



National
Museums
Scotland

National Programme 2015/2016





School group at Old Gala House, Galashiels, learning about Iron Age mirrors as part of the *Reflections on Celts* touring exhibition
© Brian Cassidy Photography

Introduction

Our ambition to bring our collections, expertise and programmes to communities and audiences throughout Scotland is central to our role as Scotland's national museum service.

In 2015/16 we welcomed over 2.4 million visitors to our museums, a large proportion of them from Scotland¹. We work hard to grow these audiences, attracting ever more and broader visitor groups. We are equally committed to engaging people beyond the walls of our museums.

This aspiration is defined in our new National Strategy 2016–2020, which affirms our aim to provide positive cultural, educational, social and economic benefits both locally and nationally. We work with key partners and funders to help us do this, expanding our impact, supporting their aspirations, and maintaining the quality and effectiveness of what we offer.

As one of the largest museum organisations in the UK, we are home to over 12 million items and an extensive cohort of museum expertise. We work with museums across Scotland to share our knowledge, skills and collections as widely as possible. In 2015/16 we worked directly with 135 individual museums in Scotland, through loans and touring exhibitions, talks and expert advice, training and development opportunities, learning and engagement activities, partnerships and digital initiatives.

Digital channels afford unprecedented opportunities to engage with audiences in new and original ways. We are expanding our online presence through exciting web developments and social media. We recently relaunched *Explore*, the online collections hub at www.nms.ac.uk, a rich new resource for those who are unable to visit our museums in person. We added fresh content, including learning resources, games, films and features about the objects and themes of our holdings, and made it easier for our online audiences to locate the things that interest them most.

¹ Research was conducted with visitors at all our museums from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. Of those interviewed, 45% were residents of Scotland.

Sharing Scotland's Collections

Touring Exhibitions

Next of Kin: Scottish Families and the First World War

To commemorate the centenary of the First World War we are working with eight partner museums across Scotland to bring national and local collections together in a touring exhibition which explores the personal stories of separation and loss experienced by Scottish families. Funded by Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the exhibition is supported by learning programmes, skills development training and online resources. High profile national collaborations like this boost the profile and capacity of local museums, increase visitor numbers and inspire audiences. The exhibition was visited by 17,896 people at its first four venues: Dumfries Museum and Camera Obscura, Rozelle House Galleries in Ayr, Hawick Museum, and Low Parks Museum in Hamilton. Visitor numbers at the first four venues increased by an average of 21%, with partner museums reaching out to new audiences including youth organisations and people with disabilities. For many visitors the exhibition's focus on personal stories has helped them to understand the real impact of the conflict on people's lives, particularly in their local area. The *Next of Kin* digital resource has collected and interpreted 46 family stories and 291 objects from partner museums, creating a valuable digital legacy which will be made available online as a downloadable app. Here's what participants said about the project:

It made WW1 more real reading the stories of people involved. (Dumfries visitor)

Pupils went home and talked to parents about their own family's experience and one pupil brought in her Great Great Uncle's medals and photograph and was able to share this with the class. (South Ayrshire event participant)

The focus on 'hard to reach' groups made us think about our users, and target groups who hadn't visited before or were underrepresented. (Rozelle House Galleries)

Help with digital photography has encouraged us to use our existing photographic equipment more and buy a pop-up studio box. (Dumfries Museum)



Part of the *Next of Kin* touring exhibition, a family workshop at Dumfries Museum explored sweetheart cushions which were exchanged between wartime lovers as tokens of affection. © Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service

Reflections on Celts

Tours of national treasures bring significant material to local audiences. *Reflections on Celts* was devised in conjunction with the major exhibition *Celts* at the National Museum of Scotland from 10 March–25 September 2016. Organised in partnership with the British Museum, it features two Iron Age mirrors from our collection and from the collection of the British Museum. The exhibition is touring to three venues: Old Gala House in Galashiels, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery and The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum. Each museum is expanding the display by adding related material from their own collections, as well as planning programmes around the theme of Celts, including schools workshops and community events.

