Museums and galleries in partnership across the UK

... with the British Museum

A 1st-century AD bronze of Herakles was displayed at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhillon-Sea as one of the BM's national Spotlight Loans (Height 1m)

Message from the Director

Working with national partners is a cornerstone of our public programme at the British Museum (BM). The BM has been collaborating with museums across the UK since the 19th century – and it is a history we are keen to extend.

The projects vary widely, depending on what our partners find most effective. Touring exhibitions and loans from the BM have proved highly successful at drawing new audiences to regional museums. High-profile loans in particular, such as our recent programme of Spotlight Loans and Tours, have real impact. Local television, radio and newspapers are interested, and with that increase of public presence, museums are better able to reach sponsors, partners and communities who might otherwise overlook their local collections. A Spotlight Loan casts its light generously – not just on itself, as a rare object of interest such as a Roman statue of Herakles not to be missed, but also on the host collection where it is displayed. Enticed to come for something unusual, it is hoped that visitors will return again, with their families, colleagues and friends.

Opening the doors wider to UK collections is one ambition. There are research links, training initiatives, community programmes, partnership galleries and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which records archaeological finds from England and Wales made by the public. All are essential components in the wide-ranging programme of national support the BM undertakes.

New methods of reaching out constantly arise. In June 2013, the BM produced its first live-streaming broadcast in cinemas across the UK. *Pompeii Live* took cinema audiences on a journey through the BM's exhibition on Pompeii and Herculaneum, with interviews, special effects and close-up access to displays people might not be able to visit in person in London. A special broadcast for schools followed the next day. In total over 50,000 people watched, including 13,000 schoolchildren. It was a wonderful new mechanism for communicating a museum experience to the public in the UK and Ireland. From Dublin to Dundee, Belfast to Birmingham, Swansea to Sidmouth, audiences did not have to come to the BM. The BM went to them.

Ner Macgretos

Neil MacGregor



National programmes

Skills
Exhibitions
Loans
Audiences
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Finds

A participant in the Future Curators programme works with the collection at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery What interests the BM in all its national partnerships is the interaction between people and collections. Whether we're creating new opportunities to see historical objects or exchanging ideas, training future curators or recording archaeological discoveries, it is how these programmes improve the cultural life of Britain that is foremost in our concerns.

Frequently devised in collaboration with the host museum, loans and touring exhibitions from the BM – supported by the Dorset Foundation and the John Ellerman Foundation – help to create a buzz for regional museums. They can be accompanied by special interpretation for local communities, public programmes of talks and events and, where possible, ways of highlighting the host museum's own collection. Large numbers of Birmingham's Sikh community turned up to see the Spotlight Loan of a Sikh Fortress Turban. When the BM's popular exhibition *Pharaoh: King of Egypt* is shown in Glasgow, Newcastle or Leeds, that public attraction should instil a longstanding interest. We want the public to return to every museum with which we collaborate.

These collaborations reach audiences in different ways. A high-profile loan such as the Gayer-Anderson Cat – one of the BM's most popular displays – can draw significant crowds locally. Loaned to Shetland, the ancient Egyptian cat attracted 23,000 visitors – a number larger than the islands' entire population. Such displays also have a less easily perceived ripple effect. They support improvements to exhibition galleries and display areas in some museums. They attract sponsorship. They draw media attention to museums. Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery received coverage on BBC Radio Asian Network, Sangat TV and the global Sikh Channel when the BM's magnificent Sikh Fortress Turban was on show.

Professional support for UK museums also surrounds this public benefit. Knowledge Exchange programmes, placements and training, and the expertise that nurtures the Portable Antiquities Scheme underpin the essential work that goes on in Britain's cultural and educational institutions. Research links with UK museums, universities and other bodies – including collaborative doctorates supervised in conjunction with the BM – foster important new scholarship.

