a pistol, Noor became the first female radio operator to be sent to Nazi-occupied France. Noor was an unlikely candidate to engage in espionage in the Second World War, but she did so with a "steely strength of will". During her mission she was captured and

tortured for information but never gave anything away and was eventually executed by the Nazis. In 1949 Noor was posthumously awarded the George Cross, the highest civilian award for bravery. Rachel Maidment, Biffa Award Grants Manager said: "It is a privilege to be able to support the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation in creating their new digital exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of Noor Inayat-Khan. It is extremely important that we continue to support projects like this that remind people of some of the inspiring people who came before us and who played such significant and courageous roles in our history."

www.cwgc.org

Cromwell Museum reopens

The Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon officially reopened to the public on Sunday 1 March 2020 after an extensive refurbishment. A grand opening ceremony included a march past by members of the Sealed Knot Society, before the official opening by the Patron of the Cromwell Museum Trust, the Rt. Hon Sir John Major KG CH.

The Museum has been refurbished over the last four months thanks to generous grants from several funders. £85,000 was awarded by the History Makers scheme, £71,000 came from the Wolfson Foundation, an independent charity supporting excellence in the fields of science, health, education and the arts and humanities; and grant of £10,000 from the Huntingdon Freeman's Trust. Camilla Nichol, Chair of the Cromwell Museum Trust says "Over the last four months we've



The Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon.

been working hard behind the scenes to create a set of new displays incorporating our amazing collection and telling the remarkable and controversial story of Oliver Cromwell for a new generation of visitors. We hope that everyone will enjoy the new displays and are very grateful to our funders, donors and volunteers who have supported these changes".

www.cromwellmuseum.org



The Match Girls Strike of 1888, People's History Museum, Manchester.

People's History Museum celebrates its 10th birthday

The 10th birthday (13 February 2020) of People's History Museum (PHM) was marked in a way that reflected the ethos, creativity and role of the national museum of democracy. Banners and poetry, new interactives on the galleries, and a project for voters of the future all featured.

Made possible thanks to the grant from Biffa Award, two new interactive augmented reality (AR) experiences on the main galleries form part of the journey that visitors are taken on when they join the revolutionaries, reformers, workers and voters who have championed for rights and equality.

The Match Girls Strike of 1888 and Grunwick Strike 1976 span different centuries, but both tell of workers uniting and standing up for their rights, and both were led by women. Visitors learn about the conditions in the Bryant and May match factory through an arcade style game where players' progress is hampered by unfair fines and sickness. The events of the Grunwick Strike, which unlike previous disputes involving black and Asian workers received trade union support and that of thousands of workers from around the country, are the focus of a new app. Visitors can explore 3D digital scans of objects from PHM's collection using augmented reality and meet those involved, including Jayaben Desai.

Katy Ashton, Director of People's History Museum, says, "Our 10th birthday gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the important role that we play as the national museum of democracy. No other museum tells the stories that we do in the way that we do. We are driven to keep pushing boundaries and a desire to inspire more people with our work and to work with partners and communities to share ideas worth fighting for."

PHM's 10th birthday begins a year in which the theme of migration will be explored throughout People's History Museum in a programme that will feature exhibitions, events, learning and creative collaborations.

<https://phm.org.uk>

www.aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants/aim-biffa-award-history-makers

Biffa Award

Since 1997, Biffa Award has awarded grants totalling more than £175 million to thousands of worthwhile community and environmental projects across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme administers money donated by Biffa Group Ltd through the Landfill Communities Fund.

www.biffa-award.org

Landfill Communities Fund.

The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) is an innovative tax credit scheme enabling operators (LOs) to contribute money to organisations enrolled with ENTRUST as Environmental Bodies (EBs). EBs use this funding for a wide range of community and environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill sites. LOs are able to claim a credit (currently 4.2%) against their landfill tax liability for 90% of the contributions they make. Since its inception in 1996, over £1.6 billion has been spent on more than 56,000 projects across the UK. For further information please visit www.entrust.org.uk or see HMRC's general guide to landfill tax.

**Emily Hicks, Director,
Bridport Museum Trust
explains the impact one
amazing painting can have.**

Incredible impact – Turner in Bridport

In Summer 2019 Bridport Museum borrowed a J.M.W. Turner watercolour of Bridport Harbour, its arrival inspired town-wide events that formed the 'Turner in Bridport' programme.

Bridport Museum reopened in May 2017 after a £1.3 million redevelopment. As part of the redevelopment, we secured funding from the Arts Council's 'Ready to Borrow' scheme enabling us to ensure that our security and environmental controls were of the highest possible specification for borrowing objects from major museums.

The painting was our first major loan and we anticipated it would raise the Museum's profile and reputation and increase visitor numbers and thus income. We began negotiating with Bury Museum, the lending institution, during Winter 2018. Their main area of concern was the management of the exhibition room as



Original artwork by a member of Bridport Art Society inspired by Turner.



The Turner exhibition.



Local school children's artwork inspired by their love of the coast and Turner's work.

they were not accustomed to loaning to organisations which relied on volunteer stewards. In order to give them extra confidence, we chose to lock the painting in a conservation grade display case. We also developed a volunteer training programme to ensure everyone was well-equipped and confident to tackle any problems.

We coordinated a town-wide programme of events around our exhibition in order to maximise the impact and reach of the painting's arrival. Those collaborating were provided with a 'Turner in Bridport' identity badge for promotional use and their events were included in our promotional printed programme. A total of 16 different organisations came on board to deliver events which included several talks, eight exhibitions, creative writing events, a school project, the creation of 100 new pieces of artwork, musical fundraisers and two brand new songs! We also hosted a big exhibition preview event supported by local sponsors.

There have been many lessons learned from this project. It took a lot of hard work,

Lessons Learned

- When negotiating loans, give yourself plenty of lead-in time, and work hard to build up confidence with the lending institution.
- It was hard to evaluate the success of the collaborative events programme – we don't have a complete and accurate figure of true numbers of people attending events.
- Partner liaison took a lot of time and we could only achieve this with skilled volunteer input.
- First class volunteer engagement was absolutely crucial to the success of the project. Around 40 volunteers underwent training to become exhibition stewards and we had to add extra volunteers to the rota to cover the exhibition. This requires a lot of time set aside by the volunteer coordinator.
- The shop didn't perform as well as hoped, but the main reason for this was not planning for stock and promotions well enough in advance.

creativity, time and resource. It required strong project management skills, a committed and enthusiastic band of volunteers and a firm base of supporters. Those involved, however, concluded that it was worth every challenge.

We have created a successful template for future exhibitions and programmes. We have opened the door to further collaboration which will continue to bring high quality cultural programmes to a small rural Dorset town.

