

platform for public capitalization of the results of this project will be operational at [www.culturalia.ro](http://www.culturalia.ro), which will include over 550,000 digitized cultural assets.

The Romanian museums oscillated between periods of vitality and cultural effervescence and periods of dramatic decrease in the number of visitors, this also against the background of the closure of the educational activities of the schools in the country. Since the students returned to school and no longer resorted to the online school option, the number of museum visitors has also increased significantly. Their number is certainly higher than that of visitors in 2020, but still below the values recorded annually until 2019.

Among the most important events of 2021 we mention the successful organization of the Night of Museums on 12 June (precisely because in May a state of alert was still established with traffic restrictions, including during the night), the inauguration of the House of Museums in Iași on 22 July (Iași was the capital of the historical province of Moldova until 1859) - a museum that brings together four museums, the opening of the museum 'St. Hierarch Gavril' from Capriana Monastery, the opening in April 2021 of the museum dedicated to the painter Ștefan Luchian from Ștefaniești (Botoani), October 2021 - the opening of the Museum of Freemasonry in Oradea, September 2021 - the inauguration of the Museum of Vrancea in Vidra.

The most important Romanian exhibition project for the promotion of the national heritage abroad was the exhibition 'Archaeological treasures from Romania. Dacian and Roman roots', at the National Museum of Archaeology in Madrid. This exhibition was the result of a collaboration between 40 museums in Romania and four in Spain, and was coordinated by the National Museum of Romanian History.

Important steps have been taken towards the integration of the cultural offer in Timișoara and Brașov, by introducing a single access ticket to all the museums in the two cities. Timișoara is the future European Capital of Culture in 2023, and Brașov is the third most visited city in Romania.

The year 2021 meant for the Romanian museum community the international recognition of the quality of the exhibition projects of the National Museum of

Romanian Literature in Bucharest, an institution that was awarded the DASA Award by the European Museum Academy, for the curatorial vision within the permanent exhibition and for reorganization of the memorial house dedicated to the memory of the poet and musician, Anton Pann.

**Valer Rus**

## RUSSIA

In Russia for 2021 - more than 2800 state museums. State - not in the sense of federal and regional, but in the sense of financed under the item 'culture' from different levels of budgets. This value is clear and relatively easy to establish. There is also a large number of departmental, private and public museums. Despite the difficult epidemiological situation, the reduction of real museum visitors, the introduction of a lockdown and the closure of museums for this period, interest in them has not disappeared. New forms have been developed; a rapid flowering of virtual formats has begun. At first, it was rather chaotic: there were not enough budgets, competent personnel and, most importantly, an understanding of the specifics of the genre. Gradually, almost everyone got used to it. Banal video tours of closed exhibitions began to be replaced by well-adjusted lecture programmes, purely online exhibitions, streams on YouTube channels, construction games, flash mobs, and multimedia shows. Museums have seen an increase in the number of followers on their social networks; in some cases, the growth was very significant, comparable to the loss of offline museum visitors. Although simultaneously with virtual achievements came the realization that the replacement is not equivalent. Visiting exhibitions in museums in Russia takes place upon presentation of a QR code or a PCR test. For major exhibitions in Moscow and St. Petersburg on advance electronic tickets.

### **Main exhibitions of 2021:**

- **Alexandre Benois and his 'World of Art'**. The exhibition at the Tretyakov Gallery was dedicated to the art association 'World of Art' (which existed in the 1890s) and was timed to coincide with the anniversary of one of its founders, the artist Alexander Benois. The exhibition is part of the cycle of changing exhibitions of the Tretyakov Gallery 'Artist and Time'. In the halls of the museum, 200 graphic works are exhibited, including those by A. Benois, Lev Bakst, Boris Kustodiev, Evgeny Lansere, Mikhail Vrubel and others.
- **Court costume of the middle of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. from the collection of the State Hermitage.** The exhibition of court costumes opens a series of temporary exhibitions dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the State Historical Museum.
- **Known and unknown Repin** in the Tretyakov Gallery. 30 works by the famous painter: some of them are now kept in the gallery itself, other canvases were provided by the Voronezh Art Museum and the owners of private Moscow collections.
- **'Sunset Luxury: Qajar Iran.** The Oriental Museum presented 250 exhibits from its Iranian collection from the reign of the Iranian Qajar dynasty. Among them are carpets, paintings, pottery, traditional weapons, manuscripts of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most of the works are shown for the first time.

