



Association of
Independent
Museums

AIM Bulletin

April 2024

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in 2024

A photograph showing a man in a yellow sweater and a woman in a white sweater looking at a museum exhibit. The exhibit consists of a display case with various items and a wall behind it decorated with red poppies. The man is pointing at something in the display case, and the woman is smiling and looking at the same area.

**The power
of partnership**
AIM and NAM celebrate
two years of collaboration

Welcome to AIM Bulletin!

Trust me – I am a trustee

Alex Ratcliffe on what he's learned so far as a recently appointed AIM Trustee.

I have a confession: I have never worked in a museum, let alone a heritage organisation. So why on earth am I an AIM trustee?

I blame my parents. Family holidays predominantly involved rain, avoiding condensation on the inside of a tent and being taken to 'appreciate' megalithic stone circles. Visiting the more obscure and rural parts of the UK provided me with a rich diet of independent, invariably wacky, but always fascinating local museums and heritage sites. It was these renovated water mills, wonky castles and converted prisons that bridged the gap between the past and the present: it educated me, fuelled my imagination and shaped my identity.

In my day job I am a civil servant and delivering services for the benefit of the public is at the heart of why we do what we do. We are also good bureaucrats. Terms like 'non-executive director', 'risk management' and 'good governance' may instil dread in the sane but over time have become the instruments that allow me to effectively deliver those services for the public benefit. It was understanding the value that a board can play and a firm belief in the value of the heritage sector that gave me the confidence to apply to become a trustee.

So what have I learned over the past nine months?

I knew more than I thought but there's still a lot to learn. I have been able to use some of my experience in

communications and strategy to help contribute to a refresh of our vision and purpose statements. But I am also on a steep learning curve understanding the inner wiring of the heritage sector and the nature of the challenges organisations face on an operational level. Board meetings often have a lot of paperwork – so take the time to digest them.

A diverse board is a healthy board. I have valued listening to the viewpoints of others and noticing the 'edge' that each of my fellow trustees brings. When we discuss a complicated issue, or want to think more ambitiously, then having a greater variety of experience and insight often means that if you don't know the answer, someone else will. It's a team effort.

Grants don't grow on trees but they do crop up now and again. Sitting on the grant panel for the Connected Communities Award has been both insightful and reassuring in seeing the range of high quality project proposals. I was taken by the wide range of partners that organisations are working with to deliver public benefit through high quality volunteering opportunities and combating loneliness.

It's enjoyable. Attending last year's conference in Edinburgh, visiting new museums and joining in on a 'Heritage 101' panel session has been fun, informative and motivating. As a trustee you give up your time and your skills for free but you also gain something in return – it's of mutual benefit.

So – don't just trust me – check it out for yourself and see what you can learn.

Alexander Ratcliffe
AIM Trustee

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



Front cover

The National Army Museum (NAM) is a leading authority on the British Army and its impact on society past and present. It examines the Army's role from the British Civil Wars to the modern day and through its collections preserves and shares stories of ordinary people with extraordinary responsibilities. As we enter the third year of our partnership with the National Army Museum (NAM), we spoke to Director Justin Maciejewski about developments across NAM and its network of Regimental and Corps museums. Read more on page 18.

The third and final round of AIM's New Stories New Audiences grants have been awarded.

Final New Stories New Audiences grants awarded

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the scheme has supported dozens of small museums to increase their impact and reach out to their community.

In this final round successful projects include:

Bath Industrial Heritage will work with the Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association to develop an exhibition and record memories of its West Indian community.

Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings (pictured below) will reinterpret the story of the showman's wagon through research, oral history, new interpretation, and sound installations.



Brook Rural Museum plan to work with the university and local students to research and gather oral histories around hop picking to develop a new exhibition.

Gordon Russell Design Museum will partner with the **Broadway Museum** to gather the stories of people who worked at the factory through film and audio.

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum (pictured below) plan to hold a series of workshops and events for younger audience and families, culminating in a celebration event and exhibition.



Chatteris Museum will be working with Traveller and Roma communities to record their stories and create a travelling exhibition of work by those communities.

Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust will be creating new interpretation around the history of the family as Huguenot refugees, working with local refugee communities.

The Marx Memorial Library are working with local residents to co-curate a portable exhibition about Clerkenwell Green's radical protest history.

Stourbridge Glass Museum have commissioned artworks from two artists that will augment an exhibition on climate change co-curated with students and local children.

Chertsey Museum will carry out research and archive development into the stories of the people involved in St Peter's Hospital, culminating in an exhibition in the museum.

Milton's Cottage (pictured below) will be exploring the international legacy of Milton through readings, artworks, and storytelling, with a cohort of digital volunteers.



Crofton Beam Engines are working with local children to create engine models, with short videos by the children that will include animation, model building and stop-motion design.

Rivington Heritage Trust have planned an accessibility and wellbeing project that aims to connect more people with nature through accessible walks and mobile exhibitions.

Finlaggan Heritage Trust are heading a project to link heritage and climate change through the exploration of Celtic crosses using citizen science with school students.



Latest Brighter Day grants awarded

The third round of the Brighter Day grants, gratefully funded by the Arts Scholars Charitable Trust, have been awarded by AIM.

In the final round, twenty-two applications were received, and six projects selected to receive funding from the £28,500 available.

The grant stream was introduced in autumn 2021, and focused on funding projects that helped member museums become more sustainable as they navigated the uncertainty of opening following the Covid pandemic. Over the lifetime of the grant scheme, twenty-five projects have been awarded funding, which has enabled members to increase access to and the care of historic and decorative art collections. Often the projects have provided the opportunity for members to work in new ways, create new income streams and increase visitor engagement.