Visitor Evaluation

We monitored feedback through our visitors' book, comment cards, Tripadvisor and via the face to face surveys carried out by our volunteers. Key findings included

- The most popular feature of the exhibition was the Turner painting itself, followed by the way the exhibition was curated, with the local paintings being the third most popular element. Interestingly this seemed to demonstrate an appetite for local connections as well as the more prestigious nature of the Turner itself.
- The exhibition drove footfall: 67% of visitors said the exhibition was the motivation for their visit to the museum.
- 71% of visitors came to learn something.
- 53% had visited us before – we are building a loyal fan base!

Impact

- 14567 people visited the exhibition, an increase of 26% on the average of the previous two seasons with an estimated economic impact of £667,960.
- 500 hours: an estimate of the number of volunteer hours contributed to the project, with an approximate value of £64,000.
- The volunteers gained a sense of ownership which has increased loyalty, confidence and commitment.

Understanding your Audiences — a new Success Guide

All of us working within museums and heritage sites are making decisions that affect our organisations every day. Knowledge of the museum's audiences is a key ingredient in this decision-making, alongside staff knowledge and experience plus ideas from elsewhere. It gives you an evidence base and helps you to minimise risk to your organisation.

How much do you know about the make-up of your audience or visitor base? Do you know who is and isn't visiting, the frequency of their visits, what would make them visit more, spend more, donate or volunteer with you? What could improve their engagement with you and spread the word? And what about who isn't visiting but could be persuaded to? What are their needs and expectations?

AIM have commissioned a new Success Guide from Arts and Heritage Consultant Emma Parsons to help you to consider what you know about your audiences both current and potential, why it would be worthwhile improving this, and how you might go about doing it. Crucially, it looks at how you can then use this knowledge and insight to deliver your strategic goals and make your organisation more resilient.

To gain more knowledge about our audiences, we need to undertake some research, consult, listen, analyse and respond. Your starting point is to consider what is the issue you want to address? And then what are the headline

questions you need answers for to be able to tackle this issue? For example – who is already visiting and what would encourage them to visit or engage with us more? Why do some local people visit us once and don't return? Are there local schools who don't visit us but who do visit other museums in the area?

The Success Guide will take you through this process, including suggestions of how to segment and sample your audience, different methods to capture data, how to write a good survey question, and then move towards analysis of your data, reporting and finally reviewing ready for next time. It's full of tips and links to further information and tools.

Improving your understanding of audiences is possible whatever your size or budget. The Guide includes plenty of ideas that don't require big resources and examples from organisations small, medium, and large.

Whether you're trying out ideas for the first time, or just feel the need to review your practice, give the Success Guide a read. By understanding our audiences better, we can make better decisions across our organisations, gaining evidence to help us to:-

- Make decisions about resources
- Monitor performance against targets
- Increase income
- Build and diversify audiences to better reflect your population

- Make improvements to your offer
- Increase frequency of visits
- Increase visitor engagement with your organisation which should increase participation and support
- Be more relevant to today's audiences
- Showcase the impact you make
- Benchmark your performance against your peers
- Answer questions about your work from funders, stakeholders, local politicians
- Improve your funding applications and reports to funders
- Make a strong case for Accreditation and/or National Portfolio Organisation status
- Make your organisation more resilient

It's hard to find a reason not to invest some time for such a useful practice.



Emma Parsons is a freelance Arts and Heritage Consultant who aims to put audiences at the heart of planning. She started her career in museums and galleries in the 1990s, working in project development, fundraising, and marketing roles. In 2007 she set up her consultancy and specialises in Audience Development, Consultation, and Heritage Lottery bids and Activity Plans. She is a mentor for the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a Board Member of the Morecambe Bay Partnership.



Audience analysis doesn't have to be expensive or overly complex. We spoke to Malcolm Phillips, Collections Manager at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum about how they went about improving their understanding of their visitors.

Understanding your audience case study

The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum collection began in the 1950s when the Talylyn Railway Preservation Society (TRPS) was formed to take over and operate the Talylyn Railway. A small independent museum with lots of family visitors, many of whom are looking to be kept amused whilst waiting for the Tywyn Wharf railway ride.

With 45,000 visitors per year to the railway, and about a third of these coming through to the museum, visitor numbers are significant and, according to Malcolm, understanding their needs is critical to the work of the museum.

"In the past have had a visitor book, but most of the feedback was about the railway rather than the museum. So, we needed a different way of doing things.

We set up a visitor survey for use on site via the web, visitors could either fill this in a dedicated machine in the museum or online – we printed up business cards with the URL which our attendants handed out, so they could complete at home, rating our activities, telling us a little bit about them – the disability feedback in particular has been very helpful, we've had an indication of what languages (as well as Welsh) our visitors would welcome."

Malcolm calculates that around 1% of visitors complete the survey and once a year he gathers all the information from this survey, from the visitor book and presents the findings at the trustees meeting.

"We've been running the survey for three years and, alongside the mystery shopping we get from Visit Wales, we take the feedback seriously.

We've refined the questions each year and the free text feedback is particularly useful; if its practical we act. For example, we've seen demand for more hands-on activities, so we applied to NLHF to support the development of interactive displays.

We use the feedback to inform MALD feedback and it has informed funding bids, we can demonstrate to our funders that we're doing what our visitors want."

Malcolm's Recommendations

Start the small way and don't be afraid to change if its not working for you – at first, we weren't getting much use out of the survey as people didn't understand the questions! So we refined. Our survey is short and only takes a couple of minutes to complete – don't expect people to fill in a 5 pager.

www.narrowgaugerailwaymuseum.org.uk

We talk to The Audience Agency an Arts Council funded Sector Support Organisation, who help cultural organisations gain a deeper understanding of their current and potential audiences.

Understand who your audiences are. Discover who they could be.

As a mission-led charity, our purpose is to enable the arts, culture and heritage sectors to use our national data to increase their relevance, reach and resilience. All of this is made possible by Audience Finder – our free national audience data and development tool that enables cultural organisations to understand, compare and apply audience insight.

Audience Finder is a platform that brings together data on all UK households, compared with data collected by nearly 1000 cultural organisations in England, Scotland and Wales. Now established as the UK cultural sector's largest data resource, Audience Finder contains over five years of data about visitors to museums and heritage sites across the country and offers essential insights into the behaviour of existing and potential visitors. It is used by organisations to underpin strategic business and audience development plans, as well as to evaluate the success of tactical marketing campaigns and projects.

How it works

Museums can use Audience Finder to collect information about their visitors and their behaviours by gathering and contributing survey and/or ticketing information that is then uploaded to the platform and accessed through an online analytical dashboard. There are no limits to the number of people who can access this data from a single organisation, so it's an ideal team planning resource.

