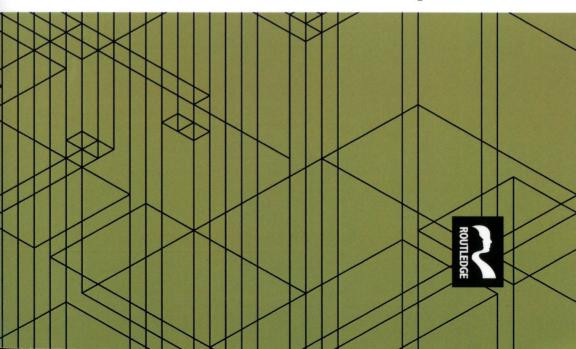# CONNECTING MUSEUMS

Edited by
Mark O'Neill and Glenn Hooper

ROUTLEDGE

Connecting Museums

Connecting Museums explores the boundaries of museums and how external relationships are affected by internal commitments, structures and traditions. Focussing on museums' relationship with heath, inclusion, and community, the book provides a detailed assessment of the alliances between museums and other stakeholders in recent years.

With contributions from practitioners and established and early-career academics, this volume explores the ideas and practices through which museums are seeking to move beyond what might be called one-off contributions to society, to reach places where the museum is dynamic and facilitates self-generation and renewal, where it can become not just a provider of a cultural service, but an active participant in the rehabilitation of social trust and democratic participation. The contributors to this volume provide conceptual critiques and clarification of a number of key ideas which form the basis of the ethics of museum legitimacy, as well as a number of reports from the front line about the experience of trying to renew museums as more valuable and more relevant institutions.

Providing internal and external perspectives, *Connecting Museums* presents a mix of applied and theoretical understandings of the changing roles of museums today. As such, the book should be of interest to academics, researchers and students working in the broad fields of museum and heritage studies, material culture, and arts and museum management.

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Routledge Research in Museum Studies

Connecting Museums

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Contents

Contributors

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Helen Chatterjee is a Professor of Biology in UCL Biosciences and Head of Research and Teaching in UCL Culture. Her research interests include the value of cultural encounters in health and wellbeing, and the role of touch and object handling in health, wellbeing and education. Helen co-founded the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing and has numerous collaborations with a range of museums, cultural, third sector, health and social care organisations. She has produced three books: *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object*

Handling (Berg, 2008), *Museums, Health and Well-being* (Routledge, 2013) and *Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education* (Routledge; 2015), and published over 40 articles. In 2015, Helen was awarded an MBE for services to Higher Education and Culture.

Pat Cooke worked for Ireland's state heritage service, the Office of Public Works, for over 20 years. In that role, he was director of Kilmainham Gaol, one of the country's top heritage attractions, and the Pearse Museum. He was project manager for two major exhibitions on the history and literature of the Great Blasket Island (1994) and the history of Irish nationalism at Kilmainham Gaol (1996). He pioneered the engagement of artists and artistic productions (in the visual arts, opera and theatre) as integral to the interpretative strategy for Irish heritage sites. From 2002 to 2006 he was Chairman of the Irish Museums Association. In 2006 he moved to UCD to become Director of the MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management. He has been a member on the boards of both the National Print Museum, Dublin and of the Hunt Museum, Limerick.

Dr Kathy Cremin left her role as lecturer in cultural studies at York University in 2002. She then took up a position with Opera North and Bradford Libraries before moving in 2007 to the Museums Libraries and Archives. In 2011 Kathy began working alongside Mike Benson at Ryedale Folk Museum, leading on the Paul Hamlyn *Our Museums* program. Kathy left Ryedale in 2012, won a NESTA/CLORE research bursary on art and digital technology, was a lead coach for the Paul Hamlyn *Our Museums* program, and in 2012 became joint-Director at Bede's World, leading on the community radio program. In 2015 Kathy left Bede's World to lead the Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Services.

Duncan Dornan was appointed Head of Museums and Collections at Glasgow Life in 2013. After graduating from Edinburgh University, he worked in education for 16 years and was a Head of Department at Aberdeen College. He joined the National Museums of Scotland as Museum Manager, working on the delivery of the National Museum of Rural Life, a joint partnership between the National Museums and NTS, and moved to Glasgow Museums in early 2013 as Senior Manager (Public Programming and Customer Service). Glasgow Museums runs Glasgow Life's nine civic museums, which welcomed nearly 4,000,000 visits in 2016–7, making it the biggest museum service outside London. Current major projects include the £65 million refurbishment of the Burrell Collection.

