



National
Museums
Scotland

National
Programme
2016/2017



Introduction

On 26 October 2016 we launched our National Strategy for 2016–2020: *Across Scotland, Working to Engage and Inspire*, an event which saw colleagues from across Scotland's culture and heritage sector come together to share their experience of working in partnership with National Museums Scotland. In a keynote address Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, said:

National Museums Scotland can only be truly national if it helps and leads museum activity right across Scotland and this new Strategy will help drive that forward.

The new touring opportunities which will see the sharing of national treasures at museums across Scotland will help inspire visitors and is a step-change in the role of National Museums Scotland as a national institution.

The National Strategy renews our commitment to take our collections beyond the walls of our four museums to engage and inspire audiences from all backgrounds in every part of the country. The strategy sets out the priorities which will achieve this, sharing our collections, skills and expertise nationally to build local capacity and deliver the greatest benefit to people and places across Scotland.

This work builds on our strong track record of collaboration with, and support for, museums across Scotland. In 2016/17 we worked directly with 148 museums and organisations on a wide range of partnership projects including touring exhibitions, strategic loans, collections advice, learning and engagement, networking events, skills development and funding for acquisitions.

Across Scotland

Our National Programme in numbers

In 2016/2017 our work across Scotland included the following activity:

148 museums

supported through training, loans, acquisitions, touring and community engagement projects

64 acquisitions

supported by the National Fund for Acquisitions worth **£373,000**, enriching the collections of **31** organisations in **16** local authorities

4,347 objects loaned

to **124** organisations across Scotland including **14** new venues

255 training experiences

provided to **143** museum staff working in **64** organisations across **23** local authorities

11,491 people engaged

through outreach programmes

95,930 visitors

at **3** venues on our *Reflections on Celts* tour with an average increase of **35%** in visitors at two venues

63,000 visitors

to our *Next of Kin* tour at **9** venues, engaging **1,913** people in **74** associated learning events

Sharing Scotland's Collections

Touring Exhibitions

In 2017 we launched our new national touring programme which aims to tour at least one new exhibition annually to venues across Scotland. To enable as many museums as possible to participate in the programme, it is our intention to seek external support to meet the costs of hosting exhibitions. We have already secured funding for the 2017 and 2018 touring programmes.



Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland, with Fiona Hyslop MSP at the launch of our National Strategy 2016–2020. © Neil Hanna

Next of Kin: Scottish Families and the Great War

Next of Kin marked the centenary of the First World War with a display of objects treasured by Scottish families in memory of loved ones lost in the conflict. The exhibition opened at the National War Museum with eight family stories from the national collection before touring to nine venues across Scotland, starting at Dumfries Museum in March 2015. At each venue the core display was joined by two local stories, giving the exhibition particular significance for community audiences. A digital resource draws together family stories and related objects from partners' collections. An important element of the project was the skills development programme for staff in partner museums, supported by a comprehensive tour manual, which covered research, content development, exhibition installation, audience engagement, marketing and evaluation. Since April 2016 the exhibition has toured to Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Perth Museum and Art Gallery and the Black Watch Castle and Museum before closing at its final venue, Orkney Museum, on 20 May 2017.



Next of Kin learning event at Symington Library, South Ayrshire.
© South Ayrshire Council

The exhibition was visited by 63,000 people and over 1,900 people attended 74 community learning events organised by our partners. As a legacy of the project we worked with seven partners to create First World War learning resources linked to their family stories which will be used at each museum to engage local audiences in the long term. The project was funded by Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Reflections on Celts

Organised in partnership with the British Museum to complement the major exhibition *Celts* at the National Museum of Scotland in 2016, this highlight display focused on two Iron Age mirrors from the collections of the British Museum and National Museums Scotland. The exhibition visited Old Gala House in Galashiels (15 March – 21 May 2016), Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (23 May – 29 August 2016) and The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum (1 September 2016 - 26 March 2017). The exhibition inspired fresh engagement with local audiences with a total of 95,930 visitors to the touring exhibition overall. Old Gala House created a new schools programme and saw a 38% increase in visitors compared to the same period in 2015. Inverness Museum and Art Gallery nurtured a new partnership with mental health charity Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre, presenting a community led exhibition inspired by the mirrors which explored themes of identity and reflection. The tour was supported by the Dorset Foundation.