The Cartoon Museum, London

Comic Creators Unite!

£7,150

A transformative project that involves employing a former Kickstarter to work with student volunteers to catalogue the collection and identify material for a new touring exhibition offer. The project will end with a new exhibition curated and offered through the Touring Exhibition Group (TEG) and the identification of new materials for potential future exhibitions.

Over £300,000 awarded in second round of AIM Connected Communities

AIM's Connected Communities programme seeks to increase wellbeing in twenty-seven deprived areas in England through offering more people the chance to get involved in their local museum.

Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Know Your Neighbourhood Fund through Arts Council England (ACE), the scheme offers grants of £15,000 – £100,000 to museums delivering projects that will improve

community connections through high-quality volunteering opportunities and/or reduce loneliness and increase social bonds. Each of the successful organisations will have completed by the end of January 2025 and over £300,000 has been invested in this round.

Grantees include:

The **National Museum of the Royal Navy** in Hartlepool will be working in partnership with Catcote Academy to support young people with SEND in shaping a new volunteer programme for young people that builds confidence, independence, and key life skills.

Ushaw Historic House and Gardens are aiming to reduce social isolation in the elderly rural population of County

The Silk Museum, Macclesfield

Rediscovering Childhood: Childrenswear in the Silk Museum's Collection

£4,500

This project has a focus on childrenswear in the collection, some 350 pieces. The project will audit, photograph, catalogue, repack and exhibit highlights from the collection allowing a new level of interpretation aimed at younger family audiences to be introduced to the museum.

Blandford Fashion Museum, Dorset

Costume Design Portfolio Preparation Workshops

£1,200

This project will provide educational learning opportunities for young people to support their career development. The findings from the students collections research will be made available on the museums website and learning opportunities rolled out to a wider audience through workshops and increased interpretation.

The Minories, Colchester

Conservation training and storage solutions

£7,150

The foundation run a gallery called 'The Minories' which houses a collection of artwork from a range of prominent 19th century to contemporary artists. Their project includes costs for professional staff to support training of volunteers, core costs to support staff to work on the storage of the collection and materials to create new shelving suitable for a listed building.

St Ives Museum, Cornwall

Reduction of lux and UV light levels at St Ives Museum

£2,000

Funding to help pay for UV film in the exhibition area, where artwork, primarily watercolours, and loan material is displayed.

"We have managed to get a grant of £1000 from our local Town Council and a further grant from a small charitable trust, so this should virtually cover the planned expenditure which is a big step forward."
Peter Garratt, Assistant Curator.

Museum of Cambridge

Restoring Cambridgeshire's Artistic Heritage: 2024 And Beyond

£6,500

The museum has 300 paintings which sustained damage over Covid while in storage. Following an audit, the museum has prioritised work on the collection, funding will cover additional staff time and storage materials. The staff hours will be used to manage the project and to build a new volunteer team. The volunteers will be trained in collection care and support the work to upgrade the storage of the art collection.

"We are so happy to have been awarded this funding from AIM and Arts Scholars Charitable Trust Brighter Days scheme. We can't wait to shed light on the artistic heritage of our collection at the Museum of Cambridge."
Alex Smaridge, Engagement and Collections Manager with Directorial Responsibilities.

Durham with a volunteering programme based around the collection, volunteer-led exhibitions, developing collection care skills and networks.

Gawthorpe Textiles Collection will be tackling chronic loneliness and isolation through a project that includes 10 months of engagement with the collections programme, where participants are encouraged to respond creatively, culminating in an exhibition.

The **Museum of Cannock Chase** will be working with local colleges to develop and provide high-quality volunteering that teaches young people sector-specific and transferrable skills.

Sunderland Culture are working with local partners to deliver a programme of creative activities for young people with autism, co-created with participants.

Signal Film and Media will engage young people and marginalised adults in a project that engages with the Sankey Collection through co-created activities, research, and exhibitions.



Gawthorpe Hall.



News in brief



Museums across the UK welcome removal of sunset clause on Exhibition Tax Relief

UK museums have welcomed Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's announcement in the Spring Statement that the Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR) is to be made permanent.

Since its inception in 2017, MGETR has supported hundreds of museums and galleries across the UK with £59 million invested, a lifeline for museums and the visual arts. The tax relief has supported 6,430 exhibitions of all sizes – from blockbuster exhibitions that draw huge national and international audiences, to the creation of more ambitious new displays at smaller museums that engage local communities around the country – encouraging innovation, creating jobs, and enabling national and international touring. The relief was previously due to expire in April 2026.

Andrew Lovett, Chair of AIM and Chief Executive, Black Country Living Museum, said: "I'd like to thank the Chancellor, the Culture Secretary and their teams for removing the sunset clause on this crucial tax relief. Not only is this a positive and relevant response to concerted advocacy by the sector, the certainty a permanent relief provides makes it more accessible to independent museums, guaranteeing a long-term return on the resource investment required to claim it. Our visitors and communities will ultimately benefit from this astute investment in a sector which makes significant contributions to the UK's economy and its sense of self."

Maria Balshaw, Chair of the National Museum Directors' Council and Director of Tate said: "I want to thank

the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt and Culture Secretary, Lucy Frazer for responding to the concerns of museums and the visual arts sector by extending this vital tax relief. It supports the making of exhibitions that directly benefit the public across the whole of the UK. At Tate it helps us create exhibitions that serve our local communities as well as attract visitors from all over the world. It underpins the economic and social benefit museums and galleries make to the UK economy and helps protect our world-leading creative sector."



