



## THE RMG PLAN 2025-29

### *Building Reach, Reputation and Resilience*

#### PART 1: Overview and achievements 2024-25

##### **Introduction**

2024-25 saw a marked decrease in visitor numbers compared to the exceptionally good previous year. This can be attributed to a number of internal and external factors; The closure of the central atrium in the National Maritime Museum had a direct impact on our family-focused offer, the bad weather over last spring and summer, plus closures of Greenwich Park all played their part.

The coming year looks more promising with the launch of the *Pirates* exhibition in March and the re-opening of Ocean Court on World Ocean Day in June.

This RMG Plan, originally agreed by the Museum's Executive Directors, the Senior Leadership Team, and by our Trustees in May 2022, sets out for our colleagues and our stakeholders our primary aims and values and specific activities over the coming years. The Plan has been updated (April 2025) to reflect the achievements of the last year and to set out our activities for the coming year. It is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide an overview of the main areas of focus.

Below is a brief overview of the vision for each of our sites, followed by a summary of our key achievements over the last year and then our main priorities for the coming year.

##### **ROG**

The ROG was built and subsequently modified for science rather than public access and now needs vital investment to safeguard its unrivalled heritage, futureproof it for the next generation and improve access. Over the coming three years we aim to transform the site, repair and restore historic features as well as focusing on physical, cultural, intellectual and economic access so that everyone can enjoy and benefit from all the Observatory has to offer. Through this project we aim to inspire new audiences and advance our remit as a place for the public understanding of astronomy.

The ROG represents our biggest opportunity for increasing revenue for the Museum and so this work and investment is vital in securing the long-term financial sustainability of RMG.

##### *NMM Galleries Our Ocean Our Planet: Ocean, People, Vessels*

The Endeavour Project, completed in 2018, provided our visitors with four new gallery spaces in the NMM, utilising spaces previously used for staff accommodation and thereby markedly increasing our visitor offer by 1,000m<sup>2</sup> enabling us to display an additional 1,100 collection items and radically improving and simplifying visitor circulation around the Museum. The project also saw a transformation in how we work, engaging much more than previously with our stakeholders and communities.

The replacement of the roof in Neptune Court has not only allowed us to improve the environmental conditions of the space; reducing the heat, fixing the leaks and improving the acoustics, but has also presented us with opportunities to reimagine the space. When we re-open in June 2025, it will be renamed Ocean Court and open the way to understanding the ocean as a critical element in our environment, as well as the vessels and life at sea as currently expressed in our galleries.

When Ocean Court opens for World Ocean Day, we will welcome audiences back to the heart of the Museum with a new Ocean Map based on the Spilhaus projection, a bold new wall colour enhanced with a dramatic mural, evoking ocean dynamics, refreshed interpretation of existing objects, and a number of new displays. In addition, a new system for hanging banners will allow us to dress the space for festivals and events throughout the year.

We will continue to create temporary displays and to improve existing galleries.

#### *Queen's House Art & Architecture*

Building on the momentum of the high visitor numbers welcomed to the Queen's House over the last year (while the NMM's North entrance and main atrium remained closed), we shall continue to deliver a dynamic, inspiring, changing programme of displays in the House to attract new and repeat visitors. We have been granted scheduled monument consent from Historic England to return JMW Turner's *Battle of Trafalgar* to the Queen's House. A display is being developed for the Headmaster's Drawing Room, off the Great Hall, to launch in time for Trafalgar Day, 21 October 2025. The contemporary artist Sharon Walters will produce artwork as an output of her current Caird fellowship with RMG, which will be integrated into the annual rehang and rotations in early Q4. We will continue to grow, build and attract a diverse, arts loving audience through creative activities and innovative partnerships. Commercial events will deliver financial support, but the focus will be to balance this carefully with continuous public access.

#### *Cutty Sark*

We want the *Cutty Sark* to develop as a skills and knowledge base, a landmark for local history and an anchor story for the great river port, London. It should become the access point to understanding how trade drove exploration and globalisation. Using new technology to evoke the experience of seafaring in the days of sail, is a priority to build engagement. To this end, live events, the rig climb, character actors and virtual reality experiences continue to be developed to deliver this deeper engagement to tell the stories about the ship's history.

