



Association of Independent Museums


Helping Heritage Organisations Prosper

www.aim-museums.co.uk FEBRUARY 2021

Spring into action? Staying positive as challenging times continue



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Comment

As I write this, I am in the depths of a Tier Four lockdown so the prospect of Spring just around the corner is very appealing! This time of year is usually incredibly busy as we all start to get ready for a new season. Setting up new displays and exhibitions, welcoming back volunteers and stocking up the shop are normal activities but normal has changed now. So how are we all dealing with these challenging times, changing rules and the prospect of another, potentially hard, season ahead?

Well, it seems light is at the end of the tunnel with more of the population being vaccinated so, perhaps, the summer will see the welcome return of our visitors. Over the time we have all learnt the art of spinning 180 at the blink of eye and have had to find depths of resilience as individuals and teams to deal with all the changes and the personal and collective grief this virus has brought.

Out of this hopefully we can take some good and put into practise some of more positive changes that we have had to make so quickly and unexpectedly and create what is being referred to as a 'new normal'.

For example, many of us have successfully worked at home, although being away from our sites, objects and teammates isn't ideal, it is possible. More home working will benefit us all in the long term. Less travel time means more time at home with loved ones, and it is better for the planet.

Meetings held remotely are more accessible for disabled people as they do not require travel, can benefit from captioning for those who are hard of hearing or Deaf and can be recorded for later if needed.

Time in a quiet place away from the bustle of the office means reports get written more quickly and emails can be sorted without interruption.

But I don't know about you, but I miss the interaction with colleagues and the ready access to beautiful architecture and objects. A balance of home working and office-based activity would be my ideal.

We also need to consider what a post-COVID audience will want from museums, will it be the same? Will people want to attend in large groups anymore? I think the social aspect of attending a museum or heritage site with friends and family may become even more important and our children need new experiences and input outside of the formal education setting even more than ever.

There is a lot of think about and to plan for and the start of Spring feels like just the right time to start looking forward with more hope and daring to plan for our perfect 'new normal'!

Rhiannon Goddard,
Head of Public Engagement
Projects and Business Management,
Historic Royal Palaces London

AIM news

Emma Chaplin stepping down as AIM Director.

Farewell Emma!



Emma Chaplin will be stepping down from her role as AIM Director at the end of March 2021. An AIM Council member from 2003 to 2014, Emma took up the role in 2018, going on to oversee a period of rapid development for the organisation including a team restructure, bringing in staff from both within and outside the sector, initiating a range of dynamic new partnerships and developing a range of well-received initiatives and programmes.

Speaking of her decision Emma said

"I am proud of the way that AIM has strengthened its support and advocacy for its members not least during this last year and in the face of the exceptional challenges Covid has brought.

As an organisation, partner, and team I believe AIM has developed markedly in recent times."

Prior to her role with AIM, Emma held curatorial and senior management roles in independent and local authority museums before setting up as a highly respected consultant, a role she is looking to return to later in the year.

"My intention has always been to return to my consultancy business when I felt I had brought about positive change and when AIM would be in a strong position for someone else to lead it through its next phase of its development."

Responding to the news, the AIM team highlighted how much they will miss Emma's leadership and professionalism, her deep understanding of the heritage sector, approachability, and irrepressible humour.

AIM Chair, Andrew Lovett, added

"It has been a privilege to work alongside Emma since taking-up the Chair last summer. Emma is rightly proud of what has been achieved for the sector and specifically AIM members under her leadership. No one has achieved more. She has also developed the organisation to great effect and brought on great new staff.

My role as Chair and that of the Board – during some very testing times – has been an awful lot easier and more impactful because of Emma's

experience, candour, approach, determination and good humour.

I wish Emma every possible good fortune with what I know will continue to be a full and rewarding life. Thank you."

Acting Director of Arts, Heritage and Tourism at DCMS, Helen Whitehouse said

"On behalf of all of us in DCMS who have worked with Emma over the last three years, I send huge thanks for everything she has done with us, and a big well done for everything she has achieved in that time. AIM is an important stakeholder for us, which has continued to develop as a sector body under Emma's leadership, and she has been an excellent advocate not only for AIM members but also the wider museums sector. Her engagement, views and advice has helped inform a number of DCMS policy areas, most notably within the last year. Emma has worked tirelessly to respond to sector need and has been instrumental in our COVID19 response work including the Culture Recovery Fund."

Kate Bellamy, Director of Museums. Arts Council England said

"Working with Emma is always a joy. She brings energy, sparkle and passion and she is a relentless champion for independent museums. She will be missed at AIM and can take pride in the difference she has made."

Suzie Tucker, National Museums Directors Council added

"Emma has made an incredible contribution to the museum sector during her time at AIM. Under her direction AIM has been a key partner for NMDC, working on a huge range of issues from reforming the business rates system to supporting the sector through the COVID crisis and advocating to government for museums. Emma's expertise, generosity and passion for museums make her a joy to work with and she will be sorely missed, but I'm delighted she's staying in the sector and will no doubt continue to do great things to support museums."

Recruitment for Emma's successor is now underway.

Front cover

Nantgarw China Works and Museum is an independent museum run by a charitable trust, which also operates as a pottery, arts centre and educational resource for the local community. Its focus is not only on preserving Nantgarw's rich heritage, but also ensuring its relevance today, producing world class contemporary porcelain and transferring skills to the next generation. Read more in our profile on page 19.



Business Rates – the fight goes on

If you have been following the progress of appeals for business rates you may be forgiven for believing that the argument over how museums should be valued for is over. Unfortunately, as Colin Hunter of Lambert Smith Hampton explains, we are not there yet.

Appeals were heard before the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) in 2017 (Stephen G Hughes (VO) v York Museums and Gallery Trust) and 2019 (Stephen G Hughes (VO) v Exeter City Council) with the Tribunal coming down firmly on the side of the museums and radically reducing the Rateable Values. The arguments in those cases turned on how the properties should be valued, either by reference to the cost of building a replacement museum, as proposed by the Valuation Officer (VO), or by reference to the receipts and expenditure which reflects the ability of the museum to pay rent for the property. Typically, museums valued by the former approach have much higher levels of value than by the latter. If the museums are loss making, like Yorkshire Museum in York and Royal Albert Museum in Exeter then the Rateable Value may even be reduced to £1.

The York cases included other issues, such as whether the museum shops and cafes should be included in the assessment of the museum or separately assessed. The Exeter case included an attempt by the Valuation Officer to have the Upper Tribunal overturn their earlier decision for York. The VO tried to appeal the decision in respect of Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, but their application to the Court of Appeal was rejected.

Due to the appeals to Upper Tribunal, over 200 appeals for other museums dating back to the 2010 Rating List have been held up. The first of those appeals to be brought forward again were listed for a hearing by the Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE) on 6th November 2020. In total there were seven appeals listed: four for Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums; one for Redcar and Cleveland Council; one for York Civic Trust and one for Chard and District Museum Society. All museums in, or include, listed historic buildings.

The Valuation Office changed their internal guidance to reflect the decisions of the Upper Tribunal. But whilst the guidance now accepts that contractor's method isn't appropriate for historic buildings, they have not accepted that loss making museums should have a nominal or £1 Rateable Value.

