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MUSEUMS AT NIGHT 2012



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Key achievements in 2012

- 416 arts and heritage venues opened their doors at night
- 537 events took place
- 216 UK towns hosted events
- 121,000 visits were made to events
- 21,000 public votes were cast in a competition for venues to win artists
- 5,000 people (4% of all visitors) had **never been** to an arts or heritage venue prior to Museums at Night
- 45,000 people (36% of all visitors) were **new** to the venue they visited
- 95% of visitors rated their experience as **7, 8, 9 or 10 out of 10**
- 94% of visitors were **inspired** to visit other heritage and arts venues
- 1329 pieces of **media coverage** with an audited value of **£3.4 million**
- 95% of venues say they will **take part again** in 2013



What is Museums at Night?

Museums at Night is the annual after-hours festival of special events and late openings at arts and heritage venues across the UK, which explodes into life for one weekend in May. It ties in with Nuit des Musees across Europe, and is the UK's response to International Museum Day (May 18). Co-ordinated and led by Culture24 since 2009, the festival has grown dramatically each year. In 2012, the festival inspired 416 venues to hold 537 events. Museums at Night is a catalyst for partnership working, and provides an opportunity for organisations to target new audiences and to try programming something different.

The festival offers visitors the chance to discover, rediscover or see arts and heritage venues on their doorstep in a new light. Each year it attracts thousands of new audiences to venues they have never visited before – in 2012, 36% of all visitors were new to the venue they were visiting. It also attracts a small but significant percentage of the hardest-to-reach people: 4% of the 121,000 visits to Museums at Night were made by people who have never been to an arts or heritage venue. 5% of visits to Museums at Night were made by people who had not visited an arts or heritage venue for more than a year.

Museums at Night is accessible for all types and sizes of venues: in 2012, 297 heritage organisations and 119 arts organisations took part. The festival encourages cross-sector collaboration and showcases innovative new event programming. The 2012 campaign was primarily funded by Arts Council England with targeted support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Sky Arts.

Collaboration

In 2012, Culture24 consolidated its festival partnerships with National Trust, Historic Houses Association, English Heritage, Sky Arts, VisitEngland and the Association of Independent Museums all attracting new venues to participate.

With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, two new groups of venues (clusters) were brought together in North Norfolk and North Lincolnshire to develop a joined-up offer for Museums at Night. Existing clusters continued to offer joint programming and two new clusters formed in Oxford and Scarborough.

New programming

Each year, participating organisations put on exciting, forward-thinking Museums at Night events and 2012 was no different. 72% of events included some kind of artistic content (e.g. animation, craft, dance.)

With support from Arts Council England, Culture24 partnered with Love Art London to launch the Connect10 competition in 2012. This competition offered venues the chance to win one of ten top contemporary artists for their Museums at Night event and the associated audience development work saw 21,000 public votes cast.

Culture24 continued to strengthen relationships with key programme providers and built new partnerships with collaborators including Sky Arts, Faber & Faber and Future Shorts. A new partnership with The Reading Agency saw four authors placed in venues across the UK to read from their books at Museums at Night events.

The British Museum participated for the first time by running a sleepover, which is usually only available to their Young Friends members. Culture24 worked with Sky Arts to subsidise the cost of 50 one-year Young Friends memberships, given away through a competition in the Evening Standard newspaper. The promotion in the Standard ensured the event attracted a completely different audience for the British Museum with one staff member reporting that 80% of the attendees had not been to the museum before. Hartlepool Museum and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens also ran Sky Arts-subsidised sleepovers.

Examples of creative new event ideas for 2012

- Bristol's **Arnos Vale Cemetery** took part for the first time, proving that all types of heritage organisations can programme creative Museums at Night events. Their torch-lit tour gave visitors the chance to discover Victorian folk customs and funeral etiquette.
- Arts venue **Derby QUAD** involved their local community in film-making, inviting them to help build the set and participate in the Derby Soap Opera.
- **The Horniman Museum** brought their Body Adorned exhibition to life with dance performances, and introduced their typical local audience to an alternative subculture with heavily tattooed art historian Dr Matt Lodder.
- **Manchester Jewish Museum** offered an experiential night; visitors were invited to a traditional Jewish Sabbath meal to sample traditional dishes and explore the significance of the various blessing and rituals.
- A local tango club took over **Hastings Museum** for their debut Museums at Night event, teaching the dance to visitors and filling the building with music.
- **The Bishop's Palace** in Wells, Somerset ran an evening of entertainment, story-telling, fire, light installations and visitor craft workshops making lanterns and willow sculptures, culminating in a parade led by a samba band.

Creating content - encouraging innovation

Having trialled offering event packages and programme content over the last few years, Culture24 made this a key part of the campaign offer in 2012. Organisations had access to a range of content including: ten artists taking part in the Connect10 competition; four authors brokered by the Reading Agency; short film screenings via Future Shorts; and a range of programme examples and case studies communicated by the Culture24 blog, email newsletter and YouTube channel.

The availability of these programme strands has a positive impact on multiple levels: bringing artists together with museums and heritage organisations; providing inspiring programming opportunities for venues that they would struggle to access alone; and giving audiences the opportunity to experience something different.

The accessible nature of the festival and range of venues being involved means that Culture24 has limited direct influence on the type of events being put on. However, in 2012, 61 Museums at Night events involved content provided by Culture24. As Culture24 builds on these partnerships, it is likely that this number will rise in future.

A legacy for the sector – sharing knowledge

Museums at Night provides significant learning opportunities for the sector to trial new events and share knowledge, facilitated by the resources and case studies published through Culture24 channels. The Culture24 team has spoken at a number of conferences and events this year, and run a marketing training session for volunteers. Having gathered feedback from this year's campaign, the team will repeat and develop this knowledge-sharing offer ahead of Museums at Night 2013.

Marketing through competitions

Culture24 works with partners to create exciting opportunities for members of the public to win unique experiences. One successful example is the result of a partnership with Faber & Faber who, for the past three years, have offered a small number of competition winners a Museums at Night tour of the Faber Archive, which is never normally open to the public. These competitions generate PR, public interest and visits to Museums at Night events.

