

THE ONLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ARTS SECTOR AVAILABLE ONLINE AND IN PRINT

**ai**

## FEATURES

8 Visual Arts

### Wall Flowers

A new generation of street art is blooming in Belfast, moving beyond the traditional murals that have marked decades of conflict in the city. Patrick Kelly reports

14 Funding

### ACE's big shift

£170m more for the arts outside London, with surprises in the new National Portfolio. AI takes a closer look

17 Theatre

### The thirty year walk in the park

Louise Bryning on three decades of pioneering promenade productions at the Dukes Theatre in Lancaster

22 Heritage

### How a kiwi became a national monument

A chalk carving in Salisbury Plain made by mutinous First World War soldiers has been declared a monument, along with a buried model of an Ypres battle town, as Simon Tail reveals

25 Festivals

### Coming in from the cold

Selby is known for coal rather than culture, but the town hopes all that will change with its first arts festival

## REGULARS

### 4 AI Profile

Dr Charles Saumarez Smith CBE, secretary and chief executive, Royal Academy of Arts

### 7 Dea Birkett

### 12 The Word

With Opera Holland Park, *The Times* got the wrong example of elitism in public funding to take a swipe at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea after the Grenfell Tower fire

### 20 Simon Tait's Diary

### 28 My Story

A new kind of arts consultancy, Branch Arts, has been launched by Flora Fairbairn and Susie Lawson, who come from different corners of the cultural domain

### 30 Papertrail



8



25

17



**Cover photo:** The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) opens its new national architecture centre, RIBA North, with a major display called *Un-veiled* by KHBT Architects. The public can walk through multiple layers of red mesh, a typical building site material covering scaffolding, that are cut in the shape of iconic buildings of cities of the 'Northern Powerhouse' including The Sage in Gateshead, Imperial War Museum North, Liverpool Catholic Cathedral and York Minster. The building's City Gallery also offers a space for visitors to learn more about Liverpool's architectural past present and future.

## ACE'S PRAGMATIC SLEIGHT OF HAND

**W**ith the momentum shift to regional funding announced in Leicester last week – and what new chairman Sir Nicholas Serota called the largest ever increase in Arts Council England's portfolio – ACE has done what it has been told to do by select committees and successive culture secretaries, but despite overall grants in London being down 4% and in the regions up by an average 22% they have done it without doing noticeable damage to London (some smaller London organisations have even been added to the portfolio). They have also extended the three year funding round to four to make planning easier and reduce time spent filling in grant application forms.

The sleight of hand has been to take the new additionality rules about the national lottery to heart and use its lottery reserves to give £170m more to the regions over the four years, and leave London on more or less standstill with the four big national clients, the Royal Opera House, National Theatre, RSC and Southbank Centre, being persuaded to take a 3% cut, acknowledging that they are better placed to get alternative funding.

English National Opera, cast out of the national portfolio three years ago

with a £5m a year cut in its grant, is back, but what does this mean? Nothing in the funding sense, because the grant they already get as a non-NPO is not to be increased, so that by 2022 and the end of this funding round they will be considerably worse off in real terms. But while the loss of the money is bad, the loss of the Arts Council's imprimatur is disastrous for fundraising. Sponsors, foundations and philanthropists like to see that ACE logo on the begging letter.

By contrast Bristol's Arnolfini gallery, an NPO since the portfolio was set up 13 years ago, has been cast out with nothing. All its £750,000 goes, just as a new director takes over, because – like ENO three years ago – its business model wasn't good enough. There are hints that with the right advice the Arnolfini will be back, but that won't help as the gallery approaches four unsubsidised years, a year longer than ENO had to endure.

ACE's move is both bold and nuanced, designed to help local authorities, many of which have had to drastically cut their communities' culture quotient, through their arts funding changes into partnerships to keep funding and standards high, to bring on promising enterprises, and to emphasise the need for more diversity in our modern culture.

---

ai – Arts Industry is published by Countrywide Publications, Fountain Way, Reydon Business Park, Reydon, Suffolk IP18 6DH  
T: 01502 725800 F: 01502 725857 E: editors@artsindustry.co.uk

**Publisher** Simon Tooth T: 01502 725838 E: simon@artsindustry.co.uk

**Co-editors** Simon Tait T: 020 8693 5672 E: simontait@artsindustry.co.uk

Patrick Kelly T: 01904 234748 E: patrick@artsindustry.co.uk

**Design and production** Mark Shreeve and Jade Matthews T: 01502 725839

**Recruitment sales & Subscriptions** Danny Lewis T: 01502 725862 E: danny.lewis@micropress.co.uk

Printed by Micropress Printers Ltd, Reydon, Suffolk.

Opinions expressed in ai are not necessarily those of the publishers. No responsibility is accepted for the content of advertisements. © Arts Industry 2017

**Dr Charles Saumarez Smith CBE**, secretary and chief executive,  
Royal Academy of Arts

# Opening art's jewel

**W**hen he was interviewed for his present job, one of the panel asked Charles Saumarez Smith if he had an experience of the art world. "Given that I was director of the National Gallery at the time I hope that I was able to come up with a satisfactory answer... well, I got the job. But it's a thing with head hunters, they tell panels to ask everyone the same questions and there might have been some who didn't know much about art..."

The question is a measure of where the RA had got to in 2007, where business sense was vital to the continued existence of the institution. His two predecessors had both come from the financial world, and one of them liked to refer to the academy as "a £100m a year business".

And yet it was founded and is run by artists, the self-selecting best in the country, and it has become world renowned for its exhibitions, with its annual open Summer Exhibition bringing thousands of submissions. It gets no government funding and rejoices in its independence.

Saumarez Smith is celebrating ten years at the Royal Academy, but before he came anywhere near it he

had had what many would think was already a fulfilled career: he's been director of both the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery, and at both he had seen through major capital developments.

The one he is presiding over now, however, dwarfs the others both in terms of size and the effect it will have. The £50m Burlington House scheme will open next year, marking the RA's 250th birthday, and is the biggest single thing to happen to it since it moved to this building in Piccadilly 100 years after its foundation, in 1868. It will open the closed collegiate institution to the public, revealing its renowned schools, its incomparable collections – each candidate from Sir Joshua Reynolds onwards has had to submit a work of art – and its members' work. Just as crucially, it will reawaken the RA's role as a centre for debate in the arts, with the recreation of its lecture theatre.

Charles Robert Saumarez Smith, known to colleagues all his working life as "CSS", is a tall, amiable man of 63 who has a sure scholarly sensibility, overlaid by a sense of the popular. A scion of a family that numbers at least one 18th century admiral in its line, he took a double first at Cam-

bridge in history and history of art followed by a burgeoning academic career which took him to Harvard, the Warburg Institute and finally back at Cambridge with a research fellowship. He seemed destined to be a Cambridge fixture with architecture his speciality – he had written books on 18th century decoration and Castle Howard, the subject of his PhD.

Architecture remains his abiding love. He has lived in the East End since 1971, latterly in a Georgian house in Stepney with his wife Romilly and two sons, and has just published a book of photographs, *East End* (Thames & Hudson), which is a collection of the smart phone pictures he has taken across the years in regular ramblings over what he regards as an urban village that continually renews itself.

But at 28 he found himself at the V&A, brought in by Sir Roy Strong to run a new joint MA course in the history of design with the Royal College of Art. He found that life in a national museum was not so different from Cambridge, and he took to it with ease. Not only did he survive the departure of his mentor, Strong, he also rose to become the V&A's head of research.



# box

In 1994 he was the surprise appointment as director of the National Portrait Gallery (as Strong had been two decades before), just as the National Lottery began. His first task was to refurbish the curious corner apartments of the National Gallery block on Trafalgar Square that the NPG had occupied since 1856, and the second to make some contemporary sense of a Victorian enthusiasm for imperial self-congratulation. He got the £16m Ondaatje Wing open in 2000, having already opened the new Tudor Gallery, a new Balcony Gallery for post-1950s portraits, a new roof-top restaurant and a lecture theatre. He instituted an exhibitions programme that identified with late 20th century society, and suddenly, the icons of British life came from all sections, so the point of the place became clearer.

In 2002 he was appointed director of the National Gallery, where the trustees had a development scheme but no-one with the right experience to run it. The East Wing, with its tiny passages and skylit little courtyards, had been badly neglected and he forced through a refurbishment scheme to open it up for gallery use. But he walked straight into the >>



>>

battle to “save” Raphael’s *Madonna of the Pinks* by raising £35m, and the capital programme had to take second place. Nevertheless, he got the £17m East Ewing scheme funded and completed before he left.

He makes no secret of the fact that there was a falling out with his trustees over the priorities. “You can treat an institution as business as usual or as somewhere that can in some way be reshaped for the future, and I’ve always been of the latter sort” he says now. “I was keen on developments, but the trouble was that the pressure on the National Gallery was to do with big acquisitions”.

The Royal Academy has been an altogether different experience. The RA has an arcane 18th century mode of governance which, it was acknowledged in 2007, was out of date, whereby the secretary was completely subservient to the Academicians. As secretary he still is, but he is also chief executive. Before his arrival there had been a governance review with a report from a distinguished banker. “The result is a compromise” he says. “I am subservient to the RAs in terms of governance, but I have executive authority in terms of the organisation, so it’s a hybrid”.