The Audience Agency's range of user-friendly resources can work in tandem with Audience Finder to help further power your audience development plans:

Our geo-locatable segmentation tool **Audience Spectrum** helps to identify potential visitors and shape audience goals for the future. We recommend using the segment pen portraits, which are packed with useful information about lifestyle and behaviours to help you define the most effective ways in which to approach new audiences and overcome barriers to engagement.

Audience Finder's regional Area Profile Reports provide detailed breakdowns of demographics and cultural engagement in your specific catchment area, while our **guide to creating an Audience Development Plan** walks you through how to turn what you find in your data into actionable outcomes for growing audiences and improving their experience of your venue.



We have also produced some handy reports based on national data, looking at both audiences to **Museums** and **Visual Arts** – a great read to fuel your own thinking and reflection on data insights. Beyond Audience Finder itself, our experienced researchers and consultants work together to help museums understand the picture that the data paints and use it to make confident, evidence-based plans for their future success. We work with **individual museums** to find both swiftly applicable “quick wins” and deeply transformative action, in order to build a future where you not only meet the requirements of Accreditation – the UK industry standard – but have the evidence to hand to plan the development of your museum's future to its full potential.

Recently, The Audience Agency has been working in collaboration with the Museums Development Network with support from Arts Council England on a new pilot project ‘Audience Champions’, a two-year funded programme to support non-NPO accredited museums to strengthen their organisations by embedding an audience focus. We have established cohorts of mid-scale and smaller museums in Yorkshire, West Midlands, East Midlands, South East, North East and North West and are working with them to use Audience Finder as a research framework, devising a flexible support programme that adapts to their challenges. If you are interested in taking part in the programme please register your interest with your regional **Museum Development Office**.

I'm delighted that in partnership with the Audience Agency, six of the regional Museum Development programmes are working with around 60 museums – from the Kent coast to the north of England – building confidence in making good use of audience data to build an evidence-based picture. All Accredited museums need to understand and develop their audiences and this programme helps equip museums with the tools and know-how to plan to do this effectively.

Isabel Wilson,
Senior Manager of Museum
Development, Arts Council England

Visitor Verdict

AIM and BDRC developed Visitor Verdict in 2013 with financial support from Arts Council England. It is open to all visitor attractions seeking a low-cost method of generating comprehensive and robust feedback from their visitors. AIM Members receive a discount on the cost, too!

Delivered through an integrated e-survey and online reporting system, survey results update in real time providing participants with the most up to date insight about their attraction set against industry benchmarks.

An easy to navigate online ‘reportal’ unlocks fully charted visitor insight for participating attractions, enabling you to view bespoke reports for your organisation and nominated sector benchmarks. Findings can be filtered by the full range of profiling data, date of visit, place of origin, age, gender, children in party, visitor motivation, first time/repeat visitors etc.

visitorverdict.com

In brief

Niels De Vos appointed Chair of Birmingham Museums Trust

Birmingham Museums Trust, one of the UK's largest independent museum trusts, has appointed Niels de Vos as its new chair of trustees. Niels, who spent over ten years as the chief executive at UK Athletics, took up the post at a board meeting on Thursday 20 February.

Following his success at UK Athletics, where he led the team to deliver the best Olympic and Paralympic performance in 50 years at London 2012, Niels founded Fabric Group in 2018, where he is CEO of the specialist consultancy for governments, cities and businesses making major investments into their communities through sport, art, education and charity.

Niels was born in Birmingham and studied Modern History at Oxford University. He joins the board at a time when Birmingham Museums has a growing national and international reputation for its innovative approach to community engagement in projects that have won major awards. Since it was founded in 2012 it has developed one of the UK's great civic collections to diversify and grow audiences at the nine venues that it manages on behalf of Birmingham City Council. In 2018/19 Birmingham Museums attracted over 1 million visitors.

www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/about/our-organisation/trustees

Whatever tools you use, ticket sales can provide an invaluable source of audience insight. We spoke to AIM Member users of Art Tickets, Art Fund's free ticket management system developed especially for UK museums and galleries.

Art Tickets may be free, but the data it provides is invaluable

Developed in close consultation with museum partners, Art Tickets is purpose built to enable organisations to reach wider audiences through selling tickets online. It is completely free and designed to be as straightforward to use as possible, with users managing their tickets within My Art Fund – a self-service area of the Art Fund website.

As well as being free – there are no set-up or running costs – the product offers a comprehensive range of features that help manage tickets for multiple venues and spaces, including the ability to process refunds and exchanges, set up promo codes, take Gift Aid donations, and capture email addresses of new subscribers. As it is connected

to Art Fund it also offers the chance to promote events on artfund.org.

Verity Elson, Director of the Gordon Russell Design Museum, said

"We launched with Art Tickets at the end of last year as we were keen to attract broader audiences through digital channels, and we didn't previously have any online booking facility. The fact it is free was a real benefit and we've worked closely with Art Fund previously – they have been very supportive on other projects.

"The add-ons such as being able to drive email list subscribers and add donations are really

helpful. We haven't yet used it for data mining, but for a museum our size it has been perfect – it looks professional and we'd find it difficult to replicate in-house."

In terms of providing additional audience insight, Art Tickets enables analysis of online sales, and the built-in Google Analytics enables users to discover more about visitors and where they come from, helpful for future planning and marketing strategies.

Beth Steiner at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum was an early adopter, using the product for about three years.

"I have done some basic data crunching, i.e. looking at postcodes and what sort of events people prefer online booking for, what do they just drop in for and so on. In my experience, there's a price point where people prefer to book online. For example, we found Halloween events, which typically attract people who aren't our regular visitors, work much better online.

It's great that you can see repeat purchasers and get people to sign up to the newsletter, and the donation feature is helpful too.

It was the first ticket tool we'd used, but it is free – Art Fund don't take a cut; for anyone our size, a charge for this kind of software would make it not do-able."

To find out more about Art Tickets visit www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/programmes/art-tickets or contact Merrin on mkalinowski@artfund.org



ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

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In brief

Sue Bowers has been appointed Director of the Pilgrim Trust

The Chair and Trustees of The Pilgrim Trust are delighted to announce that Sue Bowers has been appointed as Director of the Pilgrim Trust, following Georgina Naylor's retirement at the end of April.

Sue is currently the Director of Investment at the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Head of the National Heritage Memorial Fund. She has worked in the heritage and grant giving sectors throughout her career starting at the Museums and Galleries Commission, then working in local government before joining the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1994, just before it opened its doors to its first application. She has a MA in Museum and Gallery Management, is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts, and currently sits on the Grants Panel of the Football Foundation.

www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk

Museums and galleries responding to the climate and ecological crisis

NMDC's is holding a conference 'Museums and galleries responding to the climate and ecological crisis' at Tate Modern on Tuesday 21st April, convened by CEO of the Horniman and chair of NMDC's environment and ecology subgroup Nick Merriman.