Instead, the Valuation Office is arguing that as a minimum the property should either be valued based on the rent that would be needed to be paid for storing the collection elsewhere, or at a low percentage of the gross income (including any potential income from admissions if admission is free). This revised guidance meant that agreement could not be reached for six out of the seven appeals listed for hearing on 6th November and so cases were presented to Mr Alf Clark, Vice President of the VTE.

His decision on 3rd December again found in favour of the Ratepayer with the outcome as follows:

Property	Original RV	Museum's Valuation	VO's Valuation	Decision
Discovery Centre	£500,000	£83,500	£395,000	£93,500
Laing Art Gallery	£193,000	£1	£160,000	£10
Shipley Art Gallery	£94,500	£1	£4,000	£10
South Shields Museum & Gallery	£62,500	£1	£72,500	£10
Chard Museum	£22,000	£1	£3,500	£300
Fairfax House	£10,000	£1	£4,500	£10

As seen above, the VO didn't defend their original valuations, other than for South Shields where it was claimed that the museum was



under assessed. Even so the difference between the figures adopted by the Valuation Office and the outcome of the decision is marked, and has a significant impact on liability, especially where Charitable relief isn't available. The knock-on effect on the 2017 Rating List is even greater or would be if the Valuation Officer was willing to agree. The VO have again chosen to appeal to the Upper Tribunal, no date has yet been set for the hearing.

Note that the appeals so far have all been about properties which both the VO and the museums can agree involve historic properties. But there is no agreement with the VO on the definition of historic properties and the VO are still insisting that modern museums should be valued by reference to contractor's method.

The VO has been asked repeatedly to meet with sector representatives including AIM, the Museums Association, and National Museum Directors' Council to seek agreement. At the time of going to press it has finally agreed to such a meeting - we will update on outcomes as soon as practical.

In summary if you haven't already, you should be considering whether your museum has been over assessed for business rates. A simple rule of thumb question is: could you afford to pay as rent the Rateable Value for your museum? If the answer is no, you should take advice from a suitably qualified and experienced chartered surveyor about starting the appeals process. Most AIM and Museum Association members have not appealed and are thus at risk of paying higher business rates, putting greater strains on finances stretched by the on-going impact of COVID 19.

Finally, many museums worry that making an appeal could reflect badly on the museum when it comes to being given charitable or other reliefs. Yet there is no connection between the Rateable Value and the right to reliefs, meaning an appeal won't detrimentally affect the right to relief.

www.lsh.co.uk

*Be sure to subscribe to AIM's eNews
or follow us on social media for the
latest developments.*

In brief

ATS Heritage Announces New Managing Director

Audio and multimedia guide provider to the cultural sector, ATS Heritage, have appointed Spencer Clark as their new Managing Director.

Clark, who joined ATS in 2012 to lead the Sales team outlined his optimism for the future.

"We have an exciting vision for the future where ATS will continue to innovate across the key areas of our expertise. As a torrid 2020 is left behind, our plans include growing our consultancy services, launching new products, expanding into more international projects and our digital training business".

ATS Clients include The Royal Collection, Westminster Abbey, National Portrait Gallery, Bletchley Park, St Paul's Cathedral, English Heritage and National Gallery of Ireland.

AIM member discount from new Associate Supplier, Conservation Resources

Associate Supplier Conservation Resources UK was established more than 30 years ago and supplies a comprehensive range of high-quality products such as acid-free boxes, museum boards, specialist papers, sheeting materials, polyester rolls, and Polyweld pockets. All provided with expert knowledge and outstanding customer service.

Conservation Resources are pleased to offer AIM members a 10% discount on over 30 products and their variants on the CR website. You can see the discounted product listing on AIM's website at www.aim-museums.co.uk/12523-2

To use the code simply create an account on the CR website, add the products you require to your basket and the code AIM10 at checkout to receive 10% off your order.

Stevie Nutt, General Manager of Conservation Resources commented: "We are so pleased to be joining the AIM community and we are here to help with the supplies you may need, especially with the year 2020 has been."

conservation-resources.co.uk

Heritage Alliance Brexit Briefings

Looking to get behind the headlines to better understand how Brexit might impact your museum, as well as the wider cultural sector? The Heritage Alliance have developed a comprehensive range of online resources that assess this complex and ever-changing issue.

Read the resources at www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/manifestobriefings/brexit-briefings

Steps to Sustainability information sessions

Are you an ambitious, forward thinking, small to medium sized heritage organisation with an income generating idea? Turn it into reality with Steps to Sustainability, the Social Enterprise Academy's new National Lottery Heritage Fund project.

AIM is pleased to be partnering on the project which provides a pathway for 60 heritage organisations across the UK to deliver exciting new projects. As well as developing key entrepreneurial and commercial skills, the programme will support you and your organisation to shape and develop a new income generation project, for which you will be eligible to unlock funding of up to £10,000.

What to expect:

- 5 month programme of activities, including masterclass, webinar, good practice panel
- 9 month development period including access to coaching / business mentoring
- Funding of up to £10,000 to help shape the success of the business idea



- Resources and toolkits
- A supported journey of development with the opportunity to mix with other heritage organisations from across the UK at connect sessions, webinars and masterclasses.

Find out more at the next information session taking place online on Thursday 25 February 2021 11am. Registrations for the session are open now at www.aim-museums.co.uk/dates-for-your-diary

Support for Trustees

Good governance is key to well-run, successful museums yet being a trustee can sometimes feel daunting. So, with input from colleagues and experts from right across the sector, AIM has developed a range of support and practical guidance to help you and your Board in this critical area.

Tailored to whether you are a new museum trustee or a Board member looking to refresh knowledge, our guidance provides advice on establishing and consolidating good governance practice, outlines the requirements of regulatory compliance and how to best strengthen Board practice, offers practical guidance on key areas including roles and responsibilities, managing board meetings, working with staff and volunteers and recruitment and succession planning. It also helpfully signposts important resources for trustees.



Practical Guidance

AIM's Guides for Boards provide practical and expert advice on different aspects of museum governance and includes how to's on undertaking a governance audit, renew your constitution, run away days, manage meetings more effectively and recruit new trustees as well as staff management, motivation and retention.

Prospering Boards Consultancies

Whether its reviewing basic good practice or dealing with complex challenges, AIM's Prospering Boards governance support programme offers the opportunity to work with one of our roster of experienced and expert consultants. A new round of Prospering Boards consultancies launches soon. Register your interest today by contacting margaret@aim-museums.co.uk

Stay up to date with our Heritage Trustee newsletter

Don't forget you can also sign up to our bi-monthly Trustee eNews packed with advice, news and ideas to keep you up to date. Be sure to sign up today!

Advertise trustee vacancies

If you are an AIM member you can also advertise your trustee vacancies for free across all AIM online communications and social media.

www.aim-museums.co.uk/for-trustees

AIM news

AIM Conference 2021

AIM is currently developing plans for the AIM Annual Conference 2021. Given the ongoing pandemic, we will be looking to build on the success of last Summer's online event *Roads to Recovery* and, if possible, support any online activity with in-person events later in the year.