National Fund for Acquisitions

We administer the National Fund for Acquisitions, provided by Scottish Government and currently worth £150,000 each year. The Fund helps museums, galleries, libraries and archives throughout Scotland to acquire objects for their collections. In addition to expert advice from our own curators, applicants to the Fund benefit from the advice of colleagues at the National Galleries of Scotland and National Library of Scotland. In 2015/16 the Fund supported 67 acquisitions worth over £1 million, enriching the collections of 27 organisations in 19 local authorities across Scotland. Following high demand early in the year, a very welcome £75,000 of additional funding from Scottish Government meant that we were able to continue to support acquisitions throughout the financial year.



Detail: Printed cashmere Paisley sweater, late 1960s, by Pringle of Scotland with Harrods retail label, acquired by Scottish Borders Council with support from the National Fund for Acquisitions.
© Jamie Mulherron

Loans

Our loans programme is fundamental to our aspiration to share our collections more widely. Every year we lend objects to museums across the nation and around the world. We are particularly keen to share objects with other museums in Scotland so that as many people as possible can have access to their national collections. In 2015/16 we loaned 2,349 items to 93 venues in Scotland, including 275 items to 10 new venues.

Perth Museum and Art Gallery

Breadalbane Bling: Medieval Power Dressing in Glenlyon and Beyond at Perth Museum and Art Gallery (18 May–16 August 2015) explored the expression of identity and belief through jewellery. The Breadalbane and Glenlyon brooches from the British Museum were joined by loans from National Museums Scotland, including objects from the Holy Well at Inshadney, Kenmore, Perthshire and the Glenorchy charmstone, said to have been worn by Sir Colin Campbell, 1st Laird of Glenorchy, when fighting against the Turks in Rhodes during the fifteenth century. This well-provenanced group of items is of great significance in the study and understanding of folk belief.

Whithorn Trust

Fifteen objects found at Dowalton Loch in Wigtownshire were loaned to the Whithorn Trust for their 2015 exhibition. These objects, discovered when the loch was drained in 1863, date from the Bronze Age to the medieval period, indicating that the loch had been a sacred site for millennia.

University of Edinburgh

Dolly the sheep was loaned to the University of Edinburgh's exhibition *Towards Dolly* (30 July–31 October 2015). This celebrated Edinburgh's contribution to the field of genetic science, from animal breeding research in the early 1900s to the cutting-edge stem cell techniques employed today. As the first animal to be cloned from an adult cell, Dolly proved that it is possible to take cells from anywhere in the body and make them behave like a newly-fertilised egg. This discovery paved the way for the field of regenerative medicine and the use of stem cells to investigate fundamental human and animal biology.



Dolly the sheep, the first animal to be cloned from an adult cell, was loaned to the University of Edinburgh's exhibition *Towards Dolly*.

Museum of Edinburgh

An iron spearhead from Buiston Crannog, Ayrshire, was loaned to *Dark Goings On in Cramond*, an exhibition at the Museum of Edinburgh (2 October 2015–27 February 2016) which explored new scientific research into nine bodies found at Cramond's Roman fort in 1976. This showed that they date from 600–800AD, much earlier than previously thought, and that two of the individuals bear the physical marks of violent encounters. The spearhead from this period helps us to understand how their injuries may have been inflicted.

Engaging and Inspiring People

Community Engagement

Our community engagement and outreach programmes promote participation, wellbeing and social inclusion, both at our museums and beyond.

A high proportion of Scottish visitors to the National Museum of Scotland now come from C2DE socio-economic categories, reaching 32% of visitors interviewed in 2015/16, a significant increase since the museum reopened in 2011 and up from 22% in 2014/15.

We offer projects designed to meet the needs and interests of a wide variety of groups, ensuring broader access to our collections and resources through facilitated visits and distance learning. Many of these opportunities are targeted at young people in the 16–24 age group and seek to improve confidence, skills and employability.

Museum Socials

At the National Museum of Scotland we offer Museum Socials for anyone affected by dementia and their relatives, friends and supporters. Inspired by a pioneering initiative at the Museum of Modern Art in New York for people affected by Alzheimer's Disease, these informal sessions offer an opportunity to explore a different part of the museum each month in the company of our learning staff. Events are programmed in partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Autism Support

Funding from the Scottish Government's Strategy for Autism helped us to provide awareness training for staff, as well as after-hours and 'early doors' events for young people at the National Museum of Scotland. Many had never visited the museum before and enjoyed the opportunity to explore. We have established links with local autism groups and will continue to provide inspiring visitor experiences for children and young adults on the autism spectrum.