Delegates will discuss how museum professionals can learn from each other's efforts to tackle the climate and ecological crisis and see what sort of collective impact we might have.

The focus will be on positive action and practical solutions relating to five main themes: reducing energy consumption, sustainable exhibition practice, activating the public, sustainable approaches to international working and encouraging biodiversity at museums and galleries' sites.

For details of speakers, further information and to purchase tickets, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/museums-and-galleries-responding-to-the-climate-and-ecological-crisis-tickets-95221852123

Through understanding your data analytics your visitor needs, likes and dislikes can be ascertained without reliance on gut-feel advises Professor Paul A. Philips of PitonsAnalyticsPlus.

Using Sentiment Analysis to Enhance Museum Visitor Experience and Grow Revenues

Whilst digital has brought with it more opportunities to directly communicate with museum visitors and stakeholders, an ever-evolving marketplace and the massive amounts of data now available means that understanding your customers' needs can be a challenge. And in today's disruptive digital economy, museums may miss opportunities if they can't leverage their customer data for competitive advantage.

'Sentiment analysis' (or opinion mining) can help make sense of the vast amounts of available online data and has become a key marketing tool in recent years, informing business planning, fundraising strategies and marketing campaigns. At PitonsAnalyticsPlus we perform in-depth analysis on TripAdvisor, Booking.com and other agreed platforms to perform full textual analysis of each written review, helping organisations manage and unlock true value from these 'customer voice assets'.

Despite the digital explosion, the fundamental need to explore and understand visitors' perceptions of the meaning, value and benefits of their museum experience hasn't changed. The marketing guru Professor Philip Kotler points out, "the first thing a museum should do is to understand the characteristics of its current consumers and the segments they represent". By understanding 'customer voice assets' such as online reviews and feedback, museums can make insightful-driven marketing decisions that can enable them to grow and be fit and healthy. Understanding how changes in perception impact your museum's brand is the modern way to listen to your visitors.

At PAP we believe that increasing competition requires museums to continually ask "Do we provide meaningful visitor-experiences?" Analysing positive and negative mentions in online reviews

will help to prioritise operational and service improvements, enhancing the visitor experience, building authentic visitor relationships and exceeding expectations.

Aligning data analysis with marketing strategies will help serve museum visitors better and grow revenue. Capturing visitor interactions across multiple touchpoints and devices will enable a clearer view of their 'gain and pain' points and such insight will strengthen your ability to grow.

Top Sentiment Analysis Benefits for Museums

1: Improve your visitor experience and grow your revenues by using cost effective and time saving digital techniques to listen to your visitors.

2: Track, benchmark and analyse reviews across your key multiple customer platforms.

3: Act proactively and prevent escalation of visitor problems.

4: Identify key emotional triggers to use when communicating with visitors and enhance online reputation management.

5: Maintain a sustainable, engaged, skilled and effective workforce in order to deliver a high-quality visitor experience.

6: Enhance your financial processes by effectively measuring the ROI of your marketing campaigns.

7: Free up marketing staff time from data gathering and analysis, so that they can focus on enhancing customer facing activities.

To further explore opportunities around sentiment or data analytics contact PAP on paul@pitonsanalytics.com

Does your organisation undertake sentiment analysis? Or use data analytics in its planning processes? If you can share your experience, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Contact either PAP, or AIM on editor@aim-museums.co.uk

AIM Training Grants 2020

AIM Training Grants are available to support member museums in developing the skills and expertise of their workforce (paid or voluntary). Applicant museums must be AIM members and priority will be given to smaller museums receiving less than 20,000 visitors p.a. We can support costs related to fees, accommodation (where distance travel is involved) and travel for:

- Courses, seminars and workshops
- Museum conferences

- Museum study visits
- Mentoring placements

The maximum grant is £300. Preference will be given to staff members and volunteers of museums that have not previously benefitted. We cannot support retrospective applications and we can only support multiple applications from one museum up to a total value of £300 per museum during the grant year.

How to Apply

Complete the AIM Training Grant application form available at the link

below and email it to AIM Programmes and Finance Officer, Justeen Stone justeen@aim-museums.co.uk

Applications must be submitted by the end of any calendar month. AIM will respond to applications within two weeks of the end of each month.

Payment of grant, if awarded, will be made on receipt of a statement of expenses incurred, proof of expenditure, an image and a brief report of its value for possible inclusion in AIM Bulletin (max. 200 words).

www.aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants/aim-training-grants

There's more to insurance than you may think!

AIM wish to bring the subject of insurance to life, for museums to consider their own approach to insurance and risk mitigation. We commence with exploring the changing perception of risk highlighted by the sector and the increasing range of different (and sometimes surprising) ways through which organisations can consider safeguarding against risks involving people, assets and funding streams.

Sector Insights

For heritage organisations and museums, the first step in any proper risk management is identifying key threats. Ecclesiastical Insurance have published their 'Heritage Sector Insights' report. This report offers advice, guidance and illustrative case studies that reflects their latest understanding of sector concerns around risk and advises on how one might approach mitigating those risks. Through its annual tracking, Ecclesiastical identified the risks that cause the most concern within the sector; highlighting any new, diminishing or static movements in relation to that concern.

Whilst the impact of a major fire continues to be the top concern, no surprise as heritage organisations and museums are the custodians of some of the nation's most important and irreplaceable treasures, the 'Heritage Sector Insights' report also highlights an increased focus on how to attract more, and younger visitors and concerns around the impact of major weather incidents.

Top 10 Sector Concerns 2017/2018

Risk	2017	2018	Trend
Impact of a major fire incident	79	76	-3
Cost of building maintenance and repair	70	67	-3
Health and safety	73	64	-11
Reputational damage	75	63	-12
Security of assets	69	59	-10
Impact of a major weather incident	50	58	+8
Security of funding	57	55	-2
Attracting younger visitors	47	51	+4
Business continuity	59	51	-8
Diversification to attract more visitors	43	50	+7

Safeguarding against 'People' Risks – Supporting good Governance

Do you know whether your organisation has Trustee Liability insurance?

Good boards offer clear direction to a museum or heritage organisation, focusing on the 'big picture', the strategic and significant issues. And good boards do more than just ensure that a museum isn't doing anything wrong. They move beyond compliance, ensuring that they have creative and thoughtful conversations about the future.

Charity Commission regulators in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are there to help with the provision of guidance, support and advice to charities and their trustees to ensure any decisions they make do not lead to a breach of duty or trust. They also have a statutory obligation to ensure trustees comply with their legal obligations in managing charities.