- **'Small' art of big artists.** The Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center presented an exhibition of 'small' works by famous artists Isaac Levitan, Valentin Serov, Mikhail Vrubel, Ilya Repin.

- **Exhibition of Russian art.** In 1924-1925, the Exhibition of Russian Art was held in the USA, at which more than 1,000 works by famous painters were presented. Now these works are kept in museums and private collections in Russia, Spain, France, Canada and Austria. The Museum of Russian Impressionism has brought together works in one of its largest temporary exhibitions. The guests of the exposition saw works by Viktor Vasnetsov, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Boris Kustodiev, Lev Bakst, Igor Grabar and others.

- **Morozov Brothers. The Great Russian Collectors.** The exhibition of the Pushkin Museum is dedicated to the memory of art critic Irina Antonova, who served as director of the Pushkin Museum from 1961 to 2013. These are the works of Pierre Auguste Renoir, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet. In addition, the exposition included decorative ensembles, which were created by the founders of the Nabis art group, post-impressionists Pierre Bonnard and Maurice Denis.

- **Mikhail Vrubel.** More than 300 works are shown in the New Tretyakov Gallery. The exhibits are presented from 14 Russian and foreign museums. These are paintings, theatrical costumes and scenery based on Vrubel's sketches, his sculptures, decorative panels and ceramics.

In December 2021 the All-Russian Conference of the Model Standard of the Municipal Local History Museum was held. 2022 has been declared the year of the Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of Russia. The National Project 'Culture' included the 'Model Standard' project with funding for the renewal of local history museums in rural areas and small towns.

**Anna Permilovskaya**

## SERBIA

The activities of museums in Serbia, in 2021, as in the whole world, were in the shadow of the Covid-19 virus. Unlike the previous year, museums in 2021 were not closed to the public but had to adapt their activities to epidemiological measures valid at the moment and operate in a climate of constant uncertainty. However, it could be said that museums regularly organized their activities and many of them carried out works on reconstruction, renovation and preparation of their new permanent exhibitions, revision of their funds and digitalization processes, as well. The budget of the Republic of Serbia for culture in 2021 was higher than in the previous year, so museums were able to implement numerous diverse activities and constantly adapt to new circumstances balancing between real and virtual, old and 'new normality'.

It could be said that exhibition, publishing and educational activities in Serbian museums have returned to normal and, at the same time, a significantly increased number of programmes for digitization, virtualization and application of modern technologies, protection and promotion of cultural heritage is clearly evident. International cooperation programmes were far less than usual, but it is justified by the global situation. For the history of museum activity in Serbia, 2021 will forever be written down as the year in which the *Law on Museum Activities* was passed for the first time, regulating the field of museum activities in accordance with European legislation. The law was adopted by the Assembly in April 2021 and has been actively applied since October. In accordance with it, a number of by-laws were passed significantly regulating areas, such as: regulations on keeping documents, taking professional museum exams, keeping museum records, digitalization etc. The improvement of legal regulations laid the foundations for better functioning of museums and showed how important the issue of museums is for the overall development of culture in Serbia. We can only hope that in the future, this law will not only improve the development of the museum on paper, but also in practice.

Finally, due to the pandemic and limited movements, the number of visits of foreign tourists to Serbian museums decreased significantly, while the visits of Serbian tourists increased, so the number of domestic audiences in museums during 2021 was much higher. Also, there is a noticeable increase in public interest for museum programmes - lectures, guided tours, educational programmes - as a result of the reduced number of other cultural and social events. Museums in Serbia have managed to show that, with all respect to prescribed measures, museums are the safest places to consume culture. During 2021, museums of Serbia also showed their inventiveness, creativity and adaptability to the new situation and changes that were unpredictable.

**Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski**

## SLOVENIA

February 8, Prešeren's Day, has been a holiday of Slovenian culture since 1945, a year later it became a national holiday, and in 1991 it was still a public holiday. This is the day when there are long lines in front of museums that have opened their doors and offered selected content.

Unfortunately, we do not have statistics collected in February on visits and, above all, the impact of Covid-19 on museum work.

The Covid-19 pandemic severely hampered cultural activity in 2021. Almost 98% of cultural institutions with stage activity reported about the impact of the pandemic in 2020 and continue in 2021. At the same time also the same situation, around 71% also said that the situation encouraged other forms of activity. It was similar in museums and galleries: almost 94% of them reported that the activity was reduced, while 73% tried other forms of activity.

