



National
Museums
Scotland

National
Programme
2019/2020



National Programme Across Scotland

National Museums Scotland is committed to working in partnership with museums across Scotland to be a truly national museum, bringing our collections, expertise and audience engagement programmes to people and communities in every part of the country.

In this report we share the work we have undertaken during 2019/20 to meet the objectives of our National Strategy 2016–20: to share Scotland’s collections, engage and inspire people, and strengthen skills and expertise. These have been met through national projects designed to build capacity at local level and through the provision of loans, touring exhibitions, support from the National Fund for Acquisitions, community engagement projects and our National Training Programme for staff and volunteers.

We completed our Ancient Egypt and East Asia National Programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Museums Association’s Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund. This two-year project extended the reach and impact of our *Ancient Egypt Rediscovered*, *Exploring East Asia* and *Art of Ceramics* galleries beyond the walls of the National Museum of Scotland to engage other museums and new audiences across the country.

With funding from the John Ellerman Foundation, we’re currently working with museums across Scotland to increase engagement with their natural science collections. The project will produce a review of fossil collections and develop skills and expertise locally to deliver improvements in the care and interpretation of these collections to increase accessibility and enhance their impact for audiences throughout Scotland.



In a short film celebrating our national work across Scotland we hear from some of our partners about their experience of working with National Museums Scotland and the benefits partnership has brought to their local communities: <https://youtu.be/v-rej1TAzjg>

Looking to the future, we began consultation on the next iteration of our National Strategy with events in Inverness, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Perth, Kirkcaldy and Aberdeen during November 2019 followed by an online survey in December 2019. The results will shape our strategic approach and we look forward to sharing them.

Inevitably, our national work has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly our loans, touring exhibitions, training programme and community engagement projects. During the lockdown and subsequent period of remote working we offered support to the sector with advice on caring for collections during lockdown, working remotely with schools, developing online fundraising and preparing museums for reopening. We continued to accept applications to the National Fund for Acquisitions and launched a special funding scheme worth £100,000 to encourage and support more museums to apply for funding to develop their collections.

As we all continue to work in the context of the pandemic, our national programme will be needed more than ever, and we look forward to working with our colleagues throughout Scotland to help navigate uncertainty and look ahead to recovery together.

National Programme in numbers

In 2019/2020 our work across Scotland included:

- **114 museums** supported through loans, acquisitions, touring and community engagement projects.
- **2,836 objects** loaned to 54 organisations in 21 local authorities across Scotland.
- **55 grants** worth £158,554 from the National Fund for Acquisitions supported acquisitions worth £870,875, helping to develop and enhance the collections of 23 organisations in 14 local authorities across Scotland.
- **4,768 people** engaged through community outreach programmes beyond our sites.
- **277 learning experiences** delivered to 217 staff and volunteers from 66 museums in 28 local authority areas.
- **3,145 pupils** in 24 schools across 5 local authority areas participated in 35 renewable energy workshops and 43 science shows in our ScottishPower funded Powering Up programme.
- **8,435 visits** to the first 3 venues on our touring exhibition *Discovering Ancient Egypt* with an uplift of over 40% in visitor figures from 2015/16 achieved at two venues.
- Completion of our Ancient Egypt and East Asia National Programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund which reached **74,604 participants** through exhibitions, learning and events across Scotland during 2018–2020.

Sharing Scotland's Collections

Touring Exhibitions

Discovering Ancient Egypt, part of our Ancient Egypt and East Asia National Programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, travelled to Hawick Museum (8 March–2 June 2019), Montrose Museum (8 June–7 September 2019), the Baird Institute, Cumnock (14 September–14 December 2019) and Perth Museum and Art Gallery (25 January–4 October 2020).



Loans

In 2019/2020, 2,836 objects were on loan from the national collection to 54 organisations in 21 local authorities across Scotland. Our *Guide to Borrowing* workshop on 19 November 2019 offered practical advice on all aspects of the loan process to encourage and support participants to borrow objects from the national collection for display in their own venues.