It has led to a close working relationship with the two presidents of the RA he has served with, the architect Sir Nicholas Grimshaw and the painter Christopher Le Brun, who shared his determination to open up the RA and rediscover some of its founding precepts of education and discourse. The results could partly be seen in action last weekend with the Mayfair Art Weekend, now an annual event when the RA’s courtyard is opened up for food, music and drink, and the commercial galleries and shops that surround the academy put on special shows, lectures and parties.

In 2013 the Keeper’s House, once the opulent tied cottage of the Keeper of the RA Schools but long abandoned to storage and poky offices, opened as a new facility for the public, RA subscribers and RAs, with a restaurant and bar and a large lounge and bar for the artists.

It had been designed by Sir David Chipperfield and was the first element of the grand scheme he had been commissioned to devise and realise in 2008, when he was still unknown to the public here (his Turner Contemporary in Margate and Hepworth Wakefield in Yorkshire were still years away) but revered in the profession.

The plan coming to fruition will join two different buildings of two different ages in a contiguity that will open up the hitherto subfusc life of the Academy Schools – one of the world’s leading arts colleges whose light has been hidden behind the bushel of RA exhibitions. Access will be through the centre of the 17th century private house that is Burlington House, through the Schools, over a new bridge across a students’ sculpture garden into the 19th century former University of London building behind. The first is a series of domestic size rooms

with exhibition spaces created within, and the second in contrast designed to allow free circulation for large numbers of people.

The new space will not only allow the students to show their work, but also the Royal Academicians in a way they never have before, with proper attention given to contemporary art. And the RA’s largely unsuspected collection will get an airing, perhaps the world’s finest compiled across the development of visual art of the last 250 years.

“It is a brilliant scheme, and only when he had come up with it did it seem to be the obvious solution – to go straight from one door to the other” Saumarez Smith says. “But we also want to bring something else back that has been lost over the years.”

That will be the importance of debate about art and architecture of which the RA used to be a leader, a role Saumarez Smith believes will be restored with the recreation of the lecture theatre, possibly with an annual lecture along the lines of the Royal Institute Christmas science lectures.

The first president of the RA was Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he had to be talked into it by, among others, George III (who he at first turned down) and then friends like Edmund Burke and Samuel Johnson. The Royal Academy was established under him in December 1768, and within a couple of weeks he had given the first of his Discourses, seven lectures for students that still resonate for their wisdom, perception and sensitivity. “From that moment” says Saumarez Smith “he established not only his authority but that of the academy, and the discursive nature of the academy. Somewhere along the line that has been lost, and we can get it back now”.

**“You can treat an institution as business as usual or as somewhere that can in some way be reshaped for the future, and I’ve always been of the latter sort”**

CURRICULUM VITAE	
1954	Born, May 28
1967-73	Marlborough College
1973-78	King’s College, Cambridge
1977	Harvard
1979-82	Applied art fellowship, Christ’s College, Cambridge
1982-90	Assistant keeper, V&A
1990-94	Head of research, V&A
1994-02	Director, National Portrait Gallery
1997	Fellow, Society of Antiquaries
2002-07	Director, National Gallery
2004-06	President, Museums Association
2007-	Secretary & chief executive, Royal Academy of Arts
2008	CBE

# Time, gentlemen...



**Dea Birkett** wonders if there should be a time limit on how long artistic directors can stay in control

**H**ow long should a good man be in power? David Lan, artistic director at London's Young Vic, is leaving after 17 years. He's not alone in having given a good part of his adult life to improving and diversifying the arts. David Jubb, artistic director of Battersea Arts Centre, has been pioneering theatre in South London for 13 years. When Nick Hytner stood down as director of the National Theatre he'd held the post for a mere 12 years.

These are all excellent leaders who have done tremendous transformative work. But 17 years is a very long time in any career. During this time Lan has achieved remarkable things - not least, he has introduced more youthfulness and diversity in theatre in London. The Young Vic's work with local young people in Southwark is tremendous, from developing new audiences to encouraging them to vote. But when we call for more diverse leadership in the arts, there must be roles to fill. There's only one artistic director of the Young Vic or the Battersea Arts Centre. Such posts at the top of our arts institutions are not infinite in number, so if the heads of these fabulous cultural institutions are all white, able-bodied men on unlimited contracts, they can't be anyone more diverse.

Trustees and chairs of all these institutions have time limited appointments. Perhaps it's time to introduce similar sell-by dates to executive posts - a decade wouldn't be unreasonable. It would free up leadership roles more frequently, giving a chance, at least, for those from more diverse backgrounds to fill them.

Relinquishing power is a sign of strength, not weakness. Be like Lan, let go. Let someone else have a chance.

**I** should have learnt my lesson about writing on people in power standing down. My last column began *- There's one outcome from this coming election that looks certain. We'll have a new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Of course, we don't. Karen Bradley is still in post, and just as quiet in the role as before the vote. And far quieter than she was in the run up to the election, when*

she was speaking out on issues as far reaching as prisoners and preventing terrorism. Curious. But at least I made one correct prediction - that digital would be split from arts. Matt Hancock now has the tweaked title of Minister of State for Digital. He's the right person for the new role, unlike the MP who has recently taken the saddle of Minister for Digital Government - Caroline Nokes, former chief executive of the Pony Club in which, I imagine, more knowledge was needed about bridles than megabytes. The bits she's most familiar with fit in horses' mouths. Nokes will no doubt have noted that Hancock is the first MP in modern times to have won a horse race, having raced to victory at Newmarket in August 2012. Nokes website's best boast is that she's helped a constituent get their passport in time to go on a family trip to Disneyland. Meanwhile, Hancock is busy drawing up a Digital Charter, galloping ahead in his role.

**A**s is the unexpected new director of the V&A and former MP Tristram Hunt, who has also been vocal on the use of digital in arts and heritage, casting doubt on the perceived wisdom of rushing to digitalise national collections without first considering why. Hunt was right to point out that the reason many people go to museums is because they are full of real stuff, not screens.

But he was wrong about his new V&A Exhibition Road Quarter. Speaking on Radio 4 on the day of opening, the Director reassured us that 'no public money' was spent on it, presumably to counter any possible criticism of such extravagance in a time of austerity in the arts and beyond. But he was wrong. Government may not have contributed any grants, but the public certainly did pay for the new entrance, gallery and courtyard. The Heritage Lottery Fund contributed £5 million. And lottery tickets are bought by the public. It would be good if the new director of the V&A acknowledged the enormous contribution we, the public, made towards his architectural wonder, rather than say we kept our hands firmly in the pockets of our designer jeans. Hunt might also like to take a piece of advice from the wonderful Duke of Devonshire who runs the hugely successful stately home and estate Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. The Duke refuses to call any of his visitors "the public". They are simply visitors or guests. They are people and families. No one, says the Duke, likes being called "the public". Even if we're paying for it.

[www.deabirkett.com](http://www.deabirkett.com)

**"Perhaps it's time to introduce sell-by dates to executive posts – a decade wouldn't be unreasonable. It would free up leadership roles more frequently"**

# WALL FLOWERS

A new generation of street art is blooming in Belfast, moving beyond the traditional murals that have marked decades of conflict in the city. **Patrick Kelly** reports

**N**o visit to Belfast would be complete without a tour of the city's famous murals. Iconic wall paintings have mapped the conflict for more than thirty years and provided an opportunity for rival communities to commemorate their heroes and mark out

their territory. But a new generation of street artists is changing the meaning of murals in the city, charting a new expression of underground culture, one which has more in common with Berlin or Brazil than Bobby Sands or the Battle of the Boyne.

Now tour groups are eschew-

ing the black cab trips to the historic Loyalist and Nationalist locales of the Shankill or the Falls in favour of a walk around Belfast's hip Cathedral Quarter or city centre development sites. Here, an eclectic mix of adventurous locals or invited overseas artists have claimed a wall here or a gable end there to exercise their free expression of abstracts, pop-art, cartoons and a dozen other visual delights, a world away from depictions of paramilitary hardware and heroes.

The tour leader is Adam Turkington, a passionate organiser of the city's modern cultural scene, through his company SeedHead Arts. He created Culture Night, an extraordinary conglomeration of more than 200 free cultural experiences on a September weekend. A former events manager at Belfast's Waterfront Hall, Turkington is also the brains behind Hit the North, a street art festival, now on to its fourth edition. Dozens of artists from across Europe are invited to create work, in tandem with enthusiastic volunteers and to discuss their art in a series of seminars, talks and workshops.

