Review
2017
Visitors enjoy two of the new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland: (from top) Technology by Design and Explore.
Building on success

This has been an exceptional year for National Museums Scotland. Across our museums we have welcomed over 2.7 million visitors, 1.84 million of these to the National Museum of Scotland making it the most popular museum outside of London and the most visited attraction in Scotland.

A growing connection with our many audiences, partners and stakeholders has been key to our success and one which we do not take for granted. We are determined to sustain our ambition to refresh and update our museums, enhance our collections and enable both a broader and larger audience to share in the enjoyment and inspiration of the National Collections.

We were delighted to announce the successful acquisition of the Galloway Hoard, enabling our expert teams to begin conservation and research to unlock its secrets. We are enormously grateful to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, Scottish Government, many trusts and foundations and over a thousand individual donors for their support in helping us reach the £1.98 million fundraising target.

The successful launch of our National Strategy in Autumn 2016 has given renewed emphasis to our collaborations with museums across Scotland and the support we offer them: sharing our collections, supporting outreach activity including touring exhibitions and building skills and expertise. We now work in every one of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas.

Sharing the National Collections as broadly as possible is also at the heart of our new exhibition touring strategy. 2017 is the first year that we have taken a major exhibition created in-house on a significant international tour. *Monkey Business* opened in Brussels in October 2017 and will travel to Australia, Spain and Finland. Nearer to home, *Fossil Hunters* has been warmly received by audiences from Biggar to the Isle of Lewis, as the first in our new programme of regular exhibition tours within Scotland.

We are proud that the ten new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland, opened in 2016, have achieved international recognition, winning ‘Best Permanent Exhibition’ at the UK Museums and Heritage Awards, and the coveted United States based Dibner Award for ‘Excellence in Museum Exhibits’. Buoyed by this success, we are making good progress with the fourth and final phase of our £80 million Masterplan. With Heritage Lottery Fund support, two new galleries will open in early 2019 dedicated to our internationally important East Asia and Ancient Egypt collections. These will be a fitting finale to this hugely successful project.

All of this valuable work is only possible through the continued and loyal support of our many donors, supporters, partners and volunteers. We are enormously grateful for their generosity and encourage them to continue to support our journey into an even more successful future.

Finally, we would like to thank our staff. It is their hard work, commitment, enthusiasm and expertise that makes National Museums Scotland the thriving, ambitious and successful organisation it is and we could not have delivered this exceptional year without them.

Bruce Minto OBE, Chairman
Dr Gordon Rintoul CBE, Director
Fashion and Style: one of ten new galleries opened in 2016 to win 'Best Permanent Exhibition' at the Museums and Heritage Awards.
A year in numbers

2,714,379 visits

630,000 digitised objects

155,643 social media followers

© Andy Catlin
© Ruth Armstrong
© Chris Scott
253,039 participants in learning activities

1,419 school groups

4,347 objects loaned

2,186,554 website visits
A young visitor enjoys The Tomb exhibition. Over 100,000 visits made it the most popular exhibition to date at the National Museum of Scotland.

“Fantastic collection of original exhibits. Really brought it to life. More like this please!”

“Fascinating and well organised and illustrated exhibition. Good on explaining background and historical changes.”
Growing Visitor Numbers

All four of our museums saw an increase in visitor numbers this year, with the National Museum of Scotland, National War Museum and the National Museum of Rural Life enjoying their highest ever annual attendance. Following on from the enormous success of ten major new galleries opening in 2016, the National Museum of Scotland welcomed over 1.8 million visitors making it the top most visited museum outside London. Over 85,000 visitors to the National Museum of Flight continued to enjoy the new redeveloped hangars. The National War Museum reached over 687,000 visits and the National Museum of Rural Life achieved over 100,000 visits for the very first time.

Fascinating Exhibitions

The Tomb: Ancient Egyptian Burial opened in March, telling the story of one extraordinary ancient Egyptian tomb which was built around 1290 BC and reused for over 1,000 years before being sealed intact in the early 1st century AD. Objects from the tomb were used to explore how burial in ancient Egypt changed over time. The exhibition was extremely well received with over 100,000 visits, making it our most popular exhibition to date.

