



National  
Museums  
Scotland

# National Programme 2014/2015



Cover: Embroidered postcard from the *Next of Kin* First World War  
national travelling exhibition 2014-2017.  
Credit: Ian Jacobs

# National Programme 2014/2015

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Launch of the *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place* exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland. This was the result of a collaborative project with young people, partner museums and collections from across Scotland. Credit: National Museums Scotland

# 1. Summary

As Scotland's national museum service we engage across the nation and ensure our collections, expertise and programmes make wide reaching impacts beyond the walls of our museums. We strive to ensure effective access to the National Collections and the expertise of our staff. Our work across Scotland delivers many outcomes: engagement with local communities, enhancement of local museums, contributions to national economic and social prosperity and enjoyable and enriching opportunities for all. We deliver through a variety of activities: loans and exhibitions of our collections, expert advice for our sector, training and development opportunities for museum staff across Scotland, learning and engagement experiences and events, partnerships and digital media.

We are the largest museum organisation in Scotland with over 12 million items in our care, with the largest concentration of museum expertise nationally. Our aim is to ensure that the National Collections are utilised for the public benefit, curated and cared for, their stories revealed and promoted locally, nationally and internationally. We work across all of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. We also benefit greatly from a network of partnerships that allows us to present and explore the National Collections with local audiences, assisting them to deliver on their ambitions, while expanding the reach and impact of the National Collections.

The current economic climate has brought challenges for the museums and galleries sector nationally. Our focus for future years is to ensure our national activity continues to reach out and deliver benefits across Scotland. We will continue to support our network of partnerships, lend national treasures, promote new and sustained learning and engagement experiences as well as provide advice, training and other support as far as we are able. In addition, we will initiate a new phase of activity to expand the reach and impact of the National Collections for the widest benefit through a programme of touring exhibitions.



Research workshop held at the National Army Museum, London  
as part of the Military Collecting: *Hidden in Plain Sight* project.  
Credit: National Army Museum, London

## 2. Looking Back

In this last year we have:

- Shared our collections and expertise across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities
- Lent 2,634 items to venues in Scotland and across the world
- Provided long-term loans from the National Collections to 92 venues across Scotland
- Supported 12 new exhibitions curated by other museums nationally through significant loans
- Delivered a free training programme to 341 museum colleagues, bringing the reach of our national Knowledge Exchange training for the museum sector to over 1500 people since its inception
- Provided advice or support to all types of museums across the country
- Supported 72 new acquisitions through £198,289 of funding from the National Fund for Acquisitions
- Delivered direct learning experiences to 192,550 participants via visits, workshops, online learning and distance learning
- Encouraged greater engagement from young people across Scotland through national projects like *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place*
- Expanded our involvement in science engagement nationally, through our *Museum2Go* programme
- Marked the Centenary of the First World War with a national exhibition, *Next of Kin*, touring to eight venues across Scotland, combining local and national stories and events
- According to a recent study into the collective social and economic benefits of Scotland's cultural infrastructure (by the Edinburgh Cultural Venues Group) the National Museums contributed a significant 47% (GVA) to the economy.

The following report features detailed information on our National Programme 2014/2015.



Morgan 3-wheel motor car, 1923, on loan from National Museums Scotland to Lews Castle, Museum nan Eilean. National Museums Scotland is lending over 80 items to the new Museum opening 2015.  
Credit: National Museums Scotland

## 3. Sharing Collections

Loans are a powerful way to expand the potential of a display project, whether temporary or permanent. Loans from the National Collections can add context and often assist in raising the profile of the exhibition they are part of. Touring exhibitions are a great way to share collections across the country and develop partnerships between venues.

### Long-term Loans

We lend items from our collections to a very wide range of other organisations. In the last year we lent to 106 UK venues, 92 of them in Scotland, on a long-term basis. These include loans to a number of Scotland's visitor attractions, including Culloden Visitor Centre, Summerlee Museum of Industrial Life, the Scottish Fisheries Museum and Bo'ness and Kineill Railway. The latter features our loan of the Morayshire steam engine.

