

# REVIEW 2015



National  
Museums  
Scotland





# A year of great progress

We have achieved an enormous amount in recent years. The transformed National Museum of Scotland is recognised as one of the world's finest museums, attracting record numbers of national and international visitors. Our collections have been strengthened across a number of key areas.

We continue to enhance the visitor experience across all our sites, providing an imaginative programme of events and exhibitions and broadening our audiences.

National Museums Scotland is home to a large number of internationally important treasures, with over 12 million objects spanning many thousands of years. Together, these artefacts reveal the story of our cultural, historical and natural heritage. It is our privilege to look after these collections and to share them with a diverse audience, at home and abroad.

We continue to operate within a challenging financial environment, with Government funding being constrained. However, we have ambitious plans, and will redouble our focus on finding new sources of income and making the most of our resources. A growing group of generous supporters has been crucial in enabling us to make the bold steps forward we have taken over the past few years. With their help, we can continue to invest and make an increasing impact.

We are progressing the next stages of our £80 million Masterplan for the National Museum of Scotland. In 2016 we will open ten new galleries showcasing our collections of science and technology, decorative art, design and fashion. These will be followed by two further galleries providing new insights into our Ancient Egypt and East Asia collections.

At the National Museum of Flight we are making a significant investment which will transform the visitor experience at this important historic site. Restoring two Second World War hangars and creating vibrant and engaging displays will enable us to enhance dramatically the presentation of our outstanding aviation collections.

A major milestone was reached this year with the opening of a new £12 million building at the National Museums Collection Centre. The design of this building represents a significant step forward in how we store, use and provide access to the National Collections.

Housing nearly ten million objects, the building enables material from our Scottish history, archaeology and natural sciences collections to be preserved in optimal conditions, and makes them more accessible to researchers, specialist groups and staff developing exhibitions and other programmes. It has already attracted a significant number of international researchers.

We continue to share our collections with a wide audience outside our museums. Loans, touring exhibitions, projects with a range of communities at home and abroad, and innovative digital content all help us share the riches of our collections. We continue to build partnerships with universities, museums and a host of other organisations in order to enhance our work and extend our reach.

Generous funding awards, partnership support and the commitment of many donors, supporters and volunteers continue to help us create activities and deliver projects which otherwise would not be possible. We are hugely grateful for their generosity and encourage them to continue with us on our journey to make a lasting difference.

Finally, we thank all of our staff for their contribution to our achievements through their expertise, dedication, commitment and enthusiasm.



Bruce Minto OBE,  
Chair



Dr Gordon Rintoul  
CBE, Director

● Cover: A 1942 Rolls-Royce Merlin 73 aircraft engine is cleaned ahead of its redisplay in 2016 as part of a project to restore two nationally significant Second World War hangars at the National Museum of Flight.

● Left: One of five ivories by David Le Marchand (1674-1726) is conserved at the National Museums Collection Centre. The ivories will be displayed in the National Museum of Scotland's new Art and Design galleries opening in 2016.

# Transforming the National Museum

In 2011 the spectacular transformation of a major part of the National Museum of Scotland was unveiled. Four years and over seven million visitors later, it is now the most popular UK museum outside London. The museum's redevelopment continues apace with the next phase of the £80 million Masterplan in progress. This will create ten dramatic new galleries to display our internationally important collections of science and technology, decorative art, fashion and design.

This has been a year of great progress in the project, with careful conservation and preparation of thousands of objects and the completion of building work, including the restoration of the soaring glass roof in the west wing of the Victorian building. An innovative series of digital interactives is in development for the new displays, and prototypes are being tested with museum visitors. A number of exciting acquisitions have also been made, including *Capra*, a rare piece of glass by Pablo Picasso, and a group of five late 17th century ivories by the celebrated Huguenot carver David Le Marchand. The ivories were acquired thanks to funding from the Art Fund and the National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust.

Our Science and Technology galleries will benefit from the generous donation by CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) of a copper accelerating cavity (pictured) from their Large Electron-Positron (LEP) collider. This was the precursor to the Large Hadron Collider used to prove the existence of the elusive Higgs boson.