Helen Graham teaches museum and heritage studies at the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, and at the Centre for Critical Studies in Museums, Galleries and Heritage, University of Leeds. Before joining the University of Leeds Helen worked at the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies, Newcastle University on 'Art on Tyneside', an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research

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Glenn Hooper is a Researcher in Tourism and Heritage at Glasgow Caledonian University. Editor of *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, he has published in a variety of journals, including *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, the *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, the *Journal of Design History, Literature & History* and others. Current interests include rural regeneration, cultural heritage in Ireland and dark tourism. Previous posts include Research Fellow at the Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, and Lecturer in English at St. Mary's University College Belfast.

Janice Lane joined Amgueddfa Cymru in 2012 as Director of Learning, Exhibitions and Digital Media. She took on her current role as Director of Gallery Development and Visitor Experience in 2016. Her responsibilities include exhibitions and programming, gallery development and master-planning, digital media, visitor research and visitor experience across Amgueddfa Cymru's seven museums, and for major projects, such as the £25 million redevelopment of St Fagans National Museum of History. She works strategically with national bodies, including the Welsh Government and major funders. Janice is a member of a European expert panel for audience development established by NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations), and a member of the ICOM UK committee. Prior to this she was Senior Museums Manager at Glasgow Museums/Glasgow Life with a portfolio incorporating learning, social inclusion, access, public programming, digital media, interpretation, outreach and volunteer development.

Francesca Lanz is Lecturer in Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano. Since 2006 she has been teaming up with different POLIMI departments, collaborating with several national and international research projects, and investigating the role and evolution of interior architecture in the context of current socio-cultural trends and evolving behaviours. Most recently, her research activities have focussed on museum and heritage studies, with a focus on museography and exhibition design theory, criticism and practice. In particular, she has contributed to the EU funded research projects MeLa - *European Museums in an age of migrations* (2011–2015) and TRACES – *Transmitting contentious cultural heritages with the arts* (2016–2019).

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Nuala Morse is a social geographer working across the fields of heritage and museum studies, with interests in community engagement, participation and care. Nuala's broad research interest lies in the distinctive nature of the 'social work' of creative and culture professionals, which has been explored through research projects in UK and Australian museums, and in the field of Outdoor Arts. A more recent focus is on how the social role of museums is currently being mobilised in response to the healthcare agenda; the health and wellbeing impact of taking part in museum-based activities; and museum professionals' practices of care. Nuala was the Research Associate based at The Whitworth, University of Manchester and University College London, for Not So Grim Up North, an Arts Council funded research project (2015–2018) investigating the health and wellbeing impacts of museum activities for a range of audiences, including mental health service users; people in addiction recovery; older adults living with dementia; and stroke rehabilitation patients.

Oonagh Murphy is a Lecturer at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Alongside writing for *The Guardian*, *Arts Professional* and *Culture Sync* she has presented at key international conferences, including Museums and The Web (Portland, OR), and Museum Next (Amsterdam), and is a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellow. In 2014 she was awarded a PhD from the University of Ulster for her research on the impact of digital technologies on the cultural sector; since completion of her doctoral work she has worked in both academia and industry, serving as Associate Professor of Visual Arts Management and Curating at Richmond, the American International University, from 2015–2017, alongside developing an international consultancy portfolio with clients including The Frieze Art Fair, Blick studios, British Council, University of Ulster, Queen's University,

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Mark O'Neill is former Head of Glasgow Museums, now an independent researcher and consultant, Associate Professor, College of Arts, Glasgow University; Research Fellow, Museums Studies, Leicester University; Adviser, Event Communication, London. Mark was Director of Policy & Research for Glasgow Life, the charity which delivers arts, museums, libraries and sports services for the City of Glasgow from 2009–2016. As Head of Glasgow Museums from 1998–2009 he led the teams which established the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, refurbished Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, and created the Riverside Museum. He is interested in the social purposes of museums and in the health benefits of cultural participation.