Be sure to keep up-to-date with all our 2021 Conference plans, as well as find out about the

many webinars running throughout the year, by signing up to the fortnightly AIM eNewsletter or following our social media channels.

If you've any ideas, thoughts or comments about the sessions you'd be keen to see do get in touch and, don't forget, you can revisit all of last year's conference sessions at any time via our webpages.

www.aim-museums.co.uk/virtual-conference

AIM Communications – rethink, refresh and re-design

The eagle-eyed will have noticed a few differences to our AIM webpage structure and our eNews recently as we begin the process of updating the look and feel of some of our key communications.

Following a short tender process, J G Creative have been appointed to work on this refresh, do look out for developments. We hope to be able to share some of these changes in our April Bulletin so stay tuned! As ever, if you have any thoughts on this you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you on info@aim-museums.co.uk

Welsh language edition of Governance Success Guide

A Welsh language edition of our *Successful Museum Governance – a guide for trustees* is now available. The Guide is a great place to start if you are a new museum trustee or a Board member looking to refresh your knowledge. It provides advice on establishing good governance practice, outlines the requirements of regulatory compliance and how to best strengthen your Board.

Read all our Success Guides at www.aim-museums.co.uk/resources

Institutional digital subscriptions to British Museum Magazine

The British Museum has partnered with archiving experts Exact Editions to offer institutions around the world digital subscriptions to their membership magazine. The expansive archive, which currently stretches back to 2006 and will be completed early next year, allows museum students and professionals alike to access in-depth editorial content at the touch of a button.

Membership Manager Claire Byfield commented: "The collection of archived issues has really been brought to life in this new digital format. The comprehensive search tool will prove incredibly useful for those with a passion for or profession in the museum industry."

institutions.exacteditions.com/british-museum-magazine



In brief

Refreshed version of the Charity Governance Code now available

A practical tool to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance, the Code's update follows recent consultation and is a refresh rather than an overhaul of the Code, reflecting feedback that balancing updates to the Code whilst avoiding potentially disrupting its use is key.

The enhancements focus on the principles that received the most consistent feedback in the consultation as areas requiring change, namely Integrity and Diversity, with the latter also being renamed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

For more information on the changes visit www.charitygovernancecode.org

AHI 2021 Engaging People Awards

Are you telling great stories about your place, people or collection? Do you inspire your visitors or local communities to explore and discover more? Ensure your hard work is recognised through the AHI 2021 Awards – back with a new name and some exciting new categories.

"Much has happened to change our views and practice in 2020 and the AHI Awards have changed to reflect that" says Bill Bevan, AHI Awards Chair.

"As well as looking for great interpretive projects in response to the Covid-19 lockdowns that have so impacted heritage and wildlife organisations, we have responded to Black Lives Matter and the need to diversify heritage with a more diverse group of judges, along with categories to encourage a wider range of groups to enter.

We are also looking for projects that address climate change and look to the future of the profession with a Young Interpreters Award."

Eligible projects should have launched to the public between the 1st April 2019 and 5th April 2021. Entrants are shortlisted in spring; finalists are judged over the summer and the winners announced at a gala ceremony in October.

ahi.org.uk/awards





Museums must change their habits for the Post-COVID world – we have a challenge to help communities fall in love with us again, says Nat Edwards, Chief Executive, Thackray Museum of Medicine

Love and the long view

As someone who has worked in museums for over 30 years, I acutely feel the loss of a material connection with the heritage and stories that give substance to my job and even more so, the loss of daily contact with the communities that, by bringing the heritage to life, give it meaning.

For one COVID-related reason or another, our wonderful Thackray Museum of Medicine hasn't seen a visitor cross its threshold since the Pandemic began. This feels counterintuitive for a museum that offers a long view of public health and infectious disease, where communities can grow their understanding of today's challenges, armed with the knowledge of how people have overcome those of the past. It feels counterintuitive to have been closed under Tier 3 restrictions by a Government that had generously funded our preparations to allow us to provide a COVID-safe place for the community to visit. It feels just plain wrong to walk through newly refurbished galleries empty of people, while our conference centre is jammed to the gunnels, hosting a busy vaccination centre (we were the first museum to see a vaccination centre up and running).

Derby Museums' Executive Director, Tony Butler, often quotes Satish Kumar's assertion that, counter to its daily degradation in a consumer society, museums raise matter up. It's a nice sentiment but I think he's wrong. It's not museums that elevate our material culture but people. Museums are just the structures they have created to give themselves the space to do it and which, without those people, revert to dead places full of dead stuff. There is a real danger of a creeping necrosis across our sector as we approach a year of COVID closures and isolation. Already many museums, from small independents to the Nationals, are

announcing partial closures and cuts. Many have been able to keep going thanks to enormous generosity from funders, charitable giving and the Government's own emergency measures but to do that, we have all had no choice but to stop doing the thing we really love – sharing our actual collections and buildings with actual people. Of course, we have all tried our hand at digital engagement – and sometimes the results have been inspiring and have opened new possibilities for connecting with people. However, even the best of these initiatives is yet to balance the scales against the loss of contact with our visitors – and the loss of income that comes with them. Like every museum director, I worry about the public confidence in visiting museums when they fully re-open. More than this, though, I'm worried public habits will have simply changed such that museums no longer occur to them as something to do. We have a challenge to help communities fall in love with us again.

If we are to reconnect with a public that has changed its habits, we are going to have to

change our own. We can't necessarily rely on all of those things that made people love us in the past. We won't know for sure if people still want them; we might struggle to make a sustainable case for them and we are certainly going to struggle to pay for them. We need to show our public that museums are real assets for their communities that can help make life more bearable, more hopeful and more capable of imagining the future.

That means fairer too. Genuine equity. That means genuine redistribution of power; decision-making and resources and inclusion being represented in all aspects of museums' work – particularly when it comes to employment, procurement and supply-chain management. To make every penny count, while creating the space to genuinely share, collaborate and innovate, fundamental changes need to be considered in the structures of our organisations and governance.

A new kind of hyper localism is needed, where the really big ideas encapsulated in our museums can be put to the service of communities in myriad ways; co-created locally and coordinated regionally and nationally to share resources and push the very greatest investment closer to the public.

In practical terms that means sharing back-office services, collections management and programming resources – sharing risks and liabilities and possibly even governance – while devolving and distributing delivery across a range of museum and non-museum venues.

We also need to rediscover some of the humility and sense of public service that many of the Victorian museum founders had, rather than seeing ourselves as arbiters of taste or correct thinking. There may have been lockdowns for museum directors, but for the armies of front-line and key workers who have kept them alive for the last year there has just been greater risk, longer hours and fewer places to go with their families in the little spare time they have.

If we consider nothing else, it should be that we have an obligation to say 'thank you' to the people who have borne the brunt of the Pandemic. Putting our museums to their service is the least we can do.

www.thackraymuseum.co.uk



The Thackray Museum of Medicine has its origins in a small family-run chemist shop, opened in 1902 by Charles Thackray, in Great George Street, Leeds.

Images courtesy of Thackray Museum of Medicine.