PR success

This year's PR campaign was again managed by Brighton agency Bullet PR, who packaged stories and themed event roundups for different media. This strategy, together with the early spike of local media interest generated by the Connect10 competition, attracted a phenomenal level of coverage: over 2,000 pages of clips, including a Sky Arts documentary, achieved a total Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of £3,405,824. This was spread across a broad range of media, including every broadsheet newspaper, many tabloids, consumer magazines, broadcast media, and almost 350 online stories. The events that were produced by the Connect10 competition attracted significant attention: a short video covering Bompas & Parr at the ss Great Britain got over half a million hits on the BBC news website home page.



Frances Osborne, Loyd Grossman and Jane Finnis at Museums at Night celebration, 11 Downing Street, London

The huge increase in media coverage value was partly attributable to Culture24's on-going partnership with the BBC to provide cultural data to the BBC Things To Do (www.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo) website. Each participating venue signed up to the BBC partnership had the opportunity to benefit from extra publicity for their event if their listings qualified to go through to the Things To Do website and, via that site, on to regional BBC news sites.

Lauren Laverne was the festival ambassador once again, answering interview requests, sharing the Museums at Night link with her Twitter followers and listeners, and providing quotes for use in promotional literature.

This year Culture24 commissioned Create studios in Brighton to create a pop-up book, which included all the key elements of the campaign. This image was used on posters and as the front cover for the official guide to Museums at Night produced in collaboration with BBC History Magazine.



Museums at Night photo-shoot - brochure front cover image

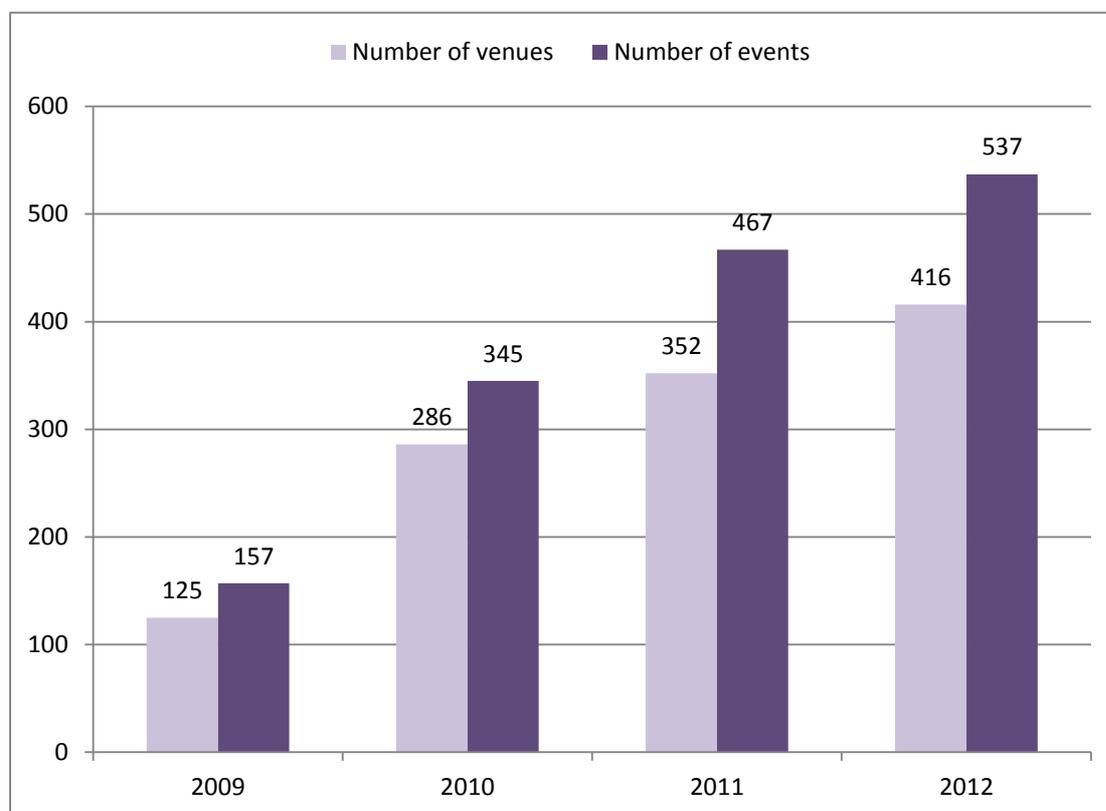
Museums at Night growth

Despite tough economic circumstances and uncertainty about the future, Museums at Night has continued to grow. The Museums Association's [2012 survey into cuts to museums](#) has found that 60% of local authority-run museums and 51% of museum services overall have had budget cuts. 42% have cut staff, and 22% have had to close part of their site. Set against this background, it is encouraging that Museums at Night continues to thrive.

Anecdotal feedback also indicates that cultural venues are having to scale back their operations and need to have confidence that the campaigns they take part in will have a positive impact on their organisation. Getting involved in this exciting annual public-facing showcase for the arts and heritage sector is an attractive prospect for many venues.