In museums and galleries, fans of this art had almost 1000 exhibitions available, which is still, about 37% less than in 2019.

Museums and galleries in Slovenia were mostly visited by domestic visitors (80% estimate).

We especially emphasize that in Slovenia we celebrate this happy day of culture on 3 December, when our great poet France Prešeren was born, from 2000 onwards. In 2021, museums and galleries were visited by as many as 269,000 visitors, which is app. 12 % of the total population of Slovenia. However, virtual exhibitions and related % of live educational activities were on the rise again.

In all 93 museums, institutions with museum collections and galleries, which form a network of museums of public service, almost the same number of individuals (1035) and as many external collaborators (approximately 1700) were employed.

In 2021, museums in Slovenia were slowly on the way to achieving the goals they were in 2019 when it comes to visitors. However, in 2021 they dedicated themselves to the revitalization of museum collections and dedicated themselves to cooperating with external collaborators in the use of new technologies to promote museum activities.

**Andreja Rihter**

## SPAIN

At the beginning of 2021, the rollout began of the Covid-19 vaccine, auguring well for Spanish museums to expect better results than those obtained in 2020, a year when the country was locked down for three months followed by long periods of restricted movement.

Initial figures for 2021, indicate that better results have been achieved in museum attendance than in 2020, although they are below those for 2019, the year before the pandemic.

Historically, tourism has been one of the main visitor types to major Spanish museums and it must be said that although 2021 figures have improved compared to 2020, the flow of foreign tourists has been limited by the still notable effects of the pandemic.

Regarding the domestic market, and according to research carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, it would appear that the effects of the pandemic have also had an impact on the population's behaviour regarding museum visits. On the one hand, compared to the pre-pandemic situation, the number of people who state that they regularly visit museums has halved. Among those who no longer visit museums, is a majority of older people who have significantly reduced their attendance to cultural activities as a result of the fear caused by Covid-19. On the other hand, a new category of visitor has emerged. These are people who state that they do not regularly visit museums and exhibitions and only used to do so during journeys abroad for tourism reasons. Covid-19 restrictions and the resulting precautions have led to a change in tourism destinations for many people, who have drastically reduced foreign travel and replaced it with destinations closer to home, in their home country. During these internal tourism trips, this new visitor type has included museum visits as an additional ingredient on their menu of activities.

Apart from the impact on attendance for heritage sites, with regard to the work of museums, it has been noted that the slowdown in regular activities has led to other tasks of a different sort being carried out. On the one hand, many museums have dedicated their efforts and growing resources to digitisation, both the digitisation of collections and the creation of a new range of online activities. On the other hand, there has been a significant increase in the number of museums that are creating or updating their strategic plans.

Similarly, increasingly more attention is being paid by professionals to the impact of museums on society. Beyond the recognised functions of museums (conservation, research, exhibition, education...), a growing interest has been perceived in the external influence that museum activities have in fields like health, social cohesion or community work. In the last quarter of the year, we have had the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars dedicated to the impact of museums on health, the commitment of museums to environmental sustainability in the face of the climate crisis, as well as the development of community projects that have the purpose of providing a service and attending to the communities closest to the museum. Many of these community activities are being established based on co-created projects.

Debate within ICOM as to a new definition of museum that focuses more on social aspects, reflects an increasingly evident change, in this sense, in Spanish museums.

**Antoni Laporte**

## SWEDEN

Many museums started the year without opening their doors to the public, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Those which could remain open to the public had restrictions to the number of visitors and other measures taken to ensure safe visits. This of course had a severe effect on the overall visitor numbers to museums in Sweden in 2021. In total there were 9,4 million visits to museums (the population in Sweden is 10 million people), which is 46% less than before the pandemic. However, it is clear that museums found other ways to reach their audiences, through digital activities, digital guided tours, lectures and other digital content to be accessed by people from their own homes. There were 233 million digital visits to museums during 2021. The digital competences have been in focus for many museums. There have been a large number of online seminars and training events for museum staff on how to use various digital tools. Still, a governmental report published this year, points out that Sweden has a slow pace of digital development and digitisation within the cultural sector, and that need to speed up. The government has proposed extra funding for increasing the work with digitisation during 2022, 2023 and 2024.