Turkington set up the Street Art Walking Tour as a response to the

## A history of writing on the wall

Belfast's mural tradition, says Professor Bill Rolston, of the University of Ulster, began in 1908, when a shipyard worker painted a picture of King William III on a gable end wall, "making it the longest extant mural tradition in the world," says Rolston. Walls continued to be decorated, usually in the period leading up to Orangemen's Day on July 12th, but the murals really took off in the 1980s when Catholic and Protestant paramilitary organisations began to use art as a way of expressing their heritage and asserting control over their respective areas. At one time, there were more than 400 across the country. The murals became more aggressive as time went on, with much use of violent imagery (masks, rifles, clenched fists and blood). It's these which the Re-Imaging Belfast scheme has targeted. The tradition continued even after the end of the Troubles. The creation of 'Peace Walls' dividing hostile communities from each other in parts of Belfast, gave graffiti artists miles of new blank canvases to work on. One taxi driver tour guide even offers visitors the chance to get up close and personal with a supply of paint spray canisters in his boot so that you can add your own message of peace to the heavily graffitied wall.





Adam Turkington

dozens of tours which bring tourists to the 'divisive' side of mural art in Belfast. "Walls here are political, but not all the messages have to do with Orange or Green," he says. "I wanted to show people that there is a street art devoted to an alternative culture, an anti-establishment culture."

Much of the street art now flourishes in abandoned and decayed parts of the city, points out Turkington and other works can be found in the Cathedral Quarter, which is fast becoming a cultural quarter attracting popular bars and restaurants, but which has a tradition of street art going back decades, to when it too, was one of the less favoured areas of the city centre. Many of the artworks tell stories of bad development and poor planning, he adds. For example, an animal mural on a burnt out 1930s Art >>



**“Walls here are political, but not all the messages have to do with Orange or Green, I wanted to show people that there is a street art devoted to an alternative culture, an anti-establishment culture”**





>>

Deco arcade refers to the pet shop that was destroyed in a suspicious fire in April 2004.

The rich and vibrant street art scene has thrown up a few star names, like Visual Waste, DMC and Emic, whose signatures now adorn walls all over the city. Much of their work is done with the tacit agreement of building owners, or with a blind eye turned by the planning authorities. However, street artists are now being commissioned to provide works for regeneration schemes and even commercial companies, which believe that street art on the walls of a new bar or nightclub will lend them street cred. *Pure Here* was created by Visual Waste in conjunction with Harp lager and local boxing superstar, Carl Frampton. It aims to celebrate the "Best of Belfast" and features some of Belfast's most iconic tourist attractions like the Albert Clock and the City Hall, as well as some smaller, more eccentric

details. Visual Waste said, "We wanted to not only put things in it that locals would notice but also some larger things like the cranes, and things that tourists would get straight away."

Marti Molloy, who runs the Belfastology walking tour, is also a keen connoisseur of the street art scene and tracks the development of the modern mural tradition from conflict to cross community projects. The intervention of local authorities and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has supercharged street art as the more warlike murals are overpainted with new scenes depicting less controversial iconography, from the successful Belfast Giants ice hockey team to George Best and Van Morrison, who feature in an array of new murals. "History has always been part of the mural tradition, but nowadays it will include the Titanic story or Irish mythology, or even local heroes like boxers and singers, many of them who

were quite famous in their time, but are really only known in this city today." He points to the new mural on the side of a new arts centre in East Belfast which pays tribute to musicians like Eric Bell and Gary Moore of Thin Lizzy who came from the area.

But Turkington is critical of the new style of officially backed street art. "I understand the sentiment behind the programme, but it's such a bureaucratic response and the art is not very inspiring. It's not what street art is about."

"It's about improving the quality of life. Defending aesthetics, beauty, having fun, making the city look better is a pretty powerful message," he adds.

"In Belfast, art and especially street art echoes the silent majority, those who are not voting because they are fed up," and "the tyranny of a tiny minority" obsessed by divisions and religion, he said.



## SUPPORTIVE

connecting young people with arts and culture

*We work to connect children and young people with arts and cultural organisations and the opportunities they offer.*

Visit [www.weareIVE.org](http://www.weareIVE.org) to see what we do and how we can help you or your organisation.

PART OF THE IVE FAMILY



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**Bridge Organisation**  
Working with Arts Council England  
to connect young people with great  
art and culture

# The wanted story

With Opera Holland Park, *The Times* got the wrong example of elitism in public funding to take a swipe at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea after the Grenfell Tower fire

**T**here is a phrase in newsrooms, a pejorative one: “The wanted story”. This is a story the newsdesk would like to see in the paper, and it is the reporter’s job to make it stand up using whatever facts he or she can garner in its support, leaving aside any that don’t comply.

On June 19 the story *The Times* wanted was the one that showed the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to be elitist, more interested in entertaining its wealthy residents than in keeping its poorer tenants safe. It was written by a talented young journalist, the paper’s head of investigations. He made a very strong case, but the wanted story made him go a step further. The following day the paper had to print an apology, anathema to any reporter.

From the sylvan glades of Holland Park a mile away Grenfell Tower isn’t visible. Three weeks ago, though, it was identifiable by the black pall that besmirched the blue horizon, but otherwise the park and its activities are a world away from the horror billowing to the north-east. Or so we are led to believe.

The scandal of the RBKC’s stewardship of its council housing is unfolding, and at the heart of it, naturally, is the council leader, the hapless Nick Paget-Brown, on whom *The Times* did a thorough demolition job, and on the council’s hidden wealth.

In the course of his piece the reporter dragged into it one of the activities in the council-owned park, Opera Holland Park, the annual fes-

tival that is now half way through its 2017 programme. The piece suggests that the council’s profligacy is exemplified by its funding of the festival. It “has picnic hampers for sale at £265. It takes place in Holland Park, a green space whose neighbours include some of the country’s richest people, such as David Beckham.

“In 2015-16 the council lost £1.5m on staffing and operating the opera, its accounts show. In 2014-15 it lost £1m... Such projects are effectively subsidised by surpluses built up in



other areas, including social housing”.

But it's not true. In fact, to portray the festival as the council-supplied plaything of the very rich in this richest of boroughs is to show the very opposite of the truth.

Opera Holland Park has been an independent charity since 2015, separate from RBKC which off-loaded it, along with the staff, because of increasing pressures on council funding, the council giving the opera company a one-off grant of £5m to set itself up. Otherwise, OHP hasn't received any money from the council, but is blessed by Investec sponsorship.

It may be a mile away but OHP is directly affected by Grenfell. Several of the staff live in North Kensington, and at least one is missing in the fire while others are grieving.

On August 1 OHP have added a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* to

the programme with all proceeds going to the victims' families, and stars including Anne Sophie Duprels and Neal Cooper waiving fees ([www.operahollandpark.com](http://www.operahollandpark.com)).

*The Times* had fallen into the old prejudice that opera means elitism, and made the cardinal error of taking received information and turning it to serve a story line with the patrician presumption that only the rich like opera. And it's got it wrong. OHP protested and received an apology and a correction the next day, but damage has been done.

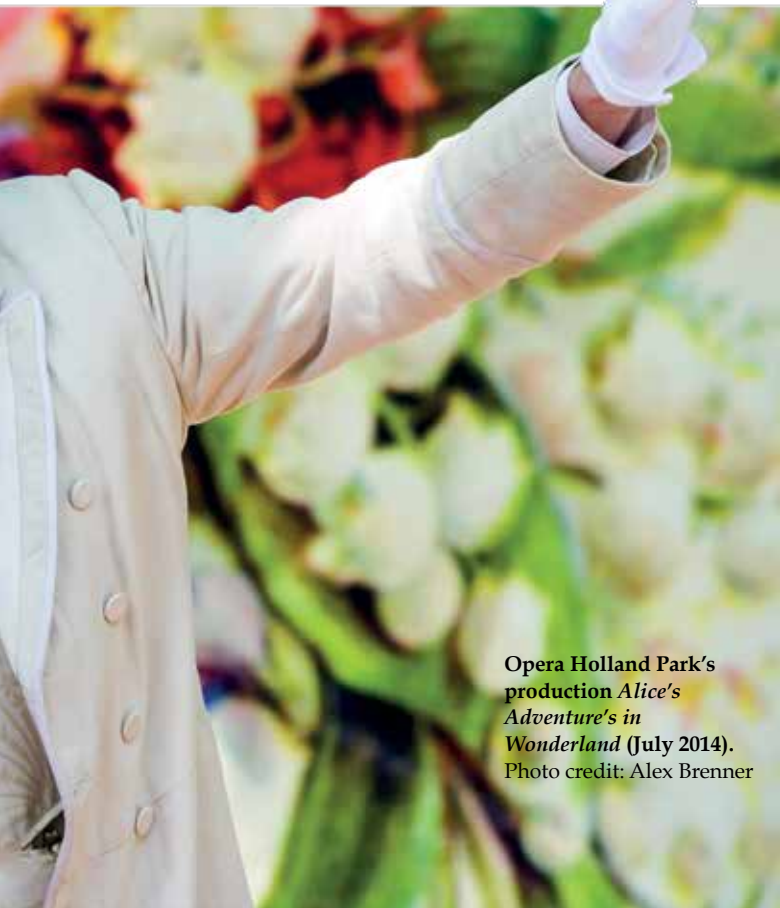
It is a glorious festival, and tickets start at £18, top price £77. There are also over 1,000 free tickets available to under-18s and over-60s, with half-price tickets for frontline NHS and police, fire and ambulance staff. It has outreach programmes working with the community, including

people with dementia who, it's true, can also love opera. And it employs over 300 local people.