Trustees working in the sector, given the nature of the buildings they own, operate or occupy have added requirements and duties placed

on them to ensure they are compliant with planning permission, listed building consent and building regulations. Property age, and maintaining to ensure an appropriate condition, fire safety, disabled access or occupancy/tenancy are just some examples of areas where decisions made could lead to potential disputes with regulators or claims from the public.

Having a Charity Trustees or a Directors and Officers Liability policy will pay for legal costs, charges and expenses as well as investigation costs in defending allegations of wrongdoing by the Commissioners, as well as claims from other regulatory bodies, government departments, creditors, liquidators, customers, competitors or special interest groups. The policy will also cover any damages, compensation and costs awarded against the trustee in a civil action.

It will not pay for any fines or penalties following a criminal conviction. The policy provides cover for the individual trustee, officer, director as well as some employees even after the closure, failure or takeover of the charity (if the policy is still in force) thereby offering peace of mind to those individuals that any issues arising from prior decisions would be covered. Without such cover, the legal fees and damages may have to come out of the trustees' own pocket.

New Museum Insurance product

In conjunction with Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers, we have been looking into how members currently purchase insurance. As a result, a new product specifically aimed at the smaller to medium sized museums is being created to truly bring risk prevention assistance and insurance together in one place. The insurer backing this product will be Ecclesiastical. More details of this proposition will be outlined in future communications.

Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers and Ecclesiastical are AIM Associate Suppliers.

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In brief

Nesta launches world's biggest impact investment fund for creative arts, cultural and heritage organisations

Nesta has launched a major new £20m impact investment fund for the UK and invites applications from all arts and cultural sectors from heritage and museums, and comedy to theatres.

The Arts and Culture Impact Fund is now the world's biggest impact investment fund for the creative arts and brings together a unique collection of public, private and philanthropic investors.

The fund is for organisations that have a positive social impact on people and the communities they live in.

The fund will follow the Arts Impact Fund and the Cultural Impact Development Fund, which together have made 30 loans totalling £9.1m since 2015, in offering loans to help build resilient, innovative and independent arts and culture organisations. The previous fund supported organisations including the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Newark Nottinghamshire, Birmingham Royal Ballet and London venue Village Underground. The new fund will offer loans, both secured and unsecured, of up to £1m, giving organisations access to affordable and flexible finance that may not be readily accessible through traditional routes such as high street banks.

Recipients of the loans can also benefit from additional support from Nesta including advice about how to become more sustainable and develop opportunities to generate income, help to understand and communicate their impact, and help to engage more with their communities.

Nesta has committed £6m to the Arts and Culture Impact Fund with additional support from the Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Bank of America, Big Society Capital, and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Nesta's Director of Arts & Culture Programmes and Investments, Francesca Sanderson said:

"Impact loans are an under-explored way of supporting the arts and cultural sectors. I can't wait to see what exciting, ambitious long-term arts and culture projects we'll support with our new fund. We've learned so much running the pilot and are looking forward to helping many more organisations reap the benefits of our loans from the new fund over the next few years.

"We invite all potential borrowers to visit the Arts and Culture Finance website, check our eligibility criteria and apply."

www.nesta.org.uk/project/arts-impact-fund

AIM Hallmarks

Many museums look quite similar on paper – in terms of their size and scale, their income and visitor numbers.

Yet some stand out as thriving, full of energy and ideas and with great connections to their audience and the wider community. Based on the experience of two generations of leaders of innovative museums, the AIM Hallmarks capture the range of factors that can make the difference and help museums to prosper. Funded by Arts Council England through AIM's National Portfolio Organisation funding, the AIM Hallmarks Awards for England are available in two strands:

- **Main Grants of £4,000 to £12,000** (open to Accredited AIM member museums in England)
To enable museums to implement the key ideas of the AIM Hallmarks relating to ways of working, culture, strategy or developing a business model.
- **Small Grants of £3,000 – £6,000** (open to Accredited AIM member museums in England in AIM's small museum category (i.e. up to 20,000 visitors a year))
To support museums to improve their financial sustainability through cost saving or income generation.

AIM Hallmarks Grants Allocated January 2020

Main Grant Award Notification

Macclesfield Museums – £12,000

Collections at the Heart of Transforming The Silk Museum: Our remarkable collections relating to Macclesfield's silk industry need a new approach to storage, management and interpretation to transform visitor experience and strengthen financial resilience

The National Videogame Museum – £11,500

Insert Coin – The road to sustainability: The National Videogame Museum requires funding to support the procurement and implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management system (CRM). The main drive for the NVM is the need to better understand and connect with current audiences – as well as targeting and communicating with new ones.

Fusilier Museum and Learning Centre – £10,500

Rags to Riches – Website and Digital Business Sustainability: To integrate the digital assets of the museum to deliver business functionality into the new website in order to generate income and support the long term sustainability of the museum.

Small Grant Award Notification

Teign Heritage Centre, Teignmouth & Shaldon Museum – £3,755

Introducing Electronic Point of Sale to record visitor admissions and retail sales: Produce accurate data for visitor numbers, retail sales and stock control by introducing an electronic point of sale system (EPOS) and software.

Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust – £5,000

Making a Great Entrance: Creating a more exciting and welcoming space for visitors. Including a pop-up shop, providing greater flexibility and security while retaining our authentic feel.

Heckington Windmill Trust – £5,000

Shop & Retail Review: A full refurbishment of our shop, with new display units that are fit for purpose, enabling an enhanced visitor experience and increase in shop profit.

Museum of Royal Worcester – £5,000

Ceramic Creative Café: To add an income-generating hands-on ceramic activity to the Museum's daily offer where visitors can engage with collection themes of ceramic design and process.

British Dental Association Museum – £2,500

Shop success: To help the museum maximise income from its shop by gaining expert advice for improvements to enhance the visitor experience, generate increased sales and ensure the sustainability of the museum.

AIM GRANTS CASE STUDIES

To help AIM members with a variety of needs, including training, conservation, development and exhibitions, AIM administers a range of grants. These include AIM Hallmarks Awards, supported by Arts Council England; AIM's Sustainability Scheme, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; and AIM's Conservation and Collections Care Schemes, supported by the Pilgrim Trust. AIM Bulletin regularly publishes case studies of some of the successful applications.

AIM HALLMARKS

The Gurkha Museum Trust, Winchester

£5,000

Gurkha Museum Brand Evolution

The Gurkha Museum ensures the future of Gurkha Heritage by celebrating, honouring and promoting the history and culture of the Gurkha Soldier and their continuing service to Britain. Located in Peninsula Barracks in Winchester, the Museum takes you on a journey of Gurkha history, beginning in their home country of Nepal and on to the year 1815 which saw Gurkhas first enlisted.