As a way of promoting museums and attracting more visitors the national association for museums started up a national museum weekend in November. Many museums participated and it remains to be seen whether it will turn into an annual event, which is the plan. The national annual museum meeting was held digitally, as so many other meetings.

The city museum of Norrköping was awarded the Swedish Museum of the Year Award. They have actively worked with tackling sensitive issues and gained much attention for their exhibition about people who sympathised with the Nazis in the '30s and '40s, and those who opposed them. The exhibition also included newspaper cuttings from present time about people still sympathising with the Nazis. This led to a huge debate about museums as political actors, and the freedom of museums from political influences. The museum law from 2017 clearly stated that museums should be free from political pressures. However, a report made in July 2021 shows that between a quarter and a third of museum directors have experienced attempts from politicians to influence them. Keeping a distance from politics has been an important topic of discussion in the museum sector this year.

**Anna Hansen**

## TURKEY

In 2021, as the pandemic continues and the rate of spread of the virus increases, new measures have come to the fore in museums. In this context, some museums affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism were completely closed, while some of them were regulated by time and day; On the other hand, 'museums and historical sites with a high density of foreign visitors' were open on weekends. In the period between 29 April and 17 May 2021, which was described as 'full closure', a curfew was imposed on citizens of the Republic of Turkey, so only foreign tourists could visit the partially open museums.

During the periods when the museums were open, visitors could enter the museums within the framework of various precautions and rules. The measures taken by the museums within the scope of the pandemic can be summarized as follows: The days and hours that the museums are open have been rearranged and limited. As of 2021, museums can be entered with Hayat Eve Sığar (HES – Life Fits Into Home) code. In museums, both museum staff and visitors are required to wear masks. The temperature of the visitors is taken at the entrance. Depending on the capacity of the museums, a varying number of visitors are accepted inside, and the specified number should not be exceeded.

In this process, where physical access was restricted due to the ongoing pandemic in 2021, digitalization and the use of current technologies in museology were at the centre of the published reports and discussions. Although most of the museums benefited from current technology before the pandemic, it can be said that digital platforms are not used that much and applications that increase interaction with the audience provided limited interaction.

In 2021, the perspective of museums in Turkey consisted mostly of transferring collections to digital media and searching for the most effective methods of meeting the audience on digital platforms. In this process, museums reached the audience by using their websites and social media accounts. For example, in 2020, Pera Museum has achieved a total of 10-year views in one year, only on YouTube. The museum's exhibitions and activities were watched one million times in a year, and the total number of views on YouTube reached two million. Many contemporary art museums, galleries and similar institutions in Turkey have taken part in the Google Arts and Culture project and have delivered their collections to the audience digitally, or their projects continue in this context.

T.R. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has opened the museums and ruins in various cities to visit in virtual environment via the electronic address

'sanalmuze.gov.tr'. As of May 2021, there are 33 museums and ruins in the application, which have been visited by 13 million people.

In this process, local and international events were organized that expressed the problems experienced by museums and sought solutions **with common sense**. The issues discussed in these organizations are also important in terms of understanding the museum agenda in Turkey in 2021:

- 1- The financial problems of museums, the methods of adaptation to the pandemic process, the future of culture and arts institutions and creative industries in the short and long term.
- 2- Social Role of Museums and Sustainability.
- 3- The Impact of Climate Change, Sustainability of Museums.
- 4- Cultural Tourism and Museum Relationship.
- 5- The effects of digitalization on museums.
- 6- Museum staff and insecurity.
- 7- Contribution of museums to democracy and social dialogue.

The crisis experienced caused a decrease in the number of visitors to the museums in both 2020 and 2021, thus reducing museum revenues. Even if they are not closed, the number of visitors to almost all cultural institutions have decreased by 50-70% compared to the pre-pandemic period.

Especially the budget cuts in private museums caused the closure of some private museums. The same restrictions directly affected the museum staff, especially the experts and guides working part-time in the education departments were faced with the problem of employment. However, objective data could not be reached due to the fact that the numerical data were not disclosed by the institutions.

With the notification sent by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey to all schools in 2021, museum tours of schools were restricted, and this situation directly affected the number of visitors. For example, the number of student visitors of Bursa City Museum, which was 84.746 before the pandemic in 2019, decreased to 23.214 in 2021.