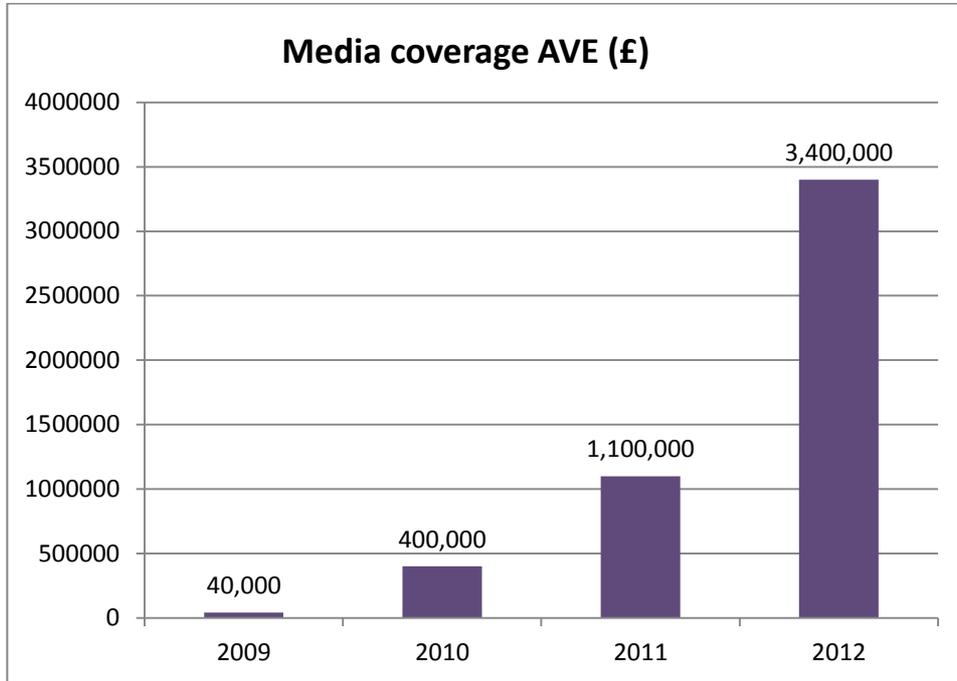
Growth in participating venues

The 2012 festival saw a 17.5% growth in the number of events and an 18% growth in the number of participating venues from 2011:



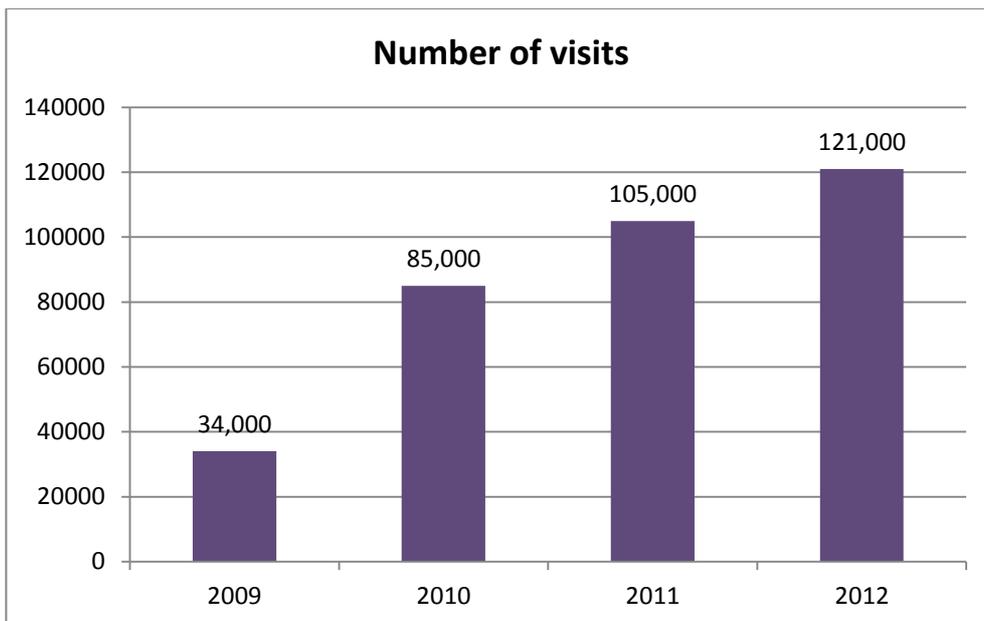
Growth in AVE

There was an impressive 240% growth in AVE from £1.1m in 2011 to £3.4m 2012 including high value coverage in the Sunday Times, Woman's Own, the Independent and the Evening Standard.



Growth in number of visits

2012 saw a 15% growth in visits to Museums at Night events, demonstrating the festival's on-going appeal to the public. 94% of visitors said they were inspired by their Museums at Night experience to visit other arts and heritage venues, indicating that the festival helps to build sustainable audiences for the sector.



The Connect10 competition

The Connect10 competition, a new initiative for the 2012 festival, gave venues the chance to win one of ten top contemporary artists for their Museums at Night event. The participating venues galvanised their networks to vote in a public poll for their event idea. Ten venues won artist-led events and eleven other venues that participated in the competition went on to hold Museums at Night events.

The competition was designed to attract new audiences, create unique venue/artist collaborations, expand the campaign's PR profile and forge deeper relationships between venues and their networks.

How did it work?

Once funding had been secured and the 10 artists had been chosen, the Museums at Night team announced the competition to cultural and heritage venues across the UK via e-newsletters, the Museums at Night blog, Facebook and Twitter.

In January, venues were invited to submit creative event ideas explaining their connection to their preferred artist. The first pitches were received within one hour of the competition being announced.

Over 200 inventive event ideas were submitted, and the Museums at Night team collaborated with the artists to shortlist 28 from a variety of museums, art galleries and heritage sites across the UK to go through to the public voting stage.

Why did venues get involved?

When asked what motivated them to enter the competition, the most common responses from venues were:

- to raise their profile, locally and nationally
- to develop their audiences, either in terms of increasing numbers or attracting new and different visitors.

Venues also saw Connect10 as an opportunity to strengthen the support they received from their existing audience and supporters:

"Connect10 revived our links with visitors by asking them to vote for us and really engage – it was a two way relationship rather than us just telling them about forthcoming events – they were able to respond and be active in what we do" Old Operating Theatre Museum

"Having an influence (particularly in the form of voting) instigates a lot of support from people and helps them to form an attachment to the venue which will hopefully continue in the future" Wedgwood Museum.

Over 21,000 votes were cast by the close of the three-week competition in March, with many venues saying that the experience enabled their staff to enhance their communications skills, particularly by utilising social media, helping them to reaching out to audiences.

What did venues want to achieve?

The majority of venues stated that they were trying to attract a younger audience than usual, and wanted to increase the overall number of people who visited. Venues were aiming to reach a different type of audience, such as visitors who have an interest in art forms other than those which the organisation specialises in. Such cross-cultural collaboration helps to strengthen the sector as a whole and allows for reciprocal benefits between venues, artists and audiences.

The majority of venues felt that they succeeded in reaching their target audiences. For example, 71% of visitors who answered the visitor survey at the Ragged School said this was the first time they had been to the venue.