Their stories cover not only battles and campaigns, but the culture and religion of this unique fighting force. We see them locked in battle with mutinous sepoys in 1857, then standing guard in India's north west and north east frontiers before being sent half a world away to the trenches of the Western Front in 1915.

The Gurkha Museum's 5-year plan saw investment in the galleries and collections as well as the development of commercial, marketing and fundraising activities to help develop key income streams and cement sustainable income for the Trust. The Museum set its largest marketing budget yet for 2019. With a wealth of ideas in the strategy to take the promotion of the Museum forward, the first step focused on the development of the brand and related brand guidance. This 'brand evolution' was to ensure the Museum had a clean and fresh look to encourage higher visitor numbers, event attendees and trading customers. The project was headed up by the Commercial Manager (now Head of Fundraising and Marketing) working closely with a local creative studio to produce the guidelines and then, with the Museum's designer, bring the marketing and fundraising materials to life using the new brand.

Once the brand guidelines were finalised in the Summer of 2019, we could get to work

producing the marketing materials required for our income generation and development.

We prioritised the development of new Friends of the Museum leaflets and used the time to overhaul our related offer to include enhanced benefits and visitor engagement. The new leaflet has been a fantastic aid in recruiting new Friends.

In addition, we have produced stationery including compliment slips and business cards and a Gifts in Will leaflet, a vital step in the right direction for our Fundraising Strategy.

The biggest impact our brand is going to make will be in Spring 2020 when our new website launches and during the Summer when the Museum attends events across the UK.

Christine Bernath, Assistant Director said:

"Since the production of the brand guidelines and subsequent design work the Gurkha Museum's marketing has taken a positive turn and continues to benefit the income generation and promotion of our Museum. We are excited to continue to produce material, including our new website, with these creative and engaging brand guidelines."



The Gurkha Museum updated branding on collections boxes and stationery.

Rochdale Pioneers Museum (Co-operative Heritage Trust) £12,000

'Earning through Learning' Creating a higher space for the learning loft

The Co-operative Heritage Trust (CHT) runs the Museum on the site where 28 working class people from Rochdale created a democratic society for the benefit of members in one of the worst periods of industrial deprivation of the 19th Century.

The Society shop has been a museum since 1931 and continues to welcome visitors from around the world. It is a unique part of Rochdale's heritage and remains a resource for the local community as well as those in the movement.

The team knew the space had earning potential and after reading a grant case study in AIM magazine, saw how the Highland Life Museum used the grant to buy a caterpod to solve a problem and generate income. Using a case study to start the process made the project realistic to plan and link to the Hallmarks we aim for as AIM members.

Co-operative Heritage Trust applied and were awarded the grant at the start of 2019. Due to some concerns around health and safety on

a small site as well as value for money, CHT commissioned a local Quantity Surveyor review of the proposed works prior to accepting the chosen quotation in order to start the work in April 2019. It was difficult to operate partial closure in a small building, so the site remained open and income generating bookings were kept. CHT tried to buy all services as locally as possible for economic sustainability.

One unanticipated delay to install was the impact of the expected Brexit in March 2019. Glass ordered had to be shipped from Italy and was delayed due to a backlog; this caused the team to use a planned 'second window' of works in June. It is important to build contingency into plans and due to the health and safety implications of glass lifting, only the ground floor could be open to the public during this time.

The team expected an increase in bookings, community use and planned delivery following the improvements. This has been realised and is set to increase in 2020. Community and schools use has increased, in addition to corporate hires, which have more than doubled in the initial period. A higher turnover of the space will mean that attention must be paid to cleaning and maintenance time and costs.

The success of the project has supported a closer relationship between volunteers, community groups, partners, staff and trustees as well as more flexible approaches to working at the site.



Rochdale Pioneers.

As a result of governance changes in October 2019, staff now report directly to board and requests for resources to capitalise on income and audience development have been agreed for 2020 and beyond. Investment in physical resources has allowed a more ambitious approach to other objectives of the Trust.

Kate Woodward, Visitor Experience Co-ordinator (based at Rochdale Pioneers Museum):

"The work in the learning loft has created a professional space which can now be used flexibly for activities or corporate hire. It has increased our income generation from this space and diversified the way we as well as visitors can use the room."

Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life £8,960

Developing New Income Streams

Tiverton Museum is a much-loved museum providing extensive displays on local history within the Mid Devon area, a schools' programme and reminiscence service.

The AIM Hallmark project builds upon our work to improve organisational resilience with

the intention to diversify our income streams (reducing dependence upon local authority funding) and to ready the museum for a major capital redevelopment in the next few years.

The project had two aims:

- Exploring the market for, and developing, children's birthday parties and celebration events for older people at the Museum.
- Options appraisal for the creation of workspaces on our site to generate income.

The project was designed to create new, diverse income streams using our assets. The themed parties mean that we can utilise the collections and displays in a new way, and the creation of workspaces would make optimum use of our site. The project was managed by the Director (and only full-time member of staff), Pippa Griffith, supported by Education and Outreach Officer, Holly Jarrett, and with regular reporting to the Trustees. We appointed Jenifer Macindoe to develop the party offer and Lemon Drizzle to undertake the workspace lettings research. Both elements of the project involved consultation with the local community, including families, older adults, and business and council stakeholders.

We are very pleased with the final party offer; we have two children's parties fully worked up and resourced (spy training school and retro toys and games). We anticipated that one of the children's parties would be railway themed linking to our steam engine. However the research revealed that there is a similar offer nearby, so alternative themes were developed following public consultation. We hope to build on these and offer more themes as demand grows. The adult offer builds on our desire to

explore the use of our large social history collections and reminiscence handling collection, tapping into a 'nostalgia' market.

We have two adult parties (time tunnel and mystery at the museum) which have resulted in new partnerships with local caterers and a murder mystery company. We are recruiting a member of staff to deliver the parties and will launch them in time for the new financial year.

The workspace lettings options appraisal and report came back full of positivity, and provides us with a clear idea of the type of workspace we want to create. This will ensure future investment in these plans will be well spent. The report provides invaluable evidence to support future fundraising applications.

The Hallmarks project has important legacies for the Museum.

In the short term we can start to offer parties straightaway and include a new income stream to our budget for 2020/21. It also has a major role in shaping and developing our medium/long term plans, as the creation of workspace lettings is a vital component of our redevelopment plans (and which we are committed to implement even if redevelopment plans are unsuccessful). We just can't wait to get started and take these innovations further!

'This project is an important building block in our work to make the museum more resilient. We have an exciting new party offer which has been properly resourced so that we feel confident we're offering a quality experience. We are already working on plans to take us a step further towards our redevelopment, in which the workspace lettings will be a vital component.'

Pippa Griffith, Director.



Tiverton Museum's parties poster.

