







Three of the new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland: (from top) *Design for Living, Making and Creating, Fashion and Style.*



© Stewart Attwood

Vivienne Westwood jacket and bondage trouser in the Fashion and Style gallery.

This has been a landmark year at National Museums Scotland as we welcomed over 2.4 million visitors across our museums, completed three flagship capital projects, celebrated the 150th anniversary of the National Museum of Scotland, and developed a new Strategic Plan to guide us through the next four years.

As one of the world's great museums, the National Museum of Scotland uniquely brings together science, art, the natural world and the diversity of human cultures, inviting visitors to explore the world under one roof. In 1866, the Museum started its life as the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art. It was therefore fitting to mark the Museum's 150th anniversary year with the opening of ten magnificent new galleries dedicated to those very subjects.

At Easter, the visitor experience at the National Museum of Flight was transformed with the restoration of two Second World War hangars and the creation of vibrant and engaging displays to enhance dramatically the presentation of our outstanding aviation collections.

At the heart of both projects was the desire to widen access to our exceptional collections and we hope the new displays will excite and engage increased numbers of visitors both today and for generations to come.

Work has now begun on the next phase of development at the National Museums Collection Centre, following the opening in June 2015 of a state-of-the-art new storage and research facility. This will further establish this site as a key resource for our national and international programmes. We have also embarked on the fourth and final phase of our 15 year Masterplan for the transformation of the National Museum of Scotland with two new galleries due to open in 2018/19 which will provide new insights into our internationally important Ancient Egypt and East Asia collections.

Looking forward, our new Strategic Plan 2016–20 – which follows over a decade of successive investment in our collections, our museums and our visitors – aims to take us to a higher level. It reflects our continued drive to delight and inspire our visitors, to invest in our historic buildings and to research, exhibit and share our collections. Our work has always reached across the nation but, importantly, the social, economic and cultural impact we have 'beyond our walls' has a much stronger focus in this new Strategy.

Delivering our ambitions will require significant financial support, both public and private. We aim to increase our capacity and skills to raise income from public sources and to develop a more entrepreneurial approach which grows commercial income.

Finally, our thanks go to our staff who have worked tirelessly and with great commitment and skill to help us deliver a year so full of significant achievements.

**Bruce Minto OBE, Chairman**  
**Dr Gordon Rintoul CBE, Director**

# A Year of Great Achievement



# Innovating & Inspiring

**On Friday 8 July 2016, ten major new galleries and a splendid new piazza opened at the National Museum of Scotland in celebration of the Museum's 150th anniversary.**

This was the latest phase of the Masterplan to transform the Museum. A £14.1 million investment in state-of-the-art galleries has enabled us to put objects on display for the first time for generations, reveal our collections in new ways and significantly increase interactivity and engagement.

The innovative new galleries encourage visitors to take a journey of discovery, exploring the excitement of scientific discovery and invention, and the creativity of applied arts, fashion and design. The redevelopment restores the Museum's original layout and sightlines, encouraging flow between the galleries by giving visitors enticing glimpses of what lies ahead.

Visitors can experience the collections like never before, with in-depth information provided through a network of digital labels, audio visual programmes and working exhibits – over 150 interactive exhibits in total. These range from specially restored, wonderfully intricate Victorian-era engineering models, to hot air balloons, a human-sized hamster wheel, a fashion design digital interactive and a host of touchscreens and films.

Our Science and Technology galleries are amongst the most significant in Europe and create a platform for establishing the National Museum of Scotland as a major centre for science engagement to inspire the scientists, engineers, artists and designers of tomorrow.

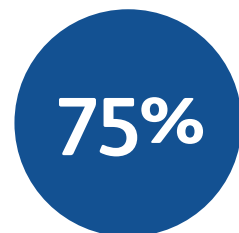
We are enormously grateful to all our funders: the Heritage Lottery Fund, Wellcome, and the Scottish Government, many charitable trusts, foundations and companies and nearly 800 generous individual donors, without whom the galleries would not have been possible.



**Total area covered  
by the new galleries**



**Objects on display  
in the new galleries**



**Proportion of objects  
displayed that have  
not been seen for a  
generation or more**

Interactive fun in the  
'human hamster wheel'  
in the *Energise* gallery.