*The Times's* story is especially wrong because the very purpose Michael Volpe had in creating OHP 21 years ago was to be anti-elitist and celebrate opera, especially Italian opera, as it once was, a wholly democratic form of entertainment. He hails from London's Italian blue collar community and still delights in the company of old mates like Harry the Greek, as he told AI last year. He took Harry to see Verdi's *La Traviata*. "Harry had his eyes shut" he said. "I asked him if he was asleep. 'No' he said, 'I was thinking of my sister and the olive groves...'"

OHP was determined to make opera family friendly and commissioned the festival's own family opera from Will Todd, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and it's back this summer, its fifth, by popular demand. This season sees Puccini's *La rondine*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, especially devised to introduce young British opera stars, the revived Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*, and a new production of Leoncavallo's *Zazà*. There are also performances by the young dancers of the Royal Ballet School. But this year there are four rather than five productions on offer, a reflection of the tough philanthropy market and the cost of production. OHP needs to raise £4m each year, with no public funding whatever.

What OHP is proving, in famously difficult circumstances, is that opera is not only popular, it is popular with all classes and generations. This season it has its own grief to deal with, but it will present its life-affirming art form with customary panache without benefit of subsidy, though possibly with the help of the anonymous philanthropy of some of those rich neighbours. Opera can reach any soul, and this summer in this park its magic will enchant hearts of all kinds in new and unforeseen ways. That is a very much wanted story.



**Opera Holland Park's production *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (July 2014).**  
Photo credit: Alex Brenner



# ACE's big shift

£170m more for the arts  
outside London, with  
surprises in the new  
National Portfolio.

**AI** takes a closer look

**T**he press release announced Arts Council England's allocation for the next four years as a "significant increase". Its new chairman, Sir Nicholas Serota, went further: "The largest ever increase in ACE's portfolio".

The bald fact, as chief executive Darren Henley laid out, is that ACE has increased its funding for the arts outside London by £170m between 2018 and 2022 – the first time four year funding has been used instead of three year to give recipients more time for planning and less taken up compiling funding applications –



Sir Nicholas Serota, Arts Council England chair, reveals the 2018-22 National Portfolio at The Curve, Leicester

## Diversity

Last time there was a paucity of diverse-led organisations in the portfolio, and particularly of disabled-led companies, and ACE took action with the Creative Case for Diversity to increase application numbers from that sector.

In addition, for this time all the NPOs have been given Creative Case ratings, and they will be judged on how they deliver against plans for greater diversity.

This time there are 351 diverse-led organisations getting four year funding, compared with 183 for 2015-18.

Among those joining are Bristol's Paraorchestra, the world's first professional ensemble for disabled musicians; the Shubbak festival, a biennial festival of contemporary Arab culture; Diverse City which combines disabled and non-disabled performers in its circus programmes; and SICK! Productions, a festival based on health-related themes.



with essentially standstill funding for London organisations in ACE's National Portfolio.

To make the point, for the first time the allocations announcement was made outside London, at The Curve, Leicester. More small organisations have been added, including a number in London – "It is vital that London continues to thrive" Serota said – and the "Big Four" national organisations getting the largest grants, the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Opera House and the

Southbank Centre, have agreed to take an average 3% drop to fund the new entrants in the list.

There are 831 organisations in the portfolio this time, compared with 698 in the last allocations in 2015, and the most ever. Twelve organisations are to get reduced grants, and 24 are out, some because they have chosen not to apply. Among those to go is Bristol's Arnolfini art gallery, while coming back into the fold after three years in the wilderness is English National Opera. >>

**"Alongside continuing support for our great national companies, we've funded inventive, pioneering arts organisations and a new range of museums across the country"**



**The Bristol-based British Paraorchestra, a new addition to the portfolio**



**The Curve in Leicester's cultural quarter**

## Why Leicester?

The city is an example, Nicholas Serota said, of “where public investment in arts and culture is making a very real - and very visible difference - to the lives of people”. The city and county budgets run to strategic development advice for artists, funds-searching help, support for festivals, and Leicester promotes ceramics, painting and drawing classes, and partners ACE in funding the Curve.

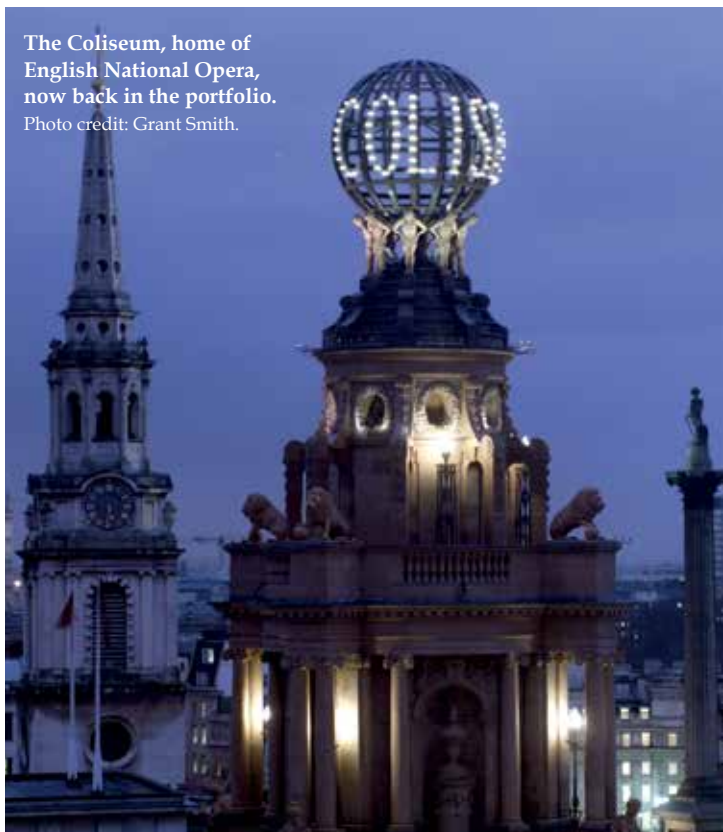
The Curve itself, a producing and receiving theatre, is back in the National Portfolio with an annual ACE grant of £1.9m. Opened in 2008, a year later the Audit Commission found that it did not represent good value for money led by a management that was, according to the local mayor, “completely out of control”.

In its last annual report it has increased its audience by more than 50,000 to a record 250,000 and increased its turnover from £2m to £10.2m, with partnerships here and abroad, and national and international tours. Its CEO, Chris Stafford, said there were seven NPOs in his neighbourhood, and eight were being added across the county. “We’re a city with a rich, ambitious and vibrant arts and culture provision” he said. It’s also diverse, with almost 50% of the population BME – Narborough Road is the most ethnically diverse street in the country with 23 nationalities living in a single mile. And one of the new NPOs is the Curve-nurtured dance company Aakash Odedra.



The Coliseum, home of English National Opera, now back in the portfolio.

Photo credit: Grant Smith.



## Arnolfini out, ENO back in

One of the shocks of the new portfolio is the departure of Bristol's Arnolfini Gallery, which has lost its entire annual grant of £750,000 after 13 years in the portfolio, just as a new director, Claire Doherty, takes over. "The Arnolfini has faced challenges in recent years and I think they've found it very difficult to make the financial position stack up" Serota said.

"What we've said to them is, you need to look again at the whole programme and the way you're running the organisation. But they've got a new director in whom we have great faith, but she hasn't had a chance to really begin, so we will work with her and other visual arts organisations in Bristol to find a solution. It's been running for 60 years" he added. "I spoke at the re-opening (in 2005) and I expect to speak there in future". The gallery continues to be supported by the city council.

English National Opera was a surprise departure from the portfolio last time. It did not lose all its funding, but a crucial £5m a year. That has not yet been replaced by ACE, but it is back in the National Portfolio. The senior management team has been changed with Cressida Pollock brought in from the consultancy McKinsey. "ENO faced a lot of challenges" said Darren Henley "and we believe it has made considerable strides forward. The application this time has an ambitious creative programme but also and very importantly has a sustainable and strong business model. We feel the management team and leadership have taken it to a better place than it was when we last visited the portfolio".

>>

Grant-in-aid funding, the subvention from DCMS, has been mixed with National Lottery funding following the relaxation of the additivity rules, meaning that of the £409m being spent every year in the portfolio, £71m is to come from the lottery.

ACE has focused on regional hubs that need lifting – Plymouth, Tees Valley, Bradford, Luton and Stoke-on-Trent – and for the first time there are 72 museums and seven libraries, libraries that support art forms as well as fulfilling the literacy task local authorities have a statutory duty to support. Small organisations in both urban and rural places have been picked out for encouragement for the first time.

But a priority, after those of moving to a more nationwide portfolio and reaching new places and types of organisation, has been diversity, and all NPOs will now have to show their progress to becoming more diverse. In the last portfolio there were 183 diverse-led (BME/disability/female/LGBT); this time there are 351.