The Museums of the North West Photogrammetry Hub highlights the potential of creative partnerships with universities

AIM spoke to the University of Liverpool's Dr Ardern Hulme-Beaman and Garstang Museum Curator, Dr Gina Criscenzo-Laycock along with Elsa Price, Curator of Human History at Tullie House – a partner museum in the hub – to find out more.

Supported by a £40k investment from Art Fund, the Museums of the North West Photogrammetry Hub: building virtual 3D futures project draws on university knowledge, expertise and equipment to train museum staff in digital 3D recording, preservation and presentation with the eventual goal of constructing virtual exhibitions.

But what is Photogrammetry and how can it help museums? Dr Ardern Hulme-Beaman, who leads the University of Liverpool's Photogrammetry Team, explains:

"Photogrammetry involves taking multiple photographs of an object from different angles, stitching the resulting images together through coordinates, then bringing those coordinates together to reconstruct an object's geometry.

The initial concept is probably 180 years old. With the earliest camera technology came the realisation that you could take measurements by adding a scale, and in the 1900s the first equations were drawn up to figure out geometry – at that time for aerial photography to build landscapes.

As a technique it allows researchers, and the public, to get close to unique items regardless of COVID closures."

The process has really taken off in the last ten years due to increasing computer power but offers more than simple digital documentation according to Garstang Museum Curator Dr Gina Criscenzo-Laycock.

"It makes objects more accessible, particularly delicate objects that shouldn't be handled too often. If you have good enough quality images you can zoom in to details that are very difficult to see with the naked eye. So, you can get more information from some of these models than you can from looking at the original.

Things like photogrammetry can often be completely out of reach as many smaller museums don't have the resources. What we want the project to do is to demystify the process; show people how this technique

works and help them develop related skills. It also offers potential in terms of public engagement, particularly during COVID, when they can't come and visit."

Although it's still early days for the project the Liverpool team hopes they can help in upskilling the North West museum sector, ultimately helping facilitate the development of a digital exhibition and build collaborations for researchers and students.

For Elsa Price, Curator of Human History at Tullie House, one of the Hub partners, ensuring this opportunity feeds into wider strategic plans is key, alongside the solutions and rich engagement opportunities the technique can offer:

"We undertook a basic skills audit and identified a gap, and this appeared to be a great opportunity to fill it. Like many we have some collections storage challenges – we've lots of stoneworks, altars and so on – and are considering how 3d scanning can help us solve those.

We're also keen to see how this work can fit in to the wider aims of 'Project Tullie', our ten-year plan. With limited resources any digital work must be linked to the Business Plan or greatly enhance engagement, collections care or our business model."

Elsa also values the collaborative approach a hub can offer, and the development of regional networks of shared resources and expertise it can inspire.

"The people in this first phase of this project will be communicating with each other regularly and as one of the larger museums in our region Tullie may be able to support smaller organisations Cumbria-wide too. As museums we have to work in partnership, we can't do it all ourselves."

See the 3d models at:

<https://sketchfab.com/LivAncWorlds>

To find out more about the project visit:

www.liverpool.ac.uk/garstang-museum/museums-nw-photogrammetry-hub



Top: The Liverpool team collaborating with Manchester's Archives+ and 11:37 Enterprises to digitally preserve the iconic head of Frank Sidebottom, alter-ego of comedian and musician Chris Sievey. Above: Garstang Museum Ancient Egyptian bronze statuette of a cat. The 3d model shows a pierced ear which would have once held a gold ring. An incised necklace and collar is also visible around the cat's neck and repair patches on the body and head.

Images courtesy of Dr Ardern Hulme-Beaman and Dr Gina Criscenzo-Laycock.

Art Fund's fundraising platform Art Happens is designed to give museums and audiences the power to bring exciting projects to life together, help engage existing supporters in new ways and encourage visitors to go from going, to giving.

From going to giving – Art Happens offers crowdfunding expertise designed for the sector

Developed specifically for museums and galleries, the platform is free to use and the Art Fund team provides one to one support throughout, from running workshops offering advice and expertise, to helping plan your campaign. And as Art Fund covers campaign costs such as producing a film and donor rewards, all the funds raised can go towards the target.

Since the platform was launched in 2014, over 9000 donors have raised more than £900,000 for a variety of projects – from restoration to exhibitions to reopening.

AIM spoke to Jennifer Grindley, Head of Marketing, Communications and Digital at Charleston.

The team at Charleston ran a campaign on Art Happens to raise funds in late 2020, to help prepare for welcoming visitors again in 2021.

"Charleston is one of the country's heritage sites hit hardest by the global pandemic, and has lost more than £1.7m in commercial income this year. We'd been fundraising since we closed our doors in March, running a public emergency appeal up until June to essentially save Charleston, and allow us to continue as a museum. Our fundraising

then continued behind-the-scenes, but even with government and sector grants we knew there would still be a financial hurdle to overcome to be able to reopen to visitors. Thanks to matched funding of £80,000, in October 2020 we were able to launch a final public ask to support our reopening costs.

This focus on reopening rather than saving Charleston was an important narrative shift for us and to have the backing of Art Fund was really important – it enabled us to reach a much bigger audience and was a more public way of people being able to show their support."

Given the explosion of fundraising initiatives underway across the sector at present, ensuring clear messaging and the rationale behind the campaign to reopen was critical.

"We tailored communications to different audiences, developed a joyful campaign video to bring the cause and Charleston to life, and prepared detailed FAQs explaining why we were raising the money. The rewards were also an important consideration, developing a mix of things that appeal to the core audience. An exclusive Charleston reward, I think, encouraged a lot of people

to donate for a second or third time, and Art Fund were helpful throughout in providing guidance, ideas for award price categories, numbers and so on. They had lots of experience of commissioning products and managed the fulfilment as well, so it was important to get their take and advice."

And if you're thinking about fundraising with the platform, the Charleston team, whose campaign exceeded its target by 15%, advise that alongside detailed planning, making sure campaign propositions are simple, clear and consistent is critical.

"Be clear about what is it that you are trying to achieve and what are you asking people to do, so that they know exactly what they're giving to. Plan out your content and the rhythm of your campaign as much as you can, but also test different creatives and communications, and be prepared to be reactive to your audience's behaviours and needs.

And even though it's a digital fundraising platform, don't discount other marketing channels and allow enough time to develop those. We looked outside of the sector at what other fundraising campaigns are doing to help us develop a point of difference too."



Duncan Grant's Studio at Charleston.

Penelope Fewster

Art Fund offer a great range of useful tools that support museums. To explore how these can help you and your organisation contact Merrin on mkalinowski@artfund.org or visit the Art Fund website.

Art Happens www.artfund.org/get-involved/art-happens

Art Tickets www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/programmes/art-tickets

www.charleston.org.uk

Art Tickets_


Plan for the future with Art Tickets, Art Fund's completely free ticket management system that makes things simple. Designed for museums by museums, we helped 120 museums re-open safely in 2020.

Art Tickets can help you:

- Manage social distancing with timed ticketing
- Reduce admin
- Improve visitor experience
- Get to know your audiences better

Get in touch at museums@artfund.org to book a 121 with one of the team to find out how we can help you open your doors.