When a prominent find such as the Frome hoard of 52,503 Roman coins, from Somerset, is reported in the media around the world, or archaeological studies from Devon to Norfolk revise the date that humans first occupied Britain to over 800,000 years ago, BM experts working with colleagues from around Britain are likely to be behind what gets reported. In the case of the Frome Hoard, the BM's departments of Portable Antiquities and Treasure, Coins and Medals, and Conservation and Scientific Research all played a major role in partnering with the Museum of Somerset in Taunton, where the reconstructed pot and some of the coins are already on display.

Training the next generation of experts ensures standards remain high. The Future Curators programme gives young curators access to a number of museums to gauge different practices and gather experience in the range of skills they require today, when museum culture is changing fast. In Fresh Leads, a new scheme launched this year, participants came from across the UK. They were all people working in very different roles and levels in museums and galleries, but each had an idea, based on what they knew about museums, that could improve the museum for the public. Each wanted to find a way to make that idea happen. That's what Fresh Leads did. Pooling ideas and experience with some expert guidance, participants were taught the skills and processes to turn their creative spark into a reality.

When the BM's new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre opens in 2014, what we can do with museums across the UK will improve. A new loans hub will create a much better environment to move objects efficiently in and out of the museum. The building is also a collaborative space, where visiting scholars and joint conservation projects – such as the recent conservation and scientific examination of the Staffordshire Hoard in conjunction with Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum – will widen the UK's cultural horizon. We don't yet know everything that will arise out of such cross-institutional endeavours – and that's exciting. It is the people who will make the difference, with new ideas as to where museum collections can go. We hope to be with them every step of the way.

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery hosted a Spotlight Loan of a rare Sikh Fortress Turban (Height 73 cm)



'Usually people have to travel to London to see this quality of Egyptian artefacts' Katherine Baxter, curator of archaeology, Leeds City Museum

Skills

Fresh Leads ... with the British Museum

A digital co-ordinator based in Newcastle felt Tyne & Wear Museums could do more to engage with collections online. John Coburn came to Fresh Leads, the BM's programme for enterprising museum staff, to find ways of bringing his ideas to fruition.

'My project within my organisation,' said Coburn, 'is about experimenting with digital projects that improve public access to collections. Fresh Leads has been an inspiring space to meet creative thinkers who are prepared to experiment with what museums are and how we can influence positive change in the sector.'

The programme drew its energy from a mix of experience and innovation. Participants inspired one another and learned how to lead, project-manage and bring about real solutions. Fresh Leads trains people to make new ideas happen.

The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, was one of six UK museums offering training under the Future Curators scheme New ways of working are very much what inspires the BM's national programmes to build expertise among museum professionals. Fresh Leads, supported by Arts Council England, targets talented people working in museums and galleries who wish to develop a great idea into a tangible project that benefits the public. In 2013, twelve participants were selected from across the country. From January to June, they followed a carefully developed programme of workshops, coaching and mentoring. Experts taught them skills in leadership, how to build effective networks and how to bring ideas to fruition. Fresh Leads celebrates results, showing how you can bring about change within your own organisation and beyond.

Future Curators is the BM's annual programme to give museum curators better skills and wider experience at the start of their careers. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, it is a national partnership with museums around the UK. That national breadth is essential, ensuring that participants encounter a variety of working methods and approaches. Five Future Curators were selected in 2012, with interests ranging from Islamic cultures to Chinese and Japanese collections. Their initial training – six months at the BM – was followed by one-year placements at Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle or Glasgow. Past participants have gone on to jobs at National Museums Scotland and collaborative doctorates at the BM and Oxford University. In 2013, the programme will be extended to include at least five smaller museums in the UK.



'One of the . . . most interesting development initiatives in UK museums'

Maurice Davies,

head of policy and communications,

Museums Association,
on Fresh Leads

Knowledge exchange is increasingly crucial to the effectiveness of those working in the museum sector. So much of our networked world today is about sharing information. It is an important moment to meet similar expectations in the cultural sector and apply the lessons to museum practice. In 2012/13, the BM's own Knowledge Exchange programme, supported by the Vivmar Foundation, saw staff from the BM and partner museums take up work placements across the UK to exchange ideas and share good practice. Participating museums included National Museums Northern Ireland; National Galleries of Scotland; Turner Contemporary in Margate; Leicester Museums; and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery in Exeter.