### National Piping Centre

Our partnership with the National Piping Centre in Glasgow showcases the national bagpipe collection within a centre focussed on sustaining Scotland's rich piping heritage through teaching and research. We are now working with our colleagues on plans for redevelopment at the Centre, which will provide an opportunity to review and refresh the collections on display there.

### Museum nan Eilean and Lews Castle

We have an important partnership with Museum nan Eilean. From 2015 we begin a new phase of collaboration at the new Lews Castle museum, where our loans make up nearly a third of the material on display. These loans will provide rich, new opportunities for fruitful collaboration for many years to come.

### Short-term Loans

We supported 12 new exhibitions last year with a wide range of important loans. These included: *Gold* at the Hunterian Museum, *The Kingdoms of the Northern Picts* at the University of Aberdeen, *Dowalton Loch* at the Whithorn Trust; *Breadalbane Bling* at Perth Museum and Art Gallery and *Towards Dolly* a century of animal genetics at the University of Edinburgh.

### Stromness Museum

*From Stromness to the Punjab: Sir John Login, Maharaja Duleep Singh and the Treasures of Lahore* at Stromness Museum (29 March-25 October 2014) featured a significant number of loan objects: Maharaja Duleep Singh's jewellery, photographs of John Login and Duleep Singh, and the newly commissioned painting by National Museums Scotland (supported by British Council Scotland), *Casualty of War: A portrait of Maharaja Duleep Singh by The Singh Twins*.



Embroidered postcard from the *Next of Kin* touring exhibition  
Credit: Ian Jacobs

## Touring Exhibitions

Touring exhibitions are an excellent way for us to share our collections both geographically and in terms of broadening the audience who can see them. Collaboration around exhibitions is also a valuable way for local venues to expand their own reach and profile. In addition, such collaborations allow national and local museums to enhance skills, share collections and develop mutually beneficial activities.

From 2016 National Museums Scotland is initiating a new programme of touring exhibitions which will build on this experience to date.

### **Next of Kin**

We currently have a national touring exhibition *Next of Kin* touring eight venues across Scotland during 2015-2018. This allows local and national stories to be told together and includes a learning resource for schools and families, an outreach programme, a digital resource, marketing material and a subsidy for transport, events and training. It is a truly national commemoration project for the centenary of the First World War but it is also a project that will leave a lasting legacy for the museums involved having introduced new practice and skills.

### **Reflections on Celts**

As part of our major partnership exhibition, *Celts*, with the British Museum we are also providing a taster touring exhibition for local museums across the UK. From 2015 – 2016 two significant iron age mirrors will be shown at Newark, Littlehampton Museum, Old Gala House in Galashiels, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery and the McManus Galleries in Dundee. As well as sharing treasures that will allow local audiences to explore current thinking on what ‘Celtic’ means and ‘who were the Celts?’ through their collections and the loan items, the project also aims to raise the profile of the collections and museums involved, with a targeted marketing campaign and local programmes of events.



*Museum 2Go is an outreach resource for use by schools and communities across Scotland.  
Credit: Megan Bell*

## 4. Reaching Out

### Schools Outreach Programme

Our programmes for nursery, primary and secondary schools are extensive and reach across Scotland. We provide opportunities to visit our museums, to participate in facilitated workshops, resources for teachers, downloadable resources for use in the classroom, work experience, engagement through GLOW (the Scottish Schools digital network) bringing our experts and artefacts direct to the classroom and opportunities to borrow resources for use in local areas.

Our learning programmes reached 192,550 participants in 2014/2015

#### Museum 2Go

The *Museum2Go* project (funded by the Robertson Trust 2012–2015) took the Museum out to schools across the country. It created handling and learning resources to allow schools to facilitate their own workshops and events on the subjects of Ancient Egypt, the Rainforest, Africa and the Carnival of the Animals. Most recently we developed a jewellery resource designed to encourage pupils to explore their own design interests in relation to our new Art & Design galleries (opening 2016).