Art Tickets. Ticketing made simple.



For galleries without their own online ticket-booking system, Art Tickets has made managing visitors in the post-lockdown period a possibility. 'We doubt that we could open without this amazing free resource'.

Gordon Cummings, Chairman, Fry Art Gallery Society

ArtFund_

Louise Emerson *explores how to approach another challenging year.*

Stop – Start – More – Less

2 021 is going to be a tough year, so we do not have much choice but to find opportunities, search out collaborators and create new beginnings and new thinking. I know many of you are in the midst of re-examining your business plans and tackling some of the issues you knew you had before this upheaval. The ongoing crisis is a stimulus to act on what you have learned over the past year and figure out what you need to build the future. You also want to make what resource and money you have create value in the most effective way.

Of course, judging value can get messy when it's not as simple as measuring it in pounds, when it is less tangible. Contribution or value can be related to reputation, it can be about building knowledge and expertise, a network of connections or partnerships that you use to lever fundraising in the future.

You need to be brutally honest when value is debatable and this is when having open honest conversations, where assumptions can be challenged and alternative opinions and options on what is valuable to the organisation are listened to, will assist you in making the best decisions. Letting go of ways of working, or activities that are not serving your Museum can be difficult.

Applying a **STOP – START – MORE – LESS** assessment is a straightforward way to get started when you are revising your plans.

Before working through this assessment of your activities, programme, marketing and operations it important to start by working out:

- What has changed forever
- What will return when the environment normalises
- What new behaviour, processes, policies, external strategies, thinking, actions etc offer up opportunities for your organisation

Having clarified what your landscape looks like now and in the medium term. Use the questions below to build a view of what you need to do going forward, applying a timescale.

1. What do we need to stop doing?
2. What do you need to start doing?
3. What do you need to do more of?
4. What do you need to do less of?

Use the best information you have to make these decisions, and to inform new ways of working.

Know the 'true' cost

Measure all the costs. With fewer staff its even more important to have a clear idea of how time is used for what output. Often there are hidden costs that sit in a general central budget line, hiding the true cost of activities or; in terms of income generation and fundraising, the net contributions. Adapt your financial records to give you the information you need to inform decisions.

Be Agile

Being agile is something many organisations have done well – fast forwarding digital distribution is just one example. What short-term opportunities can you capitalise on? For example, opening exclusively (when possible) to small groups or hires; micro weddings; outdoor space use in partnership with exercise classes; outdoor eating; online social groups and so on. Being connected locally and regionally can offer some short-term opportunities.

Collaborate

With harder times predicted, collaborative working is offering a lifeline for many organisations. Whether it is local 'building back' or place-making initiatives; cost saving ventures; skill sharing or agenda specific ventures e.g. well-being and loneliness. Your competitor is likely to be suffering the same pain as you; could you be partners?

The London Museum of Water & Steam was too small to make their café profitable but working with local charity, Our Barn, that needed work experience opportunities for people with disabilities, they were able to create a win-win and something the commercial sector could not do.

There will undoubtedly be some tough decisions. Recording the parameters and circumstances with which you made those decisions, and the expectations, will make it much easier down the line to reflect and adapt as circumstances change and, importantly, will enable you to communicate change well.

Louise Emerson is a Business Consultant with many years' experience working in and with museums on managing change and creating business plans and strategy. She is also an accredited Coach and Mentor.
www.takethecurrent.co.uk

The London Museum of Water & Steam café has always been an important part of the visitor offer. But how do you make a café work with 23,000 visitors? Not least as AIM recommends 44,000 for a viable café. Director Liz Power explains their innovative approach.

Developing a not-for-profit café partnership at London Museum of Water & Steam

The solution has been to give the space to a charity – a not-for-profit who could use the space for both running a café and giving opportunities for young people with learning disabilities.

I was put in touch with Our Barn by the young services leader at our local council and the charity were immediately interested. Setting up this partnership was a quick and easy process, helped by the fact we had worked together before, and the CEO of the charity, Karen Adams had been a long-time visitor to the Museum.

Our Barn had been on the lookout for a space from which they could run a supported work experience café opportunity for their young people; in fact, they even had a funding bid ready to support the work.



Thom Isom is a freelance Graphic Designer with over 10 years experience working with arts, heritage and cultural organisations throughout the UK. He's created identities for touring exhibitions, designed websites for internationally renowned museums and produced publications for galleries up and down the country. Here he shares some guidance on how to write a creative brief and work with a designer.

How to write a creative brief and work with designers

Seven most important things to include in your creative brief:

Background

Design elements

Creative tone

Audience

Format

Timeline

Budget

Museums are special places, full of character, history and stories. Capturing the personality of a museum and sharing it with the public can be a difficult thing. The first interaction the public have with a museum isn't the venue, it's the marketing and design material that is advertising or telling a story about the space or the exhibits.

This could be anything; a poster promoting an upcoming exhibition, a social media post advertising a workshop, or an email newsletter calling out to volunteers.

Whatever it is, it's needs to echo the identity of the space. But how do you as a museum translate your message into a piece of design? To help, here are seven tips to include in your creative brief to designers.

The creative brief is what you'll share with a designer or illustrator to help them produce what you need. Nobody knows your museum better than you, the history of the collections, the stories behind each artwork and the identity of the space.

When writing your brief, you should share this **background**, assume the designer knows nothing about your museum – the more you can give them the more it'll help them translate it into a piece of design that can capture the personality of your venue.

Most museums have a logo, fonts and colours they like to use, you can refer to these are your **design elements**. If you aren't sure what fonts and colours may work best, share some words that capture the **creative tone** you want to display in the design.

I most recently worked with the World Museum in Liverpool on the identity of a new exhibition for Artificial Intelligence. They wanted to produce an identity that was futuristic without being clichéd – their creative tone included the words; stimulating, provocative, contemporary and impactful. Emotive words that work as a great starting point for a designer to experiment with.

Who are you talking to? Let the designer know who your **audience** is. Consider the exact age groups, demographics and be sure to be inclusive – the design must be as accessible as possible.

What **format** is the design required in? Do you need a poster designed to set dimensions or an advert to fit a certain space on a website – give clear and precise measurements. If you aren't sure what you need, analyse how your visitors engage with your museum and exhibitions. Where do they spend their time? Are they on or offline? Are they likely to pick up a flyer or watch a video? Try and answers all these questions to help you define a format.

Allow yourself as much time as possible when producing any design – if you need help with production or printing make these enquiries at the start and then work backwards to produce your **timeline**.

Finally, be open and honest with your **budget**, if you've a set amount to work with, let the designer know. If you're unsure of costs, write your brief and send it to a few designers and find a quote that fits.

www.thomisom.com

The Museum has a long-term commitment to hosting and working with people with disabilities, so this partnership felt like a natural extension. We hope that the café will become a feature of the local area and give us a launch pad to work with other community organisations.

For Our Barn this was a project that had been in their sights for several years, but the right venue proved elusive. They were seeking a balance of a realistic café setup without the pressure of a commercial space. The Museum was the perfect solution.