£24 million funding available through latest MEND round

Accredited Museums across England can apply for a share of £23.8 million funding in the latest round of the Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND)

The fund is aimed at supporting capital projects at museums, funding important repairs, and improving the visitor experience. Grants from £50,000 to £5 million are available.

Since 2021, 67 projects have received a total of more than £40 million, with funding having already benefited a wide variety of museums, including many AIM members.

Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

"Over the past two years I've been delighted to see how this fund has provided vital support to museums across the country, enabling them to improve their buildings and share their wonderful collections with a wider audience."

Lisa Ollerhead, AIM Director said:

"This is important and continued recognition by DCMS and ACE of

the need for funding that keeps buildings cared for and collections, visitors and museum teams safe. Whilst this is the final round of the original funding we will be advocating to all parties for its continuation. We know how much need there still is in museums for this kind of fundamental support and will be making that point to decision makers over the coming months."

[The online portal to register Expressions of Interest opened on 4th March 2024.](#)



New CEO for the Powell-Cotton Trust

The Powell-Cotton Trust (PCT) is excited to announce the appointment of Sarah Corn as the new Chief Executive Officer. Sarah will lead the trust at the start of a new phase of development and growth for the charity.

A passionate advocate of the museums sector, Sarah has almost 20 years of industry experience and joins the museum from her current role as Director of The Old Operating Theatre in London. Sarah brings proven experience in leading museums through periods of change and helping them to grow and develop based on sound strategic planning and engagement.

Clare Valentine, Chair of Trustees, said:

"We are delighted to have found someone of Sarah's quality and calibre to lead the trust and implement our new and exciting strategy which will lay the foundations for our next 100 years."

Sarah will begin her new role on the 29th April 2024.



Dame Judi Dench image by Derrick Santini.

Self Made in Scarborough

An exhibition of portraits of cultural icons from different generations and backgrounds by Scarborough-born photographer Derrick Santini opens at Scarborough Art Gallery in the spring. Included in the exhibition are portraits of famous musicians, entertainers, and actors, including Adele, Dame Judi Dench, Idris Elba, One Direction and Stephen Graham.

Derrick Santini was born in Scarborough in 1965 and attended St Martin's CE Primary School and Graham School before moving to Harrogate where he studied Photography at Harrogate College. He holds a BA Hons in Photography and Communication from the London College of Printing (now LCC). His portraits have been acquired by the National Portrait Gallery and he has exhibited in the UK and internationally. His innovative approach and techniques have seen him lead masterclass workshops, most

notably in Lenticular photography, which he is a great exponent of. His work has been featured in many prestigious publications including *Vice* and *Vogue*, and he continues to work commercially and editorially,



Images of Prospect Cottage by Gilbert McCarragher.

as well as publishing numerous articles on photography.

Derrick will also be running workshops with students from a local school. The students will curate an exhibition of their own work that will be displayed alongside Derrick's portraits.

Self Made can be seen at the gallery from Saturday 18 May to Sunday 1 September 2024.

Prospect Cottage: Derek Jarman's House

A new book by photographer Gilbert McCarragher, invites readers into the personal sanctuary of the iconic artist for the very first time, with over 100 unseen photographs.

Discovered on a location recce on Dungeness beach with the actress Tilda Swinton, Derek Jarman bought Prospect Cottage in 1986, the same year he was diagnosed with HIV, and eight years before his death in 1994. The book features photographs of every room in the house including Jarman's artist studio, as well as works of art created by Jarman in the last years of his life that still hang on the walls of the cottage.

Published by Thames & Hudson on April 4th.



Image by Marica Melton on Unsplash

Accreditation Mentor Support in Wales

**Interested in mentoring?
Accreditation support is
being extended and networks
are being built across Wales to
further support museums.**

Mentors are an essential part of the UK's Museum Accreditation scheme. They support smaller museums to achieve Accreditation status and are typically qualified museum professionals with three or more years' experience across any of the three areas of Accreditation, at curatorial or managerial level.

Mentoring is a two-way street and a mutually beneficial arrangement. It facilitates positive relationships and builds skills and knowledge all round. It can boost confidence and enable growth, learning and ambition. Wales' mentors increasingly are self-employed or recently retired museum professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience with them.

In Wales, we are exploring how we can extend our mentor network and draw in new levels of expertise from those professionals who may not consider themselves 'mentor material'. We are developing the mechanisms for mentor support, with monthly troubleshooting drop-in sessions and newsletters. We want to invest in the training our mentors require, so we can help the sector keep pace with changes in policy and ensure its effective development. We want to map our mentors' individual strengths in their Accreditation standard knowledge, so we can help signpost specific queries to our wider network.

Ideally, we are looking to create a pool of mentors as a Welsh cohort of Museum Accreditation problem solvers, potentially opening our capacity for supporting those museums without a formal mentor agreement, on a short-term basis and specific issue.

Mentors are invaluable and welcome advocates for independent museums, so if you are already a mentor – thank you. If you are not, please think about joining this fabulous club. Wales has 13 wonderful museums looking for a mentor, ranging from a cricket museum, social history museums and museums with industrial collections. With the technological revolution in recent years, remote working is default. Your perfect pairing doesn't have to be local.

If this article has sparked your interest in mentoring, get in touch with your regional Accreditation Adviser to discuss opportunities for mentoring across the UK.

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Sarah.paul@gov.wales

Museums Galleries Scotland
accreditation@museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk

Northern Ireland Museums Council devofficer@nimc.co.uk

Your local Museum Development provider

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/
supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-
museums/museum-development-programme](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-museums/museum-development-programme)

Join us on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 June 2024 at Black Country Living Museum for AIM's National Conference 2024 exploring Heritage: at the heart of the community.