150+

Interactive exhibits  
in the new galleries

21,000

Hours of conservation  
time spent preparing  
objects for display

62

Truckloads of objects  
transported from the  
National Museums  
Collection Centre

400

New acquisitions for  
display in the galleries

# First Impressions

In the three months following the July 2016 opening of our new galleries, there were over 600,000 visits to the National Museum of Scotland, an increase of 30 per cent on the same period last year.

The new galleries have been very well received by visitors and the media.

**“From a balcony at the National Museum of Scotland, it seems all of human achievement is laid out for the curious visitor ... this £14.1 million revamp should cement its reputation as a world-class attraction.”**

*The Times*

**“[The new galleries] will take visitors on an enlightening journey of the highest order.”**

*Metro*

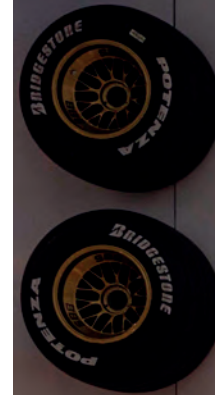
**“There’s something for everyone here.”**

*The Herald*

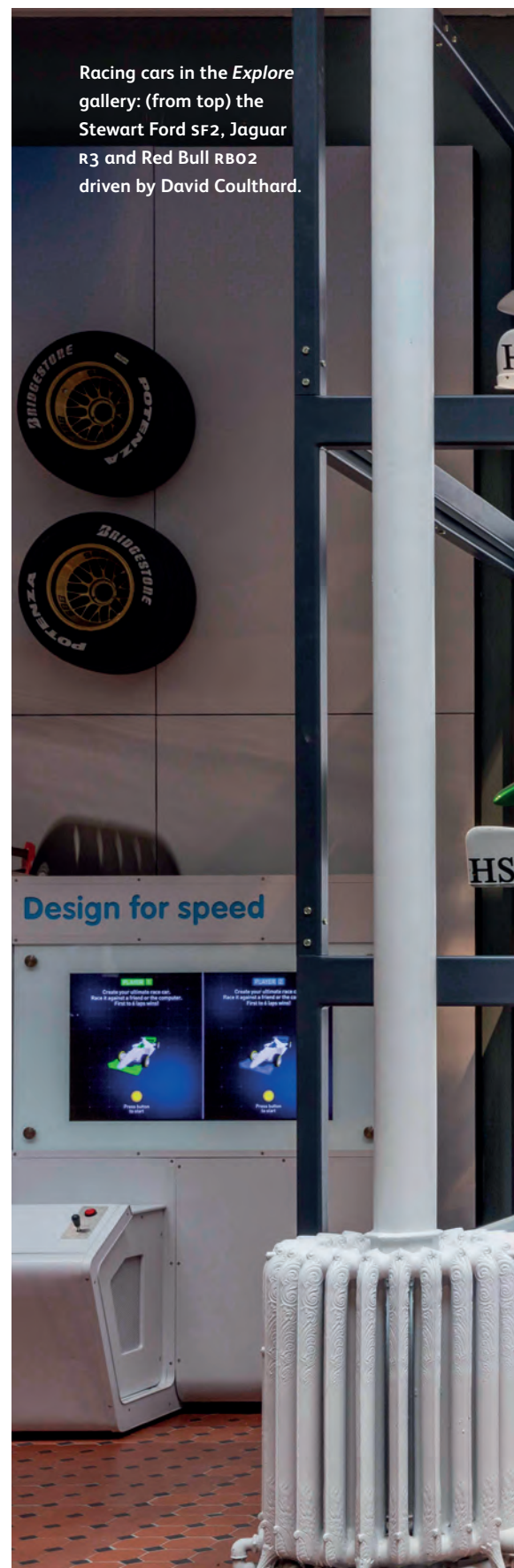
**“One of the world’s great museums.”**

*The Press and Journal*

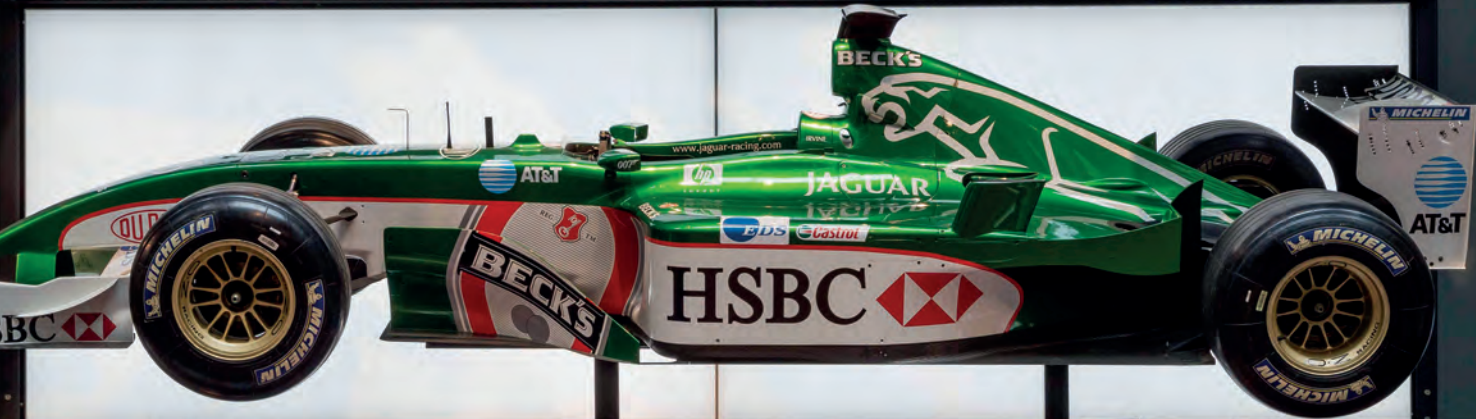
Racing cars in the *Explore* gallery: (from top) the Stewart Ford SF2, Jaguar R3 and Red Bull RB02 driven by David Coulthard.



## Design for speed









The *Art of Living* gallery brings together stunning examples of European decorative art: (from nearest) De Lucci marquetry table, Kinghorne table carpet and panelled wall from Hamilton Palace.



Making the manufacturing

London Museum



The Supermarine Spitfire has a dramatic new 'in-flight' display.

© Ruth Armstrong



Interactive touchscreens enable deeper exploration of the stories of the aircraft on display.

© Ruth Armstrong

Easter 2016 saw the opening of two newly redeveloped hangars at the National Museum of Flight, reaffirming its position as one of the most significant aviation museums in the UK and Europe.