Looking further ahead, two new World Cultures galleries are being developed to explore some of the most important civilisations in human history: Ancient Egypt and the major cultures of East Asia: China, Japan and Korea. Through artefacts that are amongst the finest of their kind, we will invite visitors to reinterpret the familiar and explore the unknown. This final phase of the Masterplan is estimated to cost £3 million.

Our supporters, donors, members and visitors have been vital partners in this journey of transformation so far, and we are immensely grateful to them.

● Conservation is underway at the National Museums Collection Centre on a 2.5 tonne copper accelerating cavity from the Large Electron Positron collider at CERN. © Neil Hanna









● The new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland are under development and due to open in 2016.

Right: Dolly the sheep has her image digitally captured in preparation for her redisplay in one of six new Science and Technology galleries.

© Chris Scott

Below left: The travelling service of the Emperor Napoleon's sister, Princess Pauline Borghese, undergoes conservation.

Below middle: Building restoration within the Science and Technology galleries is completed ahead of installing the new displays.

Below right: *Capra*, a rare piece of glass by Pablo Picasso, was acquired for display in one of four new Art and Design galleries.

© Neil Hanna





To learn more  
about these fascinating  
stories and all the work  
which takes place across  
National Museums Scotland  
visit our website  
[www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk)











## Taking flight

In the past year significant work has been undertaken to redevelop two historic hangars at the National Museum of Flight. A number of aircraft have been housed in an enormous temporary building to enable the restoration of these Second World War hangars and the conservation and cleaning of the aircraft.

When they re-open the hangars will be heated for the first time, using an environmentally-friendly ground source heating system. These significantly improved conditions will allow fascinating objects to be brought out of storage and put on public display for the first time. In addition to aircraft, engines and instruments, visitors will be able to see uniforms, archives and photographs documenting more than 100 years of aviation history.

We are also transforming the experience for visitors in other ways. Stories of aviation will be brought to life through dramatic film and sound, interactive displays and new digital interpretation. By capturing the memories and experiences of people linked to the airfield and individual aircraft, we will be able to bring their powerful stories alive.

One of the most extraordinary stories is that of Captain Eric Brown CBE, the Navy's most decorated pilot. Captain Brown flew our Messerschmitt Me 163B-1a Komet on 10 June 1945 after capturing it in Germany at the end of the war. Born in Scotland, Captain Brown has flown 487 different types of aircraft – more than anyone else in history. He has completed 2,407 aircraft carrier landings, interrogated Hermann Göring, and was one of the first British servicemen to arrive at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Due for completion in 2016, the £3.6 million project is supported by the Scottish Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Robertson Trust, The MacRobert Trust and Viridor Credits. The revamped museum will offer a fascinating visit, and will build its reputation as one of the major aviation museums in Europe.

● **Left: The Bristol Bolingbroke aircraft has been repainted ahead of its redisplay in spring 2016, when this hangar and another at the National Museum of Flight will be transformed with vibrant new exhibitions.**



# National Museums Collection Centre

Preservation, research and public access are at the heart of our activities. A new storage and research facility, generously funded by the Scottish Government, brings important collections together in one location for the first time at our National Museums Collection Centre in north Edinburgh. The £12 million state-of-the-art building houses nearly ten million objects, ranging from the tiny Nephthes titan beetle to the 5.2 metre skull of a sperm whale. Material from our Scottish history, archaeology and natural sciences collections has been painstakingly relocated to be preserved in optimal conditions.

Clear access routes enable efficient cleaning and pest monitoring, while energy consumption is minimised through effective insulation. There are also dedicated environments for vulnerable objects, such as archaeological metalwork.

The building now provides greater access to collections, particularly for researchers and specialist groups. Conservation and research laboratories offer an ideal environment for study, while work benches with data and power points make it easier to bring out objects for technical examination. A major programme of sorting and ordering collections prior to the move has resulted in better-organised storage and the more appropriate co-location of objects.