Troy Museum, which is the winner of the 2020/2021 European Museum Academy Special Award, was awarded the Special Mention in the Museums in Short competition in the same year. The awards caused many news agencies to make news in Turkey's reputable television channels and newspapers. The posts about the award

on social media attracted great attention. The fact that the Troy Museum, one of the 198 respected museums affiliated to the Ministry of Culture, received both awards, has further increased the visibility of the European Museum Academy in Turkey.

**Dilek Yildiz Karakas**

## UKRAINE

In 2021, the museum space in Ukraine faced several blocks of challenges.

Regarding legislative and political aspects. In the second half of 2020, a law on the creation of territorial communities came into force in Ukraine as part of administrative reform. The full implementation of this law began in 2021. This law allows local communities to independently control the local budget and determine priorities and support objects. Many small museums have been transferred from regional subordination to the balance of territorial communities. In the long run, caring for local communities with their local museums can help modernize them and turn them into real cultural centres for communities. However, at the initial stage, several difficulties put some museums in danger of closing. Museums in strong territorial communities have launched active activities aimed at involving residents in the life of the museum. At the end of December 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine published an updated list of museum institutions in Ukraine, which are kept by the State Museum Fund. Some of these institutions remained in the territory occupied by the Russian Federation by 2014. Therefore, the analysis of the situation and the updated register taking into account the challenges of the occupation was an extremely important action.

Due to the constant threat of intensification of hostilities and large-scale invasions in the museum environment, training on the algorithm of necessary actions in emergencies is periodically conducted. Relevant thematic materials are distributed.

Regarding the situation with the Covid-19. The continuation of the covid epidemic was reflected in new difficulties in museum life in Ukraine. According to the rules introduced in the summer of 2021, after the appearance of widely available vaccines against Covid-19, cultural institutions could work, provided that 80% of the staff are vaccinated. Due to the problematic information campaign on vaccination and the low level of vaccination in early autumn 2021, many regional museums were forced to close. In 2021, the most powerful museum centres began to create online versions of newly created exhibitions, holding most events in an online or mixed format. Experiments on the creation of virtual exhibition spaces continued.

Regarding financing. In 2018, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation started operating in Ukraine. Its activities are aimed at developing national culture and art in the country, providing favorable conditions for the development of the intellectual and spiritual potential of the individual and society, wide access of citizens to national cultural heritage, support for cultural diversity, and integration of Ukrainian culture into the world cultural space. Since 2019, the number of museums that apply for the Ukrainian

Cultural Foundation grants and receive the appropriate funding is growing every year. In 2021 alone, about 500 applications were submitted for various types of museum projects - from the creation of new exhibitions to the digitization of funds. Of course, a small part was supported. However, there is a clear trend that museums have become actively involved in finding alternative sources of funding for their activities, in addition to the annual guaranteed budget support (usually quite small).

In Ukraine, the process of digitizing the accounting system for exhibits and digitizing funds continues, but not systematically and chaotically. Museum workers are quite cautious about these processes.

Construction of two major museums is underway - the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity, dedicated to the recent history of 2013-2014, and the Holodomor Museum (the second stage of development - the creation of the exhibition. exposure function). The museum of the Russian-Ukrainian war is being developed. In 2021, a branch of the Museum of Military Childhood was opened in Kyiv. An important trend in Ukraine is the active discussions in the museum professional environment and society about the museification and memorialization of complex memory and hot, living history, about the de-communization and decolonization changes needed by Ukrainian museums established during the Soviet Union.

**Anastasiia Haidukevych**

## UNITED KINGDOM

When the 2020 national report was completed in January 2021 the UK was once again in a full lockdown, with museums and heritage attractions closed yet again, with staff furloughed or working from home. There is no doubt that this lockdown period was the toughest yet, both in terms of the financial impact on museums through loss of income but also on staff and volunteers with all the well-being issues that surrounded lockdown and pandemic more generally. Lessons learned in 2020 proved of further use, so digital initiatives such as online collections access, virtual talks, lectures and tours continued.

There was much debate (and no little annoyance) at the decision by the English government to allow shops and other public spaces to reopen on 12 April but delaying the opening of museums and other cultural venues until 17 May, depriving them of valuable income over the Easter period. This decision was frustrating given the huge amount of work museums had already done to provide Covid-safe environments for visitors and staff including online booking, social distancing, and other hygiene measures. It is worth noting that having four devolved governments in the UK did mean that because each administration had different approaches to Covid regulations and timings, life was more complicated for visitors.