Sharing expertise and training often go hand in hand. The BM supports a knowledge network of more than 40 organisations called Money and Medals (moneyandmedals. org.uk). The work ranges from auditing collections of coins across the country to training and support for those working on coins. The goal is to help museums better engage the public with their coins collections, and to create a comprehensive, online information resource about the nation's coins. So far the website has had more than 50,000 visits. In 2013, the network was awarded a further two years' funding from Arts Council England.

Knowledge sharing programmes included Fresh Leads to promote innovation in museums (right) and caring for the UK's collections of coins and medals





Exhibitions

Once a Warrior ... with the British Museum

An inspired community project in Exeter drew comparisons between modern British armed forces and native North American warriors.

Once a Warrior invited West Country men and women with military experience to respond to the Warriors of the Plains touring exhibition. 'It made me reflect on my own thought processes in the past and ... how universal those feelings were,' wrote one participant. Having served in the Balkans, Falklands and Afghanistan, they shared stories, created works of art and exchanged ideas: how a Blackfoot bear claw necklace reminded them of their own protective totems, how similar homecoming rituals have endured over 200 years and more.

This partnership project with Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Aftermath PTSD was funded by Arts Council England.



In the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, Leeds curator Katherine Baxter was full of praise. 'It is so unbelievably exciting to have the exhibition here in Leeds.' *Pharaoh: King of Egypt* is the largest exhibition of ancient Egyptian sculptures, papyri, gold jewellery and other artefacts the BM has ever toured around the UK. Artefacts ranged from diplomatic letters to Egypt's allies inscribed on clay tablets, to an ancient water clock decorated for a Greek king sitting on the throne of Egypt.

The exhibition has proved enormously popular, attracting over 300,000 visitors across the UK so far. At Leeds City Museum, visitor numbers increased by 42%, and hosting the exhibition drew support to redevelop the museum's gallery space for future installations and touring shows. *Pharaoh: King of Egypt* continued to Birmingham, Glasgow and Bristol.

BM touring exhibitions are generously supported by the Dorset Foundation and their success is very much a product of working with regional museums to ensure the subject matter, displays and linked programming make a good fit for local interests. At the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, visitors could see *Warriors of the Plains: 200 Years of Native North American Ritual and Honour.* Exeter holds one of the largest collections of native North American material in the country. The touring exhibition cast a new light on that material by exploring the figure of the Plains Indian warrior from 1800 to the present – through tomahawks, pipes, painted shields, mocassins and impressive regalia such as a brightly coloured, beaded and feathered pow-wow costume.

MP Ben Bradshaw singled out this 'wonderful British Museum touring exhibition' in a parliamentary speech on the importance of the arts and creative industries. The tour of *Warriors of the Plains* continued to Manchester Museum in May 2013. So far over 100,000 people have seen the exhibition.

Future tours include Roman Empire, Power and People and Curious Beasts: Animal Prints from the British Museum.

Children in Glasgow enter into the spirit of the touring exhibition, Pharaoh: King of Egypt



'As Sikhs we felt very proud to be represented in the museum' Visitor comment on the Spotlight Loan of a fortress turban, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

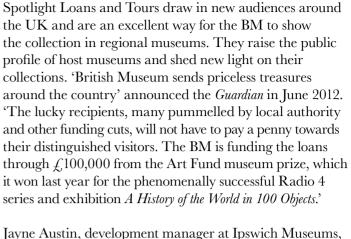
Loans

Local ties, local people ... with the British Museum

Museum displays with a local angle are a great favourite with audiences. When the collection takes to the road nationally, connections that appeal to visitors in the area are an important consideration.

The link is often a local find. The Mildenhall Great Dish, a 4th century AD silver platter, boasts in its name the Suffolk market town where it was discovered in 1942. One of the BM's first Spotlight Loans, the beautifully decorated Roman dish was loaned to loswich Museums in 2012.