The reasons cited by museums who felt they did not succeed in attracting their target audience were that the event may not have been radically different from their usual offer, therefore barriers around the venue's public image were not challenged. For example, The Oliver Holt Gallery felt that young people were engaged at the voting stage and participated in the Facebook and Twitter campaigns, but few attended the event itself. The venue will continue to reach out to the people who voted for them, and intend to create more events that will appeal to younger audiences, which they will promote through schools.

Venue experience

Participating in the Connect10 competition was a valuable experience for venue staff and offered some the opportunity to develop their use of social media for communication. Winning the competition instilled pride and excitement in the venues' staff and volunteers.

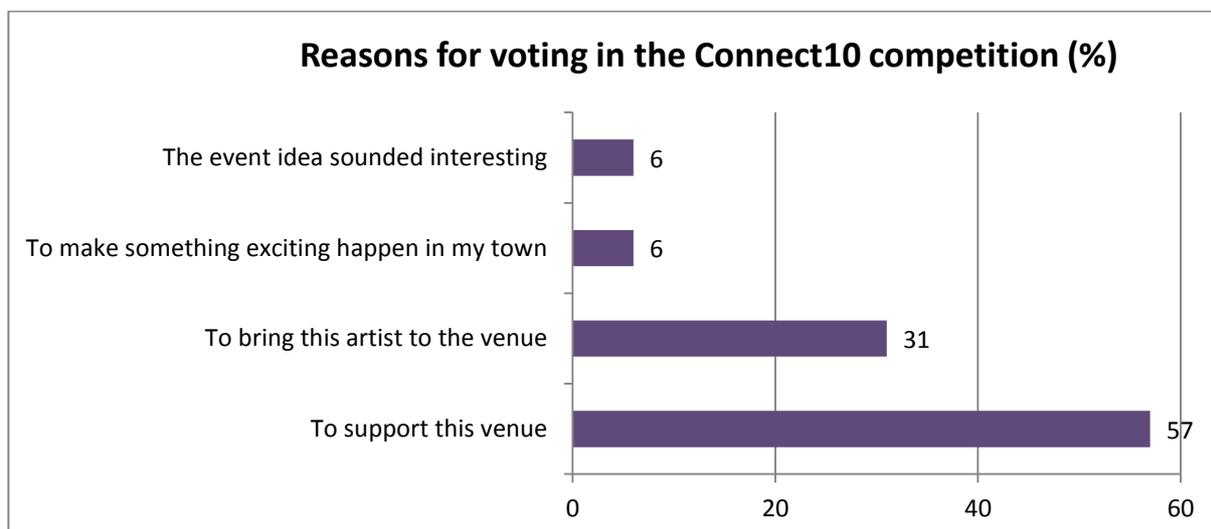
"It was the highlight of our year so far, everyone was on a high and this carried on for weeks afterwards" Wedgwood Museum

"Connect10 really hits the mark in terms of audience engagement and has helped the venue to galvanise their local and regional audience in supporting them" Towner Gallery

Who voted and why

Visitors to Connect10 events were asked whether they had voted in the competition, and if so, what their main reason was. Their desire to support the organisation they voted for was the main motivating factor, with the appeal of a particular artist the second most popular reason. 68% of people who came to a Connect10 event had voted for that venue, while 13% had voted for another venue.

Visitors to the Connect10 events were more engaged online: 13% of visitors to other Museums at Night events used social media to like, share, tweet or retweet in connection with the event they attended, but 27% of Connect10 event visitors did.



From an artist's perspective

The artists who took part in the Connect10 competition saw it as an opportunity to engage people creatively and support local museums. Many were interested in the idea of working in museums, and felt that this opportunity fitted well with their work. Some artists involved did have some concerns about elements of the campaign. The voting aspect felt uncomfortable for some at the beginning of the process, but they recognised that it was a good opportunity to raise the profile of the organisations involved and build a buzz about creative activity. Not knowing which venue they would be going to was also difficult for some artists - one felt that he would have preferred to go to one of the runner-up venues, despite their final event going well.

Overall, it was a positive experience for the artists involved. Installation artist Susan Stockwell's intervention went so well that she is now working on a project together with Wolverhampton Art Gallery and her two runner-up venues to explore the post-colonial legacy that exists in Britain's gallery and museum collections.

The winners

1. **Towner Gallery** in Eastbourne won artist Bob & Roberta Smith, who led a family-friendly daytime art event, followed by the first ever Museums at Nightclub.
2. London's **Ragged School Museum** is usually attended by school groups, so their audience with prestigious photographer Terry O'Neill attracted a new demographic of visitors.

"Huzzah! We are delighted to announce that we have won the services of the amazing @Terry_ONeill for @MuseumsAtNight! #MatN2012"
Ragged School Museum tweet

3. **The Old Operating Theatre Museum** in London offered visitors a unique and reflective interpretation of their medical objects by contemporary artist Claire Barclay.
4. **Discovery Point** in Dundee, which tells the story of Scott's journey to the Antarctic, had never hosted an author before, but secured novelist Jon McGregor who spoke about his personal experience of travelling to Antarctica.
5. Salford's **Working Class Movement Library**, the smallest organisation in the competition with only 2.5 staff members, received the highest total number of votes: 2308 out of 3140 cast in the poll for photographer Simon Roberts. Simon discussed his work and filmed local campaigners explaining their goals of political change. FC Manchester asked their fans to vote for the WCML, who also created a reciprocal Twitter campaign together with Manchester's People's History Museum, competing for Martin Parr, encouraging people to vote for either venue to benefit the region as a whole:

"Eeek less than 10mins left! What are you waiting for? VOTE PHM now to #getmartin for #MatN2012 <http://t.co/TdXwOUvx> & vote @wcmlibrary too!"
People's History Museum, Manchester, Tweet

6. The **Wedgwood Museum** in Stoke-on-Trent connected contemporary photographer Martin Parr with Josiah Wedgwood, whose son Thomas is credited as one of the pioneers of photography – and noticed a marked difference in the Museums at Night audience compared to their regular visitors.
7. The competition for installation artist Susan Stockwell to lead a hands-on craft workshop was extremely close, but **Wolverhampton Art Gallery** secured her visit by a narrow margin.
8. **ss Great Britain's** event saw jellymongers Bompas and Parr float Brunel's ship on 55,000 litres of luminous green jelly to create a unique re-interpretation of the heritage attraction.
9. Liverpool's **Victoria Art Gallery** held an evening of live taxidermy courtesy of Polly Morgan - her first ever full demonstration of the art.
10. **Oliver Holt Gallery and Sherborne Museum** in Dorset won artist Ryan Gander, who performed his LAX lecture as part of an interactive event where visitors travelled between the two venues.

