

# Museums Matter

**nmdc** national  
museum  
directors'  
council





...access to museums and galleries allows everybody to enter another world, think of another world, see the world from somewhere else, reimagine their own world, reimagine themselves...**The point of the museum is to allow the citizen to be a better citizen.**



*Neil MacGregor,  
Director of the British Museum, BBC Artsnight, April 2015*

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"Museums are a treasure house of possibilities filled with amazing objects and the many stories they can tell. They are wonderful places to nurture creativity and imagination and should be an essential part of every child's life."

*Michael Morpurgo,  
author*

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"Museums hold a unique position of being trusted, which is particularly important given the perceived lack of trusted organisations in society. Members of the public... see museums as the guardians of factual information and as presenting all sides of the story."

*BritainThinks research on public perceptions of and attitudes to museums, 2013*

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"From great art...to the many moving stories recorded from the front line, the Imperial War Museum is not just a great place to bring your children...it is actually a special place for us all to come, to learn about a defining part of our history and to remember the sacrifice of all those who gave their lives for us, from the First World War to the present day."

*Rt Hon David Cameron MP,  
Prime Minister, October 2012*

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"Working with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums has transformed the lives of some of our more socially isolated members living with mental health problems. Our members have become more active citizens, more confident to make choices, bolder in their ability to access public services and have a greater sense of self worth."

*Derek Avery,  
Mental Health Concern*

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"The Science Museum helped fuel my fascination with physics."

*Professor Stephen Hawking*

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"Attracting funding to secure transformational projects, such as Derby Silk Mill's redevelopment, is crucial to support the future success of our businesses and communities. The Silk Mill project has the potential to harness Derby's rich heritage to encourage young people into STEM education, training and employment and create a greater sense of pride and purpose in Derby's past, present and future."

*Colin P Smith CBE,  
Director of Engineering and Technology, Rolls-Royce*

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"This museum will be like a book that is open and not shut."

*Sir Henry Cole, first Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1857*



# Executive summary

Museums preserve, protect and promote one of the few irreplaceable public assets: the nation's collective memory, knowledge and history. Preserving our heritage through museums is a fundamental aspect of maintaining a healthy and prosperous civil society.

Museums are civic institutions that simultaneously serve a local, regional, national and international audience, as well as an online audience who may never cross the threshold. Museums matter because they uniquely serve a public past, a public present and a public yet to be born.

The collections held in trust by national and local governments belong to the public, and museums recognise this with sophisticated public engagement. There is a public expectation that general and local taxation supports publicly-owned museums – Arts Council England's 2014 Public Attitudes Survey showed that 70% of the public support maintaining public investment in museums<sup>1</sup>.

Public investment matters to local and central government because of the impact museums have on public policy priorities by:

- creating a **thriving, vibrant and diverse cultural life** for the nation;
- contributing to **regional prosperity**;
- developing **tourism** – museums are the country's most popular visitor attractions;
- strengthening the UK's **soft power**;
- developing **peaceful and prosperous communities** by creating safe and welcoming community spaces;
- promoting **health and well-being**;
- **education**, life-long learning, skills development and **apprenticeships**;
- being world leaders in scientific, technological and creative **innovation**.

Museums are now cultural enterprises and have adapted quickly to reductions in public funding. Nevertheless, it takes time and investment to make this change. To be successful cultural enterprises museums must be able to maintain their public trust and popularity, as well as their reputation for expertise and high quality collections care. This requires core and secure investment: substantial and in-year funding cuts make it very difficult to change operating models.

The UK museum sector is more vibrant, popular and internationally respected than it has ever been. Visitor numbers have never been higher: in 2014-15 there were over 71 million visitors to the UK's national and major regional museums alone<sup>2</sup>. The sector has benefited from significant investment from the lottery, foundations, private donors and the public purse; and through the skill and generosity of a dedicated workforce and thousands of volunteers. The long-term legacy of this investment is now at risk.

Since 2010, museums have prioritised keeping the doors open. To do this, they have had to reduce the less visible curatorial and conservation functions. This is not sustainable. Long-term erosion of expertise and an inability to invest in maintaining the basic fabric of buildings will cause long-term damage to the vitality of the whole museum sector.

In the wider context of local and central government spending the amount allocated to museums is very small. Cutting this will have only a minimal impact on deficit reduction, but the value of what is lost will be much greater. If museums reduce the extent to which they curate, acquire, conserve and engage with the public, the collections and cumulative knowledge wither and the many positive impacts museums have disappear. Future generations will not forgive this generation should it be the one which fails in its duty to protect the nation's heritage.

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## Why museums matter

Museums preserve, promote and protect one of the few irreplaceable public assets: the nation's collective memory, knowledge and history. They are also a catalyst for economic development and scientific advancement, a major tourist attraction, a safe and egalitarian community meeting place, key contributors to the nation's soft power, and the inspiration for current and future generations of pioneers, designers, makers and community leaders. They are civic institutions that simultaneously serve a local, regional, national and international audience, as well as an online audience who may never cross the threshold. Museums matter because they uniquely serve a public past, a public present and a public yet to be born.