ACE has chosen for its sub-title "The National Development Agency for arts, museums and libraries", a mantra repeated several times at the unveiling of the new portfolio. "We are investing a total of £1.6b" said Serota, "a declaration of how important we believe the arts to be at this particular moment in our history".

Its task now is to "develop the sector", not merely giving money but also advice, guidance and forging partnerships at local level. A new category in the portfolio this time is strategic support organisations, offering expertise and innovation as well as business development advice. There is also a new urgency in helping young people, both as part-takers and practitioners in the arts.

"Alongside continuing support for our great national companies, we've funded inventive, pioneering arts organisations and a new range of museums across the country" Serota said. "Working together with these organisations will inspire a broader range of young people and audiences across England than ever before."

# The thirty year walk in the park

**Louise Bryning** on three decades of pioneering promenade productions at the Dukes Theatre in Lancaster

**W**hen venturing out on The Dukes walkabout production of *Treasure Island* this summer, the cast will follow in footsteps first taken 30 years ago.

For it was back in 1987 that Lancashire's only professional producing theatre decided to vacate its building and relocate up the hill to an Edwardian park for the summer.

In doing so, it began a tradition which has lasted three decades and attracted more than 500,000 people, making it the biggest theatrical event of its kind in the UK.

And such is its reputation that last year's Dukes production of *The Hobbit* in Williamson Park received the UK Theatre Award for Best Show for Children and Young People.

The 30-year milestone is being marked >>

*The Hobbit*, last year's successful Duke's open-air production

>> with a photographic exhibition – 30 x 30 – in The Dukes gallery featuring photographs from the original 1987 production together with behind the scenes shots from the awardwinning Hobbit show and pictures of preparations for *Treasure Island* which runs from July 4-August 12.

Director Joe Sumsion said: “*Treasure Island* is a fantastic story and our version offers an amazing journey for a child – in fact, for anyone – to go on. I think people love the idea of adventure on the high seas and, for us, theatrically, there’s lots of exciting potential.”

And Joe should know as he’s directed more of The Dukes promenade seasons than anyone – eight – and his links to them go back to 1988.

“They’ve been a big part of my life,” said Joe who was The Dukes Artistic Director from 2008 until last January.

While still a student, he spent his summer as Assistant Stage Manager on *As You Like It* directed by Johnathan Petherbridge who initiated The Dukes walkabout shows and later took the idea to London Bubble.

Joe was also ASM in 1991 when The Dukes first staged a version of *Treasure Island* outdoors.

Appearing in that show, as a pirate, was a young Cherylee Houston who now plays Izzy Armstrong in *Coronation Street*.

An Honorary Patron of The Dukes, Cherylee describes her experience

of appearing in three park shows as amazing.

Cherylee is not the only Dukes Honorary Patron to have fond memories of appearing in the outdoor walkabout season.

Setting the pace in that very first production in 1987 was Andy Serkis who played Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* before going on to big screen success, most famously as Gollum in the *Lord of the Rings* film series.

“It was a total adventure,” said Andy. “I learnt a lot about acting for film, actually in that experience – relating with a real environment rather than being behind a fourth wall on a stage.”

Christine Mackie, also an Honorary Patron, and currently appearing

The Dukes production of *Treasure Island* which runs in Lancaster’s Williamson Park from July 4-August 12





**“Many people who would never go to the theatre in a building have a real commitment to these shows.**

**For The Dukes to be able to offer them that opportunity makes it very unusual and a very special”**

in *Coronation Street* as Dr Gaddas, has four park shows under her belt.

“Many people who would never go to the theatre in a building have a real commitment to these shows. For The Dukes to be able to offer them that opportunity makes it very unusual and a very special,” she said.

While acting in an outdoor promenade production is a challenge, it’s arguably more so for the production team.

Past shows have featured a real horse pulling a gypsy caravan, goats, pigs and sheep, which once made a successful escape!

Puck appeared on a scooter in the very first show and in the 1993 version of *Robin Hood*,

our hero was rescued on a jetski.

A more mundane form of transport – a 50-year-old milk float – is driven about 200 miles around the park in a season, housing the lighting and sound control panels.

Williamson Park is on the site of a former quarry so provides plenty of scope for setting scenes in a variety of locations including a lake and the park’s centrepiece – The Ashton Memorial – once described as the grandest monument in England.

For 25 years, Lighting Designer Brent Lees has had the opportunity to create the most beautiful effects which add such a unique atmosphere as the sun goes down on each performance.

“Working on the park show is quite a physical challenge and at the end of the season we all feel pretty exhausted,” said Brent.

However tiring it may be, it hasn’t stopped hundreds of people volunteering to be part of this rare theatrical experience. Over the years, they’ve played in bands, sung in choirs and some of The Dukes Young Actors even perform alongside the professional cast.

The Dukes outdoor walkabout theatre season has made memories for so many people, some of whom have attended every production over those 30 years.

One such is Bernard Gladstone who volunteered on security in 1987 and went on to become the theatre’s Honorary Archivist.

“A *Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 1987 was something entirely new and it was magic,” said Bernard. “The scene I remember best was the one where Puck came roaring up the hill on a scooter and I thought, this is going to be unusual!”

So as The Dukes celebrates 30 years of creating magical memories, perhaps the last word should go to Puck who was played by Bev Willis.

“It was a stunning company to be part of, all those amazing people doing so many different jobs, who began what is now a fantastic Lancastrian occasion.”

***The Hobbit*, last year’s successful Duke’s open-air production**



## What a little bird can tell you

This is St Paul's Cathedral's new phoenix, your guide to the Wren masterpiece that was reborn out of the Great Fire of London. It's a new kind of hand-held guide, embedded in Android devices that can detect changes in requirements, like different languages. It also adds new information as required, and has a battery than can be changed on the spot instead of the thing having to be returned to the manufacturer every couple of months, and it can't be interfered with by WiFi traffic. It's been devised by ByteSnap Design for ATS which is introducing it to Bletchley Park, the National Portrait Gallery, the Shard, National Trust and English Heritage properties, after its successful trial at St Paul's.



### SIMON TAIT'S DIARY



## Art is a beach

We've had land art and street art, now here's beach art – contemporary work chosen to fit into the seaside atmosphere. Ambassador Art is a new gallery in Bournemouth set up by local businessmen Michael and Matthew Corica, who saw their town becoming something of a cultural hub, but detected an absence of anything, well, original. "I've always had a love of original art but I wanted to do something different, not just another high street gallery" says Michael Corica. "I didn't want any prints; I didn't want anything you could find in another gallery. I wanted original artists exhibiting original art". His creative director Callie Onslow-Bartlett, has recruited a stable of new artists from around the world led by Iain Alexander, a portrait painter who operates under the name Altr Ego. This is his Donald Trump portrayal, painted on a backdrop of a "Handle With Care" tape. "The Ambassador concept has really been designed to inject the Bournemouth art scene with the explosion of creativity it wants and needs" says Corica.



## A Collector's item

Arundel Castle may not be Elsinore – it may even be a whole lot older – but in a relatively short time it has become synonymous with Shakespeare, the open air kind. It has been putting on productions like the one here in the Collector's Garden for eight years, and this time to celebrate the castle's 950th birthday, GB Theatre is putting on just two performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on August 25 and 26, the grand finale of the Arundel Festival.







## Out of the shadows

This forlorn-looking little oriental fellow is a Chinese tea taster. Forlorn because he's stuck in a Staffordshire barn in store. He's one of about 170,000 sculptures in the national collection that aren't on show, but soon will be, if only virtually. Art UK, which a couple of years ago did us all a magnificent service by putting online 200,000 oil paintings we wouldn't otherwise be able to see. Now the organisation is turning its attention to the three-dimensional. Thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £2.8m it is going to add culture to the art you will be able to see free of charge.

"This project has been four years in the planning" says Art UK's director Andrew Ellis. "The result will be an astonishing digital showcase for the national collection of sculpture in all its rich and varied glory". Can't wait – should be up at <https://artuk.org> early next year.



## Recycling recycled

The Museum of London is featuring junk this summer, not so much as it might be found in a bin but what happens to it when folks decide to reuse it, showing that Londoners' modern urge to recycle is nothing new. Curator Hazel Forsyth has unearthed evidence of Roman pots repaired with lead, iron wires and glue made from tree bark; 18th century porcelain plates, like this one, held together with iron staples; and ladies' shoes from the 1700s made from fabric sometimes already 100 years old. In Dickens's time (*Our Mutual Friend*) dustmen could get rich by selling rubbish. "Recycling has been happening for centuries in all sorts of innovative and imaginative ways" says Forsyth. "It was only relatively recently that we developed a throwaway attitude to objects and stopped repairing and restyling them to be ready for a second life. One thing that is made clear by the new display is that, in generations past, people have been much more prepared to tolerate quite awkward-looking repairs, as long as it meant they could keep using the item that was valuable to them". *Junk* is at the Museum of London until October 1.



A chalk carving in Salisbury Plain made by mutinous First World War soldiers has been declared a monument, along with a buried model of an Ypres battle town, as Simon Tail reveals

# How a kiwi became a national monument

**O**ne of the great pleasures of roving southern England is to discover one of the great figures carved into the chalk hillsides of the wolds, downs and plains. The carving of these shapes even has a name, gigantotomy, and some are more familiar than others.