The £3.6 million investment, supported by funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Scottish Government, The Robertson Trust, The MacRobert Trust and Viridor Credits, restored two nationally significant Second World War hangars and created dramatic new displays telling the stories of military and civil aviation over the past 100 years.

The hangars feature over 30 aircraft from our collection. Highlights include the iconic Supermarine Spitfire, the Britten-Norman Islander air ambulance, and the oldest surviving Hawker Siddeley Harrier jump jet. As part of the work, an environmentally friendly ground-source underfloor heating system was installed, enabling smaller objects such as uniforms, documents, photographs and weapons to be displayed alongside the aircraft.

As well as telling the stories of the technology and design of the aircraft, the new displays introduce visitors to the people connected with the aircraft and the context in which they were created. Our *Collecting Digital Stories* oral history project captured the personal accounts of pilots, engineers, crew and passengers in short films which appear on interactive touch screens alongside the aircraft they flew or worked with.

Alongside the new displays, a range of engagement activities are helping to broaden our audiences. Work with local communities has enabled us to engage with more people, both at the Museum and elsewhere. We have also established a programme of skills development workshops for young people, developing engineering, front of house and storytelling skills.

# Restoring & Engaging

“Open the door of these two ww2 hangers and you are opening the door to history. The stories of incredible flying machines come to life in a way which will inspire, teach and let imaginations fly. Thanks to funds raised through the National Lottery, we are delighted to have played our part in this remarkable transformation of this unique collection. It will ensure that the National Museum of Flight continues to grow as a significant international tourist destination and a valuable education resource.”