As Karen from Our Barn says, "When the long-term impact of what was happening with COVID-19 became more obvious, we realised that external work placements would be next

to impossible to find. We had to consider every alternative for our young people."

There is of course lots of learning for us both, and at times we have thought this is a crazy thing to do in the middle of a pandemic, but when we opened for half-term it worked, both for the charity and its young people and for the Museum and its visitors.

Liz Power, Director

London Museum of Water & Steam

Karen Adams, Co-Founder and Manager
Our Barn

waterandsteam.org.uk

www.ourbarn.org.uk

Pictured right, café at the London Museum of Water & Steam.



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 and the Welsh government (AIM Hallmarks in Wales); AIM's Sustainability Scheme, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; and AIM's Conservation and Collections Care and Collection Audit Schemes, supported by the Pilgrim Trust. AIM Bulletin regularly publishes case studies of some of the successful applications.

AIM CONSERVATION AND COLLECTIONS CARE

Tring and District Local History Museum

£1,231

Conservation of the Charlotte Smith sketchbook

The book conservator's art and craft is in balancing stability for access with the physical form and appearance of the binding and textblock, both of which can be very beautiful decorative objects in their own right. One such project was the Charlotte Smith sketchbook, conserved for Tring Local Museum through the generous support of AIM and the Pilgrim Trust.

This early 19th Century sketchbook was that most pleasing of objects: an unassuming maroon sheep-leather binding with marbled paper sides, very much a standard 'off the peg' stationery binding of its day. However, this modest cover contained a collection of charming pencil sketches drawn by Charlotte Smith in the 1820s and 1830s, depicting local scenes and people with both energy and movement.

Being a functional object, it had clearly seen some use: the leather was abraded and worn across the spine and board edges, and the marbled paper sides were lifting and scuffed. At some point it is likely that the book had been sitting in water on a shelf, as there was a substantial and visible tide line of discoloration obscuring the beauty of the sketches. The eye was most definitely drawn to the staining first and the sketches second.

However, the staining could be removed by immersion washing. This is a complex process, involving time, patience and skill, but once washed, the difference in the stain line was remarkable.

The next process was repairing the backs of the sections to allow resewing so the textblock can once again function as a book.

The cleaned and conserved volume is now able to be handled, displayed and enjoyed without risk of it being damaged in the process. More pleasing still is that the staining that was proving to be the main focus has gone, allowing the charming sketches to be the stars of the show once more.

Victoria Stevens ACR
Tring Local History Museum



Victoria Stevens preparing the sketch book for display.

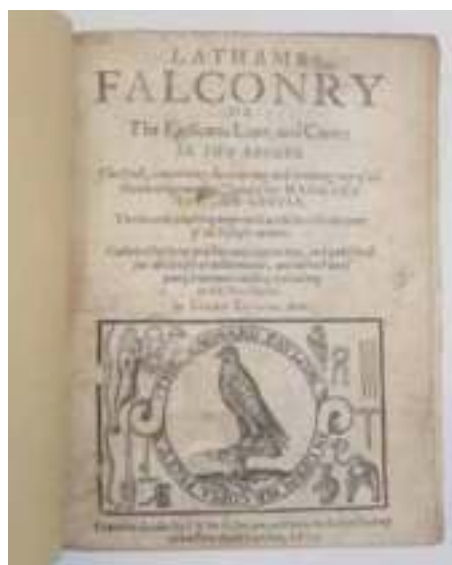
Armagh Robinson Library and No 5 Vicars' Hill

£4,000

Politics, Polemics and Pastimes –Conservation of Publications at Armagh Robinson Library

Founded in 1771 and incorporated in 1773 by 'An Act for settling and preserving a public library in the City of Armagh forever', Armagh Robinson Library is the oldest public library in Northern Ireland. An independent library, an accredited museum and a popular tourist attraction, the Library's mission is, 'To safeguard and share the treasures of the past for the enjoyment, enrichment and enlightenment of the city [of Armagh] and the world forever'. The Grade A listed building houses rare books, prints and engravings, manuscripts, coins, medals and fine art.

An application was made to AIM to conserve significant printed publications, published between 1618 and 1758. They include



'Falconry' after treatment.

publications relating to the economic history of Ireland, and one on improving the Irish linen industry. Others relate to the Civil War of the 1640s and to the emergence of the two-party

political system. Also among the volumes was Simon Latham's Falconry (1618), which is particularly rare.

Obtaining the grant from AIM helped the Library to secure further funding from the Leche Trust and the Northern Ireland Museums Council to conserve three other volumes. They all required a dry surface clean treatment to remove loose and ingrained dirt. Where there were live mould spores, a disinfection treatment was carried out, while for those volumes where insect activity had been detected an anoxia treatment was undertaken. The work was carried out by Sean Madden, Northern Ireland's sole independent paper conservator.

"This gratefully received grant will help enable public access to collection items that were previously not accessible due to their condition. As the Library approaches its 250th anniversary we look forward to making the newly conserved publications available for consultation, allowing people to gain deeper insights into different aspects of the past."

Dr Robert Whan, Director
Armagh Robinson Library

The Fusilier Museum London

£3,484.76

Collections Move

The Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment was raised at the Tower of London in 1685 at the order of King James II. By 1689 the Fusiliers had become a regular Infantry Regiment, going on to fight in some of the most important conflicts in history; the most significant of which are retold within the museum including the American War of Independence, The Napoleonic Wars, The Crimean War, the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. In 1968 the Regiment was amalgamated with the three other English Fusilier regiments to form The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who continue to serve across the world.

As part of a previous project the museum received funding to create a new storeroom. The aim of the collection move project has been to relocate material from the basement into this new purpose designed store. The project also aims to improve the long-term care and preservation of the collection, to gain a better understanding of the material that has been collected, as well as to improve the cataloguing. Other big aims of the project were to condition check and photograph the collection material; things which had never previously been done. We are also beginning to populate the museum's online catalogue to fulfil the aim of sharing more of the museum's collection with a wider audience. The funding from AIM covered many of the material costs of the project, without which we would not have been able to achieve the aims set out.

The project was primarily run by one member of staff with the support of a core group of three to six volunteers. The Coronavirus pandemic has halted progress for the time-being, but we hope to be able to finish the project this year.

With AIM's support we have been able to spend time improving the quality of our cataloguing and the storage of the collection. Both of these elements are integral to sharing a greater proportion of the collection with a wider audience, to making the Fusilier collection more accessible to all and to creating exciting new projects in the future with the knowledge gained from this project.

**Stephanie Killingbeck-Turner, Assistant Curator
The Fusilier Museum, London**



Top, the Fusilier Museum collection cleaning, and above, photography training session at The Fusilier Museum.

Frenchay Village Museum

£1,100

Collections care audit

The audit has confirmed our need for closer attention to the conservative needs of certain objects, particularly paper. We also learnt a bit more about the importance of an emergency plan and how certain priority items need to be considered. We were aware of certain issues with our storage, but this visit benefitted

us greatly as the conservator pointed out specific problems, like certain objects not being stored in the correct way for conservation reasons.