Some, such as The Uffington White Horse in Oxfordshire, Dorset's Cerne Abbas Giant and the Long Man of Wilmington near Eastbourne, have become topographic icons. Others, like the Whipsnade White Lion in Bedfordshire and the Tan Hill Donkey in Wiltshire, are less familiar, and very few date from antiquity. Some are still being made.

The Bulford Kiwi, a 130m tall bird with a 45m beak carved into Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, is no great work of art, but the government, on the advice of Historic England, has designated it a national monument as much because of its story as its appearance.

It was carved in 1919 by New Zealand soldiers as a First World War memorial to their fallen fellows, and its scheduling marked the centenary of

the New Zealanders' key Great War success, the Battle of Messines, whose centenary fell last month.

The designation has been coupled by Historic England (HE) with another poignant piece of New Zealand's Messines story, the discovery in Staffordshire of a scale model of the Belgian town made in 1918, excavated and restored by HE.

The Bulford Kiwi owes its existence to a potentially mutinous regiment of soldiers, anxious for home in the weeks after the end of the war. They were kept at Sling Camp, an annexe of Bulford, which was the principal training depot for the New Zealand troops in the First World War. Designed to accommodate up to 4,000 men, by the end of 1918 there were 4,500, and in Canterbury Battalion mutiny threatened. Sling was dismantled later in 1919.

Fed up with unrelenting discipline and delayed transportation back to New Zealand, some troops of the battalion, part of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, cut loose and looted the canteen and officers' mess. The ring leaders were jailed, but to keep the



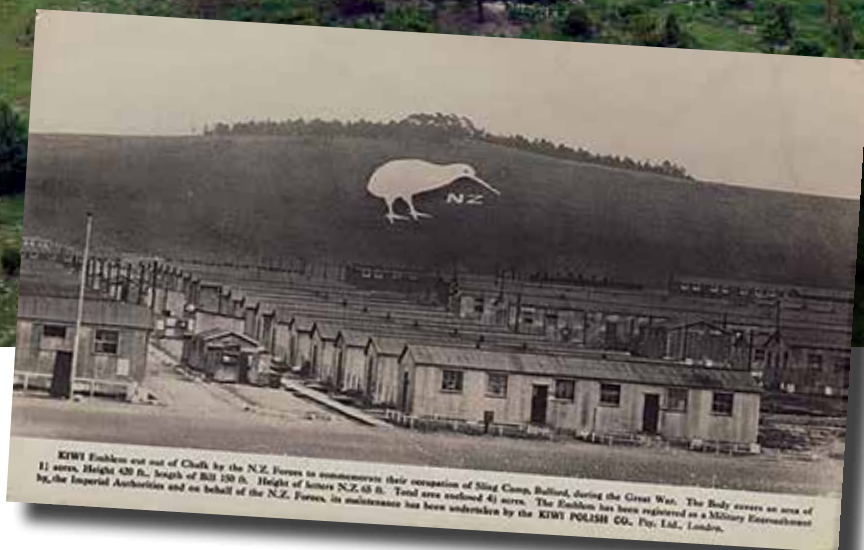
rest occupied they were set to work creating the kiwi. It was designed by Sergeant Major Percy Blenkarne, a drawing instructor in the New Zealand Army Education Corps who had been despatched to the Natural History Museum in London to make a sketch of a stuffed specimen of the bird, which had only recently become a national symbol. It took them two months, and the sparsity of actual chalk on the plain meant that it had to be imported, as it has been for its restoration. The "NZ" initials which were removed at some point have now been returned.

The Bulford Kiwi became a site of homage for New Zealanders paying their respects to 17,000 of their countrymen killed in the war, 5,000 of them





Above: Bulford Kiwi from the air.  
Photo credit: WYG NML.  
Right: Postcard c.1918



**“The Bulford Kiwi is no great work of art, but the government, on the advice of Historic England, has designated it a national monument as much because of its story as its appearance”**

at Messines, their most costly action. But while volunteers have tended it, visitor numbers diminished, though the New Zealand High Commissioner still makes an annual pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, at Cannock Chase the government has added the restored model of the Messines battleground, made by German prisoners of war in 1918 to the instructions of survivors of the battle.

“The taking of the Messines Ridge was one of the war’s most stirring attacks, and this model lay-out remains as testimony to the planning which made possible the victory” said Roger Bowdler, HE’s director of listing. “Like so much of our historic environment, these lasting reminders enable us to connect with lives and events from the past that made us who we are as a nation. The kiwi is a pretty unusual bit of New Zealand in >>



>> this country, there's so little of it representing New Zealand's role in the war, and it's an old Wessex tradition of hill figures given a modern twist. One hundred years on it's right to remember New Zealand's valour."

The Battle of Messines in which the New Zealand Rifle Brigade distinguished itself and won a VC was a crucial victory for the Allies, breaking a stalemate on the Flanders front and opening the salient for the ensuing Third Battle of Ypres, known as Passchendaele. The action included one of the heaviest allied artillery bombardments of the war, including the detonation of 19 giant mines beneath German lines.

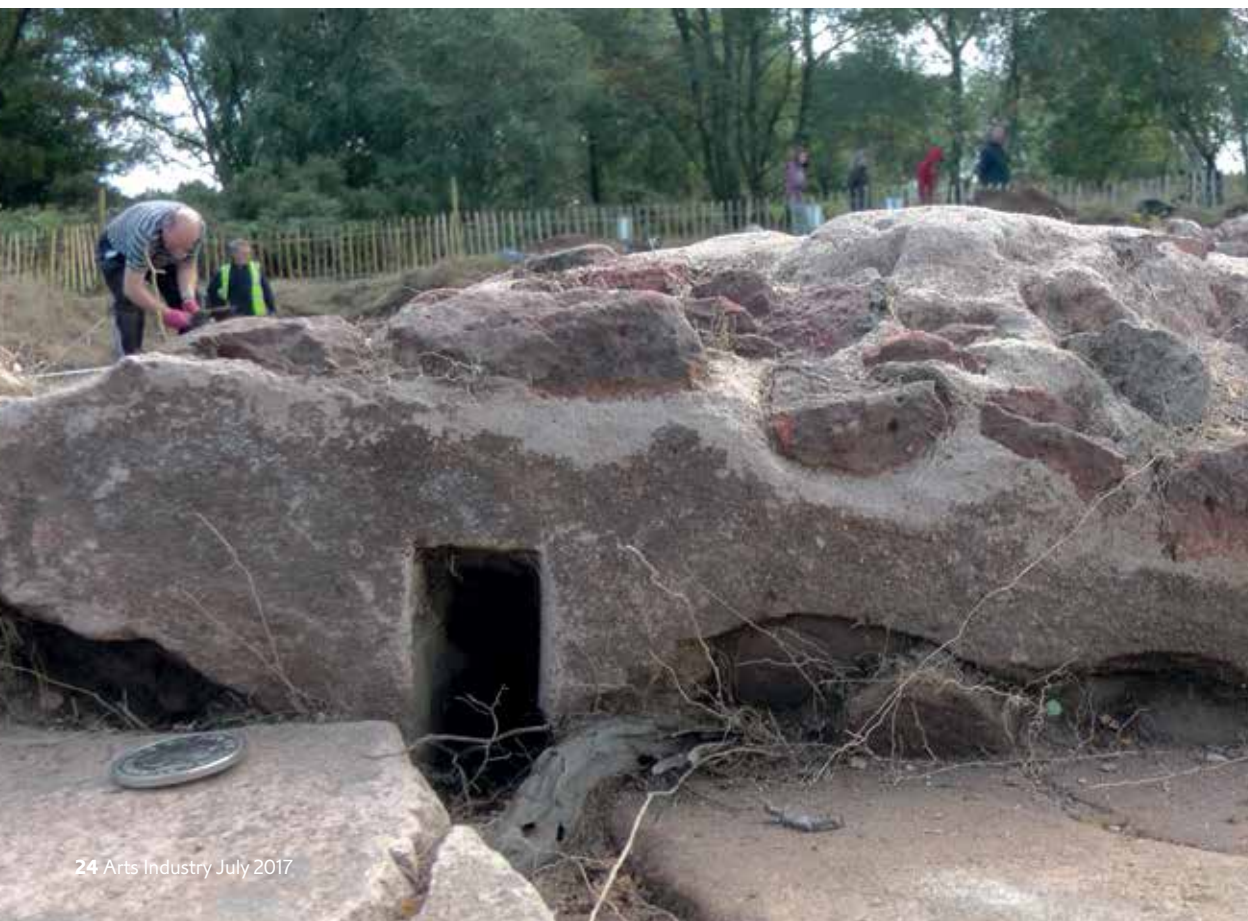
"It's fantastic to see Historic England (through the Culture Secretary) protecting two very significant sites of huge importance for New Zealand," said Sir Jerry Mateparae, New Zealand's High Commissioner. "The special connections that were forged 100 years ago, with communities in the

UK where New Zealanders trained, are still strong today and it's moving to see these sites protected for generations to come."