Pete Seaman is the current Acting Associate Director at the Centre, fulfilling a range of corporate duties across the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, and also contributing to the Centre's Assets and Resilience theme. Current and previous research interests include: understanding processes that promote individual and collective resilience, the role of alcohol across the life-course, the cultural dimensions of Glasgow's excess mortality, and the use and access to greenspace. Current work includes supporting Glasgow City Council in the development and delivery of the City Resilience Strategy, and the role of Co-Investigator on the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded 'Representing Communities' project. The Representing Communities project explores the use of arts-based methods in understanding the relationships between community narratives and health.

Anwar Tlili is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Sociology in the School of Communication, Education and Society at King's College London. After completing his PhD in Cultural Studies and Sociology at the University of Birmingham, he developed research interests in the areas of sociology of education and culture, focussing specifically on informal education, public engagement and equality/diversity through museums, and how the nature of museums as workplaces and organisations mediate their work. He has carried out research and written on the themes of social justice in/through museums and formal and informal education; professionalism and professional knowledge in museum work; cultural policies and cultural organisations; science in society; and science and democracy. He also has a broad interest in social and cultural theory.

Mike Tooby is an independent curator and writer based in Cardiff, and a Professor at Bath School of Art and Design, Bath Spa University. Mike studied in Cambridge (1975–8), been a curator at Kettle's Yard (–1980), Third Eye Centre Glasgow (1980–4), Mappin Art Gallery Sheffield (1984–92), and was founding curator of Tate St Ives (1992–9). He was

a Director of Amgueddfa Cymru: National Museums Wales (2000–11), with responsibility for Learning, Programs and Development. He is a past chair of Engage (1999–2004) and continues to work with Engage. He led a participative curating project *Journeys with 'The Waste Land'* for Turner Contemporary, Margate in 2018. Mike was Senior Research Fellow at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds from 2014 to 2015. He is external advisor to Warwick University's collection of art and public art, and to the Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University. Mike is a Trustee of the Artes Mundi International Art Prize.

Stuart Warburton is a retired Museum Curator. Since qualifying in Museum Studies at University of Leicester in 1982 he has worked in a variety of industrial museums. In 1987 he was the first curator at Snibston Discovery Park, where he was responsible for the curatorial and interpretational development of the new museum building and historic colliery site. After the reorganisation of Leicestershire Museums in 1997 he left Snibston to take up the post of Managing Curator at Riverside Museums with Leicester City Council, which included developing the Abbey Pumping Station (Leicester Museum of Technology) in tandem with the adjacent National Space Centre. After retiring as head of Heritage Development at Essex County Council he returned to Coalville in Leicestershire where he become involved with the campaign to save Snibston Discovery Museum, working as a committee member with various local heritage organisations and trusts, and promoting the heritage to a wider community.

Esme Ward is Head of Learning and Engagement at Manchester Museum and the Whitworth, and also the Strategic Lead for Culture for Greater Manchester Ageing Hub, working across regional cultural organisations and public health to develop work by, with and for older people. She undertook a 6-month secondment as part of public service reform, to embed arts and culture within priorities and plans, and create the conditions for collaboration and distributed leadership. She leads arts and health work across Greater Manchester, including Arts and Health as a Social Movement and she is co-director of the Arts and Health Programme at the forthcoming World Health Congress Europe, in Manchester 2019–20. She was one of the expert authors on the Prime Minister's Champion Group on the Arts Guide to Dementia Friendly Culture, advises internationally on age-friendly culture, and sits on several national and regional social care, health and culture boards, and networks. She has taught widely, is a Fellow of the RSA, and in 2016–7 was awarded a Clore Cultural Leadership Fellowship.

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much broader. They encompass museums of different types (especially history museums) and heritage, with particular emphases on the cultural politics of memory, display, knowledge construction and interpretation. His books include *The National Art Museum in 19th-Century Britain* (2005), *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines* (2009), *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (2011), *Placing Migration in European Museums* (2012) and *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe* (2015). He was an investigator on the European Commission-funded MeLa project (European Museums in and Age of Migrations) and the co-ordinator of CoHERE: Critical Heritages, Performing and Representing Identities in Europe (also funded by the EC).

Nia Williams is Director of Learning and Engagement at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. She is responsible for leading the following areas of work: public programs to support education, skills and wellbeing; the Fusion program; events; translation and the Welsh language; interpretation and publications. She is also responsible for Amgueddfa Cymru's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act. She has recently been responsible for developing three new strategies for Amgueddfa Cymru: the Learning and Participation Strategy (2015); the Community Engagement Strategy (2015); and the Interpretation Strategy (2016). In addition, Nia has, over the past five years, worked on developing a new strategic vision for St Fagans National History Museum. She sits on a number of Welsh Government committees, and was a member of the Government's advisory group, which contributed to the wider review of the National Curriculum in Wales.