In the same month, Safer Steps: The Work of the HALO Trust opened at the National War Museum, highlighting the work undertaken by the Trust, which is the world’s largest humanitarian mine clearance organisation. This new partnership for National Museums Scotland has enabled us to explore an important contemporary context for the displays at the Museum, highlighting the impact of war on the local population long after conflicts are over.

Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites opened in June to great critical acclaim. This was the largest exhibition about the Jacobites to be held in over 70 years. Although Bonnie Prince Charlie is the romantic historical figurehead of the Jacobite movement, he was born and died in Rome, spending less than fourteen months in Scotland during his lifetime. Spanning two centuries, the exhibition explored the full story of the Jacobite movement, and its supporters in Britain, Ireland and continental Europe.

"Truly comprehensive, it is essential viewing for anyone who cares about Scotland's history."

★★★★★
The Scotsman
At the Heart of the Festival City

The National Museum of Scotland has established a year-round presence as a key venue for Edinburgh’s rich and diverse festivals. The year began with Sproghanay, three days of family activities and a giant ceilidh as part of the Hogmanay celebrations. January saw Burns Unbound, a day of music, poetry and performance supported by EventScotland. In April we were a central part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival, with a range of displays, workshops, demonstrations, debates and talks, working in partnership with the University of Edinburgh to highlight our new science and technology galleries. We were delighted to welcome the Edinburgh International Children’s Festival in May, with a programme of performances throughout the Museum.

In August, the second year of our partnership with Edinburgh Festival Fringe producer Gilded Balloon presented an eclectic programme of comedy, theatre, music and children’s shows in the best tradition of the Fringe. A new partnership with the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo was initiated, with over 220,000 attendees to the Tattoo able to witness some of the dramatic, poetic and musical elements of the Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites exhibition woven into the narrative of the show. The popular Free Fringe Music, in collaboration with Live Music Now Scotland, showcased the best contemporary talents performing traditional Scottish and Gaelic songs and instrumental sets, and our Friday Fringe showcase of top Fringe acts, Museum After Hours, were all sold-out once again.

“The Museum is fantastic – it’s great to be able to just wander and dip in and out of such a variety of things.”

“The Museum is a wonderful space and the quality of the activities and performances was excellent.”

The Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology

The Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites exhibition took centre stage in the activity for this VisitScotland themed year, with a tourism trail across Scotland to target visitors from around the world. The National Museum of Scotland was also a key partner in the Edinburgh-wide project, 101 Objects. This provided a new way for visitors and locals alike to enjoy the city through 101 well-known and some not so well-known objects. Familiar items from the collections included Mary, Queen of Scots’ jewellery alongside the more unusual choice of a Forth Railway Bridge paint mixer.

4 The Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites exhibition was featured prominently in the performances of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo to over 220,000 attendees.

5 A hand-operated paint mixer used on the Forth Railway Bridge featured in 101 Objects.
Winners at the Royal Highland Show

The working farm at the National Museum of Rural Life is home to over 400 animals, from horses and cattle to pigs, sheep and hens. In December 2016, the Museum welcomed new arrivals in the form of two Highland calves – Airgead II and Ceò V – both named in Gaelic after their mother as is the tradition of the breed. Our Ayrshire cattle did us proud at the Royal Highland Show in June 2017, with Tulip’s Prodigy winning 2nd place and Candy’s Rose 4th place in the ‘Heifer born on or after 1st October 2015’ class.

Digital Awards Success

We continue to use digital platforms to open up our museums to a global audience. The Explore section of our website offers rich insights into the collections through multi-media stories, online games, learning resources and a searchable database of over 630,000 objects. Following its relaunch in 2016, the site has won international acclaim including a Drum Scottish Creative Award and scooping a prestigious GLAMi award from the US-based conference Museums and the Web.
Beyond our walls
Our National Strategy in action across Scotland

National Loans
Our loans programme makes objects from the National Collections accessible to audiences in communities nationwide, enabling as many people as possible to see them. 4,347 objects were loaned to 124 organisations across Scotland last year. Highlights included over 80 long-term loan items to the new Lewis Castle Museum, Stornoway, and the Whithorn Crozier to the Whithorn Trust Visitor Centre as part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology.