Connect10 competition key findings

Venue size

Half of the winning venues had fewer than 5 members of staff and had one lead contact responsible for organising the Connect10 event. The feedback from these venues was that although the competition generated a lot of work in terms of extra communication with visitors, marketing, event planning and budget monitoring, the end result was overwhelmingly beneficial.

Benefits of involving a high-profile artist

All of the winning venues felt that they benefited from the inclusion of a high-profile artist in their events. Without the funding and nationwide PR campaign coordinated by Culture24, most of these venues felt that they would not have been able to incorporate such well-known artists.

“Smaller venues can host bigger names through this campaign and also take a risk that normally they couldn’t because of money” Kirsty Hall, Victoria Gallery, Liverpool.

Encouraging experimental thinking

Many venues commented that the competition provided the opportunity to experiment with event ideas and test what audience responses would be. It therefore acted as a means for venues to develop their activities and create new experiences, attracting visitors outside of their core audience. Some venues took risks and experimented by taking part in the competition, while others added to and enhanced their usual offer. The Working Class Movement Library and ss Great Britain both applied for the competition almost on a whim, without preconceived expectations. In this respect their events were experiments, both of which were successful in drawing in more visitors and also different types of visitors.



The ss Great Britain floating on ‘a sea of luminous jelly’ for Museums at Night 2012

Connect10 competition in 2013

Nine out of the ten venues expressed an interest in taking part in the competition again in the future. Their suggestions for developing the competition included involving more performance-based artists, as these might be more accessible and bring more of an entertainment element to the events.

Heritage Lottery Fund clusters

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration

Culture24 encourages organisations to work together and form 'clusters' of venues, to deliver a cost-effective joint marketing or event offer to audiences by sharing ideas and resources.

In 2012 Culture24 helped to set up two new clusters in North Norfolk and North Lincolnshire, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Seven existing clusters re-formed for Museums at Night 2012, including large established clusters in Liverpool (Light Night) and Newcastle (Late Shows) and smaller clusters in Bath and Dorchester. Two additional clusters also appeared in Oxford and Scarborough.

The HLF funding allowed the clusters to be managed by a local coordinator and provided financial support to participating venues. Both clusters created a joint marketing offer by promoting individual venues and events in one inclusive leaflet. North Norfolk took this further by incorporating a Victorian theme, branded as Victorian Nights.

Not only does clustering enable organisations to collaborate and increase their reach and impact, it provides an opportunity for whole towns to work together and reach out to a range of venue types and provide a rounded offer for potential visitors. For example, the North Norfolk cluster offered events arranged not just by museums and galleries, but also by local preservation societies and a historic steam railway.

Both funded clusters were successful in encouraging and bringing local venues together and in creating an exciting programme of events for visitors which was easy to navigate. The management of each cluster varied and the experience has given Culture24 knowledge of how to develop and manage clusters most effectively.

Benefits of involvement

Culture24 organised a marketing training session for volunteers involved in the North Norfolk cluster, giving guidelines and advice about marketing methods and how to write press releases. These sessions were deeply appreciated by the attendees - one mentioned that after putting the recommendations into practice, every press release they had since issued was taken up and featured in local press. The workshop contributed to the development of venue staff and volunteers' skills.

A key benefit of working in a funded cluster was the presence of a paid cluster coordinator, who had an overview of all venues and events taking part in the cluster, was responsible for budget monitoring and was the main contact when liaising with Culture24 and the media. One Norfolk venue commented that it was useful to have a central coordinator with an overview of the cluster as a whole who could advise where their organisation fitted into the campaign.

Grouping Museums at Night events and venues into a cluster creates a bigger PR story, which acts as a platform for the region to base its marketing campaign upon. This benefit was particularly apparent in North Norfolk where the venues involved are very small, so working together and producing joint marketing was far more effective than anything they could have achieved on their own. The North Lincolnshire cluster secured 16 pieces of media coverage, while the North Norfolk cluster attracted 32.

Venues commented that working together allowed a broader and more diverse range of events to be included, which in turn led to a deeper and more interesting visitor experience. Venues explained that this was made possible by the financial support they received, which allowed them to experiment with new event ideas. Being part of a cluster allows organisations which do not usually run events, such as preservation societies, to learn from venues which do, and to gain valuable experience.

A broader range of events meant that the programme could appeal to a more diverse audience than the venues usually attracted, thus contributing to overall audience development.

"Having the venues joined together meant that people who weren't as familiar with some of them were more prepared to try something new because of the association with venues they already knew", Alice Muncer, Cromer Museum.

Issues and challenges

Venues commented on the additional time commitment needed for group meetings and contribution to group marketing material. One venue said it would have taken less time had they done it on their own as having to negotiate with a number of different local venues could be time-consuming, particularly if the venues involved did not use email or had no access to the internet.

Lack of staff time and the reliance upon volunteers were also cited as issues when working in a cluster. North Lincolnshire County Council officers stated that a significant challenge for them was coordinating volunteers from many venues and having to juggle the coordination of Museums at Night with their commitments to other projects.