Several Spotlight Loans are being displayed for local audiences where they were first uncovered: the Iron Age Witham Shield (loaned to The Collection, Lincoln), the Backworth Treasure of Roman silver (at Segedunum Roman Fort along Hadrian's Wall) and the Bronze Age ceremonial Mold Gold Cape, on show in Cardiff and Wrexham in summer 2013.



Jayne Austin, development manager at Ipswich Museums, summed up the BM's role for BBC News Suffolk: 'They are leading the way in making collections more accessible around the country.' The artefacts have proved immensely attractive to regional museums. In the modern De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea, a Roman bronze Herakles was seen by over 100,000 people. The silver platter known as the Mildenhall Great Dish was displayed in Ipswich. The Gayer-Anderson Egyptian cat was seen by record numbers in the far north of the country in Shetland. At Creswell Crags in Nottinghamshire, a rare Ice Age sculpture of swimming reindeer was put on show.

Spotlight Tours take some loans to several locations. A Sikh turban known as a *dastaar boonga* or 'towering fortress' is touring to six venues. In Birmingham 86,000 people turned out to see the 73cm high turban, many visiting Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery for the first time. 'Thank you very much for sharing the *dastaar* in the museum,' wrote one visitor. 'It will help the general public to understand why we Sikhs wear our turban and the importance of our turban. Please encourage this exhibition in other museums.'

As *The Art Newspaper* reported in June 2013, the BM lends more objects than any museum in the world. In 2012/13, the BM loaned nearly 2000 objects to venues across the UK.



A Spotlight Loan to Birmingham was supported by a community event showing how to tie a Sikh turban



Audiences

For Talking Objects in Brighton, participants responded to objects that ranged from a West African prayer book to a money box from Bangladesh

More diverse than ever ... with the British Museum

Museum audiences have often been considered more or less united in their interests. Studies now show that visitors use museums for very different ends – aesthetic, spiritual, educational.

With partners across the country, the BM is striving to refine what we know about UK audiences and how cultural organisations speak to them. Age Collective looks at ways museums can be accessed by older visitors. Talking Objects has been so successful at bringing the unique power of objects to life for young people that the BM has now expanded the hands-on programme nationally, working with regional museums to see how Talking Objects could be run for other age groups.

'More voices are heard,' judged one participant, 'and the confidence this can bring is clear and effective in driving participation, change and development.' How well do museums address the needs of older visitors? Among the many communities museums try to reach, the UK's ageing population is fast becoming one that demands a closer look. With this in mind, National Museums Northern Ireland, Manchester Museum, Glasgow Life and the BM created Age Collective. This series of seminars, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, brought together practitioners and representatives from a cross-section of organisations that work with older people. Participants discussed how museums and galleries can find better ways to support older people and make sense of their needs across a range of cultural venues. The aim was to uncover new forms of collaboration, encouraging social care, health and advice providers in Britain to see museums as potential partners for the work they do.

Animating Museums, supported by Arts Council England, invited museum staff, funders and artists from around the UK to discuss the strengths and liabilities of artists working with museums, galleries and heritage collections. With a long, inclusive history of excellent individual examples in the sector – from workshops with local crafts people to internationally renowned artists such as Grayson Perry working with institutions such as the BM – the goal was to discuss why museums should engage with artists and how such projects are run. At two seminars in London and Manchester, the questions were provocative and the discussion frank. Topics ranged from how to create a brief for a visiting artist, to using artists to help the disenfranchised develop skills they might not access in a more formal context. Many praised the enthusiasm artists inspire in visitors. Artists bring to life the creativity that underlies every artefact and tell museum stories in fresh ways.