National Touring
Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Fossil Hunters: Unearthing the Mystery of Life on Land featured extraordinary fossils discovered in the Scottish Borders. This discovery illustrated a major evolutionary milestone: the transition of vertebrate life from water to land. Following a successful run at the National Museum of Scotland in 2016, the exhibition toured to Biggar and Upper Clydesdale Museum, Montrose Museum and Art Gallery, and Museum nan Eilean. Two smaller tours of highlight objects – Reflections on Celts and Gifts for a Jacobite Prince – complemented major exhibitions at the National Museum of Scotland.

And with the final stages of First World War centenary project Next of Kin, in total our national touring activity reached over 179,000 people in communities across Scotland.

“It gave the Museum an opportunity to highlight an aspect of its own collections and re-ignite interest locally in fossils.”

Linda Fraser, Museum Officer, Montrose Museum and Art Gallery

1 Clean Sheets by Fiona Mathison on loan to Dovecot Studios.
2 Pupils from Ferryden Primary School exploring Fossil Hunters on display at Montrose Museum and Art Gallery.
11,491 people engaged through outreach programmes beyond our sites

Activity with each of Scotland’s 32 local authorities

148 museums supported

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National Training Programme

Our National Training Programme provides free collections knowledge and skills training for staff in museums across Scotland. In 2016/17 we delivered 255 learning experiences for local museum staff. Topics included identifying and caring for Scottish silver, managing textile collections, best practice in collections couriering, how to label objects, and developing an integrated pest management strategy.

National Programme activities reached all of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas.

148 museums were supported through training, loans, touring and community engagement projects, talks and expert advice.

National Fund for Acquisitions

National Museums Scotland administers the National Fund for Acquisitions, a £150,000 fund provided by Scottish Government each year to help museums, galleries, libraries and archives throughout Scotland to acquire objects for their collections. Funding decisions are based on expert advice on applications from our own curatorial staff and that of the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland. In 2016/17 the Fund supported 64 acquisitions with a total purchase price of £372,860, helping to develop and enhance the collections of 31 organisations in 16 local authorities across Scotland.

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A workshop giving an introduction to Iron Age and Roman archaeology at the National Museums Collection Centre as part of the National Training Programme.
Taking Scotland to the world

Promoting our work on an international stage

Touring Across Continents

Monkeys! A Primate Story is the first major exhibition created by National Museums Scotland to tour internationally. Based on the family-friendly exhibition, Monkey Business which was on display in the National Museum of Scotland from December 2016 to April 2017, it explores the world of primates, from the tiny mouse lemur to the mighty gorilla. It features 60 spectacular new taxidermy specimens and skeletons of monkeys, apes, lemurs and bushbabies alongside a host of interactives, film, models and photography. The exhibition will tour internationally from October 2017 until January 2021 with venues right across the globe. These include the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels, the Queensland Museum, Brisbane and the Natural Science Museum of Barcelona.

1 Photography of a specimen from Monkeys! A Primate Story before the start of the international tour.
Academic Collaboration

Our curators are in demand to present their work internationally at academic conferences and to build relationships with other academic institutions. Dr Nick Fraser continues his international collaboration with Beijing University and Chicago’s Field Museum, discovering several new ancient reptile species – extraordinary creatures that would have inhabited the seas of the Triassic period. Supporting our work to develop a new East Asia gallery, a new Memorandum of Understanding with the National Institutes for the Humanities in Japan will enable curatorial and knowledge exchange that will generate better understanding of our Japanese collections.

Silver, Status and Society

We have created a collaborative research network, Silver, Status and Society – the transition from Late Roman to Early Medieval Europe, which is helping us to place our knowledge of Scotland’s early silver in a European context.