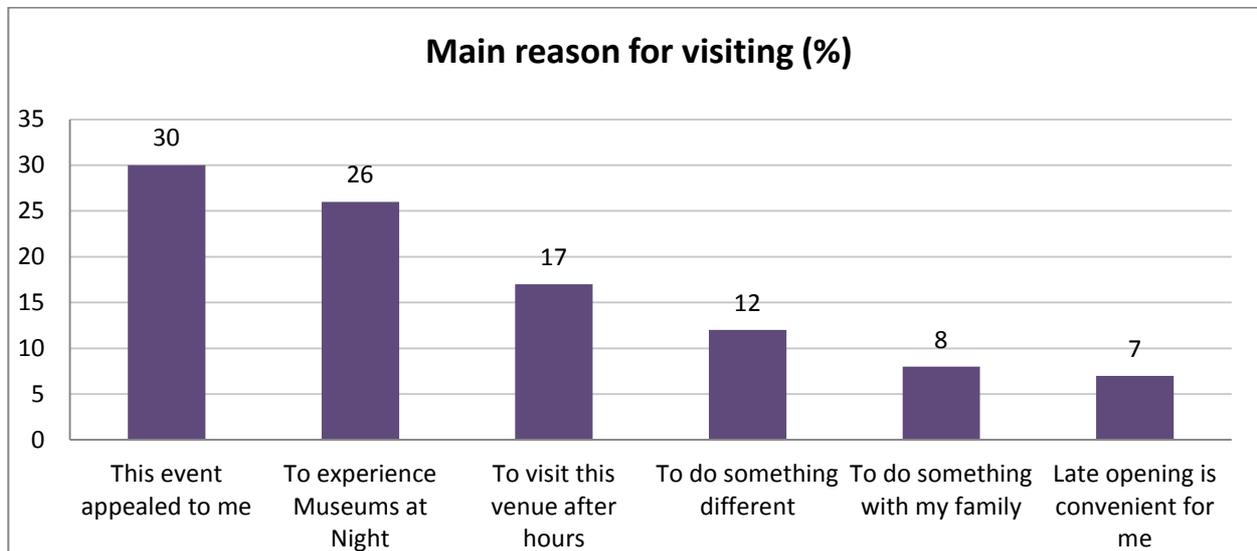
A venue in North Norfolk commented that the campaign worked by offering 'taster' sessions for people who might then decide to come back and see the museum next time they are in the area or have friends and relatives visiting. As there was so much going on and so many people, it was almost impossible for visitors to read all of the information and thoroughly immerse themselves in the exhibitions. However, their Museums at Night events were free, removing the cost barrier to exploring some of these venues for the first time, and providing an incentive to re-visit and discover in more detail the types of experiences on offer.



Elsham Wolds Airfield in North Lincolnshire welcomed 80 people to their Museums at Night event, including visitors from Belgium who brought artifacts from a crashed 103 Squadron Lancaster

Reason for visiting

The range of different, unusual events is proving to be successful at attracting regular culture attenders, lapsed attenders (5%) and people who have never been to an arts or heritage organisation (4%).



Visitor demographics

As Museums at Night develops each year Culture24 is aiming to develop a more detailed understanding of who currently attends events. Given that 30% of attenders are at Museums at Night for a specific event, the types of events being scheduled are likely to have a big impact on the type of people attending.

The age range of visitors appears to vary year on year:

	2010 %	2011 %	2012 %
Under 16	11	5	14
16-24	7	20	7
25-34	18	23	19
35-44	22	16	15
45-54	15	16	18
55+	27	20	29

In 2012 the method for collecting age data was changed from asking the age of the respondent to the age of the people in the respondent's group. This accounts for the rise in the percentage of people aged under 16 attending events. The fluctuations in other age groups could be due to a number of factors including the type of events held as part of Museums at Night this year, the type of events sampled during the survey or the communication channels used to distribute PR and marketing messages. Despite a strong sample of over 1000 respondents from approximately 70 venues, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions as to why these fluctuations exist. Therefore in the 2013 evaluation Culture24 will seek to gather key data from a greater range of individuals at an even greater range of events.

For the 2012 evaluation Culture24 collected data relating to the type of groups attending the festival. The results showed that the split between groups was equal with people coming with friends (32%), partner (34%) and family (33%). This demonstrates that Museums at Night is attracting a significant number of intergenerational groups. Culture24 will continue to gather this data in order to build a picture of the festival's visitor base.

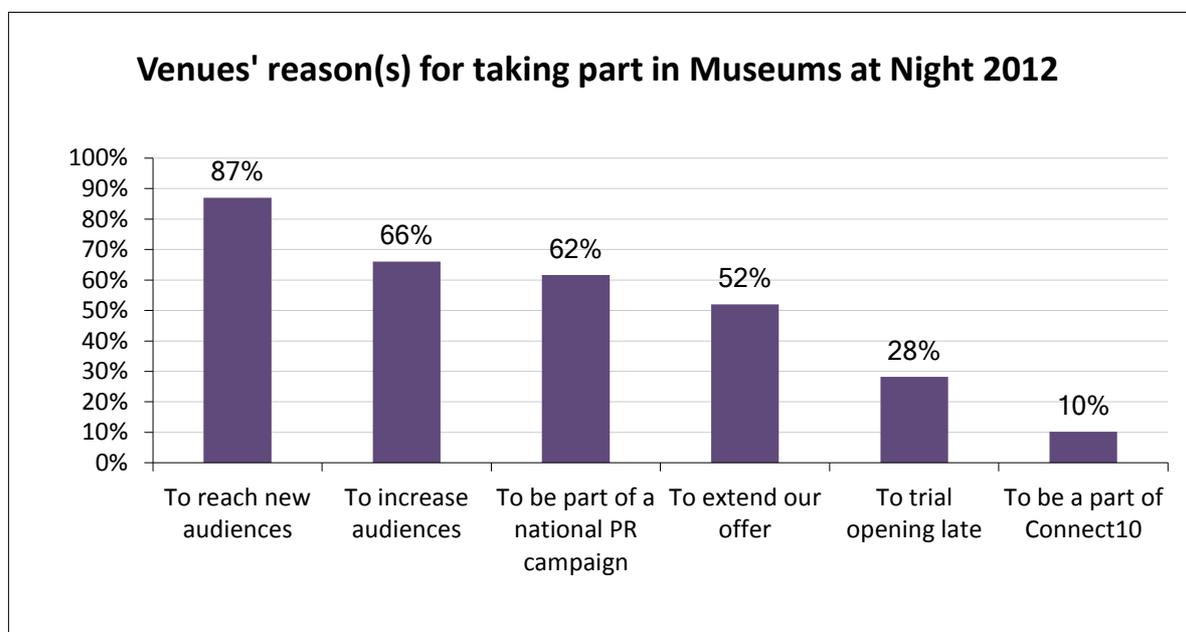
Why Museums at Night matters to venues

Organisations take part in Museums at Night to reach new audiences, increase their audiences, be part of a national PR campaign and extend their offer. Being part of a national festival gives venues the opportunity to try something different, think about their audiences, benefit from the support of Culture24 and become part of an international movement.