Following the delivery in 2024 of a display of the 1950's Nannie figurehead, and then infrastructure for changing displays in the dry berth, starting with a display which marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the vessel arriving in Greenwich, a new temporary display will be installed in October 2025.

Visitation to the ship has been slightly down on our expectations in 2023 and 2024 and we continue to work on ideas to boost visitation in the coming period. When construction starts at ROG, it is vital that we provide our visitors with plenty to do and see, and as our only other fee-paying venue, continue to generate income at the *Cutty Sark*. The ship is undergoing vital deck repairs and so far we have managed to carry out this work without too much disruption to the public, but in 2030, once ROG has re-

opened, we shall have to undertake the replacement of the main weather deck which will necessitate the ship's closure for up to a year.

#### PPMCC

The opening of PPMCC at Kidbrooke in 2017 was a significant achievement; not only did it provide us with state of the art facilities for our collections, our visitors and our staff, it meant a consolidation of our off-site storage facilities.

Work continues to make more efficient use of our storage space, to make the collections more accessible to the public and to reduce our commercial storage costs.

In terms of our primary aims and values as set out in May 2024 we have achieved the following:

#### **1. Give people a reason to visit again and again**

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Provide continuity for audiences during the Ocean Court roof works by piloting cross site/in the grounds/offsite approaches for engagement
- Develop and pilot experiences that share knowledge and understanding of the Windrush Generation, Our connection to the Ocean and support the Pirates exhibition
- Through cross-departmental collaboration, develop and deliver a range of events celebrating Matariki 2024
- Plan and deliver a school and public engagement programme at the ROG in celebration of its 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Develop and experiment with a "festival" model for summer and winter programming, focusing on stargazing and face-to-face engagements at the ROG
- Continue to build our series of Talks and Tours across our sites and develop new content for our audioguides
- Consolidate existing evaluation and research to develop a better-informed cross-museum approach to understanding and supporting audience needs
- Deepen our understanding of membership needs and motivations, with a focus on retention as we approach and work through changes to the available offer

Achievements:

- Successful delivery of 7 community festivals utilizing the museum grounds, QH and Greenwich Park through the closure of Ocean Court
- Winter Solstice Festival, held on 21 December, was a successful joint event with The Royal Parks and ROG, with support from Flamsteed Astronomy Society (FAS). Stargazing through telescopes and science demos were delivered by FAS and our astronomy team
- School and public engagement programmes celebrating the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ROG were developed, with delivery taking place throughout 2025
- We conducted a survey of our members to gather feedback on what our members value, enjoy and would like to see as part of the RMG Membership in the future. This has provided valuable insights as we continue to deepen our understanding as we plan ahead

- We continued to develop a series of talks and tours across our sites, delivered by the front of house team, providing our visitors an opportunity to delve deeper into some of our fascinating collection objects and stories
- The opening months of the Pirates exhibition received a huge 80k webpage views, achieving a 53% engagement rate. The paid marketing campaign saw an exceptional start, driving 4.4k site visits and 66 direct sales

## **2. *Engage with the environmental challenges facing our future***

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Seek further grant funding to develop detailed designs for heat decarbonisation
- Incorporate sustainability as a key consideration in the procurement of Estates contractors
- Implement carbon literacy training for all staff
- Develop new content and public programmes for Ocean Court to build ocean literacy amongst staff and audiences to increase public awareness of the ocean in daily life and its critical role in global cooling
- Create new engaging web content with a focus on promoting ocean literacy with the support of Lloyd's Register Foundation and through RMG's contemporary maritime programme
- Develop sustainable design guidelines for exhibitions that reflect best practice at RMG and throughout the museum sector
- Continue to build strong relationships with maritime industry; promoting RMG as the 'broadcasting house' for the sector

Achievements:

- Developed our plans for heat decarbonisation of the ROG as part of the First Light Project. A funding application has been submitted to the Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme
- An invitation to tender for the detailed design of decarbonisation at NMM was published in March. This will progress in 2025
- A license was purchased for Carbon Literacy for Museums training, and the first two courses were held in January and February
- Sustainability was a key feature of the design, build and decant of 'Women of the RNLI', and was a prominent part of the procurement of the 'Pirates' basebuild contractor
- Collections Services continued to collaborate with Estates to implement an energy savings approach across collections spaces, expanded to Queen's House and Park Row. Ongoing environmental monitoring continued throughout ensuring stable storage/display conditions

## **3. *Increase the relevance of our expertise and collections for our audiences***

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Seek opportunities to build resource and capacity for RMG's inclusive research culture, including through applying to become part of a AHRC Community-led Heritage Research and Skills Hub

- Continue to support compelling doctoral research through RMG's leadership of the REACH consortium (with partners The National Trust, Historic Royal Palaces, The National Portrait Gallery and British Film Institute)
- Build on momentum of Evening of Astrophotography with a series of events for schools and public aimed at encouraging women and girls to engage with astronomy and astrophotography
- Collaborate with expertise, lived experience and reach outside of RMG in mutually beneficial partnerships which enrich our knowledge and increase public awareness of the collections. E.g., National Windrush Museum, Norfolk Museums, Exchange 3.0
- Complete installation of reflection space, refreshed interpretation and artistic interventions resulting from the Atlantic Worlds Reimagined project, by end Q1
- Deliver an enhanced version of the *Pirates* exhibition, developed in partnership with National Maritime Museum Cornwall, in the Special Exhibition Gallery in Q4, opening 29 March 2025
- Develop a *Contemporary Piracy* exhibition to complement the SEG Pirates exhibition, to open in the New Insight Gallery in summer 2025
- Trial single 'object in focus' displays in the Voyagers Gallery
- Develop a new Great Map intervention that retains the playful, social function of the current map, while promoting ocean literacy
- Plan refreshed content and interpretation to provide fun and engaging opportunities to engage with RMG subjects and collections and to build ocean literacy when Ocean Court re-opens
- Design and install *Small Hands* - a temporary play space for under 5s to mitigate the impact of Ahoy! closure by mid Q2
- Deliver an interpreted display of the newly acquired Charles Hare uniform ahead of Trafalgar Day 2024
- Use RMG's art collections as starting points for a series of high-profile opportunities which address significant absences in the collection and develop inclusive interpretations through expanded engagement, new acquisitions, symposia, talks, displays and exhibitions in the Queen's House
- Develop relationships with cultural partners, such as Culture&, to bring new perspectives and attract broader audiences
- Draw upon curatorial/conservation research collaborations to engage audiences with 'behind-the-scenes' work; include 'Conservation in Action' activities on-site where possible
- Develop further thought-provoking displays in the House e.g.: an artwork by the contemporary artist Jacqueline Bishop
- Deliver new semi-permanent display infrastructure for the dry berth of *Cutty Sark*, and a first changing display to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ship being brought into dry dock in Greenwich, in Q3.

#### Achievements:

- Continued to act as lead for the REACH Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium and secured two doctoral studentships for RMG: 'Disability and Stuart Seafarers, 1600-1750: For the releife of hurt and maymed seamen' (with the University of East Anglia) and 'Photography and Seafaring: Making Visible Maritime Bodies and Spaces of Contemporary Trading Routes' (with the University of Brighton).