The network, which is supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, extends the activity of the Glenmorangie Research Project led by Alice Blackwell, which has led to the exhibition Scotland’s Early Silver and an accompanying book. The findings of the network will be disseminated publically through a conference in Edinburgh, and academic dissemination at symposia in the UK and Denmark.

Our American Foundation

The American Foundation for National Museums Scotland enables us to build connections with audiences based in North America who have a strong interest in Scotland. Its support helps us to reveal the stories behind the remarkable artefacts in Scotland’s National Collections, making them accessible to millions of people every year.

This year, friends and supporters in the United States have played a critical role in our campaign to save the Galloway Hoard, and taken us a step closer to completing the £80 million Masterplan transformation of the National Museum of Scotland.

2 Dr Nick Fraser continues his international collaboration with Beijing University.

3 A silver chain dating from 6th or 7th century on display in Scotland’s Early Silver, an exhibition resulting from the Glenmorangie Research Project. The findings will be disseminated at symposia in the UK and Denmark.
With over 155,000 followers on social media our visitors enjoy sharing their experiences at our museums more than ever.
#MonkeyBusiness
#Instameet

The world’s most famous sheep ©NtlMuseumsScot
#MuseumSelfieDay2017

#WartimeExperience. Excellent mix of child-friendly fun, terrible truths, re-enactment, music & dance

It’s Electrifying!

#InstaMuseum
#bigdiscoveries

#illridethatone
#childhoodunplugged

#fashioncuration

#AwesomeBricks
Museum of Flight, experienced engineers were given the opportunity to share their tool skills with teenagers in Engaging with Experience, a cross-generational project which offers experience of a real work environment to improve employability amongst young people. Over 18 months, a team of five engineers has worked with 12 participants stripping and rebuilding a de Havilland Gypsy Queen engine and constructing other large aircraft components.

Reaching out

Working with diverse communities to create connections with the collections

The Women of Hamilton Palace

Students studying Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing at South Lanarkshire College used the fashion collections of National Museums Scotland and Low Parks Museum to explore identity, body image and what it has meant to ‘look good’ throughout history. Utilising historical sources, they learned about five women who had lived in Hamilton Palace: who they were, the challenges they faced, and how they chose to represent themselves through their own appearance. The project culminated in a photoshoot at the Mausoleum, the only feature of the palace still remaining, where models displayed hairstyles, make-up and clothing created by the group. This project has engaged an often ‘hard to reach’ young adult audience with their local heritage through the National Collections and provided valuable work experience for the students, helping to create a portfolio they can use in their careers.

STEM Education and Training

Building on the success of our six new galleries dedicated to science and technology, we are developing and leading education initiatives to improve public engagement with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Through Powering Up, a national science engagement programme supported by ScottishPower Foundation, over 500 school pupils and communities in South Lanarkshire, Midlothian and West Dunbartonshire have so far taken part in workshops relating to renewable energy. Also, at the National Museum of Flight, experienced engineers were given the opportunity to share their tool skills with teenagers in Engaging with Experience, a cross-generational project which offers experience of a real work environment to improve employability amongst young people. Over 18 months, a team of five engineers has worked with 12 participants stripping and rebuilding a de Havilland Gypsy Queen engine and constructing other large aircraft components.
“[My daughter] often finds it difficult to express herself, but told me in the car that she had a great time at the Museum and has asked to go back to the Egyptians.”

Mrs M Kelly, Teacher, Mauchline Primary School

“This is a fabulous project that has tied in well with our STEM project. This has covered many areas – STEM, language, history of art, design, engineering, technology.”

Resources for Children on the Autism Spectrum

54 people attended Early Door sessions designed specially to help families with children on the autism spectrum enjoy a calm and focused private look at The Tomb exhibition before the Museum opened to the public. The sessions made use of new ancient Egypt handling resources created to support outreach to schools or groups unable to visit the Museum. A range of new backpacks to support families on self-led visits has also been introduced.