Conference

Early Bird rates close soon!

Approachable, friendly and practical, AIM's conference is the key gathering of the independent sector. Join your peers in the wonderful surrounds of our Host Venue sponsor, Black Country Living Museum right in the heart of the UK.

You can expect

- Insights from museums like yours that foster a sense of belonging in their visitors, their advocates and beyond.
- Sessions will cover innovative community engagement projects, growing your audience, co-curation and co-creation, dementia friendly programming, developing an

effective public engagement strategy, improving storytelling, addressing challenging topics with care, 'gamifying' young volunteering, building your online community and much, much more

- Confirmed speakers so far include representatives from Brunel Museum, Hampshire Cultural Trust, Kiplin Hall and Gardens, Museums Galleries Scotland, Historic Dockyard Chatham, Braintree Museum, Powell Cotton Trust.
- A mix of keynotes, panel discussions and interactive breakout sessions will inspire you across two days,

along with breaks for networking and browsing the supplier expo.

- Relax at social events on Wednesday and Thursday evening, the perfect opportunity to catch up with colleagues old and new.

Buy your tickets!

Tickets are still on sale with early bird discounts available until Friday 26 April.

Thanks to our sponsors

Our Headline Conference Sponsors Bloomberg Connects are joined by Host Venue Sponsor Black Country Living Museum and Hayes Parsons Insurance Brokers and search specialists Minerva as Gold Sponsors.



Heritage: At the heart of the community

13 & 14 June

Black Country Living Museum

Headline sponsor:

Bloomberg Connects

Gold sponsors:



AIM administers grants including AIM Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant funded by the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust and AIM's Conservation and Collections Care and Collection Audit Schemes, funded by the Pilgrim Trust.

AIM grants case studies

AIM Pilgrim Trust Remedial Conservation Grant

Claymills Pumping Trust £6,800

Restoration of 1912 Pipe Drug

A Pipe Drug is a horse-drawn, timber-bodied vehicle that was built specifically for moving heavy sections of cast iron pipe into position. Although it does share some similarities with a type of vehicle used for felled timber transportation, it is highly likely that the Drug was the only one of its design to be produced and is certainly the sole survivor. Built by local wheelwrights in 1912, it only ever worked between the Pumping Station and its partner farm, and so is an integral part of the museum's story.

Before work started the condition of the Drug was extremely poor, with widespread decay of the load-bearing wooden framework and oxidation of metalwork components. One wheel had disintegrated completely, whilst the others showed advanced stages of rot. Whilst the museum team took the decision that they would conserve as much of the structure as possible – most of the

metalwork, and a little of the wood – their primary mission was to return the Drug to working condition to aid interpretation.

We are pleased to report that the Pipe Drug is now fully restored and ready for public demonstration. We have achieved all we hoped. Success was assured by careful planning at every stage, linked to flexibility as we went along, as the Pipe Drug's condition could not be fully assessed until it was dismantled.

Robin Hill
Museums and Heritage Consultant

We applied for a grant to restore our 1914 Pipe Drug; it is, so far as we know, unique and had been returned to Claymills in poor condition, having been outside for many years. On return we had no accommodation, but in 2021 we were able to commence a purpose-built new display and workshop space to accommodate the Pipe Drug under restoration and now for display. The Pipe Drug is now operational again and can, on special occasions, be used outside, but it will be stored and displayed in the new building as a key exhibit for the long term.

John Freeman OBE, Trustee



Horse-drawn Pipe Drug used at Claymills Pumping Station.

Salcombe Museum

£1,500

Salcombe Maritime Museum has in its collection several iron objects from local shipwrecks and from local shipbuilding trades, most of which have been exposed to sea salt during their history.

During an AIM/ICON Pilgrim Trust funded Collections Care Audit in 2021, a small number of iron objects were identified by the auditor as showing evidence of active corrosion. The museum accordingly applied for, and in 2023 gratefully received, an AIM Pilgrim Trust Remedial Conservation Grant for the conservation of eight of the most historically significant objects including cannon and musket shot and an anchor from three 18th century wrecks, a 19th century portable forge and a 20th century rocket line throwing gun.

Peter Meehan, a specialist accredited metals conservator, carried out the work over the course of three days in December when the museum was closed to the public. Loose dirt and rust layers were carefully removed, and the objects given a



Boatbuilder's tool set conserved at Salcombe Maritime Museum.

protective wax coating. Instruction in the prevention of further corrosion will ensure that the project has lasting benefits.

Roger Barret, Chair

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Audit



The painted walls at David Parr House.

David Parr House

The application process was straightforward and an important exercise in considering the conservation priorities for the House. This grant was critically important in supporting the condition audit, an activity that is important but not easily funded, creating a report which then acts as a benchmark for the monitoring of the walls going forward.

With the first review in 2016, followed by a substantial conservation programme in 2018, all prior to public opening, this piece of work has delivered a report that underpins the collection management strategy for the care of the painted walls. It also gives us the detailed and specific information we need for future funding applications, which will be essential in achieving the care and conservation recommendations made.

Annabelle Campbell, Director

Brixham Heritage Museum

Being housed in a former Edwardian Police Station, we have been struggling against the humidity and cold in the museum for some time and so we were delighted to be awarded the grant to commission an audit of the collection.

With such a mixed collection including wood, metal, textiles, leather, paper, and human and animal remains, Fiona at AIM brought in two conservators to work with us – Morwena Stephens and Rowena Hill.

They came and spent a long day at the museum inspecting our displays, storage and poking and prodding all the nooks and crannies of the building! With expert knowledge they confirmed our concerns and identified various points that we urgently needed to deal with.