### Community Engagement

We like to engage as many people as possible in our work. Our community outreach programmes ensure that our collections reach and connect with as many people as possible. By tailoring our projects to meet the needs and interests of different groups around Scotland, we gain wider access to our objects and resources

#### Panjab Connections

This project, funded by HLF Young Roots, with the Young Sikh Leaders Network from the Glasgow Gurdwara arose from the exhibition *Indian Encounters* at the National Museum of Scotland (Nov 2014-March 2015). Using the collections, National Museums will support the group to research the history of Maharajah Duleep Singh and the tradition of Indian miniature painting. The project focuses on young people developing new skills, for example film making, audio recording and visual art as they explore the story and produce a creative response to what they have learned.

#### Access Friendly Museum

As part of our exciting project to create ten new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland, we are developing new community engagement programmes. With funding from the Scottish Government's Autism Award, we held an After Hours Game Masters event for around 50 young people with autism and their families and supporters. The funding enabled National Museums Scotland to deliver autism awareness training, which is just part of our growing provision of opportunities for people who need a little extra support to enjoy our museums.

## Outreach

We develop all of our programmes with the aim of expanding their reach and impact beyond the walls of our museums. We often take events or experiences to new places to reach new audiences and expand interest and engagement with museums and collections. In the next year we are implementing a number of new activities, including developing our first MOOC (Massive Online Open Course) on Victorian Photography in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, which will be a national and international digital resource for online learning, launching in October 2015.

### National Hub for Science Engagement

our informal and formal programming we deliver science engagement across diverse audiences. The *Rock the Lab* national project in 2013 took science on the road to the music festival circuit in partnership with the Edinburgh International Science Festival and supported by a Scottish Government 'Talking Science' grant. It brought free and interactive science experiments to new audiences across Scotland. We plan to launch a new phase of this programme in 2016. A current project, *Get Energised!* (supported by the Scottish Power Foundation) on renewable energy provides 'Challenge Days' for primary and secondary pupils to explore their interest in engineering and technology and to investigate Scotland's future energy needs. This programme will be developed further across the country from 2016 onwards, demonstrating the importance of museums to science engagement education.

### Scotland Creates

*Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place* exhibition, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Creative Scotland, was launched on 8 May as a culmination of the two-year national youth engagement project led by National Museums Scotland in partnership with McLean Museum and Art Gallery in Greenock, The Dick Institute in Kilmarnock and Museum nan Eilean at Sgoil Lionacleit in the Western Isles. The final display in the National Museum of Scotland brought together exhibitions from the five partner museums, showing young people's creative responses to museum collections. The project also delivered a unique digital strand. We facilitated workshops with young people from all over Scotland to develop their digital skills and produce a series of videos promoting the museums they represented. We also produced a Toolkit for the wider museum sector on working with young people in museums, to further ensure a legacy from this work for all museums.

## Research and Fieldwork

Our research work and its public dissemination provides great opportunities to expand our relationships with museums and communities across the country. For example, we are currently working in Skye to support and develop collaborative research projects that further knowledge of Scotland's international Jurassic fossil history. In addition, our archaeologists are actively involved in numerous projects to identify new finds from recent Scottish excavations. Our teams regularly provide lectures on such new research findings across the country, most recently in Orkney, Shetland, Whithorn and on the Isle of Bute.

### TW:eed Project

TWeed (Tetrapod World: early evolution and diversity), is a collaborative project with the Universities of Cambridge, Leicester and Southampton and the BGS (British Geological Survey), exploring our world-class collection of Palaeozoic fishes and early tetrapods (animals with four limbs) and the mystery of 'Romer's Gap'. This is a time in the Early Carboniferous period (from 360-340 million years ago) when back-boned animals moved onto land for the first time, but about which little is known. Now for the first time, new fossils from the Scottish Borders promise to reveal a much clearer picture of terrestrial life at this time. We are working with colleagues in other UK institutions to explore this and will tour an exhibition across the UK to present these findings.