Kildonan Museum

Six objects were loaned to Kildonan Museum for *A Prince on the Run*, 17 April–30 October 2019, the first exhibition curated by the museum's Young Curators Group. It explored the story of the flight of Bonnie Prince Charlie through the Scottish islands, aided by Flora MacDonald, and revealed the ancestral ties between South Uist and Napoleonic France. The loan included a silver mounted tortoiseshell snuff box inscribed 'A gift from Prince Charles Edward Stewart to Miss Flora Macdonald 1746' and a copper betrothal ring said to have been given to Flora by the Prince. The loan was extended until October 2020.

East Lothian Council Museums

Objects from the Traprain Treasure were loaned to *Treasures from the Hoard*, an exhibition at the John Gray Centre in Haddington from 11 May–27 October 2019. The largest hoard of late Roman 'hacksilver' found anywhere in Europe, the treasure was buried over 1,500 years ago, around AD 450, and consists of fragments from over 250 silver objects cut into set weights of bullion. The exhibition was part of East Lothian Council Museums' programme of events to celebrate the centenary of the discovery of the treasure on Traprain Law in 1919.

Gairloch Museum

A bronze cup-ended ornament, possibly a fastener for a cloak, went on long-term loan to the new Gairloch Museum which opened in July 2019. The ornament is part of a Bronze Age hoard discovered in Poolewe during peat-digging in the late 19th century.

Elgin Museum

An agreement was made to lend fossil fragments from an early tetrapod named

Elginerpeton pancheni – literally, ‘creeping thing from Elgin’ – to Elgin Museum. This animal, whose fossilised remains were found near Elgin in the late 19th century, showed some of the earliest adaptations that ultimately allowed life to move out of the water and onto land, some 275 million years ago. Elgin Museum received funding from the Weston Loan Programme, a partnership between Art Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation which supports museums and galleries to borrow objects from national collections for public display. Funding was used to purchase two new display cases and upgrade the Museum’s environmental monitoring system, improvements that will provide significant opportunities for securing loans in the future. The fossil fragments will be included in the exhibition *At the Water’s Edge* which has been postponed due to Covid-19.

National Fund for Acquisitions

National Museums Scotland administers the National Fund for Acquisitions, an annual grant of £150,000 provided by Scottish Government to help museums throughout Scotland to acquire objects for their collections. In 2019/20 the Fund contributed 55 grants worth £158,554, helping to develop and enhance the collections of 23 organisations in 14 local authorities across Scotland. The total purchase value of the objects to which the Fund contributed was £870,875. At 31 March 2020, a further 8 grants with a total value of £20,929 had been committed and were awaiting payment. Among the acquisitions which the Fund supported were:

- £15,000 to Glasgow Museums for an oil painting on canvas, *A Highland Chieftain: Portrait of Lord Mungo Murray*. Painted c1683 by John Michael Wright, this magnificent full-length portrait is one of the earliest depictions of a sitter in full Highland dress.
- £9,000 to the Museum of the Isles for a rare basket-hilted backsword presented by his clansmen in 1802 to Alasdair na Ceapach, 19th chief of Keppoch.
- £3,450 to West Highland Museum for a snuff box with a portrait of Prince Charles Edward Stuart hidden in an inner lid, a significant addition to their important Jacobite collection.



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Engaging and Inspiring People

STEM Engagement

National Museums Scotland's Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 sets out our vision to be a leader in STEM engagement with initiatives which inspire curiosity, build knowledge, encourage debate and support national STEM strategies.