In terms of next steps, we have taken on board all recommendations for building maintenance and intend on upgrading our system for calculating temperature and humidity by purchasing dataloggers.

We also need to reconsider how objects in storage are organised so it makes more

sense from an archive perspective. We will investigate having a paper conservator look at some key items and will revise our Emergency Plan.

In addition, the curator will attend relevant recommended training to help expand her knowledge and ability to contribute to the management of the museum.

The audit has achieved everything we have expected. We have received a wealth of important advice and recommendations, which will benefit us enormously.

We really enjoyed working with Fiona and appreciated her genuine interest in the museum. She was very attentive and professional in the run up to the site visit, and clearly explained what her role was and how the process would work; this was excellent, considering the challenges of working during a pandemic. She also asked many questions and I feel as a result provided us with an extremely detailed and well-structured report.

**Charlotte Appleyard, Curator
Frenchay Village Museum**



Frenchay Village Museum, Fry's Cocoa sign from Frenchay Village Museum and a selection of paper items on display at Frenchay Village Museum.



The Devil's Porridge Museum £4,000

The Restoration of the Mossband Clock

The Devil's Porridge Museum was established 25 years ago to share the story of HM Factory Gretna – the greatest factory on earth in World War One. 30,000 people were employed here at its height including 12,000 women. The Museum was established by a group of volunteers with an enthusiasm for local history and in its comparatively short life its growth and development have been incredible.

At the end of World War One, the Factory closed. One of the only surviving buildings was the Central Headquarters, Mossband House, but it fell into a state of disrepair and was demolished. Volunteers from the Museum tried to save the building but were unsuccessful. However, the clock which used to sit on top of it was saved and came into the Museum's care. Our project has been to restore this clock and find a home for it within the Museum in a permanent new display.

Our volunteers and Trustees have discussed for many years what to do with the clock and we eventually settled on a plan to install it within the building on top of our Factory display. The clock now looks like it is sitting on top of a Factory building again – we haven't just restored it physically, we have 'put it back where it belongs' in every sense. We were able to secure Smith of Derby for this work; the clock was originally made by this company 104 years ago so having them restore it was fitting.

The clock was unveiled on Armistice Day 2020 in a small ceremony broadcast live via Facebook and YouTube Live. We have also appeared on our local TV and radio stations and had an article about the restoration published in Museum Crush.



Top, Mossband House, the central HQ for HM Factory Gretna in World War One with the clock on top, and above, the restored clock on display within the museum.

The outcomes of the project are many: increased publicity and awareness of the Museum (needed more than ever due to the uncertainties caused by COVID-19), a fantastic new historical display, a significant historical object no longer languishing and deteriorating behind the scenes and an object which enables us to remind people that HM Factory Gretna was an Anglo-Scottish endeavour. The clock was a well-known local landmark on the English side of the border and it is the first significant object from the English side of the Factory to be incorporated within the Museum.

"Receiving funding from AIM Pilgrim Trust has enabled us to complete a project we've been working on for years. We're so glad to have been able to restore a 104 year old clock from World War One and to use the original clockmakers for the project was fantastic. Our new Mossband Clock display looks great and is helping keep the Museum in the public eye: ensuring that the work done by the men and women of HM Factory Gretna to turn the tide of the War is not forgotten."

**Judith Hewitt, Museum Manager
The Devil's Porridge Museum**



what a star

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Are you ready for the Cultural Café Revolution asks Paul Smith, Director, Montfort Catering Consultants

The Cultural Café Revolution

Cafes and other places to eat, drink and socialise have long been an essential component of a museum's visitor experience and organisational DNA. For many, they also provide an essential income stream to support greater commercial resilience and reduce dependence on funding.

That was until early 2020. The arrival of COVID-19 has had a catastrophic impact on the hospitality sector. But there have also been significant behavioural shifts because of the pandemic offering venues the perfect opportunity to reposition, realign and benefit.

The Behavioural Shift

Increased home and remote working is here to stay. If the pandemic has provided any silver lining, for many it has been the realisation of the need to readjust work life balance. Remote working is nothing new, but the significant increase in it is, and many cafes, particularly on the high street do not have the space and are not configured to accommodate this growing and attractive market, while still meeting their commercial obligations. Combine that with organisations looking at reduced office spaces and you have the perfect recipe for new opportunities.

The Cultural Café Revolution

There can be no time in modern history like this, with so many people longing to be in the presence of family, friends and colleagues. While the vaccine brings that goal in sight, the way we work, and meet for work, will be different and most likely more remote, particularly for those whose roles don't need to be in specific locations. For many, the choice to return to a more structured environment and defined place of work is unlikely to be an option.

New agile integrated work and social spaces have been springing up for some time – coffee exchange lounges on business parks and club collectives providing co-working spaces for smaller organisations and individuals. Some of these have also integrated complementary and

paid for activities and events, including business talks as well as social and 'play' activities.

Now consider that further for a moment.

Museums, galleries, art centres, historic properties and all manner of cultural, heritage and leisure venues up and down the country already do those things and more, and a significant number already have cafes or other places to eat and drink as well as other under-utilised spaces. Surely this has to be the time for the cultural café – a unique cultural place to meet, work, socialise, participate, learn and of course, eat and drink!

Curated Café Spaces

As food and drink specialists, Montfort Catering Consultants have long supported organisations with the creation of curated café spaces – food and drink destinations integrated within the fabric of the organisation, while also contributing to the venue's commercial resilience. We have found that most eating and drinking spaces within arts organisations benefit from close alignment to the wider artistic and educational programme, making them less of a passive extension to the organisation. The same is also relevant when appealing to alternative markets.

While many cafes often naturally lend themselves to informal locations for solo working and informal meetings, many strategic and operational considerations will need to be determined if such spaces are to be culturally sympathetic, commercially sustainable and successful.

Some things to think about:

- Practicalities like having enough power sockets for laptops, phones and tablets as well as adequate free wifi.
- Seating style and configuration to suit different party sizes while not overly reducing your occupancy potential.
- A relevant food and drink offer, likely to include an all-day snacking menu.

- An appropriate style of service to accommodate people that may not want to leave their seat and belongings but may want to buy another coffee or stay for lunch.
- How the artistic and educational programme could be developed to integrate new business audiences, which may include relevant social, business, training and networking events.
- The best approach to accommodate people wanting a space to stay and work for longer periods of time, which could include an alternative time-based charging model or membership option with complimentary hospitality?
- How to extend and encourage your new audience into more leisure and cultural activities.
- Consideration as to how to integrate the unique element that your organisation does well and is known for?

It is these aspects that will help create a truly unique integrated destination for eating, drinking, participation, cultural enrichment, self development and working, relevant to both existing audiences as well as appealing to new remote workers and businesses.

How do I join the Cultural Café Revolution?

The starting point for many will depend where your organisation is currently on the journey, but a good initial basis would be to consider Who, What, Where, How.

Who are your potential new café audiences? Are there local organisations and associations that could be engaged with? Do research and find out about them.

What are their needs and how does this translate to an integrated food, drink and broader offer?

Where are the spaces and locations that you can develop or reuse?

How will you balance the opportunities with the commercial requirements and the business plan?