Communities need safe and welcoming public spaces. Museums across the UK are embedded within their communities. They form partnerships with artists, charities, community groups, businesses, schools, collectors, universities and the NHS to ensure the whole community is part of the museum. Museums are a source of great civic pride and affection and command a high level of public trust, and for these reasons communities look to museums to commemorate and celebrate significant moments in history. Over the last twenty years museums have used public, private and lottery investment to vastly improve their buildings, galleries and the visitor experience they offer.

Museums enrich people's lives by creating a thriving, vibrant and diverse cultural life. They have never been so popular: 52% of adults and 62% of children in England visited a museum in 2014-15<sup>5</sup>. The collections held in trust by national and local governments belong to the public, and museums recognise this with sophisticated public engagement in research, exhibitions and gallery re-development. Communities view civic collections as a common treasury for all – a collection that their ancestors built for them which should continue for future generations. Museums adapt their public offer to make sure no-one misses out, with initiatives to

ensure everyone can access this common treasury. Thousands of objects are lent and borrowed between museums – and are even displayed in more unusual locations like shops – to ensure they serve a truly national audience.

Museums are critical to place-making and developing regional prosperity. They generate much greater economic value than the sum of their public investment – £3 for every £1 provided by the public purse<sup>4</sup> – something very few public services can demonstrate. Museums make places attractive to visit, to do business and to live in, and can be the catalyst for long-term economic revival. Tourism is the UK's fifth largest industry and museums are the country's most popular visitor attractions. They also strengthen the UK's soft power by being popular and trusted institutions which conduct ambitious international projects, and the UK has recently been assessed as the country with the greatest soft power. In quickly changing and challenging times, cultural dialogue is crucial to helping understand the world around us.

Museums are uniquely able to achieve all this because of their collections, the buildings in which they are housed and the expertise of their staff. The objects in museums' collections tell stories about people, places, the natural world and thought, and the stories told by these objects, brought to life by their study and engagement with the public, help us explore and understand the world around us. It is through museum collections that stories are preserved, a connection to the past is made and fundamental questions of identity can be explored. Objects prompt visceral, emotional responses: they can be a source of joy and wonder, but can also be the starting point for challenging conversations about contested histories, reconciliation and facing the uncertainty of the future. This can only happen if those conversations are brokered by skilled staff and the collections curated and conserved by specialists.

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## Why public investment in museums matters

Public investment in museums takes two broad forms: direct revenue investment in museums and their core business; and project support, capital investment, tax relief and investment in local infrastructure. Museums need the former to take advantage of the latter. Maintaining the collections and the viability of the museums is a significant responsibility for those who work in them; a responsibility shared with central and local government who ultimately hold the collections in trust for the public.

Revenue investment in national and local authority museums benefits the whole museum sector. Museums work in partnership to deliver almost every aspect of their operation. They share back office functions, tour exhibitions, lend objects, provide training and run community projects. Partnerships are formed between the largest national and the smallest volunteer-run museums, and every sort and size of organisation in-between. The whole museum sector is intrinsically connected, and the strengthening or weakening of one element has a long-term impact on the whole.

Between 2010 and 2015 public investment in national museums reduced by 30% and investment by local authorities has reduced markedly, in some cases as much as 60%. These significant reductions have been compounded by the short notice with which they have had to be implemented, with many cuts made within the present or forthcoming financial year.

Museums have adapted to become cultural enterprises. Catering, retail and venue hire have been expanded, membership schemes set up, and admission fees introduced for special exhibitions, historic sites and events. Independent charitable trusts have been established to maximise fundraising, touring exhibitions created for commercial revenue, content licensed and staffing restructured. Although museums now earn a greater proportion of their own income, such changes in operation take time to be effective and are rarely sufficient to cover all of a museum's costs.

In order to be successful cultural enterprises museums must be able to maintain their public trust and popularity, as well as their reputation for expertise and high quality collections care. This requires core and secure investment. The UK museum sector is more vibrant, popular and internationally respected than it has ever been, but this position is now at risk. Since 2010, museums have prioritised keeping the doors open, and national and many civic museums have maintained free admission. To do this they have had to reduce some of the less visible curatorial and conservation functions. This is not sustainable.

Long-term erosion of expertise and inability to invest in maintaining the basic fabric of buildings will cause long-term damage to the vitality of the whole museum sector. If there are further significant and swift cuts to the public investment in museums, short term solutions will be the only ones available. Opening hours will be cut, charges introduced and programming and partnership work, including loans, markedly reduced. The access the public has to their collections and their heritage will be much diminished. Collections need constant maintenance or they irrevocably deteriorate.

In the wider context of local and central government spending the amount allocated to museums is very small. Cutting this will have only a minimal bearing on deficit reduction, but the value of what is lost will be much greater. If museums reduce the extent to which they curate, acquire, conserve and engage with the public, the collections and cumulative knowledge wither and the many positive impacts museums have disappear. Future generations will not forgive this generation should it be the one which fails in its duty to protect the nation's heritage.

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# Culture

Local and national government policy is that museums should practice excellent standards of museum management, engage the widest possible public with their collections, be sustainably run, and ensure the highest standards of collections care and curation so that future generations can realise the benefits of museums as people today do.

