



National  
Museums  
Scotland

# Across Scotland

National Strategy 2021–22





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Powering Up Science Weekend, 25–26 May 2019, part of the Powering Up project

## Across Scotland: National Strategy 2021–2022

National Museums Scotland launched its first national strategy in 2006 and since then our work across the country has gone from strength to strength. Our work with other museums and communities across Scotland allows us to share the National Collections widely and to support our sector, where we can. We do this through loans, touring exhibitions, learning, outreach and digital programmes as well as offering advice, acquisition funding and training programmes to other museums.

The enormous challenges faced by all in the last year due to the outbreak of Covid-19 has made this work even more important. In response, we pulled together a package of support that fitted the immediate needs of our peers for practical help to aid recovery. Looking ahead and following consultation with museums, funders, staff and stakeholders, we have a better understanding about how we can best serve our sector and national recovery priorities. We have developed a shorter and more flexible interim strategy which enables us to react to immediate requirements and priorities. Concurrently, we will begin to plan for the longer term and think strategically on how we can contribute proactively to the challenges faced by the sector while continuing the positive and effective collaborations we have built up with partners over the years.

Dr Christopher Breward  
Director, National Museums Scotland



## Vision

Our vision sets out what we aspire to achieve through our national programmes:

To engage and inspire people across Scotland by sharing our collections, their stories and our expertise for the widest benefit.

## Aims

In this period, as our resources allow, we aim to:

1. Respond to local and national interests by targeting our expertise and programmes to areas of need.
2. Broaden the range of people and places across Scotland accessing and engaging with the National Collections.
3. Develop and support initiatives to build capacity in our sector, harnessing external funds to extend our support.
4. Enhance the reach and impact of our national work through collaboration, innovation and effective communications.



An Introduction to Iron Age and Roman Archaeology in Scotland workshop, part of the National Training Programme



Schools workshop at Paisley Museum, part of a project with National Museums Scotland to engage autistic young people with museum collections

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## Priorities

These aims will be delivered through continuing the three strategic priorities that guide our national work:

- Share Scotland's collections**
- Engage and inspire people**
- Strengthen skills and expertise**

## Values

This Strategy will also reflect our organisational values, which describe how we want to operate – with each other and externally:

### ***Creative***

we are innovative and thrive on good ideas

### ***Inclusive***

we are open, friendly and enabling

### ***Collaborative***

we are enquiring, receptive and well connected

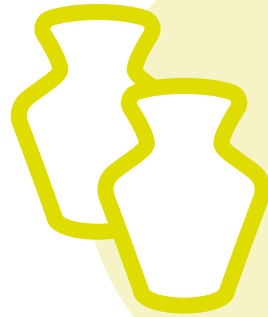
### ***Forward-thinking***

we look for the big picture as well as the detail



### Advice

access to expertise in collections identification, care and management

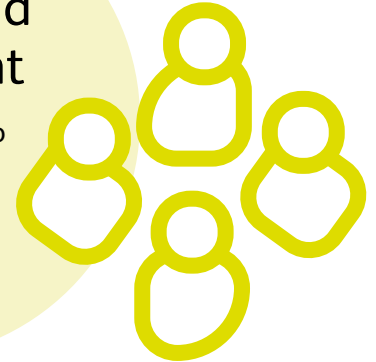


### Loans

engage local audiences with the national collections

### Learning and Engagement

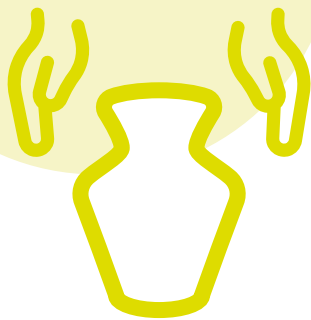
work in partnership to develop programmes for all audiences



# Across Scotland National Programme

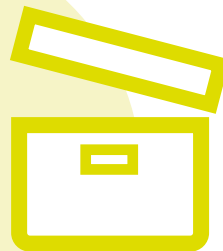
### Training

strengthen skills with online courses, demonstrations and case studies



### National Collection Reviews

reveal objects and connections between collections



### National Fund for Acquisitions

supporting development of collections across Scotland



### Touring

fully developed exhibitions shared in local venues



## Context

Consultation completed in 2019 and throughout 2020 has identified the following themes as key drivers for this period of work.