We talk to Camilla Nichol, Chief Executive, UK Antarctic Heritage Trust about one of AIM's more unusual members and hear about an intriguing art project.

Telling the story of British scientific and human endeavour in Antarctica

We are the principal organisation in the UK dedicated to Antarctic heritage. We look after six historic sites on the Antarctic Peninsula; we deliver a range of vibrant and creative public programmes and work with Antarctic policy makers on issues related to heritage and conservation. Our aim is to connect people with the wonder of Antarctica and its stories of human endeavour, helping promote a greater understanding of this extraordinary place and the role we all have in protecting it.

Our principal historic site is Port Lockroy, Base 'A', a former British science station on Goudier Island off the Antarctic Peninsula. It is one of the most visited sites in Antarctica receiving ca. 18,000 visitors each season (Nov-Mar). Base 'A' was established in 1944 and operated as a British research station, initially under *Operation Tabarin* and later by the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey until it closed in 1962. The base was recognised for its historical importance and contribution to British science and given the status of Historic Site and Monument (HSM) No. 61 under the Antarctic Treaty.

In 1996, Port Lockroy was restored and since then has operated during the Austral summer as a visitor site welcoming those who travel to Antarctica on expedition vessels and yachts. The five other sites are also abandoned scientific stations, which together tell the story of British scientific and human endeavour in Antarctica since the Second World War.

We are a very small charity – there are seven of us in the team in Cambridge and we recruit teams seasonally to work in Antarctica, to run the museum and post office at Port Lockroy or to carry out conservation work on the huts. As if that wasn't enough, we are also committed to providing opportunities for as



Visitors to Port Lockroy

many people as possible to share in the wonder of Antarctica, to learn more about our history there and to engage with contemporary issues surrounding this unique continent and its role on our planet.

2020 marks two hundred years since Antarctica was first discovered. Edward Bransfield first sighted the Antarctic peninsula coast in January 1820 and what followed were two centuries of the worst and the best of human actions on our planet. The epic stories of Scott, Shackleton and Amundsen are tempered with narratives of exploitation of the biodiversity – sealing and whaling at unimaginable scale driving species almost to extinction. And then into the twentieth century and the race for sovereignty, the development of international scientific programmes and the signing of the Antarctic Treaty. Since then Antarctica has become a protected wilderness, a place for peace and science and is now recognised as pivotal in our understanding of our planet.

This bicentenary gives us the opportunity to reflect on this varied history and to perhaps engage actively with the future of Antarctica, so we have launched **Antarctica In Sight** our major cultural programme.



Base E, Stonington Island.

Across all four nations and around the world through online platforms, UKAHT has engaged leading artists, historians and scientists to help us celebrate the most incredible stories and open vital discussions about the scientific, political and environmental future of Antarctica.

As a centrepiece to this ambitious programme, UKAHT has commissioned a new work by Welsh artist Marc Rees entitled *E C H O*. Working in collaboration with David Attenborough's sound recordist Chris Watson, award winning writer Philip Hoare, musician/broadcaster Cerys Matthews, and Creative Producer Isabel Griffin, *E C H O* aims to reach audiences across the UK simultaneously on a single day in 2020.

We are looking for partners across the UK to join us for this secret project. Marc and his team have connected with a range of cultural organisations – but would like more to join in on what will be a memorable day in 2020. Do please get in touch and we can share the details, so we can make this a truly extraordinary Antarctic moment. AIM members who would like get involved with this project or joining the Antarctica In Sight programme generally, can get in touch by emailing Sud Basu sud@ukaht.org www.ukaht.org/antarcticainsight



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Camilla Nichol, CEO
UK Antarctic Heritage Trust



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The inaugural museum finance special interest group was held in Leeds in February, kindly hosted by Wrigleys Solicitors.

What's new in your membership with Charity Finance Group?

Working with Museum Development Yorkshire and Museum Development North West, AIM and CFG were delighted with the inaugural museum finance special interest group meeting for AIM members held in Leeds in February, which was kindly hosted by Wrigleys Solicitors.

The group is designed for people who have a dedicated and strategic responsibility for finance in their museum. The focus is on financial strategies, policies and procedures in charities and your museum may want to take part if it has a turnover and financial complexity that requires it to have access to a dedicated financial employee or contractor.

The first meeting took an in-depth look at pressing current issues affecting AIM members in the world of finance, including exhibition tax relief.

We are planning to launch a group in the South of England in the next few months so keep an eye out for special interest group news on the CFG website.

CFG has recently piloted a highly popular mentoring scheme in the south-east which is being rolled out in the Midlands region. This is an exciting chance for AIM members to take a step back from the day to day of your role and share knowledge, best practice and experience with members of the sector community. The scheme is focused on building on leadership skills within the finance professional community and is open to everyone to apply as a mentor or mentee.

Finally, we have some exciting new training dates recently announced; if you're new to charity finance, or want to understand investment management in your museum, there will be something useful for you to grow your finance and management expertise. Book with member discount at www.cfg.org.uk/events_and_training

Contact us

You can find out more about what you receive as a CFG member at www.cfg.org.uk/membership. For more information about the AIM special interest group, mentoring scheme or any other aspect of your membership, contact Zoe Bennett in the membership team at membership@cfg.org.uk

If you haven't registered for CFG membership yet ... CFG helps you to connect and understand the finance landscape. Register at www.cfg.org.uk/aim It's free through your AIM membership and available to the whole of your organisation from your volunteers to your trustees, giving you exclusive access to support in the world of charity finance through our unique community, expert helplines, resources, discounted events, training opportunities and much more.

Charity Finance Group membership is available for free through your AIM membership. CFG brings together a network of charity and non-profit finance professionals, supporting them with a range of opportunities to grow knowledge, build skills and meet other professionals.



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Museum profile

Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol

The Martin Parr Foundation is a public photography gallery, library, studio and archive centre. It exists to promote the legacy of photographers making important work focused on the British Isles, and to champion overlooked and emerging photographers.

We do so through a programme of exhibitions, talks, screenings and tours, and with the acquisition of significant photographic prints and photobooks. We also house the entire archive of Martin Parr; a collection containing an estimated 750,000 prints and associated books and ephemera. Since opening in October 2017 we have hosted 14 exhibitions and 50 talks, while accumulating a library of over 5,000 photobooks and building up an extensive archive collection, preserving work of national importance.

Programme Highlights

Our exhibitions have included rare prints by Tony Ray-Jones, a selection of some of the greatest works by the Magnum Photos collective, a collaboration spanning photography, fashion and several youth clubs in the Welsh Valleys, plus the first ever wedding photography show in an art gallery context.

We've hosted David Bailey, Don McCullin, Marketa Luscakova, Alec Soth and Sian Davey, amongst others, in our Artist Talks series.