Lucy Casot, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland



80,595

Visitors to the National Museum of Flight in 2015/16

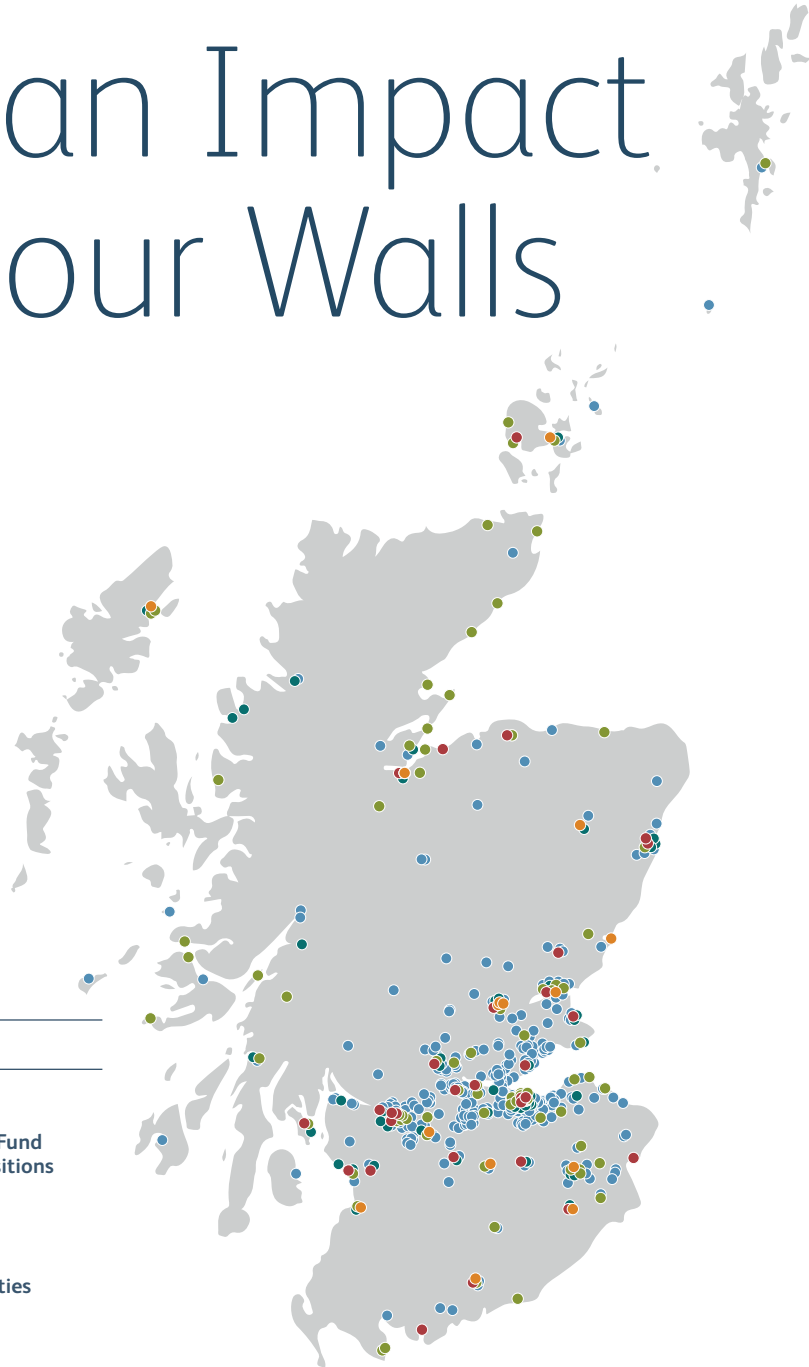


15,705

Record attendance at Scotland's National Airshow 2016

# Making an Impact Beyond our Walls

We continue to be very active in communities across Scotland, working with a wide range of partner museums and other organisations to share our collections, knowledge and expertise. Key aims have included boosting the profile and capacity of local museums, increasing their visitor numbers and inspiring audiences.



135

Other museums supported

2,349

Items loaned to 93 venues

53,000

Pupils engaged from over 500 schools

67

Acquisitions supported



© Brian Cassidy



© Graham Construction

## Touring and engagement

To commemorate the centenary of the First World War, we have been working with eight Scottish museums to bring national and local collections together in a touring exhibition. *Next of Kin* explores the personal stories of separation and loss experienced by Scottish families during the First World War. The tour, which continues into 2017, has so far visited five venues and been seen by almost 42,000 people.