## ACCESSIBLE

Central government, the devolved administrations and many local authorities seek to reduce the barriers to accessing permanent collections by operating a free admission policy. Free admission reinforces the public ownership of many museum collections: collections owned by the state, paid for in part by general or local taxation and created, in many cases over a period of more than a century, by public benefaction through the donation of objects or money for new acquisitions. The public is able to make the distinction between freely accessible public collections and charges for temporary exhibitions or sites where visitors are less likely to visit repeatedly. Similarly, it draws a distinction for the public between civic and independent museums (where the collection is owned by a charitable trust) and allows the latter to generate income through admission – although museums that charge for entry frequently operate annual tickets and also enjoy repeat visits.

## POPULAR

Museums have never been so popular. Visits to the Natural History Museum have more than tripled since 2000/01 to 5,578,580 in 2013/14, and there has been a fivefold increase in visits to Royal Museums Greenwich to 2,488,801.<sup>5</sup> Museums have also turned the regions into must-visit destinations: around 18,000 visitors attended the re-opening weekend of The Whitworth at the University of Manchester; visits to museums in Oxford have doubled to 2 million in the last five years<sup>6</sup>; and 85% of local and 57% of holiday visitors to Penlee House Gallery and Museum in Penzance are repeat visitors.

## EXCELLENT

The excellence of museums' public programming is demonstrated by their critically acclaimed and record-breaking popular temporary exhibitions. This success is based on two factors: the outstanding reputation of UK museums which enables them to borrow from institutions and private collections across the world; and the expertise of museum staff to curate and present material in an accessible way. Museums of all sizes and types regularly work in partnership to deliver collaborative projects with other museums, educational establishments, and

heritage and community organisations. Partnerships focus on developing new public programming, education and learning, the exchange of skills and expertise and working with communities, enabling benefits to be shared with the widest possible audience.

Museums loan thousands of objects to other museums across the UK every year as part of mutually beneficial collaborative projects. In 2013/14, DCMS-sponsored museums lent objects to 1,657 venues around the UK. The famously over-stuffed Horniman Walrus left the museum for the first time in 112 years in 2013 to be part of the Hayward Gallery's *Curiosity* exhibition at the Turner Contemporary in Margate where it was seen by 136,000 visitors. The Great Bed of Ware went on a year-long loan from the V&A to Ware Museum where it almost tripled Ware's annual visitor numbers. All but one of the locomotives and stock on display at STEAM in Swindon is on long-term loan from the National Railway Museum.

## INNOVATIVE

Museums have embraced new digital and technological innovations, allowing greater public engagement. The British Museum had 6.7 million visitors in 2014 and connected with 43.7 million virtually.<sup>7</sup> As part of Imperial War Museums' First World War commemorations, 7.6 million stories have been added by the public to the *Lives of the First World War* website. *Orchid Observers* is one of the Natural History Museum's many Citizen Science projects, and requires the public to photograph any wild orchid they see and upload the photograph and their observations. The National Gallery's *Rembrandt: Late Works* exhibition was one of many exhibitions made accessible to those who are unable to travel to London by providing exhibition screenings at cinemas across the UK.

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## NATIONAL & MAJOR PARTNER MUSEUMS

### Visitor numbers

Number of people who visited national and major regional museums in 2014/15...



### England

Major Partner Museums

**12.92million**

National museums

**48.19million**

### Northern Ireland

**0.77million**

### Scotland

**7.93million**

### Wales

**1.69million**

**Total visitors 2014/15**

**71.5million**

UK museums stage some of the most successful and ambitious temporary exhibitions in the world:

- Works from Anthony D'Offay's collection of post-war and contemporary art – co-owned by Tate and National Galleries Scotland – have been on tour since 2009. There have been 143 exhibitions and displays seen by more than 35 million visitors at 77 museums across the UK.<sup>8</sup>
- The loan of the Lindisfarne Gospels from the British Library to Durham Cathedral in 2012 generated £8.3m in economic benefit for the city and was visited by 100,000 people.<sup>9</sup>
- Three temporary exhibitions – *Roman Empire: Power and People*, *The Wonder of Birds* and *Homage to Manet* – contributed to Norwich Castle receiving its highest number of visitors in fifteen years in 2014/15.
- Since opening in London at the V&A in 2013, over 1 million people have seen the V&A exhibition *David Bowie Is...* at six venues across the world. 312,000 people visited the exhibition at the V&A and during that time the Museum sold 20,000 *David Bowie Is...* tote bags, 36,000 guitar picks and 93,000 postcards.
- *Generation: 25 Years of Contemporary Art* was a partnership between Glasgow Life, National Galleries Scotland and Creative Scotland and attracted 1.3 million visitors across 60 venues in 2014.
- *Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan* brought together the largest number of surviving da Vinci paintings at the National Gallery, visited by 323,897 people.<sup>10</sup> In 2014, over a quarter of a million people visited the Gallery to see *Rembrandt: The Late Works*.<sup>11</sup>
- Oxford University's Museum of Natural History took their star object, the Dodo, on a week-long tour of museums, galleries and heritage sites from Land's End to John O'Groats. At each stop, the Dodo "interviewed" a star object from the venue, including a 75 tonne sculpture at the Eden Project, a steam hammer at the Black Country Living Museum, a live Capercaillie at RSPB Loch Garten and the Telford Parliamentary Church in Ullapool.