The written report sets out a clear action plan, highlighting both the priorities and the ease of achievement. This has already had a big impact on the museum as we have been able to use these observations to feed into our collections care and forward plan, but we hope that it will also form the basis of grant applications this year and in the longer-term, leaving a legacy in the form of a better cared-for and longer-lasting collection.

Holly Jarrett, Curator

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Grant

Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery

£5,000

Conserving Don Eades Photography negatives

The key aim of the project was to conserve over 100,000 negatives. After seeking professional advice on the best practice for conserving and storing cellulose acetate negatives, it was decided to proceed with 100% cotton envelopes made by Conservation by Design.

The grant enabled us to purchase the correct conservation envelopes that would provide long-lasting protection for the negatives. These envelopes are stored in conservation boxes housed in the stores at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery.

The previous curator undertook the application process and taking on the project was very straightforward, owing to their clear planning and organisation. Contact with Fiona Woolley, Grants Administrator at AIM was reassuring, and I was able to talk to her about the project and the support of AIM in general when she visited the museum.



Storing of Don Eades negatives at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery.

The project has been successful in two areas. Firstly, the conservation of the negatives and their secure storage. Secondly, the project has been successful in building a committed and skilled team of volunteers and staff to work together over an extended period to catalogue, re-pack and store a significant collection of negatives. Two key factors to the project's success were the detailed preliminary research undertaken by

the previous curator, with advice from external conservation consultants and the meticulous planning, engagement, and training of a team of 20 volunteers. Their commitment to the project was unwavering and it would not have been possible without their participation. They felt empowered and responsible for the success of the project.

The legacy of the project for Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery is considerable. The negatives are now stored securely, and their conservation and care are much improved. The cataloguing and partial digitisation of the images is just the beginning of a broader project to make the Don Eades Photography Archive searchable, connected to the museum's other collections and relevant to our audience.

Next steps include attaching keywords to each image to enable consistency in searching the archive; updating information about events and people in the photographs which have been given by groups and audiences, digitizing more of the collection, and using the collection to create displays within the museum.

Louise Weller
Head of Collections and Exhibitions

Bentley Priory Museum

£5,915

AIM's Collection Care Grant has enabled Bentley Priory Museum to protect its display collection by installing conservation blinds in two of its Battle of Britain galleries.

The conservation blinds have successfully reduced LUX levels by around 70%, which has allowed the museum to display more original artefacts instead of facsimiles of more vulnerable paper artefacts, including pilot logbooks.

Our environmental monitor has been recalibrated through the grant, and some of the museum's team of volunteers have been trained on how to use it to enable greater monitoring of the environment.

The project also sparked wider conversations about volunteers supporting the care of the collection, and they have recently undertaken object handling training to support



Conservation blinds in-situ in operations room at Bentley Priory Museum.

the Collections Manager, particularly in an emergency, where the collection would need to be moved quickly.

Eleanor Pulfer-Sharma, Director

Ari Volanakis of the Institute for Sustainable Heritage (UCL) is building on a wealth of sector experience to inform research seeking to consolidate learning across the creative and heritage sectors.

Curating organisational knowledge in cultural heritage management: Solving a paradox

Have you ever struggled to find the most relevant and up-to-date information when reviewing your policies and practices? How stressful has it been, how long have you spent looking?

I feel the sector is missing a 'simple implementation toolkit providing accessible guidance on tools and models that are suitable for heritage organisations, including collating resources that are already available for free'

(BOP Consulting, 2012, p. 16).

Accessing knowledge is challenging as it is often fragmented and held by multiple different organisations. It is not searchable by a common set of operations. And as the information is fragmented, one cannot know which is more recent or valid.

The problem becomes more difficult as museums need knowledge to deliver and to grow organisational sustainability.

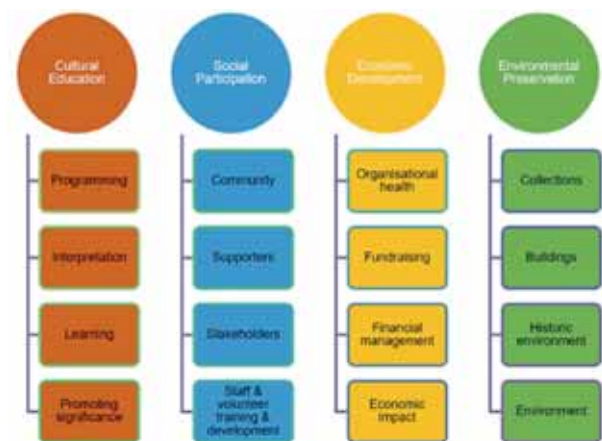
And the problem does not apply to museums only; a range of organisations face similar difficulties, as in the image below:



16 common operations categories (rectangles in the image right) are observed across the full spectrum of cultural heritage organisations found above. These are placed within the four main objectives (in the circles) as found in cultural heritage governance documents and annual reports.

A summary description for each is available at www.avculturalheritage.org/useful-information.

My pilot study finds *only 3% of present and updated knowledge across the 16 operations* in cultural heritage organisations. This 3% however is associated with a *10.2% higher performance* across the



four objectives. If we could grow that 3% of knowledge in cultural heritage organisations, the improvement in performance would be extraordinary. Knowledge exists in often overly elaborate or formal manuals in printed and digital formats (explicit knowledge), and within people with extensive experience (tacit knowledge). Using Nonaka's knowledge model and Cooperrider's Appreciative theory, any consolidated design needs to bring together explicit and tacit knowledge and to appreciate what we do well; to make recorded knowledge present and accessible so we can learn and grow, and then enrich the recorded knowledge with our experience in a continuous cycle so we can grow more.