Introduction

Mark O'Neill

Making progress

Despite being used as a media cliché to represent the dull and the defunct, museums are amongst the most dynamic and resilient institutions in society. Thus a 'special report' in *The Economist* in 2013 began: 'Museums used to stand for something old, dusty, boring and barely relevant to real life. Those kinds of places still exist, but there are far fewer of them, and the more successful ones have changed out of all recognition'. Not only have museums changed, but their range has also broadened and now goes considerably beyond traditional subjects, such as art and artefacts, science and history. Even if not every director or curator is enamoured of such changes, the revitalisation of the industry continues: 'the statistics suggest that these new-look museums are doing something right. Globally, numbers have burgeoned from around 23,000 two decades ago to at least 55,000 now'. *The Economist*'s reporter explains the 'surprising' success of museums in terms of the multiple purposes which they now serve, particularly in 'developed countries' where they are being championed by a wide variety of interest groups: city fathers who see iconic buildings and great collections as a tourist draw; urban planners who regard museums as a magic wand to bring blighted city areas back to life; media that like to hype blockbuster exhibitions; and rich people who want to put their wealth to work in the service of philanthropy ('a way for the rich to launder their souls', as one director put it). But it is not just in the rich world where this flourishing is taking place, but also in 'the more affluent parts of the developing world'. Here it is being driven 'mainly by governments that want their countries to be regarded as culturally sophisticated (though wealthy private individuals are also playing a part)'. They see museums as symbols of confidence, sources of public education and places in which a young country can present a national narrative.[1]

As might be expected from institutions which have become ubiquitous and have such multifarious purposes, museums are also sites where some of the key social, political and ethical issues of our time play out. Of the more tangible we might point to the nature and importance of community at a

time of unprecedented mobility, the transformations wrought by techno-logical innovation (what Appadurai has called 'mediascapes')[2] and the new wave of global health issues which relate less to infectious diseases (which have become more controlled) than to those that reflect social meaning in a market society: depression, anxiety, substance abuse, obesity, self-harm and suicide.[3] When 30 years ago Peter Vergo suggested that 'the more re-cent sense of an obligation that museums should not merely display their treasures to the curious and make their collections accessible to those de-sirous of knowledge, but also actively engage in education', he could hardly have guessed at the demands and upgrades yet to come. But the authors of *The New Museology* knew that change was not only imminent but neces-sary, a change which Vergo summarised as a shift from a focus on *methods* to a greater consideration of the *purposes* of museums.[4] This book is about those purposes.

At a time when political and ideological debates about the character of human nature have raged, when the dynamics of individualism as well as the nature and efficacy of democracy have been prevalent, perhaps change was inevitable – and inevitably contested. The spread of neoliberal ideas since the 1980s had led to the end of the Keynesian consensus not only in relation to the management of the economy, but about the value of publicly-funded culture, which Keynes had himself epitomised as first chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain.[5] No longer guaranteed a safe and hospitable haven, museums have had to demonstrate their value, and been subject, like all government institutions, to the 'tyranny of metrics'.[6] In-creasingly open to the pressures of commercialism, expected to attract ever higher visitor numbers and be less dependent upon state investment, mu-seums have had to justify their existence and relevance to contemporary society. These issues play out in a context where the narrative of the ne-oliberal version of capitalism and government austerity in response to the global financial crisis of 2008 remain dominant, but are being questioned, and not only by those who believe that there are alternatives, but by many mainstream economists.[7]

The debates within museums and museology about the purposes of muse-ums have focused on this question of value – what kind of value, and value to whom – and have often been framed in terms of dichotomies – intrinsic versus instrumental value, traditional versus progressive, neutral versus ac-tivist,[8] entertainment versus education and so on.[9] However, these debates were often a proxy for a struggle between elite and democratic access, and reflected the ideological and political conflicts of the culture wars of the late 1980s and 1990s. A key strategy for those defending a traditional/elitist/excellence model was to argue that their position was apolitical and neutral, while at the same time representing Western values of rationality, truth and beauty.[10] Meanwhile the competing discourse emphasised human outcomes, such as personal development, social cohesion and community empowerment. Within museums this drew on the perspectives of social

history, or 'history from below' (see Hooper in this volume) and anthropology, the approaches of community arts, educational psychology and community development, as well as on wider commitments to the democratisation of culture.[11]