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In 2014, over a quarter of a million people visited the Gallery to see *Rembrandt: The Late Works*.

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# Regional prosperity

Recovery from the recession requires the development of prosperity and growth across the country, business investment in communities and the raising of skills and aspiration. Businesses invest in attractive and creative environments with a strong civic infrastructure, and museums make a significant contribution to this. They have a direct economic impact of £1.45 billion on the national economy, which is supplemented by a number of indirect economic benefits.<sup>12</sup>

## PLACE MAKING

Museums are a major contribution to making a place attractive to live in. Major investors, such as Rolls Royce in Derby and Tata Steel in Sheffield, have been very supportive of their city museums because of their civic value. Museums foster creativity and curiosity, which is crucial in inspiring the designers and technicians of the future in industry. Excellent museums help to encourage local business investment by creating an environment which helps attract and retain workers.

Manchester's cultural sector, including Manchester City Galleries, Manchester Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry and The Whitworth, are central to the national and international reputation of the city as a vibrant, creative and exciting place. Culture has been central to the development of the Northern Powerhouse, and the collaborative way in which museums already work across Greater Manchester ensures that the benefits of inward investment are felt beyond the central Manchester postcodes.

## DIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Museums have a much greater direct economic impact than they had twenty years ago. Increases in visitor numbers result in consequently higher visitor spending both at the museum and in its surrounding area. Investment in buildings and infrastructure has enabled museums to create commercial opportunities through venue hire, filming, catering and retail. Larger museums are significant employers and purchasers. Beamish is the largest tourist attraction in the North East and employs 300 staff and 350 volunteers. The economic value delivered by the British Library for society is £5 for every £1 invested. The Library generates a net economic value of £419m<sup>13</sup>. Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums has a net economic impact on the region of £8.5m per year, whilst Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust lets property to enterprises which have a resonance with the collection. Many museums develop commercial partnerships with retail, designers and production partners, and utilise their collections as the inspiration to create products which are sold in the museum,

online and in retail outlets worldwide.

Cultural, and particularly museum or gallery-led, regeneration has revitalised local and regional economies across the UK by attracting visitors, residents and supplementary businesses. The transformation of Salford Quays began with the opening of Imperial War Museum North and The Lowry, attracting additional business, retail, leisure and property investment before culminating in the development of MediaCityUK and consequent improvements in local infrastructure.

## SKILLS, APPRENTICESHIPS AND ASPIRATION

Many museums have developed apprenticeship or paid internship schemes, leading to employment both in museums and elsewhere; others have developed programmes such as National Museums Northern Ireland's *Horizons* which improved the skills, confidence and employability of young people and the longer-term unemployed.

“ Museums foster **creativity** and **curiosity**, which is crucial in **inspiring** the designers and technicians of the future in industry. ”



## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUR MUSEUMS

The Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by the museum sector in England in 2012/13 was estimated at

**£1.45 billion**

and the ratio of this to public sector grant is



**£2.20:£1** GRANT GROSS VALUE ADDED

Government support is *less than*

**0.09% of GDP**

Museums generate

**£3 INCOME**

FOR EACH

**£1 PUBLIC INVESTMENT**

### Manchester

**16** principal cultural institutions employ the equivalent of

**2,152** FTE JOBS

giving a total GVA impact of

**£86.9m**

directly generating **£81m** of additional tourist expenditure

### National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh



Generating

**£67.8m**

national economic benefit

Supporting

**3,124** FTE JOBS

Providing a **3:1 return**

for every £1 spent by the Scottish Government, the Scottish economy benefits by at least **£3.19**

### National Media Museum, Bradford

Generating

**£26.4m** for the UK economy

with

**£24m**

directly benefitting Bradford district

VISITOR EXPENDITURE = **£20,649,200**

### Natural History Museum, London

In 2010 the Natural History Museum's economic impact was assessed as between

**£253m** and **£262m**



### Imperial War Museums

The IWM's 5 sites have a total economic impact of

**£80.5m**



# Tourism

The economic output of the tourism industry in 2013 was £56 billion. It employs 2.8 million people, is the UK's fifth largest industry, and is critical to the economic sustainability of many regions of the UK.<sup>14</sup> Government has recognised this by promoting tourism on a national and international level through the GREAT campaign, which has sought to capitalise on the galvanising effect of the London Olympics and Paralympics, the Diamond Jubilee and the Commonwealth Games.

## DOMESTIC TOURISM

112.9 million overnight domestic trips were made in 2013.<sup>15</sup> The domestic market continues to be the mainstay of the tourism industry, and, as the UK's most popular tourism attractions, museums are critical to its success. When it opened in 1993 it was hoped that Tate St Ives would attract 90,000 visitors per year: it now receives over 240,000.<sup>16</sup> 67% of visitors to Penlee House Gallery in Penzance visit from outside Cornwall, with the same proportion visiting Penzance with the specific intention of going to the Gallery.<sup>17</sup> Up to 60% of visitors to Ironbridge Gorge Museums stay overnight in the area and approximately 50% of Beamish's visitors travel from outside the region. Visits to a museum or gallery form part of city breaks, family holidays and visits to see friends, and are a way to fill free time on a business trip. Museums work with destination management organisations and are part of Local Enterprise Partnerships to be central to a region-wide tourism offer. Heritage Lottery Fund research concludes that heritage-based tourism was worth £26.4bn to the UK economy in 2011.<sup>18</sup>