### Military Collecting: Hidden in Plain Sight

Our research interests often combine with our sector partnership interests, resulting in new areas of research. We ran two research projects in 2013-2015 with the National Army Museum in London, crossing two departments: World Cultures and Scottish History & Archaeology. The focus was military collecting and the non-European collections of regimental, corps and service museums. The Royal Society of Edinburgh funded a series of workshops which allowed us to bring together military historians, anthropologists and regimental museum curators from around the UK and further afield. The British Academy/Leverhulme Trust funded a research assistant who reviewed military collections held in regimental museums across the UK looking at two campaigns in particular: the French and Indian War or Seven Years War (1755-1763) in North America; and the Younghusband Mission to Tibet in 1904. Further research work is planned in this area.



Pair of gilded brass sunflower andirons, c. 1876, designed by Thomas Jekyll (1827 - 1881) and made by Barnard, Bishop and Barnard, Norwoch. Acquired by the Hunterian with support from the National Fund for Acquisitions. Image courtesy of the Fine Art Society. Copyright Michael Whiteway.

## 5. Expert Support

### Advice

We offer collections advice to museums across Scotland. Our staff are in dialogue with colleagues on a daily basis and provide direct advice and guidance on collections where this can be easily facilitated. We maintain a staff directory to support museums in contacting our curators and collections staff for advice [www.nms.ac.uk/advice](http://www.nms.ac.uk/advice)

#### Elgin Museum

In this last year we have enjoyed a fruitful partnership with Elgin Museum in Moray. Elgin has a Recognised Collection of National Significance, particularly the Elgin fossil reptiles from Permo-Triassic times. A number of National Museums Scotland experts have reviewed other parts of Elgin's collections (Natural History and World Cultures) while Elgin has furthered our research interests in the fossils from this region through continued collaboration and support for National Museums Scotland researchers.

### National Fund for Acquisitions

The National Fund for Acquisitions, provided by the Scottish Government, contributes towards the acquisition of objects for the collections of Scottish museums, galleries, libraries, archives and other similar institutions open to the public. The Fund can help with acquisitions in most collecting areas including objects relating to the arts, literature, history, natural sciences, technology, industry and medicine. Decisions on grant applications are made in consultation with curatorial staff at National Museums Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland who provide expert advice to the Fund.

The Fund made 72 payments totalling £198,289 to 34 organisations in 2014/2015. The total purchase value of the objects to which the Fund contributed was £537,655. The Fund achieved wide geographical coverage, supporting purchases by museum services in 21 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas, including 17 local authority museum services, 12 independent museums and 5 university collections.

We also celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Fund in 2014 with a series of profile-raising activities including a blog series from local museums coupled with a Flickr stream to highlight significant acquisitions, a promotional newspaper featuring the blog and a major Symposium on Collecting in Scotland, held at the National Museum of Scotland, which had around 90 participants from across the sector.

*Excellent, power packed day! Thought provoking and full of practical information.*

*Educational, inspiring and entertaining. Good Networking opportunity, Many thanks.*

Peter McCormack, East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust



Assistant Curator, Nicola Tayler advising MGS Heritage Horizons trainees on object marking techniques as part of our Collections Skills marketplace in the 2015/2016 Knowledge Exchange Programme  
Credit: National Museums Scotland

## Sharing Expertise

We try to ensure we work with other colleagues across Scotland to harness the benefits for the majority rather than the few, through targeted projects or partnerships that will enhance and develop collections subject expertise. We have recently focussed on development of Scottish interests in the Dress and Textiles Specialist network (DATS) for UK museums, in response to sector support requests. We also use strategic partnerships to further mutual interests, like our current work with Auchindrain Museum Trust to share historic skills, which has led to important support for displays at the National Museum of Rural Life and skills retention programmes at Auchindrain.

### STICK network

We continue to support the Scottish Transport and Industrial Collections and Knowledge network (STICK), which has gone from strength to strength as a sector support network. We also recently supported the STICK Machine Tools: Scotland-wide collection survey and assessment project, jointly managed by National Museums Scotland, the Museum of Scottish Industrial Life in Summerlee and the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine. Funding was provided by Museums Galleries Scotland. Another important partnership is the ReCREATE project between the University of Glasgow History of Art department and National Museums Scotland. This aims to enhance the display and interpretation of Scotland's textile heritage, and is facilitating new engagement with and innovative thinking around these collections nationally.