Powering Up

Powering Up, our innovative science engagement programme focusing on renewable energy, worked with partner museums in communities across Scotland to engage young people in STEM learning. Funded by the ScottishPower Foundation, in its third and final year *Powering Up* worked with our partners, National Mining Museum, Scottish Maritime Museum, New Lanark Mills World Heritage Site and Historic Environment Scotland at Stanley Mills, Perth, who hosted renewable energy workshops for local primary schools in Midlothian, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and Perth and Kinross. Through these partnerships we provided free transport, activities and resources, removing barriers that could prevent primary schools from visiting local museums, as well as increasing schools' overall engagement with STEM subjects. An interactive science show, full of experiments based on renewable energy, was delivered at each participating school, allowing more pupils to engage in the programme and learn about renewable energy in Scotland. The wider communities were engaged through science shows, workshops and events including the Powering Up Science Weekend, a free festival on 25-26 May 2019 at the Scottish Maritime Museum's Denny Ship Model Experiment Tank in Dumbarton. Visitors took part in interactive science engagement activities provided by science centres and other organisations from across Scotland and enjoyed guided tours of the historic site. In the three years since the programme began in 2017, 152 workshops and 108 science shows were delivered to 9,684 pupils from 79 schools across 5 local authority areas. In addition, 13,000 people were engaged through science shows, workshops and events.

Maths Week Scotland

Maths Week Scotland, delivered by National Museums Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, aims to raise the profile of maths across Scotland with events and activities for schools, adults and families which celebrate the importance of maths in our everyday lives. National Museums Scotland co-ordinates Maths Week Scotland's communications and programme of year-round events delivered by partners across Scotland, including science centres, universities, mathematical associations and community groups. Maths Week Scotland, 30 September–6 October 2019, saw an increase in geographical reach and a greater range of activity with events in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, St Andrews, Dundee, Aberdeen and Dumfries and Galloway, including topical talks, family activity days, code-breaking events and inter-generational sessions. In schools, pupils and teachers from every local authority celebrated Maths Week Scotland with creativity and enthusiasm as performers, workshops, career talks and in-school activity showcased the full breadth of maths engagement. Maths Week Scotland collaborated with Education Scotland to deliver maths focused training sessions for STEM Ambassadors.

Community Engagement

Scotland 365

Scotland 365, a youth engagement project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of their UK-wide *Kick the Dust* programme, is transforming the way we engage young people with our collections. In 2019 we consulted over 500 young people aged 16-25 through online questionnaires and focus groups to find out what they thought about culture, heritage and museums. The results are helping us to develop a series of activities and pilot programmes for this age group. In July 2019, in partnership with Impact Arts, we ran a summer residency programme, working with over 150 young people at the National Museum of Scotland as well as with groups from Glasgow, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. The exhibition *Wild and Majestic: Romantic Visions of Scotland* provided inspiration for workshops with professional actors, digital and visual artists, musicians and performers, with an event on 24 July which showcased the impressive art, theatre and live music which

resulted. The programme culminated in a national showcase at the Barrowlands Ballroom in Glasgow and was also supported by Scottish Government Cashback for Communities funding. We have continued working with Impact Arts on a series of workshops at the National Museum of Scotland and we're developing a wider programme of work with other partners, including Project Scotland and Young Scot.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

With funding from People's Postcode Lottery, National Museums Scotland launched initiatives aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation, bringing people together, offering opportunities for social interaction and encouraging skills development. We worked with Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Glasgow Museums and West Lothian Council Museum Service from May to December 2019 to deliver local programmes for individuals with dementia, their carers and families. Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums worked with Alzheimer's Scotland to build on their dementia friendly programme, *Our Aberdeen*, to create a new programme, *Our Gallery*, for the reopening of Aberdeen Art Gallery in autumn 2019. Glasgow Museums created a new dementia friendly programme based on their ancient Egyptian and East Asian collections, working with an artist to pilot the use of art for wellbeing and developing reminiscence and handling collections workshops. West Lothian Council Museum Service produced a programme of events to support the development of their new community museum at Whitburn, with the aim of creating a museum which is dementia friendly by design.