Inspired to Create

380 Primary 7 school pupils from East Ayrshire took part in I Am Here, a four-week project funded by Creative Scotland and East Ayrshire Leisure. Most of the pupils had never previously visited the National Museum of Scotland, and through two full-day visits were able to explore many of the galleries and take part in discussions, treasure hunts, handling sessions and hands on workshops.

Back at school, the pupils worked with professional jewellery designer-makers to experiment with some of the specialist techniques and materials associated with the objects and jewellery on display at the Museum, creating their own jewellery which was then displayed in Kilmarnock and at the National Museum of Scotland.

3 Pupils taking inspiration from the jewellery on display in Making and Creating as part of the I Am Here project.
Enriching Scotland’s heritage
Landmark acquisitions enhance the collection

Burges Vase

An exceptional addition to our new Design for Living gallery is an exquisite vase from a set of four, designed by the gothic revival architect and designer William Burges (1827–81). The vase was part of Burges’ concept for one of his greatest interiors; the Summer Smoking Room at Cardiff Castle, designed and built between 1866 and 1874 for the 3rd Marquess of Bute. An export bar enabled us to save it for the nation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust.

Galloway Hoard

We have successfully raised £1.98 million enabling us to purchase the Galloway Hoard, the richest collection of rare and unique Viking-age objects ever found in Britain or Ireland. The Hoard is of international significance and will transform our understanding of this period of Scottish history. Uncovered by a metal detectorist in Dumfries and Galloway, it comprises in excess of 100 gold, silver and other Viking-age items buried at the beginning of the 10th century. Extensive conservation and research can now begin to help us unlock its many secrets.

In time, material from the Hoard will be displayed in the National Museum of Scotland, in Dumfries and Galloway and toured to other parts of Scotland to be enjoyed by as many people as possible. We are grateful to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, Scottish Government, the National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust and our Patrons, Members, and visitors for their generous support in helping us to acquire and protect the Galloway Hoard for generations to come.

Fettercairn Jewel

In March we acquired an exceptionally rare Scottish Renaissance jewel – a 16th century enamelled gold pendant locket set with an almandine garnet. Dating from c.1570–80, this exquisite work of art offers the opportunity for new insights into the Renaissance period in Scotland. The pendant was from the private collection of the Forbes family of Pitsligo who trace their lineage back to King Robert II of Scotland. The purchase was made possible thanks to the generosity of Art Fund, The National Lottery and the National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust.

1 Principal Curator of Modern and Contemporary Design, Dr Sally-Anne Huxtable presents the Burges vase.

2 A selection of items from the Galloway Hoard, the richest collection of rare Viking-age objects ever found in Britain or Ireland.

3 The exquisite decoration of the Fettercairn Jewel depicts flowers and exotic birds.
Engaging our Staff

Inspiring People is our People and Organisational Development Strategy 2017–20. Together with its accompanying Action Plan, it will support us in meeting the opportunities, challenges and potential set out in our Strategic Plan, through a range of activities focused around our four interconnected themes of Leadership and Learning, Partnership and Working Together, Performance and Recognition, and Health and Wellbeing.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important and appreciated part of National Museums Scotland, giving their time and passion to support us in our work, and bringing with them new experiences, perspectives and insights. In the last year our Volunteer Programme supported 597 people in roles that developed their personal, professional and community involvement. Event planning, providing tours, photography, co-ordinating school groups and gardening are only a few of the tasks undertaken. A new Volunteer Strategy was developed in 2016 to ensure we can grow this valuable resource over the next few years.

“Volunteering has overtaken my expectations. I have learned gardening skills while practicing my English and making new friends so now I am not so shy! I strongly recommend being a volunteer at National Museums Scotland as there are plenty of activities and opportunities where your talents can be used.”