Our small touring exhibition, *Reflections on Celts*, took two Iron Age mirrors to museums across the UK. Each museum expanded the display, adding related material from their own collections and programming schools workshops and community events on the theme of *Celts*. This activity supported the National Museum of Scotland's major exhibition *Celts*, organised in partnership with the British Museum.

## Supporting the museums sector

We share our knowledge and expertise through free training programmes for museums staff throughout Scotland. In 2015 / 16 we delivered over 250 learning experiences to 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 to how to mount a crowdfunding campaign.

## Sharing our collections

Nearly a third of the fascinating objects on display at the new Museum nan Eilean are on loan from National Museums Scotland's collections, including a number of spectacular Viking hacksilver hoards and a 1923 Morgan three-wheel motor car, which had been owned by a local resident. These loans will provide rich, new opportunities for fruitful collaboration for many years to come, with a number of further projects already planned.

**1** Two Iron Age mirrors, one from our collection and one from the British Museum, toured museums across the UK.

**2** A team of curators and registrars visited Lews Castle in Stornoway, the new home for Museum nan Eilean, to transport and install objects on loan from the national collections.

“Partnership with National Museums Scotland has been an essential factor in the development of the new Museum. A close working relationship with National Museums Scotland staff has contributed to a high quality exhibition which will provide an excellent visitor experience.”

Nick Smith, Heritage Manager for Museum nan Eilean

# Collaborating for Success

Working with partners enables us to maximise our resources and reach new audiences across Scotland, the UK and internationally.

1 *Celts* featured more than 300 treasured objects from across the UK and Europe.

2 New fossil finds will help to explain how vertebrate life stepped from water onto land.

## A strategic partnership

Our major exhibition *Celts* was organised in partnership with the British Museum. It unravelled the complex story of the different groups of people who have used or been given the name 'Celts' through the extraordinary objects they made and used. This is the first time that National Museums Scotland has partnered with the British Museum on such a major project and it involved teams from both organisations working closely together to curate, design and promote the exhibition. *Celts* featured more than 300 treasured objects from across the UK and Europe, brought together for the very first time – a feat it would have been near impossible to achieve without such a partnership.



© Phil Wilkinson



© Ruth Armstrong





© Neil Hanna



© Phil Wilkinson

### Cutting-edge research

Over the past year, a team of researchers from National Museums Scotland, the British Geological Survey and the Universities of Leicester, Cambridge and Southampton, have been working together to investigate fossils found by Scottish palaeontologist Stan Wood. Their aim has been to try to explain how vertebrate life stepped from water to land.

Funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the *TWeed* (Tetrapod World: early evolution and diversification) project involves undertaking a major excavation in the Scottish Borders seeking fossil evidence to fill a gap in our scientific knowledge of evolution. Their research formed the basis for the National Museum of Scotland exhibition *Fossil Hunters*, which featured some of the newly discovered fossils and explained the scientific techniques used to extract and identify them. The exhibition is now on tour to other museums in Scotland.

### Making history

At the National War Museum, the exhibition *Life Support: Stories from The Royal Regiment of Scotland* marked the Regiment's first decade of operations since it was formed in 2006. Created in association with The Royal Regiment of Scotland, the exhibition offers a fresh perspective on the combat and peacekeeping work of Scotland's infantry soldiers, through a selection of stories and interviews from the people, military and civilian, who make up their vital support network at home and on the frontline.

### Building skills for the future

With Skills Development Scotland, we are strengthening our links with secondary schools and connecting our galleries more closely with careers choices for young people. Two Skills Development Scotland staff have been seconded to work with our Learning & Programmes team to develop resources to support educational visits to the new galleries. In March 2016, we hosted the first Careers Hive with Edinburgh International Science Festival, promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and careers to school pupils. In one week, over 2,000 pupils took part in workshops, talks and demonstrations by industry experts.

**3** *Life Support: Stories from the Royal Regiment of Scotland* brought together people and objects to tell the story of the Regiment's first 10 years.

**4** Events such as Careers Hive help to connect our galleries to the subjects young people are studying at school.

# Reaching New Audiences

We continue to work to diversify our audience through imaginative programming and developing new ways of engaging traditionally 'hard to reach' groups.