We might also find synergy opportunities, for example libraries might have documentation management processes that theatres do not have, but theatres might have more developed ticketing systems. And both can be beneficial to museums, which can share conservation and interpretation knowledge, for example. The research objective therefore is to develop an organisational knowledge design for cultural heritage that empowers individuals and teams and improves organisational performance.

You can contribute to the study by completing the short (15 min) questionnaire at www.avculturalheritage.org/complete-the-questionnaire.

Ari Volanakis, PhD researcher
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www.avculturalheritage.org

We spoke to **Emma Chaplin, Chair of ICON** and **Margaret Harrison, AIM's Head of Programmes** to get their expert take on making a solid grant application.



Making the most of your grant applications

Applying for grants is a fact of life for a wide range of work in the heritage sector. Core funding rarely supports all the activity that we would like or need to carry out, but there are many sources of additional funding that a successful grant application can secure.

Funding and funders cover a wide range in scope and scale, from less than a hundred pounds to attend a training course or seminar, through to tens of millions of pounds for major capital development at a heritage site.

The Icon Writing Effective Grant Applications course highlights the essential steps in putting together an excellent grant application. Success can never be guaranteed and heritage funding sources are almost always heavily oversubscribed, but following some key tips can ensure that you maximise your chances of securing funding and do not waste time on applications where you have little chance of success.

Preparation and research

The most important work on a grant application is at the research stage and there are questions that you need to be able to answer before you even start the application process.

Why are you applying for funding? If you aren't clear on your reasons for applying, the funder won't be either. This will weaken your application. Why this work? Why now? You need to be able to articulate answers to these questions. This will help you strengthen your application.

Does the funded work match the strategic aims of your organisation (or your own plans, if you are an individual)? It is easy to see a funding opportunity and run towards it without thinking if it is the right opportunity to help you achieve your overarching goals. A funding opportunity should not be a distraction from the priorities that have been agreed.

What are the resources required to complete a funding application? All applications, done well, require resources and you need to check if you have the time available, if you need the support of colleagues (for example, to provide additional reports, financial information, photographs) and if this is worth the investment. The time you take on an application should be proportionate to the size of the grant you are applying for.

If you are successful, what is the exit strategy for your organisation? How will you ensure there is a legacy? Funders want to know that their investment will have a lasting impact, so you need to think about what this will be. For example, if you are applying for funding to conserve an object, what is the plan to care for it in the long term and how will it be used?

Finding the right funder

The Icon course explores the next vital step, which is how to research potential funders, ranging from the largest bodies, such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), through to a range of heritage sector funders and small charitable trusts. The right funder for you is the one whose goals match your

own. All funders will tell you (somewhere in their guidance documentation) what they want to achieve with their grants. They want to fund projects that match their goals and can show impact. If they are interested in conserving textiles and that is the goal of your project too, that is a good match.

It's important to note that many funders, particularly around conservation, want to know what the impact of the work will be beyond improving/stabilising the condition of an object, so read any documentation carefully. Funders also have eligibility criteria. They may or may not fund, for example, individuals or local authorities or charities. They usually stipulate funding deadlines, the size of grants they offer and what their application process looks like. Check if you need to submit an expression of interest and what information they expect an application to include.

If a funder offers case studies and information on previous work they have funded on their website, take the time to explore and read these. You will get a much better idea of the type of work they are interested in funding and maybe get some inspiration and ideas for your own work, too.

If you reach a point where you think that:

- your project/funding goals fit with those of the funder;
- you are eligible for the funding;
- the funder's timescales fit with yours (note it is unlikely that you can apply for funding retrospectively or once work is underway);

then it is time to move onto the next step.

Writing the application

You may be surprised that writing the application comes so far down the checklist of a good grant application. All your thorough research will ensure that you are applying to the right fund at the right time for your project.

In your application make sure that you:

- demonstrate how you meet the funding criteria;
- answer the questions that are being asked;
- supply all the supporting information that has been requested;
- stick to the word limits;
- tell a compelling story about why your organisation is credible and represents a great investment for the funder.

From the funder's perspective

As an applicant, it is helpful to put yourself into the funder's shoes. Margaret Harrison, Head of Programmes at AIM offers top tips for writing effective grant applications from the perspective of the funder . . .

AIM grant programmes are a core part of our benefits for our members and there is plenty of information on our website about the grants that we offer, most of which is generously provided by external funders. We are therefore in the interesting position of not only being a funder but also being experienced at applying for grants.

Most of our grant streams are only open to AIM's smaller members and are designed to be accessible to organisations

that aren't experienced in fundraising. So, we aim to support applicants and make the process as easy and straightforward as possible, ensuring they meet our basic eligibility criteria and are as strong as possible.

We've published our top ten tips for grant applications on our website, which can be accessed by everyone (visit www.rb.gy/wofpa9). Some of these echo Emma's guidance, for example, be precise and clear in your applications, make a strong case for why you need the funding now, answer the questions, provide evidence, and stay focused on your strategic goals.

There are also some basics you need to get right – like reading the grant guidance and making sure your organisation and project meet the eligibility criteria, and that you proofread your application before it is submitted.

But what is also really important to AIM as a funder is that applicants show that we can trust them to deliver their project. It's the relationship that you develop with the funder that matters and will stand you in good stead for future funding, too.

This starts before you submit your application. At AIM, we offer online support workshops for each of our grant streams and we encourage all applicants to speak to us before putting in an application. Some applicants, particularly those who are reapplying, are given feedback and individual support in developing new applications. This matters to us and we do notice who has been in touch, prior to putting in an application.