A series of events at the National Museum of Scotland and other venues across Scotland included Early Doors and After Hours visits for people with autism, monthly Museum Socials for people living with dementia, sessions with care homes, including visits to the National Museum of Scotland, and Chatty Café events, as well as sessions for people with hearing loss and children with visual impairments. A sensory access map and film of the museum to support a range of people with sensory and assisted support needs was created in collaboration with relevant partners and target audiences. Specialised training on working



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with people living with dementia and autistic people was delivered to our Visitor Experience team leaders who used this to develop a training module for their teams to support their work with groups with additional needs, including dementia and autism. A Wellbeing Week, planned for March 2020, to celebrate the work carried out and pilot some of our new approaches within our core community engagement programme and with the general public, was postponed due to Covid-19.

Strengthening Skills and Expertise

Our popular National Training Programme offers free collections knowledge and skills training for staff and volunteers in museums across Scotland. In 2019/20 we delivered 23 workshops and other events, providing 277 learning experiences for 217 staff from 66 museums in 28 local authority areas. Our workshops explored a wide range of subjects, including collections care topics such as pest management and object handling and labelling, curatorial sessions on topics as diverse as dress and textiles, insects, and rocks, minerals and fossils, and audience engagement workshops on autism and dementia awareness. Many of the workshops supported our national programmes, Ancient Egypt and East Asia and Natural Science Collections Across Scotland, made possible by the generosity of our funders. The Hugh Fraser Foundation generously provided funding to support our National Training Programme in 2020/21. Below are some examples of the workshops delivered and responses from participants.

#MadeOnAMobile

On 24 April 2019, Jon Gill of Playful Communications led a workshop at the McManus Collections Unit in Dundee at which participants learned how to create and share video content from a single mobile device. The session gave attendees the confidence to explore how this fresh approach could be used in their own museum to encourage broader audience engagement through social media.

'I now feel confident that I could create video footage on my mobile and share these on our Social Media platforms whilst our museum is closed for redevelopment.'

'I feel much more confident in using the iPad to capture content during public events and activities as well as creating my own film content to advertise the Museum, for example taking 'Behind the Scenes' film clips or interviewing our curators to showcase an 'object of the week'.'

'I feel I have acquired the basic knowledge to use the iMotion and iMovie apps alongside a new understanding of different filming techniques and shots. I am looking forward to experiment with my phone and hopefully produce some fun content!'



Introduction to Bird and Egg Collections

Delivered as part of the Natural Science Collections Across Scotland project funded by the John Ellerman Foundation, this workshop at the National Museums Collection Centre on 5 June 2019 aimed to develop participants' confidence in working with their own bird and egg collections. The workshop explored best practice in curating and caring for specimens and covered topics such as labelling and marking, storage, packing and handling, cleaning and pest management, legal and licensing issues, display, and acquisition and disposal.

'Workshop was excellent. I learned a lot about the history and complexity of bird and egg collections as well as the potential for research and the future of such collections.'

'I really enjoyed getting to meet other museum curators and knowing that there are people that can help me if I encounter challenges where I need help.'

'The workshops are invaluable to me in my work by empowering me with the skills I need to properly care for a mixed collection to best practice standards.'

Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs

This workshop at the Hunterian Collections Study Centre, Kelvin Hall, Glasgow on 18 June 2019 was part of our Ancient Egypt and East Asia national programme. It explored the development of writing in ancient Egypt, discussed approaches to research and gave participants the opportunity to learn how to read short hieroglyphic inscriptions directly from ancient objects.

'The workshop was absolutely fantastic! I have learned so much.'

'The opportunity to learn from people with unique expertise in Scotland was much appreciated.'

'This has been an excellent training day – thank you.'

Autism Awareness

This workshop on 24 July 2019 gave participants the opportunity to develop their knowledge and awareness of autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with specialist trainers from Autism Network Scotland. The session was organised as part of the Ancient Egypt and East Asia national programme to support the delivery of local autism friendly programmes and events. Common stereotypes were challenged, and participants discussed the ways in which people on the autism spectrum experience language and communication and process information and explored how organisations can respond to sensory needs to create more autism friendly spaces.