## OVERSEAS TOURISM

Museums are a key strength for the UK's international brand, and for many are the main reason to visit.<sup>19</sup> Overseas visits to DCMS-sponsored museums have more than doubled since 2001/2, with over 21.75 million overseas visits in 2013/14.<sup>20</sup> VisitBritain research has found that perceptions of the UK's history, vibrant city life and cultural heritage are deeply valued, especially in China, India, Australia and Italy, and when asked what cultural products they associated with the UK almost half of overseas visitors name museums.<sup>21</sup> Museums are adapting their offer and improving their marketing to attract overseas tourists – websites, audio guides and apps are produced in many different languages, café menus have been altered and partnerships formed with tour groups.

Encouraging short-stay visitors to visit other UK regions and long-stay visitors to venture outside of London is a priority for tourism bodies and destination management organisations. As culture rates so highly as a reason for overseas tourists to visit the UK, museums are in a prime position to deliver this. The Wordsworth Trust, which manages Dove Cottage in Grasmere, makes special provision for Japanese visitors drawn to the Lake District because of the popularity of Beatrix Potter in Japan. Overseas visitors accounted for 25% of visitors to Dove Cottage between April and July 2013.

## TOURING EXHIBITIONS

UK museums lend high profile objects or touring exhibitions to venues in all of VisitBritain's top 20 markets for projected growth between 2011 and 2020, and in doing so raise the profile and recognition of the museums. National Museum Wales' exhibition *Pastures Green & Dark Satanic Mills: The British Passion for Landscape* toured to four venues in the USA. Accompanying the exhibition was a brochure which connected the industrial and pastoral landscapes of the exhibition with visitor destinations in Wales.

Museums are a **key strength** for the **UK's international brand**, and for many are the **main reason to visit**.

# Soft power

Soft power is the influence achieved through activities which are not formally organised by governments. Exercising soft power is to communicate with a larger audience and seek attitudinal change over a longer period of time, and is more important than ever in an increasingly digitally connected world. Areas of the world with rapid economic, social and political change are now more familiar and visible to a UK audience and vice versa; making the UK public more curious about their culture, history and heritage, yet also making the world more curious about UK history, culture and heritage. A positive view of the UK increases trust, which is a powerful diplomatic and economic tool. The UK has the greatest soft power capability in the world.<sup>22</sup>

## DIPLOMACY

The international work of museums makes a major contribution to the UK's soft power capability and influence overseas. It creates channels of communication, a positive impression of the UK and the conveying of different perspectives which may not be achieved through more conventional forms of diplomacy. The position of UK museums as working at arms-length from government allows them to create mutually beneficial relationships and build trust based on institutions' shared interests.

Many UK museums have long-held international links derived from the focus of their collections, their expertise, their audiences or their location. Loans, academic study, acquisitions, peer support, special exhibitions, research and staff exchanges all provide the means by which international links develop. The long-standing relationship between UK museums and their Russian counterparts demonstrates the ability of museums to maintain good working relationships when more formal channels of communication face challenges. The British Museum's loan Illissos (one of the Parthenon Sculptures) to the Hermitage to mark the Hermitage's 250th anniversary and the V&A's borrowing of objects from A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum in Moscow (both in 2014), and the Science Museum's 2015 exhibition *Cosmonauts*, produced in partnership with numerous Russian institutions, illustrate this.

The Fitzwilliam Museum's exhibition *Search for Immortality: Treasures of Han Tombs* (the largest ever loan of treasures from the Han tombs to a Western institution), the Ancient House in Thetford's work with Anglo-Indian Sikhs and Royal Museums Greenwich's research with communities in the Niger Delta demonstrate the breadth of museums' international relationships. Museums' international work both develops from and supports their work with local communities and the impact on domestic UK audiences of international partnerships is significant,

becoming part of museums' role in enabling visitors to explore the world around them.

## DEVELOPMENT

Museums with international collections develop good relationships with source communities, to ensure objects are handled sensitively and a body of knowledge is developed in collaboration. Museums are uniquely able to present objects and exhibitions in a contemplative environment, allowing visitors to explore their own culture, history and identity, as well as those they see as "other". For these reasons museums can play a key role in post-conflict reconciliation and international development.

## TRADE

Good but less formal relationships developed or sustained through cultural activity can create a positive context within which more formal trade relationships can flourish. The British Council reports *Trust Pays and Culture Means Business* demonstrate the hugely positive impact of cultural activity. The cultural relationship between the UK and the Gulf States, China, India and Korea are all hugely significant and necessary parts of wider bilateral relationships. Those reached by UK cultural activities are more likely to feel trust towards UK people, as well as being more likely to favour its education system and to do business with the UK. Brazilians with no family or other ties to the UK felt significantly more trust after experiencing the UK's cultural products.<sup>23</sup>

The UK has the **greatest soft power capability in the world.**

## A GLOBAL VIEW

The British Museum loans to **151 international venues** building partnerships **worldwide**



### 1 Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford

The Pitt Rivers, working with the University of Aberdeen, lent five Native American shirts from the Blackfoot tribes to Glenbow and Lethbridge Museums as part of a wider project with Blackfoot communities.