All change

The Economist statement that the majority of museums have 'changed beyond recognition', sheds an interesting light on decades of dichotomous debate. While there are occasional laments amongst the most prestigious museums about commercialisation and the vulgarity of the blockbuster,[12] few decry the increased attendance numbers, the great improvements in visitor amenities (cafes, shops and improved access), the provision of educational activities and events for both children and adults, enhanced communication through exhibitions, reinterpreted long-term collections, websites, public relations and marketing. This book focuses on changes which have been less easily absorbed – those which seek to democratise museums and connect them more deeply with the society in which they are embedded, which provides their funding, and which validates their authority. Whether change in museums in this direction is driven by internal leaders, or by external requirements in the form of policy, it invariably involves a complex internal process of negotiation, and often falters in the face of powerful institutional traditions.[13]

Indeed, discussions of change in museums often treats them as a special case, although recent research viewing them as bureaucracies suggests that they share many characteristics of such organisations. Based on 'legal rational' rather than traditional or charismatic forms of authority, museums are

staffed by specialists, operating in a system based on instrumentally-rational formal rules that are managed through hierarchical patterns of control; there are formal records kept of operational rules and decisions; there is also a formal career structure in place based on competence and/or seniority; staff members do not control resources or the job as personal possessions; the job is their sole or major occupation, and they are free to leave it at any time.[14]

While in theory such organisations can be changed through the 'legal rational' instruments of government policy, they develop strong internal dynamics along with institutional and professional group cultures[15] with conflicting views about change,[16] and thus translate, modify or reject changes – from whatever source, including those arising from staff within the organisation.[17] Moreover, museums have been subject to society-wide processes to address the perceived issues with bureaucracies – provider capture, lack of accountability – through what has been called the *New Public Management*, which has a strong focus on metrics of performance.

Early attempts to provide a rationale and evidence base for these democratising approaches include those espoused by Comedia, an organisation pioneering social value research in the mid-1990s and the early years of the New Labour government and which favoured participatory and joint-evaluation models.[18] Comedia's approach was criticised for a lack of rigour[19] and under pressure from government targets and centralised data management systems, the focus moved to a search for standard measures of social impacts. Despite a vast effort, argues Belfiore, museums have failed to come up with meaningful metrics.[20] Perhaps one lesson from *The Economist* report which, surprisingly for a market-oriented newspaper shows no interest in such metrics, is that if the overall narrative is convincing, these are not relevant. For *The Economist*, modernised museums are a sign of economic growth and increased education; in a word, of progress.

The museum case studies in this book explore attempts to bring deep change to these bureaucracies, with their hierarchical culture, expert status and rational procedures. One feature of a bureaucracy is its clear boundaries, set by the rules and hierarchies inherent in its structure. Even when people working within these boundaries wish to change, the inertia of the system is considerable. Changes which are compatible with the core values of the bureaucratic tradition are more easily absorbed than those which imply modifications of the structure. Thus, many of the shifts implied by *The Economist*'s 'transformed beyond recognition' analysis leave deep internal hierarchies unchanged. Indeed, the promotional and visitor amenities, and the increased visitor numbers, can convey an aura of success and enhance prestige by adding functions to the 'core' without any fundamental change whatsoever.

The year before *The Economist* article, the AHRC funded Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska to create a framework for cultural value which would try to draw together and move beyond two decades of studies, much of it driven by the demands for justification and the requirements of advocacy, of the role of culture in society. Their conclusion was that the arts and culture have the ability to 'help shape **reflective individuals** [original emphasis], facilitating greater understanding of themselves and their lives, increasing empathy with respect to others, and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures' and to 'produce **engaged citizens**, promoting not only civic behaviours such as voting and volunteering, but also helping articulate alternatives to current assumptions and fuel a broader political imagination [original emphasis]'.[21] They argued strongly for a mixed methods approach in which qualitative research, centred on the individual experience of cultural engagement, was valued. However, basic metrics of engagement reveal deep and persistent inequalities in participation in publicly funded cultural experiences. For example, the 2015 Warwick Commission found that those who were most likely to avail themselves of these experiences were the better off and most educated 8% of the population. In terms of museums it reported that 'analysis of annual performance indicators of DCMS-funded museums reveals that visits by UK residents fell by 3% over the period 2008/09–2011/12' while visits from

UK residents from lower social groups fell even more, by 12%. The higher social groups accounted for 87% of all museums visits, the lower social groups for only 13%.[22] It would seem that, rather than functioning as institutions of mass public education, fostering individual growth and active citizenship, most museums serve those who are already educated. The authors in this book explore the issues, tensions and contradictions faced by those museums which seek to address this issue.