To learn more visit [www.nms.ac.uk/collectioncentre](http://www.nms.ac.uk/collectioncentre)



Above: Scottish history and archaeology objects are now kept in state-of-the-art storage cabinets.

Left: Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, at the opening of the new storage and research facility.

© Neil Hanna



In 2014-15 we welcomed  
**2.3 million** visitors  
 to National Museums Scotland sites



**1.6 million**

visitors to the National Museum of Scotland

**84,000**

visitors to the National Museum of Rural Life



© Wattie Cheung



© Ruth Armstrong

**55,500**

school pupils visited our museums



© Ruth Armstrong

**15,500**

enjoyed the Airshow at the National Museum of Flight – a record attendance

**30,000**



attended activities as part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival

51 % of visitors to our museums came from Scotland, 15 % from the rest of the United Kingdom and 34 % from overseas

**597,000**

visitors to the National War Museum



**72,000**

visitors to the National Museum of Flight

# Inspiring exhibitions



© Ruth Armstrong

## Game Masters

With more than 100 playable games, *Game Masters* was one of our most dynamic and engaging exhibitions to date. Tracing the development of computer games from arcade to console to handheld, the exhibition covered the rapid growth of gaming from a niche interest to a global business.

The reach of the exhibition was extended through an imaginative programme of events and activities, featuring talks and debates led by industry experts, game designers and animators. These attracted a diverse young audience, many of whom had not previously visited the museum.



© Howarth-Loomes Collection at National Museums Scotland



## Photography: A Victorian Sensation

This vast photography exhibition captured the Victorian craze for photography, tracking how the visionaries of the era learned to frame their world.

The exhibition included not only original photographs, but also the cameras and technology that captured them.

Supported by films, interactives and touchscreen displays, the exhibition charted the pioneers of photography, including the world's first stereographs, produced around the 1851 Great Exhibition, and the craze for personal collectible cartes-de-visite.





## Waterloo: After the Battle

National Museums Scotland marked the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo with a display reuniting two French eagle standards captured at Waterloo.

The Eagle of the 45th French Infantry, captured by Sergeant Charles Ewart, was escorted to the museum from its display at Edinburgh Castle.

Here it was reunited with the Eagle from the standard of the 105th French Infantry, captured by the Royal Dragoons. The sense of occasion truly captured the public imagination.

## Fully Fashioned: The Pringle of Scotland Story

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Pringle of Scotland, this popular fashion exhibition charted the rise of a small hosiery firm in Hawick to become an international knitwear brand.

The exhibition combined rare pieces of early knitwear, iconic garments and archive film to create a snapshot of sartorial history. Previewing in London during London Fashion Week, it enabled us to increase our profile amongst a new audience in advance of the opening of our dedicated fashion gallery in 2016 at the National Museum of Scotland.

● Tilda Swinton, photographed by Ryan McGinley.



## Next of Kin

Our touring exhibition *Next of Kin* is a truly national commemoration project for the centenary of the First World War, fusing local and national stories in each of nine venues across Scotland.

The material on loan from National Museums Scotland looks in detail at eight individual stories which illustrate the impact of the War on servicemen and women and their families back home in Scotland.

Each of the host venues is adding material from their own collections to tell stories related to their respective local areas. These additional contributions will be captured and preserved in the exhibition displays and an online resource.

The tour, from 21 March 2015 to 20 May 2017, is supported by objects for visitors to handle, digital resources and subsidised transport, events and training. The exhibition will leave a lasting legacy for museums across Scotland.

The touring venues are Dumfries Museum, Rozelle House in South Ayrshire, Hawick Museum, Low Parks Museum in South Lanarkshire, Grampian Transport Museum, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Swanson Gallery in Thurso, Perth Museum & Art Gallery (in partnership with the Black Watch), and The Orkney Museum.

The tour is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Scottish Government.



## Indian Encounters

*Indian Encounters* explored British-Indian relations through the lives of two people with very different experiences: Maharaja Duleep Singh and Captain Archibald Swinton.