#canada

### 2 Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum more than doubled its profits in a single year as exhibitions reached new regions in North America and Asia.

#usa #asia

Our international outreach brings the story of **UK science, history and innovation**

to overseas populations, from **schoolchildren** to **world leaders**



### 3 National Museums Liverpool

NML worked with the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia to borrow 385 objects from museums and Maya sites in Mexico for the 2015 Mayas exhibition

#mexico

### 4 Tate

Tate has a long term partnership with Pinacoteca, Brazil, including the jointly curated Mira Schendel exhibition.

#brazil

The Natural History Museum works in over **70 countries worldwide**



conducting **research collaborations, collections development, fieldwork and science** as well as **exhibitions**

### 5 Norfolk Museums Service

The museums service is working to increase Norfolk tourism with its Norman Connections collaboration with museums in Normandy.

#france

### 6 Science Museum

The Science Museum collaborated with scientists and staff at CERN for their Hadron Collider exhibition. Touring internationally in 2015, it attracted large audiences in France before opening in Australia.

#switzerland

### 7 Horniman Museum

Research in Romania, and collaboration with its Cultural Institute has informed the museum's 'Revisiting Romania' exhibition.

#romania

### 8 Royal Museums Greenwich

RMG is conducting research on the African palm oil trade using their collections and working with communities in Nigeria.

#nigeria

### 9 V&A

Over 40 works from the V&A's street art collection were displayed alongside works by Libyan artists in Benghazi and Tripoli in 2012. It was the first international exhibition to take place in Libya after the revolution.

#libya

### 10 Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

TWAM has a long standing relationship with the museums of Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.

#southafrica

### 11 National Museums Scotland

National Museums Scotland 'Agents of Change' project skilled up curators in Malawi and promoted knowledge exchange. Their David Livingstone exhibition toured to the Chichiri Museum, Malawi.

#malawi

### 12 British Museum

The British Museum's has lent a Parthenon sculpture to the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg in celebration of its 250th anniversary and ongoing collaboration.

#russia

### 13 Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton

Brighton Pavilion is working on a research project with Indian institutions and descendants of India soldiers who used the pavilion as a hospital during the FWW.

#india

### 14 British Library

Working with the Qatar Foundation, the library has digitised millions of records on the history of the Gulf for the first time, building strong relationships with the Qatari government.

#qatar

### 15 Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

The museum worked with the city of Jingdezhen on the exhibition *Ahead of the Curve: new china from China*

#china

### 16 Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge

The Museum displayed one of the great art treasures of Vietnam. *Giông by Nguyen Tu' Nghiê*m was lent by the Vietnam Museum of Fine Arts for the Cambridge Festival of Ideas.

#vietnam

### 17 Imperial War Museums

IWM has developed a touring exhibition based on their FWW Galleries and using 350 IWM objects. The tour opened in Melbourne in April 2015.

#australia

International exhibitions are a **catalyst and advertisement** for the UK's growing international **tourism industry**

**79%** of the Science Museum's **482,000** twitter followers are from **overseas**



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The Museum displayed one of the great art treasures of Vietnam. *Giông by Nguyen Tu' Nghiê*m was lent by the Vietnam Museum of Fine Arts for the Cambridge Festival of Ideas.

#vietnam



### 17 Imperial War Museums

IWM has developed a touring exhibition based on their FWW Galleries and using 350 IWM objects. The tour opened in Melbourne in April 2015.

#australia



The Imperial War Museum is working with **3,332** groups from **52 countries** to commemorate **the First World War**



Museums' international relationships contribute to the UK's **soft power capability** and provide an **attractive backdrop for business**





# Communities

Being a steward of the civic infrastructure to support peaceful and prosperous communities is a critical function of both central and local government. Ensuring no group in society feels marginalised or isolated is fundamental to making communities safe, raising aspiration and creating vibrant and thriving places to live. Fostering a sense of community – understanding differences and sharing commonalities – is a powerful way of encouraging civic engagement and participation in civil society to celebrate, commemorate or help in times of crisis.

## SAFE AND SOCIAL CIVIC SPACES

Museums are safe and social spaces: warm and welcoming to the whole community. A visit to the permanent collections of the national museums, university museums and the majority of local authority-supported museums in the UK is free. Museums are one of the few genuinely egalitarian civic spaces and many people view the collections as a common treasury for all. The profile of museum visitors shows that they span all ages, socio-economic backgrounds and ethnic groups. The RAF Museum and Science Museum both provide special support access for people with autism, and there are projects to welcome vulnerable people such as *Burrell for Blokes* for older men in Glasgow and the issuing of free passes to all looked after children by Norfolk Museum Service. Museums have saved much-loved community assets, such as the Hetton Silver Band Hall which was moved brick-by-brick to Beamish. Some museum buildings have been re-designed specifically to be more welcoming. The Whitworth is within one of the most deprived wards in Manchester and wanted the local community to become a greater part of the life of the institution. Following the major refurbishment large glass windows, dedicated spaces for noisy activities and an extension have made the building much less intimidating. It worked: the Whitworth met its annual visitor target within twelve weeks of opening.