HomeWorks

HomeWorks inspired children and families in Edinburgh to explore what home means to them by creating their own designs for everyday objects. These artist-led workshops were linked to the new Art, Design and Fashion galleries at the National Museum of Scotland. The project created opportunities for families to work together and to use art as a medium for therapy and increasing self-confidence. Participants included Newcraighall Primary School (FAST Save the Children project), Stenhouse Primary School (City of Edinburgh Council Family Learning), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Edinburgh Young Carers Project. The CAMHS workshops were part of a wider initiative funded by Gingko Projects to create patterns and prints for the Department of Clinical Neurosciences and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service at Edinburgh's new Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

Young Demonstrators

The Young Demonstrators are an exciting new team established at the National Museum of Scotland. Aged 14–22, these young people from different areas and backgrounds have one thing in common – they love the museum and want to help other young people discover its wonders. They spent time getting to know the museum and its collections, and meeting curators and volunteer guides, before devising their own gallery tours and planning activities to encourage other young people to visit. At a ‘Takeover Day’ on 20 November 2015 they entertained visitors with a photo booth, object handling opportunities and themed tours.



One of our Young Demonstrators giving a talk on the Millennium Clock at the National Museum of Scotland.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Photography: A Victorian Sensation was the subject of our first MOOC, based on a major exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland. Created in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, it attracted over 7,500 subscribers in 146 countries. The innovative five-week course provided free online audio lectures, films, quizzes and discussion forums, and received very positive feedback. The content was later re-purposed to create a shorter course exploring stereo photography.

Panjab Connections

Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Young Roots programme enabled us to develop a project with members of the Young Sikh Leaders Network at Glasgow Gurdwara. They were inspired by the free *Indian Encounters* exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland in 2014/15, and the story of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the UK’s first Sikh resident who settled in Scotland in the nineteenth century. They explored his life through objects in our collections and interviewed members of the Scottish Sikh community about their own memories of coming to Scotland. This creative project helped the group to explore the history of Sikh



culture in Scotland while learning new skills in film, jewellery design and photography. On 16 January 2016 around 120 members of the Sikh community came together at the National Museum of Scotland to celebrate the conclusion of the project and see a display of the young people’s work, which was later also shown at Tramway in Glasgow.

Participants in the Panjab Connections project.
© Kat Gollock

Impact Arts: Gallery 37

For the fourth year we collaborated with Impact Arts on their Gallery 37 programme, which uses a variety of artistic and creative approaches to engage young people aged 14–19 who are at risk of disengaging from school. Inspired by the film *1 Nation, 5 Million Voices* in our *Scotland: A Changing Nation* gallery, around 50 young people worked with professional artists to interpret the theme of heritage through a variety of art forms, culminating in a showcase event at the National Museum of Scotland on 13 August 2015. Funded by Inspiring Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the programme encourages young people to stay in education or training, helping to increase their confidence through improved social, communication, teamwork and creative skills.

Celts at Polmont Young Offenders Institute

We worked with Fife College to run a learning course at Polmont Young Offenders Institute, a specialised unit for young male offenders aged 16–23 which offers a comprehensive programme of learning and skills development opportunities. Inspired by the *Celts* exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland, the six-week course used handling objects, images and themes from the exhibition to engage the audience.

Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place

Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Creative Scotland, *Scotland Creates* was a two-year national youth engagement project led by National Museums Scotland in partnership with the McLean Museum & Art Gallery in Greenock, the McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, Museum Nan Eilean at Sgoil Lionacleit in Benbecula and the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock. Long term impact is important to us, so in 2016 we caught up with some of the *Scotland Creates* volunteers to see how the project had affected them since it ended in 2014. Here are just a few of their comments:

I am working for the [Edinburgh] City Council ... 5 days a week and still doing my drama. And the work I did with you was and still is some of the best and most fun I loved so much. Callum Murphy, Edinburgh (Callum is on the autism spectrum)

Since finishing Scotland Creates I've completed my HND, with two As, and started my first year at the UHI (Inverness) doing Scottish History and Archaeology. I've always wanted to work in museums, and the project did open up opportunities for volunteering. Scott Pryde, East Ayrshire

I worked on a couple of the advert projects and I think the experience really helped me as I am now half way through my four-year university Film course at Edinburgh Napier! Zoe Macinnes, Western Isles

Doors Open

In September 2015 we participated in Edinburgh's annual Doors Open Day, providing 'behind the scenes' tours of our new state-of-the-art research, access and storage facility which opened at the National Museums Collection Centre in June 2015. The tours were fully booked and received excellent audience feedback. Tours of the facility were also offered as part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival in 2016.

Schools Outreach Programme

Our Schools Outreach Programme provides opportunities for pupils to visit our museums, participate in facilitated workshops, access resources for teachers and pupils, undertake work experience, engage through Glow, the Scottish schools' digital environment for learning, and borrow resources for use in local areas. All this activity brings our collections and expertise directly into the classroom, enabling pupils and their teachers to engage with us no matter where they are. In 2015/16 a total of 53,500 school pupils participated in school visits to our museums either through workshops, using our teacher-led tours, or participating in handling sessions.



Magic Carpet Science Investigation with primary school group at the National Museum of Scotland. © Ruth Armstrong Photography

Museum2Go2

The second phase of the Museum2Go schools outreach project, funded by the Robertson Trust, focused on the new Art, Design and Fashion galleries at the National Museum of Scotland. Pupils from Falkirk High School and Kirkland High School in Fife created jewellery inspired by the collections which was displayed at a showcase event at the National Museum of Scotland in June 2015. A project focusing on body image, based on the new Fashion gallery, was undertaken with a group of girls from Baldrigon Academy, Dundee, with support from Apex Scotland. In the run up to the opening of the new galleries we worked with other groups on the subject of 'Feeling Good'. Pupils from Bellahouston Academy, Glasgow worked with ceramicist Moyra Stewart to trial activities based on our ceramics handling collection.



Edinburgh International Science Festival Careers Hive at the National Museum of Scotland © Jane Barlow

Science Engagement

A number of initiatives were undertaken to promote engagement with STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and maths. Skills Development Scotland seconded two specialist careers advisers to work with our staff at the National Museum of Scotland, developing new programmes and resources to attract more secondary-age pupils and their teachers to our museums and to develop awareness of how to access courses and careers in these subjects. Nearly 3,000 pupils took part in workshops and activities between 29 February and 4 May 2016 in our 'Careers Hive', part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival.

Supported by the ScottishPower Foundation, *Get Energised!* focused on renewable energy. Challenge Days for primary and secondary pupils explored their interest in engineering and technology to investigate Scotland's future energy needs. The programme also included Challenge Days for National Qualification Physics pupils, Science Investigation days for S1–3 pupils, 'Magic Carpet' sessions about weather for Nursery–P1 pupils and interactive STEM workshops for P5–7 pupils, as well as training and support for teachers.

Research and Fieldwork

Glenmorangie Research Project

This pioneering partnership between The Glenmorangie Company and National Museums Scotland was inspired by the Hilton of Cadboll stone, a spectacular piece of early medieval sculpture found near the Glenmorangie distillery in Tain, Easter Ross, and now on display in the National Museum of Scotland. Thanks to support from The Glenmorangie Company we have been able to undertake ground-breaking research on this fascinating period of Scotland's early history. Digital content generated from the Glenmorangie Research Project has proved very popular. A blog post by Glenmorangie Research Fellow Alice Blackwell had 1,200 views in two weeks, and the first of three short films profiling our silver collections, released on YouTube in December 2015, had the largest audience of any National Museums online content to date.