AIM publishes the *Guide to Successful Fundraising at Museums*, written for us by Judy Niner, a very experienced fundraiser. Judy emphasises the importance of stewardship of your funders. She says: "Don't be tempted to think [. . .] a grant is the end result. It's very much the start of the next stage of the relationship with a grant maker. You have convinced them to support you – now you need to show them that they have made the right decision."

We expect grant recipients to understand their responsibilities to AIM. We expect them to deliver projects on time and meet reporting and claim deadlines. We understand that projects don't always go to plan and we encourage grant recipients to communicate with us about any changes. It's important for us to know who has delivered a grant project well and who hasn't. Judy says: "Your best donor is your last donor."

It's important to build a relationship with grant givers. We are more likely to support further applications if we know that you will deliver a project well.

Some things to consider as part of this include:

- Talking to us before you put in an application.
- Keeping in touch throughout your project.
- Reporting on time.
- Making your claim on time.
- Telling us if anything needs to change.
- Sending us all the information we ask for.
- Getting the funding acknowledgements right.
- And finally, say thank you. We really do appreciate it!

This article first appeared in ICON's magazine, 'Iconnect.'

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Thinking Digital?

Our friends at Bloomberg Connects on strengthening your digital presence.

Today, it's more important than ever for cultural organisations to have a robust digital presence. Many museums are contemplating some sort of app or digital guide – and they have a wide variety of options to choose from. With audio, video, text, and images, digital guides can enrich the visitor experience before, during, and after a museum visit, and can also help engage those who might never set foot in your space. But sometimes it's difficult to know how an app can fit into your digital strategy. Here, the team at Bloomberg Connects – a free app that currently hosts digital guides to more than 400 museums and cultural organisations worldwide – explore a few key questions to consider before taking the plunge.

How might I use audio to engage my organisation's audiences?

Have you heard that “people like to look with their eyes and learn with their ears”? Audio is a powerful tool for audience engagement and storytelling, and one of the key reasons to create a digital guide. Personal perspectives from artists, curators, and unexpected voices can provide unique and valuable entry points into your organisation's art and

artefacts. Museums of all sizes are using audio in creative ways on Bloomberg Connects. Check out the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)'s interviews with security guards, the Centre for Architecture and Metropolitan Planning (CAMP)'s intern-led tour, or Somerset House's Sonic Histories.

What accessibility needs or goals does my organisation have?

Providing a welcoming, inclusive, rich experience to all is a key value of many cultural organisations. However, depending on the size and expertise of your staff, it might be hard to know how to create a truly accessible visitor experience. Bloomberg Connects has been designed for maximum compatibility with assistive technologies, and offers built-in tools to support accessibility, including alt-text, transcripts for audio, and closed captioning for video. And if you're ready to go even further, get inspired by our partners who are leading the way with accessibility, including MK Gallery, whose “Art and Us” programme for children with complex support needs is spotlighted in their guide and the Jewish Museum, whose guide features tours in American Sign Language (ASL).

Do I need support in reaching multilingual audiences?

Whether your museum is considering ways to increase access to the arts for residents that feel more comfortable in other languages, or seeking to engage with multilingual tourists,

Bloomberg Connects can help. By integrating Google Translate directly into the app, Bloomberg Connects allows users to experience your content in over forty languages – helping your organisation to meet audiences where they are.

What resources does my organisation need to create a digital guide?

Choosing a digital product requires careful consideration of available resources. Even if you choose a free platform for your digital guide, your organisation will need to make sure to allocate appropriate staff time. A good guide is generally a collaboration between team members across a range of roles and departments, from marketing and communications to curatorial and education.

With Bloomberg Connects, initial training and guide development takes place over twelve weeks, alongside a cohort of other cultural organisations – a wonderful way to share ideas and experiences with colleagues. A dedicated team of content experts are on hand to help you throughout the process, but your staff's perspective, expertise, and participation are essential to making a great guide, so make sure to plan around other important projects.

If you are interested in learning more about Bloomberg Connects or are ready to get started, please visit bloombergconnects.org/for-partners.



National Army Museum

As we enter the third year of our partnership with the National Army Museum (NAM), we spoke to Director Justin Maciejewski about developments across NAM and its network of Regimental and Corps museums.

Can you tell us about the differing roles NAM has, as a museum, and as the core to a network of 140+ museums?

The NAM sits at the centre of, and provides continuity to, a network of Regimental and Corps Museums, which we do in several ways. To begin with, the first thing that the museums asked for when we started the service in 2012, was a single point of contact at the NAM. A national museum can be a potentially daunting institution to smaller independents, difficult to know who you need to speak to when contacting it for advice on say, design work, or communications assistance, or picture library services.

Having a single point of contact, someone you know and who can

advocate for you, was deemed as vital. It also illustrates one of our core principals in providing support to the network, ask them what they need! We constantly canvas the museums for new ways that we can assist and support them.

This point of contact rapidly evolved into our advisory service; we still receive multiple inquiries per month which we either answer ourselves or pass onto colleagues who are better suited to help. We also incorporate into this service our advisory visits, which are an opportunity for the NAM team to get out and visit museums across the network. We believe that you can't fully understand the problems and help if you haven't visited the museums on the ground.

Although we haven't visited them all, we have wended our way around most of them in the last twelve years.

In addition, we also run a comprehensive training programme, at least 30 taught sessions per year and still expanding. These range from shorter online sessions to a full week in-person course (our Regimental Curators Course) which covers all aspects of museum work for newly entrant curators. The service is free to all regimental museum staff, trustees, and volunteers.