The story of the two men was revealed through a beautiful collection of 19th-century jewellery and 18th-century Indian miniature-style paintings illustrating their wealth and status.

Another exhibition highlight was the contemporary painting *Casualty of War: A Portrait of Maharaja Duleep Singh* which we commissioned from renowned British artists The Singh Twins.



# Broadening our reach

**M**aking an impact beyond the walls of our own museums is a fundamental element of our activities. Our aim is to develop, care for and share our collections for the benefit of the whole nation, nationally and internationally. We achieve this through loans and touring exhibitions, through partnerships with many organisations and communities, training for colleagues, and through an increasing digital dimension to our work.

A further element of our role is engaging with those who do not normally visit our museums and all sections of the wider community, including disadvantaged groups.



© Neville Buck

## Strong partnerships

Our work with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has resulted in collaborative projects across a wide range of areas, from restoring habitats for wild pandas to sharing expertise in genetics, conservation, and work to halt the demise of the Scottish wildcat.

Now, the three institutions have signed a memorandum of understanding, laying the ground for further partnership work benefiting Scotland's cultural and natural heritage.

## Young people

We are now in our fourth year of a partnership with Impact Arts, inspiring young people through our collections to create and showcase music, art and performance.

To date 250 young people have benefited from the project. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Young Roots funding, we are currently working with 20 members of the Young Sikh Leaders Network from Glasgow Gurdwara on the Panjab Connections project. The young Sikhs are using film and photography, interviewing their peers and elders in the Scottish Sikh community.

## People with autism

As part of a broader initiative to enhance our facilities for those with autism we staged a special event enabling over 50 young people with autism to visit our *Game Masters* exhibition with their families and supporters. This was supported by funding from the Scottish Government's Autism Award.





## Discover the Celts

A ground-breaking partnership with the British Museum has resulted in the first major British exhibition on Celts in 40 years.

Created jointly, using expertise and collections from both institutions as well as international loans, *Celts* opened at the British Museum on 24 September 2015. It comes to the National Museum of Scotland 10 March - 25 September 2016 and is generously sponsored by Baillie Gifford Investment Managers.

● Left: The Gundestrup cauldron is one of the spectacular international loans to feature in the *Celts* exhibition.

© The National Museum of Denmark

Right: Artist's impression of the Lews Castle museum.



## Treasures on loan

This year 2,600 objects were loaned to museums across Scotland, the rest of the United Kingdom and internationally.

One attraction benefiting from our extensive loans programme is the new Lews Castle museum in Stornoway, due to open in 2016. Our loans will account for nearly a third of the material on display in their galleries.

## Elderly people

We do a wide range of work with elderly people. One example is our ongoing relationship with Contact the Elderly to support and host visits to our sites. Participants aged 80 plus are accompanied by volunteers and benefit from engaging with museum staff and collections.



## Families

Our 2015 summer family programme attracted over 18,000 participants and was kindly supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

We continued to work with Dads Rock, an organisation which encourages fathers, grandfathers and male carers to develop their parenting and caring skills. As part of the initiative over 1500 people took part in a range of Father's Day activities at the National Museum of Scotland.

Working with family learning groups, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, we support vulnerable families in shared art activities. This project aims to build confidence and strengthen familial relationships.

## Inspiring public programmes

This year 192,600 people, including more than 55,500 school pupils, took part in learning opportunities across our museums.

Activities ranged from spinning wool at the National Museum of Rural Life to demonstrations of a wartime Enigma encoding machine at the National Museum of Flight.

One of the highlights of 2016 was our annual airshow at the National Museum of Flight.

A record crowd of over 15,500 enjoyed a breathtaking series of aviation displays including the Red Arrows.

## Future focus

We are creating an organisation fit for the future. We are currently developing a new Strategic Plan for the next four years in consultation with staff. The new strategy will give a clear sense of organisational direction, helping our hundreds of staff and volunteers to work together to achieve shared priorities and communicate our aims to our stakeholders and public.