Pair of silver plaques from the Norrie's Law hoard which dates from the 5th or 6th century AD. Research undertaken as part of the Glenmorangie Research Project has shown that the plaque on the right is a nineteenth century copy

Collaborative Research Agreement

National Museums Scotland, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2015 to advance collaborative research in global biodiversity conservation and associated public engagement. Current initiatives include sharing expertise in genetics, conservation and classification to help distinguish wildcats from domestic cat hybrids as part of the Scottish Wildcat Action Plan and joint work to conserve the pine hoverfly *Blera fallax*, which is critically endangered in Scotland. The partners are also exploring options for shared facilities across all three organisations, such as shared storage of DNA samples.

Study on Cognitive Ageing

The new Science and Technology galleries at the National Museum of Scotland, which opened to the public on 8 July 2016, include the story of the longest running study on cognitive ageing in the world, known as 'Scotland's Lothian Birth Cohort'. John Scott, a retired miner from Tranent and a member of the study, volunteered to go 'on display' in the galleries. In conjunction with the University of Edinburgh, we used brain scans taken throughout the study to produce two new objects for the collection: a 3D-printed scale model of Mr Scott's brain and a model of the white matter, the neural connections, laser-etched into blocks of crystal.

Strengthening Skills and Expertise

National Training Programme

We provide a free programme of collections knowledge and skills training for Scottish museums. In 2015/16 we delivered over 250 learning experiences to 164 museum staff from 75 organisations in 26 local authority areas. Topics ranged from the use of handling objects for learning to managing Egyptian collections, and from how to mount a crowdfunding campaign to how to bid effectively at auction.

Building Skills: Entomology

A group of curators visited our National Museums Collection Centre for an introduction to the care of insect collections. They learned about specimen preparation, data capture, labelling, storage and how to avoid pest infestation. Each participant received a printed resource which summarised best practice in caring for entomology collections. Here's what the participants said:

The handout was really well produced and has already proved useful whilst working on the collection.

Excellent workshop providing lots of varied and useful information for me to take forward in my role.



A very friendly, relaxed approach led by three knowledgeable members of the Entomology team.

Entomology workshop at the National Museums Collection Centre

Everyone has been really encouraging about us contacting them for help/advice and for using equipment – this will be helpful in future.

Building Skills: Developing and Using Handling Collections

Participants came from museums across Scotland to learn how to create, use and maintain object handling collections as a tool for learning. The workshop gave participants an understanding of how different kinds of handling collection could be used for specific audiences, either in the museum or in community outreach. Course leaders shared their experience of projects they had worked on.

I enjoyed meeting other museum and gallery folk and am super impressed with the amount of info fitted in to the session. The day whizzed past and I've got loads of notes to take back to colleagues.

I thought it was great – professionals sharing their practice and recent experiences in a very open and honest way.

Inspiring, active and passionate individuals in the National Museums Scotland team.



Object handling workshop at the National Museum of Scotland

Curatorial Advice

Our staff regularly offer specialist advice on collections held in other museums around Scotland. Just one of many examples, Dr Alison Sheridan, our Principal Curator of Early Prehistory, worked with Biggar Museum Trust to advise on their archaeology collections. Alison re-strung a disc-based necklace from Cloburn quarry and advised on its mounting for display in the new galleries at the Biggar and Upper Clydesdale Museum. Alison was also filmed for an interactive feature in the displays, discussing the reconstruction by the University of Dundee's Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification of the head of a young man who lived over 4,000 years ago and whose skeleton was discovered in 1970 at Boatbridge Quarry, Thankerton.

Our staff also share their knowledge through a wide range of talks, whether to other museum professionals, to the general public, students or the wider academic sector. Together with our publications, displays and digital engagement, this is an important way for us to communicate the stories behind the objects in our collection.

New National Strategy

In October–November 2015 we consulted other museums across Scotland on how we might develop our National Programme for 2016–2020. In addition to an online consultation we involved colleagues in five workshops in Edinburgh, Inverness, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Kilmartin. This opportunity to share views and engage in discussion was well received. Feedback suggested our programmes were all performing well and helping communities and other museums across the country. Colleagues expressed interest in new areas of collaboration too. This extensive feedback allowed us to shape our priorities for the future in our new National Strategy published in 2016.



Next of Kin handling resource launched at Dumfries Museum and Camera Obscura © Ian Jacobs Photography

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