“ We are excited to further develop our partnership with AIM to provide additional benefits and support to regimental and corps museums over the coming year. ”

Finally, the NAM helped to set up and continues to convene the regimental museums regional networks, there are seven of these covering the whole of the UK and they promote joint project work, best practice, shared resourcing, consortia bids etc.

How has NAM changed over recent times? Can you highlight some recent developments?

The NAM went through a largescale redevelopment from 2013 – 2016 with its 'Building for the future project'. The permanent galleries were redesigned to be regularly updated, so in the last year new galleries have opened covering the history of the British Army on the global stage, conflict in Europe and, most recently, an Army at Home gallery.

Additionally, a large temporary exhibition on the British Army in Germany titled 'Foe to Friend', and a smaller exhibition on Shakespeare and War, have opened. Our next big temporary exhibition will be on Victorian art and will include some fantastic loans from the Royal Collection.

Can you explain the relationship between NAM and the British Army? Does that provide any specific opportunities or challenges that other museums may not be aware of?

The NAM's principal sponsor is the MOD, so the Museum has a very close relationship with the Army, but this is not only on an institutional level. We encourage individual soldiers as well as Army groups to use the NAM and its resources and run many public programmes both supported by and celebrating serving Regiments. Unlike many Regimental Museums, who have a direct link to a serving Regiment, we rely upon our colleagues at the MOD to help us collect contemporary objects and oral histories.

Of course, if we examine our collections, historically a great deal of the material in any military collection has initially been collected by soldiers on campaign, which can pose difficulties and challenges to a modern audience. For this reason, the NAM provides 'Imperial legacies' training to the network to help museums in developing the interpretation and display of their colonial collections in a sensitive and respectful way.

What do you see as the value of the NAM partnership with AIM?

The NAM recognises the great opportunities that AIM provides and is delighted to have partnered with AIM to help regimental and corps museums access these benefits by sponsoring their memberships. AIM offers a wealth of information and resources beyond that which falls within the NAM's scope, and advocates for the wider independent museum sector, which many regimental and corps museums belong to. We are excited to further develop our partnership with AIM to provide additional benefits and support to regimental and corps museums over the coming year.

What can attendees expect at the upcoming Conference in April?

NAM's annual conference offers a great opportunity for museums to get together face to face and network. The conference is never themed, rather we invite anyone to share an interesting

project they might be working on, which this year includes an exciting excavation of an SAS camp, and a community cohesion project with Afghan refugees. We also take the opportunity to deliver sector updates from key stakeholders and partners including the MOD and AIM.

What are some of your favourite objects in the collection?

We have some amazing objects in our collection, from priceless Victoria Crosses from Rorke's Drift, Eagles captured by British soldiers on the field of Waterloo, to the lamp of Florence Nightingale.

My favourite is a small scrap of tissue paper. It has no intrinsic value, you could easily walk right past it, but this insignificant looking note is the order that launched the charge of the Light Brigade and sent the six hundred sabres into the 'valley of death'.

I have been reading about this piece of paper since I was a small boy and I can't begin to express the excitement I felt the first time I was privileged to hold it (we were moving it into a new display case in 2004).

www.nam.ac.uk





Gift Aid in 2024

Charity Finance Group has big plans for Gift Aid in 2024. Dionne Sturdy-Clow, CFG's Gift Aid Project Officer, sets out some of the work being done to help every charity understand and make the most of this valuable tax relief.

By the time this article reaches you, we will have had the government's spring budget, setting out their tax and spending plans for the year ahead. Ahead of the budget, Charity Finance Group (CFG) led on a charitable sector submission to HM Treasury.

One of our asks of Government is for a transition mechanism in place for Gift Aid, to protect charities from losing out if there is any reduction in the basic rate of income tax. With the economy formally in recession, interest rates above 5% and inflation still double the government's target of 2%, there's very little space in the Budget for tax cuts, but it is a general election year . . .

This year, CFG is running a special project to increase the number of charities which are registered for Gift Aid, and to help those that have registered to claim all the tax relief to which they are entitled. Many thousands of charities miss out on Gift Aid that they could be claiming, and we want that to change. CFG is gearing up to bring you all the resources and information you'll need to be a confident (and competent!) Gift Aid registered charity. The Gift Aid Awareness 2024 campaign is a collaborative project and we will be sharing ways for the sector to get involved in the creation of our Gift Aid Awareness Day resources.

Gift Aid means any registered charity, which includes loads of independent museums, can claim 25p from the government for every £1 they receive from supporters and donors who are UK taxpayers. It's a great way to increase your income, and CFG is here to help.

Gift Aid is worth £1.3 billion each year to the charity sector. Research from 2016 estimated that more than £500 million goes unclaimed annually. That amount of money could make a huge difference to organisations right across the charity sector, and, more importantly, to the people and communities they work with.

During 2024 we'll also be working with charities to learn more about the barriers that prevent them from claiming Gift Aid, and how we can dismantle those barriers.

**A date for your calendar:
Thursday 3 October 2024 is Gift Aid Awareness Day!**

We'll be sharing a full suite of resources to help you engage your donors and supporters, encouraging as many of them as possible to maximise the impact of their financial contribution to you. Look out for the Expression of Interest form on the CFG Gift Aid Awareness Day website page – tell us what Gift Aid means to your organisation.

Make sure you don't miss out on all our Gift Aid news and resources by registering for our fortnightly newsletter. As members of AIM, you are entitled to FREE membership of Charity Finance Group, saving your organisation £££ and ensuring every member of your staff and all your trustees can access our resources, expert insight, information and updates on policy.

To claim your FREE membership head to www.cfg.org.uk/aim

AIM Bulletin

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