## Building a mini-museum

The perennial appeal of Lego® bricks was the foundation stone for a programme of activity designed to attract diverse audiences, as part of the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, and the Festival of Architecture. An exhibition showcased some of the world's greatest feats of engineering recreated in Lego®, from the Colosseum to the Empire State Building. The accompanying programme of family-oriented activity, including a public build of a giant Lewis Chessman and the creation of a scale model of the National Museum of Scotland, encouraged people of all ages and abilities to try some building themselves.

## Festival fun

Our burgeoning Festival programme was a hit with the public and the media, featuring activity designed to surprise and delight both local audiences and tourists. We worked with Gilded Balloon to create a new Fringe venue at the National Museum of Scotland, hosting comedy, theatre, children's shows, music, spoken word performances. Along with free lunchtime music, pop-up dance shows in the Grand Gallery, and a series of three sold-out *After Hours* events, it was certainly an August to remember.





### Thinking differently

Our series of activities designed to appeal to those for whom visiting a busy museum can be intimidating, goes from strength to strength. *Museum Socials* are regular free sessions for anyone affected by dementia and their relatives, friends and supporters, creating a relaxed environment in which participants enjoy tea and cake, followed by an activity inspired by our collections. This year, we also held three events outside of regular museum hours to enable young people on the autistic spectrum to enjoy our exhibitions in a quieter, more relaxed environment, and to meet curators to hear more about their work.

### Award-winning livestock

The National Museum of Rural Life showed some of its livestock at the Royal Highland Show for the second year running. Two members of the Kittochside dairy herd competed successfully, with Nora Louise 2<sup>nd</sup> and Kittochside Carrie's Napier placed second and fourth in their respective categories. This is just one of a number of competitions entered each year by the farm team at the museum as an important way of showcasing the farm and the skills of the staff in preserving traditional farming methods. With almost 200,000 visitors, the Royal Highland Show also plays an important role in raising awareness of the museum amongst the farming community and potential future visitors.

1 A young visitor observes progress as the Lego® brick museum takes shape.

2 *POP-UP Duets* contemporary dance show entertains visitors in the Grand Gallery.

3 *Museum Socials* provide a relaxed environment for those affected by dementia and their carers.

4 Stockperson Maggie McDougall at the Royal Highland Show with Nora Louise 2<sup>nd</sup>, who was placed second in the category 'cow in calf to be shown milked out'.

# Digital Development

Our new Strategic Plan prioritises expanding our online footprint through innovative digital partnerships, web developments and a wide-ranging presence on social media platforms.

This year we have created digital experiences to support our new developments, grow our social media following and help a broader range of people connect with our collections wherever they are.

## Revealing more

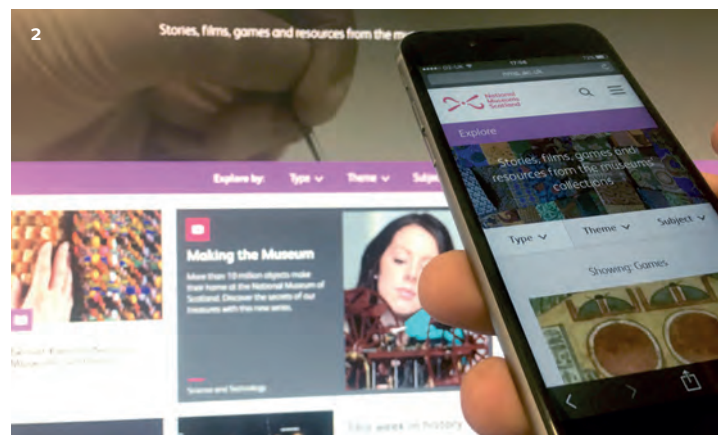
To complement our new galleries, we created two online experiences to enable audiences to engage more deeply with our collections. For the Science and Technology galleries, support from Wellcome enabled us to create *Gen*, a game in which players are asked to diagnose and treat an online creature's illnesses, using real biomedical objects displayed in the galleries. For our new *Fashion and Style* gallery, *Mode* offers a personal, mobile phone-based guide to the museum's wardrobe. Featuring detailed imagery and 360° spins of outfits, it allows visitors to see the garments on display up close, and to place them in the context of fashion and design history.