Fossil Hunters: Unearthing the Mystery of Life on Land

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), *Fossil Hunters* featured a collection of fossils discovered in the Scottish Borders which represent a major evolutionary milestone; the transition of vertebrate life from water to land during the Early Carboniferous period, 360-345 million years ago. Following a successful run at the National Museum of Scotland in 2016 the exhibition toured to Biggar and Upper Clydesdale Museum (15 October 2016 - 15 January 2017) and Montrose Museum and Art Gallery (21 January - 1 April 2017). Here's what Montrose Museum had to say about their experience of hosting the exhibition:



Pupils from Ferryden Primary School exploring *Fossil Hunters* at Montrose Museum and Art Gallery.
© ANGUSalve Museums, Galleries & Archives

Montrose Museum was delighted with the public enthusiasm for the Fossil Hunters exhibition. It gave the Museum an opportunity to highlight an aspect of its own collections and reignite interest locally in fossils. Both the talk by Dr Nick Fraser from National Museums and the children's workshops run by Montrose staff had great responses. The exhibition managed to make events in the evolution of vertebrates both exciting and understandable to all age groups.

Gifts for a Jacobite Prince

This highlight display toured in advance of the major exhibition *Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites* which opened at the National Museum of Scotland on 23 June 2017. It featured a sword and targe gifted to Prince Charles Edward Stuart by James, 3rd Duke of Perth, a committed supporter of the Jacobite cause. The display toured to Perth Museum and Art Gallery (25 October 2016 – 25 February 2017) and Inverness Museum and Art Gallery (7 March – 21 May 2017). This tour provided an opportunity for partners to highlight their significant local collections and assisted in promotion of the upcoming exhibition in Edinburgh.

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 value of £372,860, helping to develop and enhance the collections of 31 organisations in 16 local authorities across Scotland.



The National Fund for Acquisitions supported the purchase of an oil painting, *The Pier at Cove – Loch Long*, painted around 1934 by Scottish Colourist F C B Cadell, seen here in the Scottish Maritime Museum's Linthouse Engine Shop.

Loans

Through our active programme of loans to museums throughout Scotland we seek to enable as many people as possible to see objects from the national collection in their own community and to inspire museums to find new ways to engage with their audiences. In 2016/17 4,347 objects were loaned to 124 organisations across Scotland, including 18 new loans of 75 objects to 14 venues.



Over 80 items from the national collection are on loan to Lewis Castle.
© Isobel Martin

Lewis Castle Museum

The national collection played a major role in the transformation of Lewis Castle Museum in Stornoway which opened to the public on 14 July 2016 with over 80 items (some one third of all the objects on display) on loan from National Museums Scotland. This follows nine years of formal partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in the areas of training, audience engagement, touring exhibitions and loans. Nick Smith, Heritage Manager at Lewis Castle, said:

Partnership with National Museums Scotland has been an essential factor in the development of the new Museum nan Eilean at Lewis Castle. Our close working relationship has contributed to a high quality exhibition which will provide an excellent visitor experience.



The replica Deskford carnyx was loaned to Aberdeenshire Heritage's exhibition *Treasures of Historic Banffshire* at Duff House.

Treasures of Historic Banffshire

We worked closely with Aberdeenshire Council on their exhibition *Treasures of Historic Banffshire* at Duff House, 29 October 2016 – 26 February 2017, in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland. The display showcased archaeological treasures discovered in the North East of Scotland during the last 200 years, including the Deskford carnyx and the Gaulcross hoard of Pictish silver. The replica carnyx, loaned from the national collection, enabled visitors to see what this extraordinary object would have looked like when it was originally created.