The 416 venues taking part in Museums at Night 2012 included:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 airfield | 23 gallery-and-museums (making a total of 119 arts venues) |
| 2 archaeological sites | 1 garden |
| 5 archives | 57 historic houses |
| 6 attractions | 2 historic railways |
| 1 bridge | 9 libraries |
| 1 cemetery | 190 museums |
| 7 castles | 1 observatory |
| 7 churches / cathedrals | 1 science centre |
| 96 galleries | 5 ships |

Museums at Night's reputation continues to attract new venues with 51% of venues new to the festival in 2012 hearing about it in previous years and wanting to be a part of it. The reasons that organisations took part in Museums at Night 2012 are detailed below:

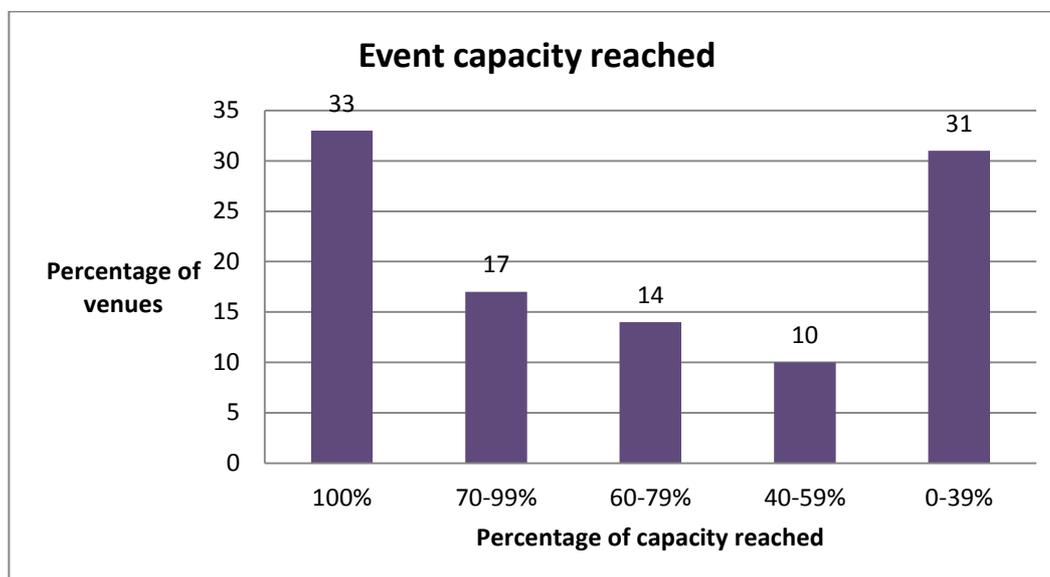


Reaching new audiences

The chart above clearly demonstrates that venues see Museums at Night as a chance to reach new people, indeed, 36% of all visitors were new to the venue they visited.

Reaching capacity

For the 2012 evaluation we have looked at the capacity of the events during the festival in order to understand how successful the venues have been in terms of visitor numbers.



Around a third of venues reached their capacity during Museums at Night and 46% reached a capacity of 80% or more. Whilst this is very positive, there are a large percentage of organisations achieving less than 39% capacity.

Culture24's continued support and guidance in terms of programming and marketing is available to organisations throughout the campaign, but venues need to be encouraged to flag up potential issues and challenges with the Museums at Night team earlier. Culture24 is considering how best to support venues to reach a higher proportion of capacity in 2013.

Funding

64% of venues did not have funding for the event(s) they put on as part of Museums at Night. The 36% that did have funding secured this from local authorities, sponsorship, the Connect10 competition, HLF, Arts Council England, Sky Arts and other sources such as Trustees or Friends groups, donations, local tourism organisations, local museum groups, EU sources, or in-kind support from local businesses.

Return on investment

Out of the organisations who responded to the Museums at Night venue survey, 45% charged for admission to their event and 55% offered their event for free. All participating venues were asked if their event(s) broke even (22%), made money (30%) or cost money (48%).

Breaking this down further, venues that charged for their event recorded the following:

Generated income	54%
Broke even	20%
Cost money	27%

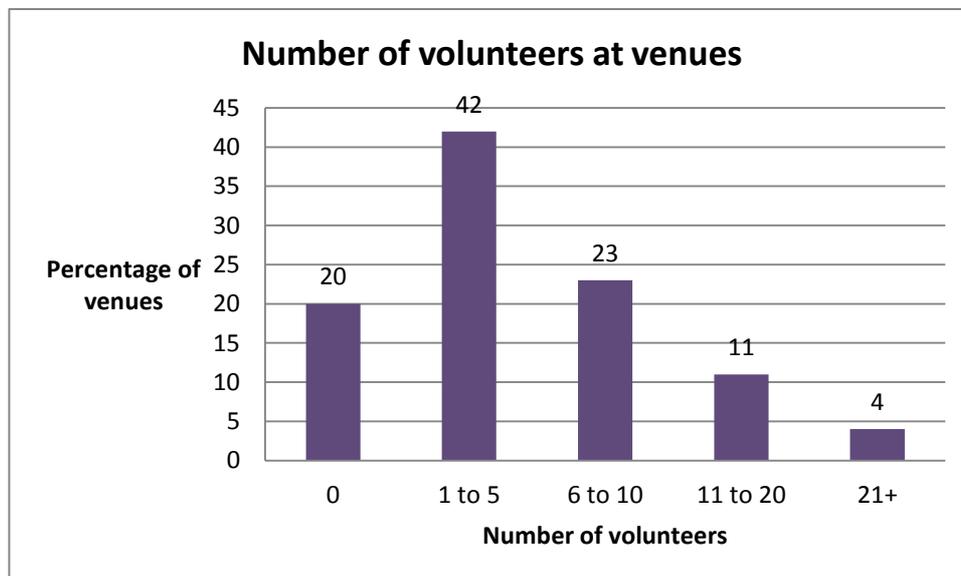
Venues that did not charge for their event recorded the following:

Generated income	13%
Broke even	20%
Cost money	68%

Those venues that did not charge for their event, but broke even or made money may have found ways to make their events cost neutral: 12 of the 27 venues sampled received funding for their events. They may also have generated extra income streams on the night from bars and refreshments.