Young people were certainly a focus, as they are in the BM's extensive work with supplementary schools and in the BM's successful initiative, Talking Objects. Supported by John Lyon's Charity, Talking Objects began in London in 2008. It invited young people to find a way of talking with curators and artists about a single object they were allowed to handle and explore. Objects have ranged from a carved Mexican lintel to an African sculpture of an Ife head. The discussion is peer-led, with experts helping to facilitate talk rather than lecture. Since 2011, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the BM has expanded the programme across the UK. It now works with a group of museums to test the method with different visitor groups in different contexts. In 2012/13 these included Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery in Carlisle and Brighton Royal Pavilion and Museums. Future plans include an online toolkit to enable all UK museums to deploy the Talking Objects method.

Age Collective is thinking up new ways to bring museum collections to older people across the UK



If you give young people a sense of responsibility, and a sense of purpose, the trust will be repaid' Anna Smalley, learning officer, Tullie House Museum, on Talking Objects

Galleries

Partnership galleries are an effective way for museums in the UK to draw on the BM for support. Examples in the past decade have included galleries in Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Carlisle and Birmingham. Each has been able to amplify what they can do for the public with support from the BM's collection and staff.

In June 2012, a new gallery about ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome opened at the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. The Ancient Civilisations Gallery was launched with pyramid-building, readings from Socrates and mummy-making to welcome the public to the new space. More than 1200 adults and children visited on the opening day.

Loans to the new gallery include a marble bust of Dionysus and a statue of Sekhmet, the lion goddess, from ancient Egypt. BM staff also collaborated on developing a new public programme, fundraising advice and gallery interpretation. 'We are working closely with the BM,' reported Museum director Hilary Bracegirdle, 'to reinterpret the collection for schools, families and casual visitors.'

'Sekhmet looks wonderful and all the objects support the gallery's story,' said BM Keeper Lesley Fitton. 'There is so much to see and do – it's a great testament to the hard work of all the staff and volunteers involved. The BM greatly appreciates its relationship with the Royal Cornwall Museum and discussions are ongoing regarding future collaborations.' Since the gallery opened, the museum has attracted over 13,000 visitors.

Future proposals include a medieval partnership gallery at Norwich Castle Museum, an Egyptian gallery at Maidstone Museum and a new museum at Lews Castle, Stornoway.

> At the Royal Cornwall Museum, children celebrate the opening of the new Ancient Civilisations Gallery



Finds

Televising antiquities ... with the British Museum

Television brought the BM's Portable Antiquities Scheme to a wide new audience in 2012. On *Mud Men* (History Channel) Johnny Vaughan and Steve Brooker went mudlarking on the Thames foreshore. They showed their finds to a PAS expert before heading off to learn more about London's history.

ITV's six-part *Britain's Secret Treasures* attracted a peak audience of 4.1 million viewers. Hosted by award-winning journalist Michael Buerk and historian Bettany Hughes, the series' special guests included Brian Blessed, Myleene Klass and Michael Portillo.

From the 900,000 artefacts reported through PAS in the last 15 years, the hosts counted down the top 50 archaeological finds made by the UK public – from the Crosby Garrett Roman helmet to the Happisburgh handaxe, the oldest manmade object ever found in Britain. A second series will be broadcast in autumn 2013.

Not all of Britain's historical artefacts can be sent on tour or loaned to a gallery. Some are yet to be discovered. In 2012 the public reported nearly 74,000 finds they'd made, 990 of which were legally defined as Treasure. They included the second largest hoard of Roman gold coins ever discovered in Britain (found in Hertfordshire), a Viking Age burial of gold and silver rings, plaques and other metalwork (Yorkshire), and a rare Iron Age helmet (Kent). BM curators write reports on finds of Treasure for coroners. Conservators and scientists carry out analyses and undertake conservation on some items brought to the Museum. The BM's Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure administers cases of Treasure on behalf of the government and helps to place many of these finds in local museums. Of Treasure finds reported in 2011, over 250 have been acquired by 88 local museums throughout England and Wales.

In 2013 the Art Fund, which has been a major source of assistance to museums in acquiring Treasure finds, announced a new funding initiative called Treasure Plus. Its intention is to help museums develop their archaeological collections for better public engagement. This will be particularly useful for museums who have acquired Treasure finds. They can apply for resources for conservation, research, educational activities, or even the provision of new display cases.