The terrain model of the battleground around Messines was made in 1918 when the New Zealand Rifle Brigade was back at Brocton Camp on Cannock Chase. It was made by German prisoners under the instructions of Messines surveyors as a three-dimensional teaching aid, to a scale of 1:50. Made of concrete, re-used brick, pebbles and soil, it has all the principal features of the battle-hewn town. The only First World War terrain model known to have survived was a tourist attraction for a while, but was later overgrown and buried under quarry waste.

Made in 1917 the three-dimensional model was created to illustrate the successful battle and to prepare those arriving for training at the camp prior to their deployment to the Front. It was excavated in 2013.

**"It's fantastic to see Historic England (through the Culture Secretary) protecting two very significant sites of huge importance for New Zealand"**



International folk  
star Seth Lakeman



## FESTIVALS

# Coming in from the cold

Selby is known for coal rather than culture, but the town hopes all that will change with its first arts festival

**E**dinburgh celebrates its 70th anniversary, the Manchester International is now 10 years old, and finally, next month, Selby has its first.

It seems that nowhere can call itself a community unless it has an arts festival, but the North Yorkshire market town of Selby had become used to being overlooked in this regard. Indeed, if Selby is known for anything it's for coal (it was home to the biggest opencast mine in the UK) rather than culture. For more than a decade it has received not a penny piece of Arts Council England funding.

Now all that has changed and next month will see international folk star Seth Lakeman, comedian Ed Byrne and indie-folk rockers Patch and the Giant headlining in various venues for the inaugural Selby Arts Festival, thanks to a sizeable chunk of ACE support and backing from the local authorities.

>>





>> What made the difference is the intervention of Dep Arts, the arts production company and agency led by David Edmunds. Edmunds, who has lived nearby for nearly 15 years, will be the first to admit that he had not really seen Selby as “anything more than somewhere to catch the train or fill up on petrol.”

He was aware that Selby Town Hall was an award-winning performance venue with a programme which had hosted stars such as Dara O’Briain, Chris Farlowe, Midge Ure and Wilko Johnson, but, squeezed between culture-rich places like York and Leeds, and with a population of just 14,000, the town was off the cultural radar for most people, including many of its residents.

“People from Selby would go elsewhere to access the arts,” says Edmunds, “but I began to think, ‘Why should they have to?’ At first he thought it was an ‘outrage’ that Selby had been ignored by funders like ACE, until it emerged no-one had applied

for ACE grants. He decided that was going to change.

Dep Arts carried out audience research and convened focus groups, it persuaded ACE chief executive Darren Henley to pay a visit to the town and convinced Old Vic boss and former local school pupil, Matthew Warchus, to give his support. When ACE decided to back the arts festival idea, it provided a massive fillip in overcoming initial scepticism.

“There was a feeling of ‘Let’s see how you get on with getting support from the Arts Council’ before anyone would commit themselves. Once that was agreed, lots of people came on board,” says Edmunds.

Sponsorship came from The Read School, and grants from the district council and the town council, both of which could see the value in boosting the creative economy in a place like Selby and in matching their own aspirations to Edmunds’ ambition.

“I was always clear from the word go that this wasn’t a family fun event



**Festival founder David Edmunds of Dep Arts**



# AI DATABASE

## FLOORING



Flameproofed board specialist  
and premierbond spray adhesive  
suppliers to theatre, television  
and exhibition trade.

Unit 6, Marcus Close, Tilehurst,  
Reading, Berkshire RG30 4EA.

**Tel: 0118 945 3533**

Fax: 0118 945 3633

## STAGE EQUIPMENT

### Upstage Theatre Supplies



Hire & Sales of  
Lighting & Sound  
Drapes & Tracking  
Stage & Tiered Seating  
Also Technical Support

Please call us on  
0116 2783084

Or email

info@upstagesupplies.co.uk

**www.upstage.biz**

TO ADVERTISE IN THE  
AI DATABASE CALL  
DANNY LEWIS ON  
01502 725862

*Rugby Songs: The  
show devoted to that  
favoured sporting  
pastime in Yorkshire*



or a local showcase, but a festival that attracted national and international names."

Dep Arts, which has a long pedigree working in Leeds, had the reputation to pass muster with agents and thus could persuade big name acts like Ed Byrne and Seth Lakeman to take part. But Edmunds is also proud that Slung Low, one of England's most innovative theatre companies is backing the festival with a production of *Rugby Songs*, a popular show devoted to that favoured sporting pastime in Yorkshire.

The festival will have a range of prices, including many free events, to ensure that it reaches as wide an audience as possible. Poets will be popping up across the town in shops, cafes, bus stops, artists will take over High Street shops, there will be puppet theatre shows, DJs will provide a night of music and skating at the local leisure centre, and there's even a 'mini-rave' for parents with small children.

The total budget for the Selby Arts

Festival is likely to run out at £100,000, says Edmunds, but he is determined that an arts festival will be a permanent feature of the Selby cultural landscape, not just a one-off event. There's a commitment from funders to ensure that it will happen every year for at least five years, he says.

"Legacy can be a dangerous word," says Edmunds, "but what we want to see is that an event like this will excite and inspire people to do other things."

He points to the support the festival is getting from the Selby Community Enterprise partnership which is backing a tour of the area's primary schools by Leeds based children's theatre company Wrongsemble in the run-up to the festival.

He adds that the festival raised £5,000 from a local crowdfunding campaign and will depend heavily on the work of 30 volunteers. They are already handling marketing and PR and will be vital in providing technical and stewarding of the event. Recruited from every walk of life, they include teachers, police officers and environmental health workers. "They are all immensely proud of their town and will be the face of the festival," says Edmunds.

Genuine local talent will also get a platform at the festival. For example, Fiona Lee, a 17 year old singer/songwriter from Selby College will open for Lakeman and there will be appearances from the 14 person ukulele collective called the Grand Ol' Uke of York.

"I have worked with hundreds of international acts and major names in the arts, says the festival's creator, "But I can genuinely say that nothing has given me greater satisfaction than to see Selby have its first arts festival."

Selby District Council's Executive member with responsibility for housing, leisure, health and culture, Cllr Richard Musgrave, said, "As a Council we want to give practical help for events and festivals that bring new people into our area, as well as giving new opportunities for people who live and work here. Doing this supports our long-term ambitions to make the Selby district a great place to do business and a great place to enjoy life."

*Selby Arts Festivals runs from July 22 to July 30.*

# Branching in

A new kind of arts consultancy, Branch Arts, has been launched by **Flora Fairbairn** and **Susie Lawson**, who come from different corners of the cultural domain

**What is Branch Arts, is it concerned with all the arts or specifically visual, and how did you come together to create it?**

Branch Arts is an umbrella organisation. It brings together two core services: Creative Branch, an art advisory service for private clients and organisations, as well as curating and producing art projects around the world; and Branch Out, offering specialist arts communications and access to an extensive network of creatives.

The idea behind Branch Arts grew from previous projects that we collaborated on. For these we tapped into multiple networks each had built up over our combined 30 years in different areas of the industry. It seemed only natural that we should pool our resources to establish Branch Arts.

Both Fairbairn and Lawson have worked across the arts but have concentrated on visual arts. Since establishing Branch Arts, projects they're working on include curating and producing a national arts project to raise awareness and funds for a blind children's charity, building an art collection, establishing a sculpture park and curating an exhibition in Venice for the 2019 Art Biennale.

**What is your background? Flora first...**

I am an independent curator and art advisor, with a background in architecture. I have curated over 30 exhibitions in the UK and abroad, most of which have been non-gallery locations usually in special architectural settings. I also advise collectors, artists and gallerists.

Since 2000, I have worked with 100s of artists, producing exhibitions in various non-gallery locations. Exhibitions locations include La Casa Encendida, Madrid, The Museo del Ron in Havana, Cuba, a derelict building on the river in Kings Cross, London, the vaults underneath the courtyard of Somerset House, and currently an exhibition which runs until 26th November in the Iglesia di San Gallo in Venice.

My reputation grew for spotting new talent and for launching the careers of a multitude of artists, many of

whom have gone on to become house-hold names. I sit on various arts industry panels and committees and have always been passionate about identifying and supporting talented artists whose work should be seen by as wide an audience as possible.

**And Susie?**

I have worked in arts PR and communications. Past clients include the RA, the Photographer's Gallery, Frieze Masters, The Art Room and The Ashmolean. My parents are both artists, and before them my grandparents. Having had the privilege of being brought up surrounded by creative people, creativity is in the blood. I dabbled with the idea of going into law after a history MA but instead chose to explore the world of private galleries. It was a natural progression into communicating the brilliance of artists I was working with. Years at The Photographers' Gallery, RA and on individual campaigns such as the inaugural years of Frieze Master and with the Ashmolean have resulted in over 15 years as a specialist arts PR and marketing consultant.

It was when I found myself running the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in 2005 that I realised that it wasn't limited to communications but destined to produce projects and organise cultural events. Branch Arts encompasses all my passion for creativity.