## Exploring more

The Explore section of our website is our online hub of collections, stories, games, films and resources – a place where people can find out more about objects they have seen in the museum, and those who cannot visit our museums in person can connect with our collections stories. Following detailed audience research, we have redesigned and relaunched our website, with a 13% uplift in visits to the site and over 550,000 sessions in the first three months. This work won a Scottish Creative Award for Digital Strategy.

1 Players of *Gen* are scored on their performance.

2 Our website has a mobile-friendly format.





## Sharing more

We are continuously adding records to our online database, with just over 400,000 records already accessible online. We will continue to add records throughout the year, aiming to have almost 600,000 records available online by the end of March 2017, meaning that these objects will be available for people to appreciate throughout the world, at the click of a button.

3 Our mobile Museum Highlights app is available in seven languages.

1.98  
million

Website visits in 2015 / 16

130,000

Followers on social media

# Preserving & Conserving

Our unusually diverse collection is an important international resource – historically, culturally and intellectually. Through the further development of the National Museums Collection Centre, we are significantly improving access to our collections for research, conservation and learning.

In 2015, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism, and External Affairs opened a new, state-of-the-art research and storage facility for our Natural Sciences and Scottish History and Archaeology collections. The new facility provides better access and ease of operation, has enabled us to increase external research visits, improve the care of our collections, and pursue cutting edge and inter-disciplinary research.

There is still much to be done to enhance and replace buildings at the Centre. A new phase of building development has begun to extend our conservation and scientific analysis facilities, which are vital for our work both in our museums and supporting national and international touring.

For the new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland, staff prepared objects for display, restoring and cleaning thousands of items, crafting bespoke mounts, and planning the logistics of packing and transporting the objects to the Museum for unpacking and installation.

1 Spiral-horned antelope skulls from Africa – part of the Vertebrate Biology collection.

2 A selection of beetles from the Dufresne collection, which was given to the Museum in 1866.

3 An entomology training session at the National Museums Collection Centre.







© Ruth Armstrong



1 A member of the conservation team prepares the ancient Egyptian coffin of the 'Qurna queen' for future display.

2 42,000 people have seen the *Next of Kin* touring exhibition so far. Visitor numbers at the first three venues increased by 22%, with partner museums reaching out to new audiences.



We are proud of our contribution to the creation and promotion of world class culture in Scotland. Bold ideas and a track record of success have served us well, but we must continue to innovate – looking to the future with ambitious goals will help us further transform our organisation.

During this year, we developed a new Strategic Plan which sets out the ambitions of National Museums Scotland in 2016–20. It outlines the opportunities and challenges we face for the future.

Although we are operating in an increasingly challenging financial climate, our ambitions to continue to transform our facilities and services and enhance our impact both at home and internationally are undimmed. We want to build on the many achievements of the past ten years to ensure that the National Collections are cared for more effectively, shared with an increased number of people, and that our overall impact continues to grow. We plan to broaden our programme, making further step-change improvements to quality, profile, popularity and reputation. We will place greater emphasis on our impact beyond the walls of our museums, and in October 2016 launched a new National Strategy which strengthens our approach to working nationally through touring, sharing our skills and expertise, and working in partnership to engage audiences. We will also use digital technology to transform the way people can engage with our collections and make shifts in the way we operate and fund our work.

You can download the full Strategic Plan at [www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk)

# Planning for an Ambitious Future

# With Thanks

## Helping it happen

Many of the wonderful achievements of 2016, including the bold and confident transformations at the National Museum of Scotland, National Museum of Flight and National Museums Collection Centre, simply would not have been realised without our supporters.

We are grateful to all of our supporters for their passion for our museums. Such support has helped enable exhibitions to be created, buildings to be restored, new galleries to be developed, research discoveries to be made, outreach activities and schools programmes to be expanded. All this helps ensure Scotland's treasures and their amazing stories continue to delight and inspire new generations of visitors.



© Phil Wilkinson

Dr Andrew Kitchener,  
Principal Curator, installs  
Dolly the Sheep as one  
of the stars of the  
*Explore* gallery.

## Our supporters in 2015/16

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



Traditional rural skills are demonstrated at the Country Fair at the National Museum of Rural Life.

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The new Science and Technology galleries at the National Museum of Scotland.

Cover image: Accelerating cavity from the CERN Large Electron Positron Collider, in the *Enquire* gallery.



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

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