The results of our recent survey of staff opinion were very encouraging, with job satisfaction, pride and advocacy at their highest levels since the survey began in 2005. Ratings were also higher than the average levels found in other public sector organisations.

A series of 'listening groups' held with staff across the organisation enabled us to explore areas for improvement in greater depth. These positive sessions will help inform and develop an action plan to further enhance employee engagement across National Museums Scotland.



## Going digital

An important element of our future focus is the digitisation of our collections, enabling us to share our many treasures with new generations across the globe. This year we digitised 4,955 objects, taking our total number of online records to 27,000, a 23% increase on last year.

Our website now works responsively across mobile and desktop devices, attracting a 25% increase in visits year-on-year. Our relaunched blog is a vibrant hub for diverse stories and behind-the-scenes insights. Our many social media channels continue to grow rapidly, engaging larger audiences in new ways.

At the National Museum of Scotland the launch of free public wi-fi has further increased access to our online resources. Funded through the Scottish Government's Connected Capital initiative, our wi-fi service is already attracting 15,000 unique users a month.



## Sustainability

Our commitment to sustainability continues to drive efficiencies across our sites, and we are working hard to diversify our income and make the best use of resources.

This year has been one of major progress towards our 2020 vision for a more sustainable future. We are on track to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 15% by 2016. Further waste reduction strategies have been implemented, including the automated switch-off of PCs, installation of more LED and sensor-controlled lighting, and an increase in recycling across our sites.

In 2014/15 we earned £7.8 million in self-generated income – nearly a quarter of our overall income. We are sustaining our economic viability through a continued focus on appropriate commercial activity, fundraising and sponsorship.



# 12.4 million objects in our collections



## 27,000

objects are now digitised  
and available to view  
on our website



We have added 4,995 images in the last year including the Spencer House sofa which will be displayed in the National Museum of Scotland's new galleries opening in 2016

## 2,600

items loaned to venues  
across the world. The Pictish  
silver chain (pictured) was  
one of a series of objects  
lent to the King's Museum,  
Aberdeen University for an  
exhibition about the Picts



## 1.8 billion

opportunities in the media for  
people to hear about National  
Museums Scotland worldwide

## 192,600

participants in direct  
learning experiences



## £538,000

worth of acquisitions supported  
by the National Fund for  
Acquisitions on behalf of the  
Scottish Government. This  
included a grant to The Pier Arts  
Centre in Orkney to purchase  
this Barbara Hepworth  
sculpture, *Two Forms (Orkney)*,  
1967 © Bowness

Photograph © Christie's Images Ltd 2015

## 1.6 million website visits



## 86,400

wi-fi connections at the  
National Museum of  
Scotland in the first six  
months of usage



## 2 million

views of our image  
collections on Flickr

# With thanks

We are extremely grateful to the many donors who have so generously contributed to National Museums Scotland this year.

## Key Funders

The Heritage Lottery Fund  
Scottish Government

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Below left: Generous support from our donors has enabled essential preparatory work as we develop displays for the new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland, such as conservation of this marine paddle engine model. © Neil Hanna

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**And all those who prefer to remain anonymous.**

We would also like to thank the many people who have provided guidance, expertise and their time in support of the work of National Museums Scotland.

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If you would like to know more about ways to get involved and support our work, please contact our Development team on 0131 247 4095 or [development@nms.ac.uk](mailto:development@nms.ac.uk)



National Museums Scotland cares for  
museum collections of international  
importance presenting and interpreting  
them for a broad audience.

**National Museum of Scotland**  
**National Museum of Flight**  
**National Museum of Rural Life**  
**National War Museum**  
**National Museums Collection Centre**

View our full Annual Report and Accounts at [www.nms.ac.uk/review](http://www.nms.ac.uk/review)

National Museums Scotland  
Chambers Street  
Edinburgh EH1 1JF

0300 123 6789  
[info@nms.ac.uk](mailto:info@nms.ac.uk)  
[www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk)

For more detail about our museums and the work of National Museums Scotland  
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