Whithorn Trust

Three objects were loaned to the Whithorn Trust's Visitor Centre for a new display focusing on the bishops of Whithorn. The 12th century Whithorn Crozier and two rings worn by bishops at Whithorn during the 13th century were discovered during excavations at Whithorn Priory in the 1950s and 1960s. The high level of craftsmanship, particularly in the crozier with its delicate gilded metal framework decorated with champlevé enamels, demonstrates the power and wealth of the bishopric during the medieval period.

Engaging and Inspiring People

Community Engagement

Through our inclusive community engagement and outreach programmes we seek to make a positive and lasting impact on people's lives, promoting equality, health and wellbeing and the sense of belonging that comes from sharing our common heritage.

Celts at Polmont Young Offenders Institute

Working with Fife College, we completed a six-week learning course for twenty-five young men at Polmont Young Offenders Institute, inspired by the *Celts* exhibition held at the National Museum of Scotland in 2016. Using imagery, film, replica objects and curatorial expertise, the group explored the exhibition's themes to discover Celtic art, discuss Celtic identity, explore stereotypes and learn new skills. Work undertaken helped some towards Further Education qualifications as well as providing a forum in which to broaden their understanding and motivate them towards a positive future.



Trying on a replica gold torc, part of the Celts learning course at Polmont Young Offenders Institute.
© HMYOI Polmont

Feeling Good: The Women of Hamilton Palace

In partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture, this project encouraged seventeen students studying Beauty Therapy and Hairdressing at South Lanarkshire College to explore identity, body image and what it has meant to 'look good' throughout history. Using historical sources, including paintings, letters and objects from the collections at National Museums Scotland and Low Parks Museum in Hamilton, the group studied the lives of five women who lived at Hamilton Palace; who they were, the challenges they faced and how they chose to present themselves through their 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 engaged an often 'hard to reach' audience in their local heritage and provided valuable work experience for the students together with a portfolio of designs they can use in their future careers.



Students from South Lanarkshire College exploring the lives of the women of Hamilton Palace as part of the *Feeling Good: The Women of Hamilton Palace* project.

I Am Here

This project, in partnership with East Ayrshire Leisure, focused on contemporary jewellery design for new audiences. 380 P7 pupils from schools in East Ayrshire visited the new *Making and Creating* gallery at the National Museum of Scotland and followed an activity trail through the World Cultures galleries, exploring body decoration in different cultures. *I Am Here*, a Crafts Council exhibition of jewellery at the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock, provided further inspiration for the pupils who worked with professional jewellery designers to create their own wearable art designs which were displayed in the National Museum of Scotland Learning Centre in May 2017. The project received funding from Creative Scotland. This is what one teacher and one pupil had to say about the project:

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.

Mrs M Kelly, Mauchline Primary School

My favourite part about the trip to Edinburgh was exploring the different parts of the world and the jewellery from there. This has been my favourite trip in ages. Thank You!

Scarlett Mischa Burrell (pupil)



Pupils from schools in East Ayrshire worked with professional jewellery designers to create their own wearable art.

Digital

Following the success of our first MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), *Photography: A Victorian Sensation*, based on the major exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland in 2015, we launched *Stereoscopy: An Introduction to Victorian Stereo Photography* in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. Reaching 7,442 people worldwide, such MOOCs are a great way for people, wherever they are, to engage with and learn from our collections. A third MOOC will focus on the exhibition *Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites*.

Science Engagement

Powering Up!

With funding from ScottishPower Foundation, we are offering a series of workshops for schools in Midlothian, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire to engage teachers and pupils with renewable energy. Working in partnership with industrial museums – the National Mining Museum in Midlothian, New Lanark World Heritage Site in South Lanarkshire and the Scottish Maritime Museum at Denny Tank Museum, West Dunbartonshire – we will deliver science engagement activities for upper primary school pupils and for families and communities in each area. National Museums Scotland will take part in the Midlothian Science Festival in October 2017.

James Watt Bicentenary

As part of our work to promote engagement with science and engineering we are partnering with organisations across Scotland to celebrate the achievements of James Watt leading up to the 200th anniversary of his death in 2019. The partnership, launched at the Scottish Parliament in January 2016, aims to increase awareness of Watt's achievements and their relevance today. Partners include Historic Environment Scotland, the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Falkirk Community Trust, Friends of Kinneil, Glasgow Life, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and Greenock Museum and Art Gallery.