**What was missing from the support network for artists that you were working in?**

It is a very competitive market. We were both regularly being approached by artists for advice, those seeking the tools to carve out a career as an artist. Quite simply, artists







were missing the “network” and the means to find spaces, commissions, collectors and gallery representation. It is these areas of support that both of us have an affinity for, Flora with a strong network of creatives and interesting spaces loaned to her by architects and developers over the years. We’ve both built up strong relationships with galleries, collectors and the press over the years.

**Arts funding has swivelled in the last ten years with subsidy cuts, austerity and financial caution. How have artists and arts organisations coped?**

On a practical level, the changing climate in arts funding has squeezed artists out of central London studio spaces. The new hub of artist communities has shifted from East London to South East London. Many have moved out of London altogether to places such as Berlin, where rents are much cheaper. This migration of artists in recent years to more easily habitable places has threatened London’s position as the beating heart of the international art world - even if it’s still the centre of the art market.

With government funding cuts, organisations and artists have had to rely more heavily on brand sponsorships, corporate partnerships and philanthropic foundations. Much in the style of the US but, the UK still lags behind. Foundations and philanthropists have become increasingly important. It is now the means to connect with these funding streams that has become more crucial.

Artists have had to become more accessible and savvy with their networking and profile and to some extent, better able to adapt their work to meet the needs of sponsors or corporate messaging. Negotiating

a company’s CSR policy and establishing links with philanthropic individuals is where Branch Arts comes in and is well placed to match artists with the right funding streams.

**Has publicity become more important for artists as a result?**

As funding streams have narrowed, the need to have a good public profile has become imperative. Many buyers and cultural audiences are swayed by reputation and name and the influence of good publicity has a direct correlation with the financial security of the artist or organisation. This scenario has not changed in recent times; it is the focus and nature of the media that is changing.

Traditional media (newspapers and broadcast) provide a platform for fantastic critics and art correspondents, but the space dedicated to the arts has shrunk. Audiences now rely on more immediate social media and the tastes of influencers .

Understanding and utilising the changing nature of press attention is critical to artists and we have witnessed the careers of some artists being made on the back of their social media presence. The practice of selling work directly from the studio through instagram pictures or twitter posts has become widespread. Collectors like to have a personal connection with the artists and social media has broken down many of the boundaries of traditional gallery settings allowing the collector to get under the surface of the artist’s world. Galleries and organisations like Branch Arts play a role in further endorsing artists through these channels.

**"SWINGS A WRECKING BALL INTO OUR FUTURE PLANS" HAMPSTEAD THEATRE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, EDWARD HALL ON THE 14 PER CENT CUT IN ARTS COUNCIL FUNDING, QUOTED IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

## TINTAGEL TROUBLE

English Heritage's plans for a new bridge at Tintagel Castle have been described as a "cash cow theme park" by campaigners, reports the *Cornishman*. The bridge, designed to reduce congestion on the historic site, is out of keeping with the site, says Kernow Matters, which also claimed "this is not English Heritage, it is Cornish with the Cornish people being a national minority grouping."

## BATTLE OVER BANNOCKBURN

The National Trust for Scotland has objected to a new housing development near the historic site of the Battle of Bannockburn, according to the *Sunday Herald*. The conservation charity said the plans were "a further encroachment on the heritage site which has slowly been eroded over the past 50 years". It adds that "it would be a great shame to lose even more of this historic location."

## SIR ANTONY ANNOYED

At least nine of Sir Antony Gormley's iron men on Crosby beach in Merseyside have been painted with colourful outfits by a mystery artist, after standing naked on the beach for a decade. However, the artist is not pleased, says *BBC News*, and has asked for the 'additions', which includes a pink polka dot bikini and bright orange shorts, to be removed. The artwork, titled *Another Place*, was installed in 2005 and the figures were originally meant to move to New York the following year – but have stayed looking out to the Irish Sea.

## SCULPTURES ON SCREEN

Britain will be the first nation to have an online catalogue of every publicly owned sculpture reports the *Antiques Trades Gazette*. Art UK, formerly the Public Catalogue Foundation, will digitise images of Britain's 170,000 publicly owned sculptures by 2020. This will be added to the website already cataloguing paintings and works on paper owned by public institutions such as museums, universities and councils. The new scheme is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and the Scottish Government as well as a number of small trusts and 70 individual and corporate donors.

## LAST CHANCE FOR LIVERPOOL

Unesco has threatened to remove Liverpool from its list of world heritage sites next year unless it reconsiders the regeneration plans for its historic docks, writes the *Guardian*. Henrietta Billings, director of the campaign group Save Britain's Heritage says losing the Unesco listing "would be an international embarrassment, as well as a hugely costly mistake." But city mayor Joe Anderson says the £5.5bn scheme to transform 60 hectares of redundant docklands is needed to retain Liverpool's status as "a vibrant, dynamic city, not one that's preserved in aspic. I believe we can cherish our

heritage and come up with great iconic modern buildings, too".

**"IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE ART, IT'S ABOUT THE WORLD WE LIVE IN," NEW TATE DIRECTOR MARIA BALSHAW, QUOTING SIR RICHARD LEESE, MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL LEADER, IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES**

## HULL'S HURRAH

New figures show that nine out of ten residents in Hull attended or experienced at least one cultural event in the first three months of the year, more than double the number engaging in such activities before the city's bid to be the UK City of Culture this year, reports the *Independent*. More than 1.4 million visits were made during the Made In Hull season, the first of four three-month long seasons in the City of Culture year. More than half a million visits were made to the city's museums and galleries in the first four months of the year, with the Ferens Art Gallery and the Hull Maritime Museum boasting year-on-year increases of over 500%, while Hull Truck Theatre has seen an increase of 8,000 people watching productions.



New bridge: cash cow or necessity? (see *Tintagel trouble*)





>

The Young Masters Art Prize and inaugural Young Masters Emerging Woman Art Prize is designed to celebrate all aspects of art history through the eyes of contemporary artists. This year's winner, who takes away £3,000, is Iranian artist Azita Moradkhani. Two highly commended prizes of £500 were awarded to Laura Hospes (whose work, *Scream*, is pictured) and Tamara Al-Mashouk. A selection of shortlisted artists is shown in an exhibition at the Royal Overseas League until September 8 and at the Royal Opera Arcade Gallery from October 2 to 14.



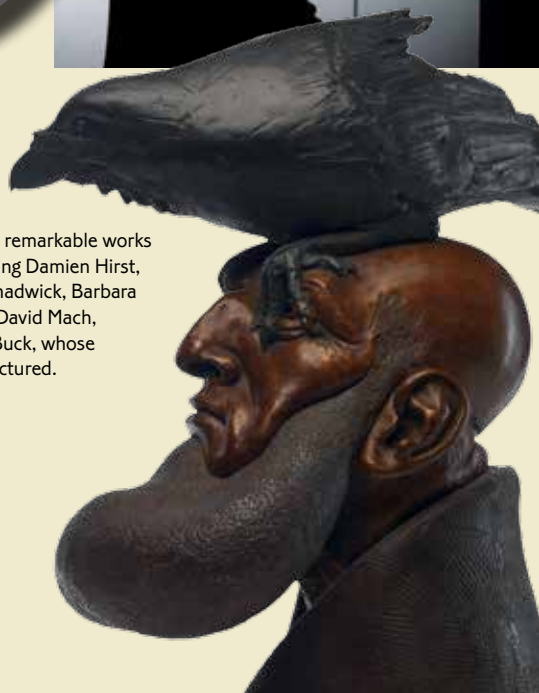
LOOK  
OUT FOR...  
AI'S PICK  
OF THE  
BEST



>

*Ark* is a new sculpture exhibition which takes up residence at Chester Cathedral between July 7 and October 15. The exhibition will feature 90 remarkable works by over 50 artists, including Damien Hirst, Antony Gormley, Lynn Chadwick, Barbara Hepworth, Sarah Lucas, David Mach, Elisabeth Frink and Jon Buck, whose *Noah and the Raven* is pictured.

✓ On July 14, Clod Ensemble will offer a first glance of their new show *On the High Road*, at Latitude festival. Featuring an international, interdisciplinary company of dancers, actors, and singers, *On the High Road* looks at migration, difference and intolerance. Described by *The Guardian* as "one of those innovative and anarchic companies thrusting its way through the boundaries of theatre." The provocative, finely crafted work of Clod Ensemble's director Suzy Wilson and composer Paul Clark has been presented in dance houses, galleries and public spaces including Sadler's Wells, Tate Modern, The Lowry Salford, Wales Millennium Centre, Serralves Museum Porto and Public Theater New York.



^ *The Crows Plucked Your Sinews* is a one woman show written and directed by Hassan Mahamdallie and performed by Aisha Mohammed. Produced by Dervish Productions, with music performed by Abdelkader Saadoun, the play is described by the British Theatre Guide as "a fine, important play about the way Britain's foreign adventures are shaping one young London woman's identity." *The Crows Plucked Your Sinews* is at Liverpool's Arab Arts Festival on July 11, the Albany Theatre in south London on July 14 and Bristol ACTA on July 21.