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Museums are one of the few **genuinely egalitarian civic spaces.**

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## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The nature of museum collections provides museums with the opportunity to actively engage groups in their communities and ensure their stories are documented. The Discovery Museum in Newcastle has developed the *Destination Tyneside* gallery to present the long view of immigration to the area; working with OutStories Bristol, MShed documented the experiences of the LGBT community in the city in *Revealing Histories*; and the British Museum exhibition *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* was visited by approximately 60,000 British Muslims – many travelling from across the UK on a family day out.<sup>24</sup> The proportion of visitors to museums from hard-to-reach communities, as well as the number of black and ethnic minority visitors, has grown substantially.<sup>25</sup> Almost a third of adults living in hard-to-reach communities in Northern Ireland visited one or more National Museums Northern Ireland sites in 2014.

## MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Museums tell local, national and international stories, giving a sense of shared heritage and a long view of our social and political evolution. Few other civic institutions have the public trust, collections or infrastructure to mastermind large scale acts of remembrance, as demonstrated by the UK-wide commemorations of the First World War led by Imperial War Museums. Regimental and military museums are particularly important to veterans and their families. Historic anniversaries allow for the reaffirmation and reassessment of community values: from the creation of Magna Carta; to the Battle of Waterloo; to the fight for women's suffrage.

Exhibitions, events and digital programming – and the process of developing these – allow communities to address difficult histories in a measured way with the museum as the mediator. National Museums Northern Ireland worked with Wolverhampton Art Gallery to bring together sixty paintings associated with the history of the Troubles. The purpose of the exhibition and associated events, about a subject where there is an unresolved legacy and continuing sensitivities, offered a way of exploring recent history and reflecting on the impact of violence and division in the community.

# Health & well-being

There is growing evidence that social isolation is twice as bad for health as obesity or smoking fifteen cigarettes a day, and yet nearly two million people over 50 suffer from severe loneliness.<sup>26</sup> By working in partnership with specialist organisations such as charities, care providers and community groups, museums are able to devise specific programmes to draw people back into society and tackle loneliness and alienation. Protecting the vulnerable and addressing social exclusion is a requirement of central and local government, as is improving public health to provide an environment for people to be healthy and happy.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

As people stay healthy through social connection, they reduce pressure on the health services. A museum building is a sociable place: somewhere warm and safe which appeals to people of all ages and backgrounds. The objects in museum collections, interpreted by skilled staff, stimulate memories, help people make sense of a confusing world, provide joy, and are the start for a conversation. These have been shown to positively affect mood, self worth and a general sense of well-being.<sup>27</sup> Local authorities, hospitals and social care agencies work with museums to reduce the need for more costly social interventions as they commission museums to deliver programmes. Objects can also make a message more relevant and memorable: Nottingham City Council used the John Players Collection at Nottingham Museums to demonstrate the dangers of smoking to young people.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Supporting an aging and increasingly isolated population is a great concern for both local and national government. In England alone, 676,000 people have dementia; it is estimated that this number will double in the next 30 years and in 2012 the Prime Minister launched Challenge on Dementia 2020.<sup>28</sup> Handling objects which are familiar from their childhood can stimulate memories for those with dementia and prompt conversations with other people which may not otherwise be possible. Projects which provide access to museum collections for people with dementia (and their carers) – such as *House of Memories* at National Museums Liverpool or the activities run in the 1940s Orchard Cottage at Beamish – are celebrated by public health professionals.

One in four people in the UK suffer from a mental health problem every year.<sup>29</sup> There is increasing public recognition of the importance of supporting those who suffer from poor mental health and to find ways

to help alleviate it. Mental health services and public health bodies recognise the benefits of participation in the arts, culture and heritage; this is supported by research by the Royal Society for Public Health,<sup>30</sup> Canterbury Christ Church University and University College London.<sup>31</sup> The National Army Museum and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum run therapeutic projects for former service personnel. The *Capture It* project, delivered by Manchester Art Gallery and Wigan Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, was based around creative workshops in the gallery inspired by the art works on display. It enhanced recovery and built self-esteem in young people with a history of self-harm and eating disorders.<sup>32</sup>

## HAPPINESS

Participating in museums is associated with an increase in happiness equivalent to earning an extra £3000 a year and correlated with improved health and well-being.<sup>33</sup> A study of Scottish museums showed that 90% provided opportunities for volunteers, with benefits including increased employability for younger people and offering retired people a chance to stay active and maintain skills and knowledge.<sup>34</sup> 95% of participants in National Museums Northern Ireland's health and wellbeing programmes reported an enhanced quality of life and greater social interaction.

“ Participating in museums is associated with an **increase in happiness** equivalent to earning an extra **£3,000 a year** and correlated with **improved health and well-being.** ”



# Education

Children's formal education continuously adapts to prepare them for a quickly changing world. In recent years the school curriculum has changed to include updated computer science, a broader span of history and non-European languages. Education is more than just the formal curriculum and schools and families seek inspiring experiences for young people to help raise aspiration, make learning memorable and equip them with the skills and curiosity for adulthood. UK universities attract under- and post-graduate students from across the world and provide some of the best and most varied tertiary education available. The benefits of lifelong learning – in both formal and informal environments – are well documented, contributing to health and happiness and increased earning potential.

## SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In each week, 4% of the child population in England visits a museum.<sup>35</sup> The nature of museums' collections allows them to support the teaching of a number of subjects across the school curriculum through visits to museums, digital resources, collaborative projects or object handling boxes sent to schools.

Object-based teaching enriches the curriculum and adds a dimension to understanding and learning which cannot be achieved by classroom teaching alone. Research shows that 95% of teachers feel their pupils are inspired to learn more after visiting a museum; 88% would explore new ideas with their pupils as a consequence; and 94% thought pupils would improve subject-related understanding.<sup>36</sup> Visiting museums in childhood is associated with better qualifications and employment in later life. In the 2014 Scottish Household Survey, 41% of those with degrees or professional qualifications reported visiting museums and galleries during childhood, compared with 20% of those with no qualifications.<sup>37</sup>

Museum education has been revolutionised over the past 20 years, from a "look and don't touch" approach to providing inspirational and immersive experiences such as *Against Captain's Orders* at the Royal Museums Greenwich. This interactive theatrical experience was developed with the theatre company Punchdrunk. Aimed at 6-12 year olds, with their families and in school groups, it allowed children to be active participants in a journey through the Museum's collections.

There is also an increasingly greater role for museum educators in teacher and learning assistant training and in the provision of classroom resources. The British Museum, working with museums across the UK, developed *Teaching History in 100 Objects* to support the History curriculum. Leeds Museums and

Galleries runs a digital learning tool for teachers, *My Learning*, which covers the breadth of the school curriculum and includes 300 resources from 230 museums and archives.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

Museums provide teaching and learning experiences at many different life stages. Museum staff teach on Higher Education courses and provide free or affordable access to university-level learning by working with universities on the development of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Museums provide vocational training for local businesses and run hundreds of adult learning courses, as shown by Glasgow Museums' dedicated online adult learning resource. Museums are a less intimidating environment in which to learn and objects make learning easier: basic adult literacy is taught through *English at the Museum* at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in partnership with Exeter College, and the Museum has taken objects into Exeter and Dartmoor prisons for their Brain Gym sessions.

In each week, 4% of the child population in England visits a museum.



# Innovation

Innovation is the foundation of business success and takes many forms – ground-breaking research, scientific developments, creative design or artistic output. Innovation may be the adoption of new forms of technology or finding an alternative way of using something more traditional. Government, business and universities all wish to encourage and sustain innovation and place greater emphasis on knowledge. As knowledge-based institutions with collections, museums provide a valuable asset to innovation. They support academic research, technological development, the creative industries and the development of new digital products.

## RESEARCH

Museum collections provide unique source materials for research. Museums of all sizes work in partnership with higher education and research institutions and technology developers, and museum-led research is funded by a variety of organisations. More than 350 scientists work at the Natural History Museum and in partnership with international collaborators they publish over 700 scientific papers each year using the collection of over 80 million specimens spanning 4.5 billion years. This research tackles pressing global issues such as improving crop yield for a growing global population or tackling the spread of malaria through the study of mosquitoes.

A number of UK museums are formally recognised research institutes with Independent Research Organisation status, conducting research that makes a significant contribution to the sum of human knowledge. Museum research is led by museum curators, who are highly regarded in their academic fields, and they support numerous museum-based collaborative doctoral awards. The subjects explored by museum-led research are numerous and diverse: recent examples include the study of prisoner of war diaries; turtle diversity; food distribution networks; digital preservation; osteology; fashion and African cities; faith, slavery and identity; and children's play in the new media age.

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Museum collections are a **rich source of inspiration** for the UK's **creative industries**.

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## INSPIRING BUSINESS AND DESIGN

Museum collections are a rich source of inspiration for the UK's creative industries. Museums are also able to showcase new or local design through events, exhibitions and retail. The V&A, as the world's leading museum of art and design, is an invaluable source of inspiration to the UK's creative sector. It, like Leeds Museums, Manchester City Galleries and many more, works with an array of creative businesses from architects to fashion houses to games designers. Museums work with students, SMEs and internationally-recognised firms as co-creators, inspiration or to provide a showcase. The Museum of London Tweed, based on fabric in the collection, was created by British fashion labels Liberty and Christy's Hats. It was then turned into a suit by London tailors Norton & Sons and modelled for a global audience by musician Tinie Tempah for London Collections Men, a showcase of British menswear.

## DIGITAL

Museums have become leaders in digital innovation. They are respected publishers of trusted content, serving the audience which visits the museum as well as another which may not. Museums have embraced opportunities for major partnerships with both small and multi-national digital technology companies and have transformed museum data into an asset. Increasingly sophisticated virtual tours and games have allowed geographically remote audiences to build relationships with museums. Tate's annual IK Prize celebrates creative talent in the digital industries. The 2014 winner, *Tate After Dark* by London studio The Workers, allowed users of the app to see the Tate Britain galleries over four nights via camera-mounted robots who were guided by "masters": the first master was Colonel Chris Hadfield, retired commander of the International Space Station. The project won Apollo's 2015 Digital Innovation of the Year and was honoured at the 2015 Webby Award.