After some early hesitancy, visitors began to return in greater numbers. Most museums had a positive summer, with visitor numbers for many being between 60-80% of a 'normal' year. Limitations to retain distancing did limit numbers, although these were relaxed as the year progressed. Reduced appetite for air travel and foreign holidays meant that more families had 'staycation' holidays, which was good news for museums outside London; in the capital, visitor numbers remained lower due to the depressed overseas visitor market, and also a perception that London was still a bigger risk in terms of Covid-19.

By autumn of 2021 there was some cautious optimism, especially as the vaccine rollout in the UK had made good progress; the rise of the Omicron variant in November was a blow and its rapid development severely affected visitor numbers and bookings for Christmas-related events and corporate activities, denting income targets for the year. Many museums reported lower than expected visitor numbers, and in the weeks before Christmas, staff shortages due to Covid infections caused some to restrict opening hours or closed completely.

The impact of severely reduced visitor numbers, corporate giving, and other income generation in 2020 continued to manifest itself in museum operations in 2021. Many museums announced restructuring initiatives, job losses, closures and reduced

opening hours during the year. As an example, the Victoria & Albert Museum announced a 20% cut in both curatorial and front of house staffing in the spring of 2021, although this has been scaled back subsequently. On a more positive note, there were further tranches of government aid for museums and galleries by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Museums & Galleries Scotland and Arts Council England who announced a third Cultural Recovery Fund scheme worth £300 million, from which many museums were able to benefit. The same body also announced a funding scheme MEND, aimed at tackling long term backlogs in building maintenance worth £18.8 million, but this proved woefully inadequate in scope, being completely oversubscribed.

The most obvious difficulty for museums (and organizations and people more generally!) is the longer-term uncertainty that the pandemic has brought. Developing robust budgets and plans has clearly become much more difficult, although most museums have become far nimbler in responding to new developments as they occur. At the time of writing, there is some very cautious optimism that 2022 will be a better year, but only time will tell. We had thought that 2021 would be a year of consolidation after the initial stages of the virus, but it seems that this might be the case in 2022!

#### **Other Developments – some other things of interest in brief:**

- **Decolonisation/Contested Heritage:** the issues highlighted in the 2020 report following the promotion of the BLM movement continue to be a high priority for museums in the UK. Initiatives at all levels are being developed to address racism, inclusion and diversity and as well as broader debates at a sector level, museums are working more locally to tackle inequality and build meaningful relationships with local communities. The statue of Edward Colston which became a focus in 2020 is now on display at the M Shed Museum in Bristol while plans for its long-term future are agreed following consultation with local people. The work done by museums and other heritage bodies to create content that provides a more balanced view of Britain's colonial past has become highly politicised with national government also involved.
- **Climate Change:** COP26 event provided another focus for work already being done by museums and other cultural institutions to address climate change. Museums were represented at various sessions during the conference. More generally, many museums have declared 'climate emergencies' and set dates for achieving climate neutral status. (My museum has set a date of 2030 for this). The nationally-funded Science Museum pledged to have zero-carbon status by 2033, but has been embroiled in a long-running saga prompted by sponsorship of a number of exhibitions by energy companies including Shell and Adami.

The museum argues they can influence the debate by working with such companies, but this view is not shared by activists. The issue has led to demonstrations outside the museum, an overnight occupation by protesters and high-profile resignations from the Science Museum board.

- **Museums and Placemaking:** there have been a recognition that museums can make a real contribution to engendering a sense of community pride and reinforcing placemaking in towns and cities in the UK where investment has traditionally been low, but opportunities for development are high. Arts Council England announced a programme targeted at 54 different locations where arts and culture could be used to support regeneration. This is not a new idea, but welcome none the less.
- **World Heritage Status:** two significant heritage developments took place in 2021; in positive news, the Welsh Slate Industry in North Wales was awarded World Heritage Status in July, becoming the fourth location to achieve this accolade in the Principality. Less good was the news that the City of Liverpool had been stripped of its status a month earlier.
- **And finally:** on a less serious note, in times when public confidence in government, politicians and other public administration seems at a low ebb, it was great news to hear that museum curators are seen by the public as one of the top five 'trusted' professions!

See:<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/12/museum-curators-among-the-most-trusted-professions-poll-finds/>

**Tim Bryan & Lawrence Fitzgerald**