Volunteers

The majority of organisations engaged volunteers to help deliver Museums at Night:



The fact that 80% of participating organisations involved at least one volunteer clearly demonstrates the essential role of volunteers in the arts and heritage sector.

Benefits of Museums at Night

Following the festival weekend, venues were asked what they felt the key benefits of taking part in Museums at Night were. Responses included reaching a new audience; being part of a national campaign; developing a higher profile; being part of a national PR campaign; and trying something new. Several also stated that participating in the festival was a good team motivator, boosting staff and volunteer morale.

Shifting dates for Museums at Night 2013

Culture24 surveyed organisations that ran a Museums at Night event in 2012, and those who did not, to explore whether shifting the festival days from 'Friday, Saturday and Sunday' to 'Thursday, Friday and Saturday' would widen participation. 95% of venues who took part in 2012 were also planning to take part in 2013, and 95.3% stated that they were as likely or more likely to take part if the days were moved.

Among organisations who did not take part in 2012, only 5.6% said that the change would deter them from participating, while 42% thought the date change would make it more likely that they could participate. Respondents cited better public transport and cheaper staff overtime on Thursdays than Sundays, while several galleries said that they already ran late openings or private views on Thursday evenings which they could easily double-brand as Museums at Night events.

Looking forward to 2013

Museums at Night can continue to be successful if Culture24 builds on the existing model emphasising partnership working and creative content generation. In this section the independent evaluator outlines recommendations as priorities going forward and the campaign team responds with completed or intended actions.

1. Review strategy

As Culture24 applies for two-year funding to coordinate the festival in 2013 and 2014, it seems an appropriate time to review the purpose of Museums at Night, its vision, aims and objectives and key success factors. By developing a set of clear objectives Culture24 will be able to focus its resources more effectively and efficiently.

Response: The Museums at Night team is developing a clear set of core values and objectives for the festival. Aims and objectives include:

- To build capacity in participating venues
- To progressively raise the quality of events
- To be the foremost showcase event for the arts and heritage sectors
- To attract larger audiences
- To reach less engaged audiences
- To deepen the relationships between venues and their audiences

Key performance indicators will be established internally.

2. Think about branding

Within the cultural sector the Museums at Night brand is fairly well-known but this is not the case outside the sector. In areas where Culture24 works with partners such as the Late Shows and Light Night, the challenge is how to promote Museums at Night alongside existing strong brands without having a negative impact on partners and confusing audiences.

Response: Culture24 will continue to work closely with all festival partners, and any sponsorship benefits will be shared amongst all partners. The Museums at Night branding will continue to be placed prominently on all campaign communications; participating venues will be encouraged to use the logo on their websites and press releases; and Culture24 will commission redesigned versions of the standard Museums at Night poster and flyer templates to give a coherent look to individual venues' promotional materials.

3. Sponsorship

A commercial sponsor could bring extra resources and profile to the festival and take the pressure off public funding.

Response: Culture24 is already taking steps to secure a sponsor for Museums at Night in 2013. The success of this could have a big impact on the festival - a headline sponsor would resource a significant increase in marketing spend, helping the festival to attract thousands of new visitors and encouraging hundreds of new venues to participate.

4. Reach 'new, lapsed and less-engaged' audiences

There are steps Culture24 can take, both sector and public-facing, to increase the number of new audiences engaging with the festival. For venues, reaching new audiences can be a long and difficult process. Culture24 is well-placed to advocate an effective audience development process to participating organisations. For many venues there is groundwork to do first in understanding who their potential audiences are, what their needs are, what the barriers to attending are and how to address these. Using existing knowledge-sharing channels Culture24 can share ideas and stimulate thinking about how best to programme for and communicate with new audiences. This will leave a legacy of skills development and knowledge sharing that the sector can use all year round. Again working with a sponsor will reach wider audiences and care has to be taken to focus on targeting the right audience segments with the right messages.

Response: Culture24 intends to collaborate with audience development agencies to devise resources to support participating venues in understanding their Museums at Night audiences better and programme attractive events. The campaign team will continue their outreach and support work with arts and heritage organisations offering skills development opportunities to participating venues.

In addition to the successful PR campaign, Culture24 will regularly communicate with members of the public through monthly email newsletters. They will continue to develop competitions and promotional partnerships to raise awareness of the festival among

members of the public. The inaugural Connect10 competition was a successful audience development initiative - Culture24 intends to build on this year's learning and run it again in future.

5. Develop growth-management strategies

The festival has grown steadily allowing Culture24 the space to trial new ideas and ensure that delivery of the festival is manageable. The introduction of a sponsor may jump-start this growth and Culture24 will benefit from developing strategies to manage this change if necessary. It is also recommended that Culture24 formalises procedures to allow for changing job roles and responsibilities if the delivery team were to expand.

Response: Culture24 company policies include succession planning, and the Museums at Night team keeps a record of their procedures and interactions using a CRM system. Risk management plans are in place to expand the capacity of the Museums at Night team should this become necessary, and to offer further placements to campaign interns enabling them to learn new skills through structured support of the campaign.

Conclusion

Museums at Night continues to grow despite difficult economic conditions. The core principles of accessibility and encouraging organisations to open late and do something different are attracting both experienced and new audiences of all ages, while new programming opportunities inspire venues and attract audiences. Culture24's emphasis on working in partnership continues to bear fruit with emerging clusters demonstrating that there is value in working together. The key to sustained and resilient growth is continued Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund support, combined with new energy from a commercial sponsor.



Museums at Night is managed and delivered by Culture24



Major Funders:



Other funder: [Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service](#)

Marketing partners: [The Digital Asset Lab](#), [BBC History Magazine](#), [Nuit des Musées](#), [VisitEngland](#), [Faber & Faber](#), [Penguin](#), [DCMS](#), [Create Studios](#)

Participation partners: [Festival of Museums](#), [English Heritage](#), [National Trust](#), [Historic Houses Association](#), [Association of Independent Museums](#), [Future Shorts](#), [The Reading Agency](#), [Love Art London](#)