'I can honestly say this was the most engaging and informative training session I have ever attended. The trainers' lived experiences as people with autism and sensory differences added an important dimension to the training and made it much easier to understand what the condition is like to live with, rather than just talk about. Thank you for a very enlightening day.'

Collaboration and Capacity Building

Ancient Egypt and East Asia National Programme

With funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this two-year project extended the reach and impact of our *Ancient Egypt Rediscovered*, *Exploring East Asia* and *Art of Ceramics* galleries beyond the walls of the National Museum of Scotland. It supported engagement with related collections in museums across Scotland through touring exhibitions, new displays, digital resources, skills development and enhanced interpretation and audience development.

Our touring exhibition, *Discovering Ancient Egypt*, incorporating objects from local collections at each venue, travelled to Hawick Museum, Montrose Museum, the Baird Institute, Cumnock and Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The exhibition attracted 8,435 visits to the first three venues with an uplift of over 40% in visitor figures from 2015/16 achieved at two venues. The learning and engagement programme across the first three venues delivered 968 experiences to schools, families, adults and community groups. Partner museums have increased confidence to deliver programming to new audiences, particularly audiences with additional support needs. The exhibition supported museum development at Hawick Museum and Montrose Museum through new display cases, provided by Weston Loan Programme with support from the Art Fund, and the creation of permanent displays of their ancient Egyptian collections. A further tour to East Lothian Council Museums John Gray Centre has been postponed.

Revealing Stories, a programme of displays and audience engagement supported by the Museums Association's Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, provided opportunities to engage with ancient Egyptian and East Asian collections across Scotland with a focus on breaking down barriers to access and inclusion. Displays at Perth Museum and Art Gallery (26 May-27 October 2018), the University of Aberdeen (18 March-22 August 2019), the Kirkcudbright Galleries (30 March-9 June 2019) and Dunfermline Carnegie Library & Galleries (24 August-17 November 2019) were supported with learning resources to engage new audiences, including children and young people with autism and their families.

The East Asia *Reveal* Display programme received a total of 54,973 visitors across the four partner museums and over 3,000 people were reached through audience engagement programmes at partner museums. *Revealing Stories* also enabled two national collection reviews to be undertaken: **Ancient Egyptian Collections in Scottish Museums** and **East Asian Collections in Scottish Museums** revealed detailed insights into collections held in museums across Scotland, identifying significant objects and connections between collections.



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The project supported a knowledge and skills development programme, organised through our National Training Programme. A total of 14 workshops provided 99 training experiences to 71 museum staff and volunteers from 25 organisations across Scotland, enabling them to discover new information about their ancient Egyptian and East Asian collections and promote wider engagement with local audiences.

Natural Science Collections Across Scotland

Funded by the John Ellerman Foundation, this two-year project is reviewing natural science collections across Scotland with a particular focus on fossil collections. The project is advancing curatorial expertise and improving collections care with the aim of enhancing the impact of natural science collections for audiences throughout the country. Project curator, Dr Sue Beardmore, visited 72 collections throughout Scotland, from Kirkcudbright to Fetlar in the north of Shetland, examining specimens, collecting data and giving advice. Her findings will result in two reports, *Review of Fossil Collections in Scottish Museums*, which will provide a comprehensive account of fossil material held across the country and make recommendations for future research and public engagement, and *Priorities for Future Support and Development of Natural Science Collections in Scotland* which will look at natural science collections more broadly. The project is supported by a training programme for staff working with natural science collections. Three workshops were delivered in 2019/20: *Introduction to Bird and Egg Collections* on 5 June 2019; *Introduction to the Care of Entomology Collections* on 21 August 2019; and *Introduction to Rocks, Minerals and Fossils* on 26 February 2020.



Cover image: Objects from the Traprain Treasure on loan to the John Gray Centre, Haddington. © Neil Hanna