Viktoria Urikova, Volunteer Gardener

1 Conservation staff working on a roll of ‘L’Eden’ block printed wallpaper for the Art and Design galleries.

2 A volunteer packing items for relocation.

3 Dr Martin Goldberg promoting the Galloway Hoard public campaign appeal.
Growing our Income

Securing substantial non-government income is a key factor in achieving our ambitions as we move forward. It is vital in enabling us to sustain short, medium and long term investment in our collections, museum buildings, displays and facilities. We are working proactively to grow our membership, attract sponsorship, and maximise opportunities to generate income through projects, exhibitions and events, new partnerships and commercial activity.

Gold Awards

The National Museums of Rural Life, Flight and Scotland all achieved a Gold Award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme in May 2017, the largest and most established sustainable certification programme in the world. Our dedication to working responsibly, ethically and sustainably, and the reduction in our carbon footprint, all contributed to this success.
Future focus
Forging a path for continued success
Revealing Cultures

The creation of two galleries showcasing our world-class collections relating to ancient Egypt and three major East Asian cultures – China, Japan and Korea – will mark the completion of our £80 million, 15-year Masterplan for the National Museum of Scotland. Opening in early 2019, the new galleries will display over 1,200 objects, 40% of which have never been on display in over a generation.

The Ancient Egypt Rediscovered gallery will present the remarkable culture and achievements of the ancient Egyptians, highlighting individual stories to give a sense of their values and personal lives. The displays will showcase the depth and breadth of our ancient Egyptian material which is the result of over 150 years of collecting.

We have one of the most significant East Asia collections in the United Kingdom. The Exploring East Asia gallery will present a unique perspective on East Asia, enabling visitors to explore and contrast the diverse traditions, peoples and histories of three fascinating and dynamic cultures.

National Museums Collection Centre

Central to the delivery of our strategic vision, the National Museums Collection Centre is an active and vibrant hub for collections access, research, storage and the long-term preservation of our National Collections. This year we opened a £3.4 million extension to our conservation and science facilities increasing our capacity to conserve, research and prepare collections for exhibition and loan, as well as supporting our growing programme of national and international touring exhibitions. A successful programme of monthly public tours to the site continues, increasing access to collections not on display and providing insight to the work happening ‘behind the scenes’.

National Museum of Flight

In 2018, planning for the next phase of development will begin in earnest at the National Museum of Flight. Comet to Concorde envisages the construction of a new visitor arrival and display building, allowing us to address the urgent conservation and environmental needs of the collection while significantly enhancing the visitor experience.

1 Artefact Conservator Charles Stable examining under UV light the funerary canopy of Montsuef, which will be displayed in the new permanent gallery, Ancient Egypt Rediscovered.

2 Bobby, a western lowland gorilla, being prepared for touring at the National Museums Collection Centre.

3 Concorde being cleaned at the National Museum of Flight.
With thanks

Our museums are enriched by our community of supporters. Our Members, Patrons and Donors, those who remember us in their will, and those who sponsor our work, together make it possible for us to safeguard Scotland’s National Collections and to reveal the remarkable stories behind the objects in our care. In 2017, our supporters helped us to create stunning exhibitions, to acquire significant objects, to extend our reach to audiences across Scotland and to give millions of people the chance to experience our world class museums. Thank you.

Our Supporters in 2016/17

Key funders
Heritage Lottery Fund
Scottish Government

Trusts and other organisations
Art Fund
Antiquarian Horological Society
Arts and Business Scotland
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The Castansa Trust
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Aaron Duke, Trial Bike Champion, in action at Wheels and Wings at the National Museum of Flight.

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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

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We would like to record our special thanks to the Trustees of the National Museums Charitable Trust for their ongoing support of our work.

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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

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1 Senior Curator Dr Margaret Maitland with a unique mummy shroud, discovered in the collection during research for the exhibition The Tomb: Ancient Egyptian Burial.

2 Clydesdale Dapple Miriyana with Maggie McDougall, Stockperson, at the National Museum of Rural Life.
Dolly the Sheep being admired by schoolchildren on one of the 1,419 school group visits this year.
National Museums Scotland cares for museum collections of international importance, presenting and interpreting them for a broad audience.

Cover image: A rare gold bird-pin (foreground) and silver arm ring bundle (background) from the Galloway Hoard.