Strengthening Skills and Expertise

National Training Programme

Our popular 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 143 local museum staff from 64 organisations in 23 local authority areas. 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.

Building Skills: Scottish silver

A group of curators from museums across Scotland attended *Introduction to Scottish Silver Collections* at the National Museum of Scotland on 8 March 2017. The workshop covered styles and techniques in Scottish silver, how to identify makers' marks and how to handle and care for silver collections. Participants had the opportunity to handle silver objects from the national collection and were given a tour of the Scottish silver displays at the National Museum of Scotland. Here are some of their comments:

Wonderful and very helpful to be able to handle objects and see up close.

I feel more confident at steps to identify makers, places and manufacturers/goldsmiths and add information to our database.

We are carrying out a review and I will now feel confident when describing [silver] objects.



Scottish silver workshop at the National Museum of Scotland.

Building Skills: Dress and textiles

Curators from our Art and Design department travelled to Perth on 9 February 2017 to deliver a workshop, *Introduction to Dress and Textile Collections*, for staff from Perth Museum and Art Gallery and the Scottish Fisheries Museum. The event focused on the knowledge and practical skills required to catalogue, store and care for dress and textile collections including object handling, condition checking, measuring, photography, object numbering and packing. Participants made the following comments:

I am far more prepared now for our upcoming costume review and I look forward to using my new skills in packing, analysing and storing our textiles.

Will be better equipped with the knowledge and practical experience needed to safely handle, pack and store this type of material.

Now have a clearer vision of how to make the collection accessible in the new storage facility.

Curatorial Advice

We share our specialist collections knowledge with colleagues at museums across Scotland through touring exhibitions, loans and training workshops as well as through advice offered on an individual basis by members of staff. Dr Godfrey Evans visited Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran, in July 2016 to assist the National Trust for Scotland in cataloguing their important collections including outstanding examples of Scandinavian and Dutch silver and base metalwork, acquired by the 11th and 12th Dukes of Hamilton. The results of this ongoing work will be added to the National Trust for Scotland's database and used for new displays planned for the re-opening of the castle in 2018. Support from Dr Evans was instrumental in the National Trust for Scotland achieving Recognition Status from Museums Galleries Scotland for the collection at Brodick Castle.



Children from Palnackie Primary School on an archaeological dig near Castle Douglas learning about finds from Dr Fraser Hunter, Principal Curator of Prehistory and Roman Archaeology.

Research and Fieldwork

Military Collecting and Collections

National Museums Scotland, in partnership with the National Army Museum and regimental museums in Scotland and the rest of the UK, has been involved in research into military collecting with funding from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy. In January 2017, Dr Henrietta Lidchi (Research Fellow and former Keeper, World Cultures) and Dr Stuart Allan (Principal Curator, Scottish History & Archaeology) were awarded an Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant of £390,000 for the research project *Baggage and Belonging: Military Collections and the British Empire (1750-1900)*. By studying objects collected during military campaigns in India and Africa, the three-year project will offer valuable insights into encounters between imperial forces and non-European people during this period. The research will lead to an exhibition at the National War Museum, publications and an international symposium.



Nicole Hartwell, Postdoctoral Researcher, *Baggage and Belonging: Military Collections and the British Empire*, examining an Asante stool with Alastair Massie, Head of Research and Academic Access at the National Army Museum.

New National Strategy

In October–November 2015 we consulted museums across Scotland on how we might develop our National Programme for 2016–2020. In addition to an online consultation we involved colleagues in five workshops in Edinburgh, Inverness, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Kilmartin. This opportunity to share views and engage in discussion was well received. Feedback suggested our programmes were all performing well and helping communities and other museums across the country. Colleagues expressed interest in new areas of collaboration too. This extensive feedback allowed us to shape our priorities for the future in our new National Strategy published in 2016.



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