In October 2019, in collaboration with the Royal Photographic Society, we held the inaugural BOP photobook fair, bringing publishers from across the UK to Bristol. We also teamed up with local art gallery the Arnolfini, to show new work made during the city's St Paul's Carnival.

Collection Highlights

The archive holds all of Martin Parr's negatives and contact sheets, dating back to the late 1970s, plus the entirety of his printed output which includes rare vintage prints.

Other significant bodies of work have been acquired from Chris Killip, Graham Smith and Stephen Gill. We also house a number of rare book maquettes, such as Richard Billingham's *Ray's a Laugh*, Vinca Peterson's *No System* and the as yet unreleased *Power in the Blood* by Gilles Peress. Our library collection includes David Bailey's *Sumo*, first editions of JC Burrow's *Mongst Mines and Miners* and Corrinne Day's *Diary*.

Membership Scheme

Launched in 2018, our membership programme provides vital funds for the work of the Foundation in return for a number of benefits. Members get access to the Foundation's library and archive collection, discounts on events and free tours. Mid-tier supporters receive a signed Martin Parr print, while Patrons enjoy a portrait session and annual dinner with Martin Parr.

Visitor Numbers, Income Streams, Staffing

In 2019 we welcomed approximately 20,000 visitors to the gallery. Our exhibition opening parties now attract crowds of up to 300, while the majority of our Artist Talks reach our seated capacity of 150. We receive no core funding and therefore rely on a variety of income streams – principally through ticket and book sales, membership fees and fundraising events.

The Foundation currently employs four staff on a full-time basis and three part-time. We are governed by a board of Trustees.



Exhibition opening parties now attract crowds of up to 300, while the majority of our Artist Talks reach our seated capacity of 150.

Current And Future Projects

We're currently exhibiting a retrospective of the work of Chris Killip, one of Britain's most important documentary photographers of the past 50 years. This month also sees the return of our popular Portrait Studio, where members of the public can have their photograph taken by Martin Parr.

Our archive and library collections are slowly being digitised, while we are also working on a series of filmed 'Sofa Sessions', featuring Martin Parr in conversation with significant photographers who pass through the Foundation.

Jon McCall, Head of Membership & Fundraising
www.martinparrfoundation.org

We spoke to William Tregaskes, Museum Coordinator at Cynon Valley Museum about their introduction of an innovative scheme to assist those with hidden disabilities.

Introducing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower was first launched at Gatwick Airport in May 2016 to help those with additional needs in their boarding process. Its use was to address the fact that hidden disabilities don't have physical signs and so are often difficult for others to recognise or acknowledge.

Hidden disabilities include learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. Without any visible evidence of the disability, though they may affect each person in different ways, the challenges faced by those living with such conditions can make daily life demanding and isolating.

Increasingly recognised globally, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower has been adopted by major UK airports, many supermarkets, railway stations, leisure facilities, in the NHS and an

increasing number of small and large businesses and organisations.

Cynon Valley Museum were approached by Cynon Valley Pals – parents of children with hidden disabilities – to consider introducing the scheme at the museum.

"We already had a relationship for over two years with the Pals before they approached us about introducing the scheme at the museum, says William Tregaskes, Museum Coordinator at Cynon Valley Museum.

"They had had a positive experience of working with us and so were interested in whether we might act as a flagship for Sunflower scheme, as lots of people in the community would see it."

Following a short session with the Pals when they came into to talk about their experiences,

and some staff training, Cynon Valley Museum introduced the scheme in November, piloting it with Santa bookings.

Will explains

"As people book to come into the grotto, we could identify whether they had any additional needs, as it's one of the online booking questions. This meant we could make people aware of the lanyards and offer them for use on arrival.

We now have a sign, and staff wear badges to show we're part of the scheme. A benefit of the approach is its simplicity – you don't have to wear it – it's a personal choice; our approach is that it is part of our work to become more inclusive."

To find out more about the scheme, visit hiddendisabilitiesstore.com

Improving and developing museum cafes and visitor catering

Your catering offer has the potential to provide both a healthy income stream and enhance the wider visitor experience, but it needs to be well executed, advises Paul Smith, Director, Montfort Catering Consultants.

When considering your offer, understanding your audience can be incredibly valuable. How do you ensure that your visitor catering is adding value to your visitors' experience? And does your current approach provide the optimum financial return to your organisation? Three areas should be considered and reviewed to ensure you are achieving the best you can be.

1. Positioning

This is more than just the physical location. Is the overall style, offer and service culturally sympathetic and does it support the wider organisational culture? Does it 'feel' right in the context of your building, your audience, the visitor experience you offer?

Different visitor profiles often mean different food and drink requirements. Consider their motivations and expectations. And use feedback to help!

Identify a differentiating factor, relevant to visitors' needs, that will set your visitor catering apart from the local competition. What is going to make your visitors remember their experience of visiting your café? What's your unique selling point that is better than your competitors?

2. Place

Place relates to how the operational elements of the catering are determined and delivered to support the wider visitor experience, while optimising the financial return.

Develop a sense of place – ambiance, environment

and style are often as important as the food and drink.

Service Style – If your visitors are repeat visitors with short dwell times (ie don't spend long in the museum or attraction), is the service style appropriate? Or would an alternative style increase the speed of service, as well as customer turnarounds?

Menu – Is your menu customer-centric? If visitors are dropping in and out throughout the day for short periods, it may be more appropriate to offer a greater range of snacks, visibly displayed to tempt, rather than focusing on main meals.

Seating – Ensure the level of seating is appropriate to meet your peak periods and that the seat-to-table ratio is relevant to your average party sizes. For example, if your average visitor party size is 2.5, providing all tables to accommodate groups of 4 is likely to result in an inefficient usage of seating.

3. Performance

Food Margin – Think about ratios versus the actual revenue. Margins are important benchmarks of performance, but which would you rather have? 65% of £4.00 or 50% of £6.00? The cash is usually better than the percentage, although you need to consider both, as well as understanding the sales mix.

Staffing – Determine the most appropriate opening hours to optimise the commercial return while supporting the visitor experience. Multi-skilling and developing a flexible workforce can also reap considerable savings, as well as service benefits.

Management Information – Insight is essential to support sales and cost management, and for future planning. This might include more than

daily sales analysis. Consider for example when peak periods are, what items sell best when and so on. Collecting and crunching this data can be really effective for planning growth or efficiencies.

And don't forget customer feedback – it's a vital part of your performance and potentially rich with ideas.

These are, of course, just a few considerations when looking at improving existing visitor catering or planning for new visitor cafes and restaurants. If you'd like to discuss further, are looking at developing new visitor catering or just need support improving your existing café or restaurant, please do get in touch with us at Montfort Catering Consultants.

www.montfortconsultants.com



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