The public finds in England and Wales were reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), the BM's longstanding programme to record archaeological discoveries in Britain. The aim is to ensure their preservation and that important information about their context is not lost. With more than half a million visitors to its website in 2012, over 900,000 objects are being made available for a worldwide audience to study.

The scheme has many components. Finds Days invite members of the public to bring artefacts they've found to experts, who can help to identify them. During 2012, 725 PAS outreach events took place, including talks, finds days and exhibitions. These were attended by more than 33,000 people, including 2700 children. In addition, the

One of the year's major finds was a hoard of 159 Roman gold coins. Struck in Milan and Ravenna in the 4th and 5th centuries AD, they were discovered near St Albans in autumn 2012



scheme's Finds Liasion Officers had regular contact with 197 metal-detecting clubs, attending 843 club meetings. Internships, funded by the Headley Trust, help to train the scheme's future Finds Liaison Officers.

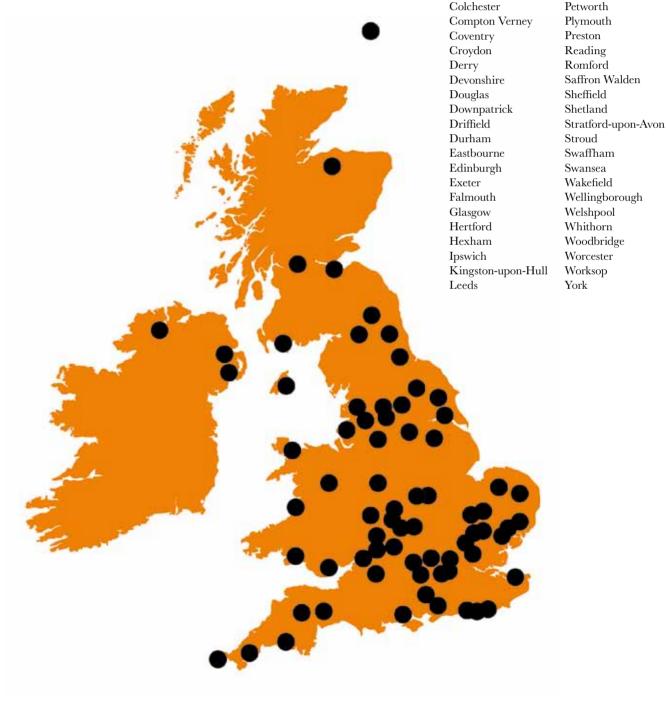
Over 370 research projects are using data collated by PAS. These include a collaboration with the University of Leicester, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, to study what coin hoards tell us about Roman Britain. The PAS website encourages engagement with research and archaeology. Members of the public can record their own discoveries, while an online area for children, *PASt Explorers*, encourages young people to learn about archaeology through games and activities.

'It never ceases to amaze me that such incredibly important objects have survived in the ground for many hundreds of years, waiting to be found by everyday people,' said Minister for Culture Ed Vaizey. 'Not only are these objects extremely exciting discoveries, but once reported Treasure or recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, they have great potential to rewrite the history of this country, and enrich local and national museums.'



The ITV series *Britain's*Secret Treasures
selected a handaxe
found on a beach in
Happisburgh, Norfolk,
as Britain's top public
find (Length 13cm)

Joint projects with the British Museum 2012/13



Aberystwyth

Bexhill-on-Sea

Bishop's Stortford

Birmingham

Aylesbury

Bath

Belfast

Bristol

Buxton

Cardiff

Carlisle

Cambridge

Chelmsford

Cheltenham

Chichester

Cirencester

Leicester Lincoln

Liverpool

London

Luton

Llanfairpwll

Lymington

Manchester

Margate

Newcastle

Norwich

Oxford

Penzance

Newmarket

Moray

Littlehampton

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This British gold medal of 1633 shows Charles I on horseback. Displayed in Birmingham, it was one of the nearly 2000 loans made by the BM across the UK in 2012/13 (Diameter 4cm)

National programmes

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