We believe this is the time for the cultural café revolution – an opportunity for venues to provide enriched spaces and events to meet, work, socialise, unwind, participate, learn and of course, eat and drink!

Do get in touch with Montfort Catering Consultants for an informal chat if you would like to explore opportunities further and discuss how we could support you.

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Museum profile

Nantgarw China Works & Museum, Wales

When we think of the Welsh Valleys our thoughts generally turn to male voice choirs, Tom Jones, rugby and of course coal – the black gold that fuelled so much of the industrial revolution and left an indelible mark on the landscape, prosperity and culture of Wales.

However another precious commodity, known as 'white gold', was made in the area and eagerly coveted by Royalty, politicians and the richest in the land. Nantgarw porcelain, developed at the start of the 19th century by William Billingsley is revered as the finest porcelain made in the UK and among the finest in the world; plates can change hands for tens of thousands of pounds.

Yet the fragility and difficulty of firing this remarkably white and translucent porcelain in the bottle ovens led to losses of up to 90% and the closure of the factory after only four years. Ironically the factory spent the next ninety years making earthenware jugs, flowerpots and up to 10,000 clay smoking pipes a week – making it the largest pipe making factory in Wales and a far more financially successful business than during porcelain production.

Today the original site houses Nantgarw China Works & Museum, an independent museum run by a charitable trust, which also operates as a pottery, arts centre and educational resource for the local community.

Over the past five years the Museum has gained significant growth in visitor numbers, retail activity and educational programmes while at the same time developing one of the largest public displays of Nantgarw porcelain, transforming interpretation and tours and creating ambitious plans for the preservation and expansion of the original China Works.

Much of the site, including the only remaining bottle ovens in Wales and traces of the Glamorganshire canal, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. A recent Conservation Management Plan has identified priorities for conservation and possible future. Other buildings on site have already been restored and are used as ceramic studios by our resident ceramicists and to run over 400 workshops a year.

In 2017 the museum succeeded in recreating the lost recipe for Billingsley's original Nantgarw porcelain – an incredible achievement that saw widespread media coverage and an appearance on the One Show.

This is the first Nantgarw porcelain made for two hundred years and the only softpaste porcelain in production in the world. All the processes involved from making the porcelain body from raw ingredients, creating traditional plaster moulds, slipcasting, glazing and decorating are performed on site and are part of the visitor experience. Nantgarw is back making world class porcelain.

A 2019 grant from the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund enabled a significant number of items of Nantgarw porcelain to be loaned from Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. Combined with other loans and acquisitions the Museum now has a world class display of Nantgarw porcelain complemented by later earthenware, pipes and artefacts.



As the Museum receives no core funding its income is dependent upon being open for visitors. During the COVID-19 pandemic the site has been open for less than 10% of the time and we have had to develop a strategy to ensure its viability. Retail operations, previously all conducted onsite, have been moved online and pre-COVID retail targets have already been exceeded. Campaigns to boost membership and donations have also helped replace lost income as have the various government grants on offer. We are deeply grateful to these and the Federation of Welsh Museums. Porcelain production has continued throughout.

Our philosophy is very much geared towards the Museum preserving Nantgarw's rich heritage but also ensuring that the porcelain and site still have relevance today. This is achieved by producing world class contemporary porcelain, transferring skills to the next generation and providing an environment for skilled artists and craftspeople to develop their skills and earn a living. Whilst this last year has been unbelievably frustrating, we believe that we can emerge from it stronger and more resilient.

nantgarwchinaworksmuseum.co.uk



Above clockwise from top: Nantgarw porcelain plate – Mackintosh type service; Pottery workshops; Nantgarw China Works & Museum.

MUSEUMS +HERITAGE AWARDS

2021 Museums + Heritage Awards adapted to reflect extraordinary times.

Tough times call for special recognition

By any standards 2020 has been momentous. The pandemic crisis has been all-consuming and has stretched individuals and organisations in previously unimaginable ways. But against the most challenging of backdrops, it has been truly inspiring to witness a collective energy to not only ride out the storm but to seize opportunities, to transform and to challenge.

The 2021 Museums + Heritage Awards have therefore been adapted to reflect these extraordinary times and to provide a high-profile platform for the hard work of so many, to be rewarded and celebrated. The period of eligibility has also been adjusted to align with the start of the first lockdown in the UK.

A range of new free-to-enter categories have been introduced which focus on the unique challenges of the pandemic. Closed but still open? Pivoting boldly? Responding rapidly? These categories are free to enter and look specifically at the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

They sit alongside twelve other categories, including the free Volunteer of the Year Award, in partnership with AIM.

The awards will be judged by a panel of museum experts with two of the categories culminating in a sector wide vote to find the winner. Nominate someone you think has pushed themselves beyond all

normal limits to make a difference to their organisation, colleagues, the wider sector or community during the pandemic. From front of house to volunteers, cleaning teams to the board room, the job title matters not but their effort and determination, does. The nominees will be whittled down to a shortlist which will be put to a sector-wide vote to determine the winner of the COVID Special Recognition Award – the *Pandemic Pioneer*, the *COVID Unsung Hero*, whatever you want to call them, it couldn't have been done without them!

For the sector to re-open safely, it also needed its suppliers and consultants to be agile, creative and focused on delivering solutions. Much like the Special Recognition Award, museums, galleries and heritage visitor attractions are encouraged to vote for businesses which have helped them through these challenging times. Nominate those companies, consultants and freelancers which helped save the day by adapting technology and products, delivering precisely what you needed, when you needed it and helping to ensure the reopening of your organisation was as safe and seamless as possible and/or continued operations during lockdown made possible.

As well as new and different categories, the entry process has been simplified and moved online, making it easier for everyone to enter. The deadline for entry is 31 March 2021 and full details can be found at <https://awards.museumsandheritage.com/>

Seeking inspiration? Conservation Grant Case Studies

We're currently taking applications for the latest round of our Pilgrim Trust conservation grants. The grants support small to medium sized museums to care for their collections more effectively and efficiently and to meet the standards required for Accreditation. The closing date for the next round of

applications is 31 March 2021. If you aren't yet sure how this funding could work for you, or are simply seeking inspiration, why not take a look at our case studies showing what the grants have achieved for other members. You can find out more at www.aim-museums.co.uk/case-studies

New appointments at Portsmouth's Mary Rose and The Lightbox, Woking

The Board of the Mary Rose Trust have confirmed that Helen Bonser-Wilton, Chief Executive, will be leaving the Mary Rose Trust at the end of March 2021 to take up a new role as Chief Executive of the Leeds Castle Foundation in Kent.

Dominic Jones, current Chief Operating Officer, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive, with effect from end March 2021.

Pam Powell has been appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Lightbox gallery and museum. Pam is taking over from

Aileen McLeish who has been Chair since 2013. An experienced board director, she is currently serving three plc's: AG Barr, Cranswick, and Premier Foods, where she also chairs the remuneration committee. She is a member of council at University of Surrey and was formerly a governor at Royal Grammar School Guildford and Guildford College. Pam's executive career in strategy and marketing took her from New York to London with Unilever and then to Woking with SABMiller.



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