Health and communities

Though *The Economist* did recognize the significant inequalities in museum attendance, it saw these as a failure to appeal to different markets, rather than a reflection on the social inclusion commitments, policies and practices through which museums claim to address them. Nor did it register a trend which in 2013 was only just emerging - the prominence of health and wellbeing as a feature of museum debates and practice. Within the traditional dichotomies, this is another fashionable instrumentalisation of museums, but Nuala Morse's chapter shows that museums are rarely passive implementers of government policy; they adapt and find opportunities for action which reflect their institutional values. Morse provides a Foucauldian genealogy of changes in government policy in relation to the social role of museums in the UK since 1997, which included significant funding for social inclusion work under New Labour (1997–2010) and policy neglect and disinvestment under the Austerity regimes of both the Coalition (2010-2015) and Conservative (2015) governments. It was during this period of Austerity that significant numbers of museums began to focus on health and wellbeing. While many had responded to damaging funding reductions by cutting socially purposeful work more deeply than 'core functions', some managed to sustain and even develop their engagement with their communities, often driven by an awareness of health and wellbeing inequalities. Morse's case studies show how both at a strategic (The Museums Association) and a local (Tyne and Wear Museums) level, disinvestment led to a search for relevant, socially responsible roles which might generate more sustainable funding. The drive was not however purely pragmatic. Creative responses to cuts usually reflected pre-existing commitments to social responsibility which supported staff agency in interpreting policy, identifying needs which museums could address and building new partnerships.

The new focus of museums on health and wellbeing also represents a shift in public health and primary health care. The chapters by Chatterjee and by O'Neill, Seaman and Dornan summarise, from different perspectives, the changes in Public Health thinking and the growing understanding that prevention and treatment of many illnesses can only be achieved by enriching people's lives, through social activities, including cultural participation. After decades of the search for evidence of museum impacts, it is perhaps ironic that, just at a time when museum funding in the UK is under unprecedented

threat, robust evidence for the contribution of museums to wellbeing is reaching a critical mass. O'Neill, Seaman and Dornan explore how Glasgow's civic museum service has responded to this evidence and a growing understanding of the serious health problems facing the city. Working with a public health partner, Glasgow Museums are working through how to deploy their resources as strategically and effectively as possible to benefit those people whose health is at risk. Esme Ward's chapter describes Manchester's ambitious citywide programme which aims to enhance the contribution its museum and heritage sectors also make to public health. This is part of a wider strategy to empower citizens, forge collaborations between public and private spheres, and focus on a person and community-centred approach to wellbeing. From the very outset such initiatives have placed arts and culture at the forefront, with museums given a particular role in galvanising local and community interest. Similarly, Helen Chatterjee focusses on a research project in London on the impact of social prescribing (a term used to describe the process whereby healthcare professionals refer patients to non-clinical forms of support, including green gyms, time banks and museums). With the research providing a strong evidence base for their efficacy, Chatterjee argues that, as core civic assets, museums are particularly well-placed to contribute to public health initiatives that are community-led and person-centred.

More generally, the emergence of museums as sites of health improvement can be seen as part of a wider attempt to redefine progress. While the neoliberal economic narrative has been globally dominant since the late 1980s, proposing the market as the key driver of progress, along with a scaled down state, privatisation and deregulation, there has been some questioning of its argument that 'there is no alternative'. Part of the neoliberal position was to define freedom in terms of the economic freedom of the individual, and progress in terms of economic growth.[23] Moves to counter this approach began with the creation of the Human Development Index in 1990, which sought to add people-centred policies, such as education, to the metrics. In the domain of human rights, the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum shifted the focus from legalities to the actual capacity of people to exercise their rights based on their human characteristics.[24] The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – an intergovernmental economic think tank with 36 member states – has made a similar shift from the purely economic to a more holistic concept of progress. In 2018, it published *Beyond GDP: Measuring What Counts for Economic and Social Performance,*[25] and *Culture and Local Development: Maximising the Impact, A Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums.*[26] It recognised the potential of museums to contribute not only to urban regeneration, economic development and innovation, but also to community and cultural development, education and creativity, to inclusion, health and wellbeing.