### Sharing expertise with the sector to immediately help with:

- Reopening of museums following COVID-19 closures.
- Development of new programmes to meet new audience demand.
- Undertaking work with collections while some museums are closed.

In response to the impact of COVID-19 on our National Training Programme we have created new online guidance resources for use by local museums.

### Encouraging people to visit/engage with local museums to aid their recovery:

- Maintaining our commitment to lend to agreed national projects.
- Providing loans or touring exhibitions to attract and increase local engagement.
- Collaborating on media or marketing initiatives to raise profile, as appropriate.

We worked collaboratively with museum partners on the *Discovering Ancient Egypt* touring exhibition to design a package of marketing materials.







### Helping to bridge the gap in resources available to local museums:

- Building confidence and maintaining activity and capacity in collecting through the National Fund for Acquisitions, funded by Scottish Government.
- Supplementing limited local revenue budgets where possible through externally funded projects e.g. for learning, events, marketing, digital, travel, staff back-fill.
- Responding to the severe gap in digital infrastructure and skills as resources or opportunities allow.

We have delivered workshops on photographing collections to support museums to digitise and share their collections online.

### Tackling subjects of concern to society that demand a response from museums:

- Building sector confidence and visibility in responding to queries around decolonisation, historic racism, provenance and collection histories.
- A continuing focus on climate emergency and environmental sustainability.
- Enabling change in the museum sector, particularly encouraging greater diversity in audiences and the workforce.

### Expanding or delivering new national programmes, based on previous success:

- Identifying opportunities for further national collection reviews.
- Collaborative work with target audiences (particularly schools and young people).
- Initiatives that aim to build capacity in museum sector infrastructure, sustainability and profile.

Our review of ancient Egyptian collections in Scottish museums re-identified this statue from Montrose Museum as a Ptolemaic (c332–30 BC) temple musician called Meramuniotes.



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## Resourcing and partnership

Delivery of our full National Strategy stated aims and objectives is reliant on harnessing external funds. Against the backdrop of a challenging financial environment our ambition to deliver and enhance our programmes across Scotland remains high.

Delivery also depends on effective partnership working. We will increase our collaboration with other culture and heritage stakeholders where we share strategic purposes. We will continue to collaborate with Museums Galleries Scotland for the benefit of the sector, aligning our work with the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries.



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Emma Peattie, West Lothian Council, and Lydia Messerschmidt, National Museums Scotland, install objects on long term loan to Linlithgow Museum



## Delivery Objectives

These objectives and their corresponding activities will make up our National Programme implementation plan (2021–2022).

### Share Scotland's Collections

- Champion the National Fund for Acquisitions, maximising its visibility and impact.
- Provide a National Loans Programme, ensuring support for agreed sector strategic initiatives and aiming to increase reach and profile.
- Offer touring exhibitions that increase reach and profile and review our national touring model for 2022 onwards.

### Engage and inspire people

- Deliver outreach and engagement activities which attract and inspire broad audiences, with focus on schools and young people in this period.
- Expand sector involvement in Maths Week Scotland.
- Build our use of digital content and digital channels to engage new and diverse audiences.

### Strengthen skills and expertise

- Share our expertise through maintaining our core National Training and Advice Programmes, expanding their content and reach where we can.
- Target our support to identified gaps in collections skills, knowledge and standards, as our resources allow.



Bottle of whisky recovered from the wreck of *SS Politician*, acquired by the Scottish Maritime Museum in 2020 with an NFA grant of £7,579



## Evidencing our impact

We will measure our performance and its impact annually, both in qualitative review and quantitative evaluation. We will also ask our partners for their support in evidencing the impact of our work. This will include:

- Measuring levels of engagement with all our national programmes.
- Monitoring participation levels in our programmes in terms of the type of programme accessed, location and target audience reached.
- Collecting and reporting audience and stakeholder feedback on our effectiveness across all our national programmes.
- Requiring use of our Acknowledgement Guides to credit National Museums Scotland and external funders.
- Reporting annually on the progress of meeting our aims and objectives and progressing our strategic priorities.

Cover image: Dr Dan Potter, National Museums Scotland, and Shona Sinclair, Live Borders, with objects from our national touring exhibition, *Discovering Ancient Egypt*, which was on display at Hawick Museum (8 March–2 June 2019).

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