### National 'Knowledge Exchange' Training Programme

This popular, free, collections skills training programme has become an integral part of the Scottish sector's National Skills Development Programme. National Museums Scotland experts provide subject specific advice to groups of museum professionals in an informal setting. We target the programme in response to needs raised and provide courses across Scotland. Last year we had 341 participants in 15 events delivered to colleagues from 22 local authority areas. These ranged from basics in handling and couriering collections to top tips in working with young people and appraising collections from the Pacific region.

*I attended the course in anticipation of packing up the collection for moving to Kelvin Hall. The knowledge I gained on this course will be very useful when the process of moving the collection begins.*

Natalie Milor, National Library of Scotland

*Great to speak to and learn from National Museums Scotland staff plus have a lot of current procedures confirmed to be up to date and relevant. Excellent content and pacing.*

Louise Robertson, University of Glasgow



Pacific Project Curator Eve Haddow, examining cloth from Vanuatu at Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The review of Pacific Collections across Scotland can be found at [www.nms.ac.uk/pacific](http://www.nms.ac.uk/pacific)  
Credit: National Museums Scotland

## National Projects

The National Collections have strong links to other collections across Scotland. There is much potential for collaboration across Scotland's collections and for all museums to achieve more through working in partnership. We have developed a number of targeted museum development projects in recent years, to improve the sector's knowledge of its shared collections holdings, to capitalise upon that knowledge and retain it for future generations. Sustaining collection expertise continues to be a challenge across the sector and an area of continued interest for us..

### Pacific Collections Review

We led a project, *Pacific Collections in Scottish Museums: Unlocking their Knowledge and Potential* (funded by the Museums Association Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund), in partnership with Glasgow Life, the University of Aberdeen and Perth Museum and Art Gallery, to review the collections from the Pacific region held in museums across Scotland. This was a transformational project. Not only did it produce a full review of the collections, including information on individual museum holdings to benefit future researchers, it also produced guidance materials to support future curators to appraise their Pacific holdings. Most importantly, we developed new curatorial talent by employing a new curator to lead on production of these resources. The distributed collection now has increased national profile, there is new expertise nationally and new opportunities for these collections in future . We are actively pursuing similar projects in partnership across the sector.



The Balmaclellan Mirror, Iron Age mirror found near Kirkcudbright, one of the objects in the *Reflections on Celts* touring exhibition (see p.9) 2015/2016.  
Credit: National Museums Scotland

## 6. Looking Forward

As Scotland's national museum we are committed to supporting the development of a strong museum sector across the country. Our own ambitions, to make best use of our collections and expertise and ensure wide reaching impacts, are ambitions shared by others in the sector. Therefore, our approach to working across Scotland is also to ensure, wherever possible, that we complement the strategic interests of our fellow museums, galleries and stakeholders.

We contribute at strategic level to sector development plans through the Stakeholder Group for the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries, administered by Museums Galleries Scotland, and will continue to do so. We also nurture our national delivery in collaboration with other museums through our own National Programme, which allows us to prioritise delivery to areas of mutual interest and towards strategic need. We will be consulting with the sector in Autumn 2016 towards setting priorities for our new National Programme 2016-2020.

In this coming year, we will:

- Share the national collections across Scotland through our loans programme, outreach programme and new national touring exhibitions.
- Support museums across Scotland through collections advice and training provided by our National Training Programme and through the National Fund for Acquisitions..
- Reach out to people across Scotland to encourage them to get involved in our learning and development experiences, including online learning, community engagement and research projects.
- Make a truly national impact, engaging across Scotland's 32 local authorities through our national programmes, partnerships and projects.



*Scotland Creates* a national youth engagement project with partner museums, East Ayrshire Museums & Arts, McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum, Museum nan Eilean and Mclean Museum and Art Gallery: fashion and textiles exhibition curated by young people, Dick Institute Kilmarnock

Credit: Mike Scott

## 8. Contact Us

Feedback on the content of this report is welcome.

Please contact us at:

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