A pervasive issue in our time is how societies based on liberal principles of the free individual can nonetheless form bonds which are essential for the

health of those individuals – and their societies – to work. Stark neoliberal statements like Margaret Thatcher's that 'there is no such thing as society' are now rarely explicitly supported.[27] Indeed David Cameron's short-lived 'Big Society' initiative seemed to be a reversal of her view, though its implication was that it was big government which was eroding social bonds by creating cultures of dependency. Nonetheless, social bonds continue to be eroded by the requirements of the economy, notably geographical mobility, the gentrification of places which were formerly the location of long-standing communities, or the dereliction of such communities by business closures and redundancies, the reduction in social organisations and – a phenomenon unique in human history – the high and increasing percentage of people living alone. The importance of social bonds is now recognised across many disciplines: in urban planning 'place making' has become shorthand for an urbanism which links residents (whatever their origins) with where they live and work.[28] Philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre, who has revised Aristotle's definition of humans from 'rational animal' to 'dependent rational animal',[29] recognise that individualism always takes place in a context of social bonds. Despite the dominance of the neoliberal belief that markets provide the best solution to all problems, global economic institutions like the World Bank recognise that capitalism depends for its functioning on many non-market values. This is why it has taken a lead in developing the concept of Social Capital, based on the understanding that the functioning of all aspects of society, including local communities, governments and markets, is dependent on the level of trust, shared attitudes and social networks, between individuals and groups.[30]

Many of this book's authors try to clarify complex and loaded terms which pervade the museum literature (both professional and academic). Raymond Williams, who is quoted by Lane and Williams, famously wrote that 'culture' was one of the two or three most complex words in English – his *Key Words* also includes entries on 'democracy' and 'community', which are perhaps no less complex and contested.[31] And in Black and Warburton's chapter we find that the term 'community' is employed more than 30 times, leaving the definition to emerge from the text. Clearly place-based, it refers mainly to people whose antecedents have lived in the same area for generations, but it is not exclusivist or fixed, but rather a form of heritage which can be a resource for building a future. In Hooper's chapter community is also an important part of his discussion of the role of the Copper Mining Museum in the small West Cork village of Allihies. Initially fearful that their history of mining would be lost to future generations, the local parish community secured the support, then the funding, to convert a small Methodist chapel into a museum which today functions as much like a community centre and cultural hub as it does a museum or heritage centre. Community engagement is now widely accepted as an essential feature of museum practice, a way of realising some of the unfulfilled potential of museums.[32] Black and Warburton provide testimony of how one geographical community attempted to

recover their heritage in the face of the closure of their historic industries – and local museum – due to globalisation and government austerity budgets. Other authors argue for moving beyond a didactic or service approach to the 'hard to reach' to, in the words of Tooby, a place where 'the curator's task becomes how to be an active part of a community'. Such sharing of curatorial authority has been addressed by Golding and Modest, who argue that such departures must involve 'radical turns', something more than 'mere consultation and inclusion of diverse perspectives'. There should be genuine collaboration, in other words, rather than tokenistic gestures, and an honest re-appreciation of curatorial authority.[33]

For Benson and Cremin, this is centrally an issue of accountability, and they argue that 'when it comes to museum claims for making a difference in people's lives and the transformative role of museums' such institutions need to be social spaces, 'sites of a stronger and more collective intelligence'. They advocate collections that demonstrably connect with heritage:

> A museum that is part of heritage ecology can sustain the places and spaces through which its work flows, and its work at every level is shaped by that ecosystem of horizontal, vertical and diagonal relationships that exist between individuals, organisations and place.

Of course, such a connection requires different institutional structures and alternative processes of organisational development, which may be why many staff from large and prestigious museums, despite being drawn to Benson's and Cremin's model, find it impossible to accommodate. It may also be why the authors find themselves placed under 'a burden of proof and scrutiny' from peers that other museums would not experience – the demand for evidence providing an alibi for those wishing to change but lacking the will or the courage.