- Successful co-curation and co-design of new elements for the *Atlantic Worlds* Gallery including a new reflection space, enhanced interpretation and artistic interventions
- The newly acquired Charles Hare uniform underwent extensive textile conservation by our team before being displayed in *Nelson Navy Nation* ahead of Trafalgar Day 2024. The Conservation team conducted behind-the-scenes tours, educational talks, and media collaborations. An interactive digital display produced by the in-house digital design team through digitisation of fragile Charles Hare manuscripts brought the human story associated with the object to life. The Digital team created a range of Hare uniform content. The video series received 5,937 views, online articles: 10,783 page views, social media impressions: 19,777 and email newsletter clicks: 919 across five email campaigns
- Enhanced curation and design of the *Pirates* exhibition, originating in a partnership with National Maritime Museum Cornwall, opened to the public on 29 March 2024 to promising visitor figures. It has received over 65 pieces of media coverage reaching 32 million unique views
- Successful content development and design process for display elements of Ocean Court, including a dramatic new Ocean Map, showing the ocean as a single contiguous body of water
- Developed new Ocean-centred interpretation for objects on display in Ocean Court, including two new exhibits
- Marking the history of the Queen's House as a space for female creativity and artistic expression, new exhibits profile the work of women artists, including a ceramic tea service by Jacqueline Bishop and photographic works by Maisie Broadhead and Leah Gordon. Associated events included a lecture by Dame Sonia Boyce (in partnership with UCL's Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery) and a 'long table' event with Jacqueline Bishop (supported by Culture&). The Queen's House also provides the context and setting for an ongoing series of 'Salon' lunchtime talks, which are free and open to all
- Further developed RMG's relationship with Culture& through the joint funding of a curatorial role and began a new partnership with Black Beyond Data to extend access to collections materials, as part of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded initiative
- Strengthened the visitor offer by providing opportunities for new content, with new display infrastructure for the dry berth of *Cutty Sark*; the first display marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ship brought into dry dock in Greenwich
- Completed a successful pilot of the 'Object in Focus' display, a wonderful collaboration across teams giving our front of house team an opportunity to talk about objects they want to highlight
- The Library and Archive Assistants presented archive sessions as part of 28 Enquiry Day events for schools. The Library & Archive and Engagement teams delivered a new, more engaging workshop style of presentation, welcomed by both staff and visitors. The Library & Archive and Research & Curatorial teams welcomed 21 further group visits to the Reading Room, including the successful Windrush Day in June. In total we welcomed 2,547 Reading Room visitors; 1,589 group attendees; retrieved 6,222 items; and answered 1,903 remote enquiries
- Total number of media pieces for the year: 9,001; Number of pieces including original or syndicated staff interviews/quotes: 2,530

#### **4. Maximise opportunities offered by digital technology**

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Achieve National Cyber Security Centre Essential Plus accreditation to help protect RMG digital assets and data
- Maximise opportunities brought to us via being part of the Bloomberg Digital Accelerator Programme; continue to work on the design and implementation of a new integrated online ticketing webstore to offer an improved experience for our visitors
- Continue transfer of the digitised Historic Negative files to a secure and accessible networked location; scope an approach to digital asset management that provides opportunities for public co-curation and the widest possible access
- Continue the Mimsy XG (Collections Management System) replacement project and improve data quality and consistency prior to a transfer to a new database
- Continue the development of the Digital Preservation Procedure, best practice and infrastructure required to manage our digital collections to sectoral standards
- Develop digital interpretation to promote ocean literacy, to enhance and supplement the new Great Map
- Enhance Evening with the Stars and other observing events by using smart digital telescopes to capture images of celestial objects
- Use the Annie Maunder Astrographic Telescope (AMAT) for real time observing, astrophotography and potential research opportunities
- Build RMG's catalogue of images of celestial objects and the night sky using AMAT, small telescopes and DSLR cameras
- Trial the regular delivery of digital school workshops to multiple schools in a single session
- Identify opportunities to publish via e-book and audio platforms

Achievements:

- The ROG had a successful observing season thanks to the massive collaboration across the museum. Several teams contributed to the refit of the Annie Maunder Astrographic Telescope (AMAT) and to the success of the livestreams
- The ROG education team trialled the regular delivery of digital school workshops to multiple schools in a single session
- Using the AMAT and the Observatory's small scopes, we have added to RMG's catalogue of celestial objects and the night sky
- We launched our first e-books, the Illuminates series 10 titles focused on Astronomy topics
- The Digital Imagery project for Historic Negatives has now linked 8050 digital images to their respective Mimsy catalogue records, in turn accessible on Collections Online
- The Museum's Digital Preservation Working group developed a procedure and infrastructure to manage our digital collections to sectoral standards
- The Solar Eclipse space live stream had over 264,000 viewers, adding up to almost 16,500 hours of total watch time. The average time people spent watching the feed (4mins 13 sec) was much higher than the last Solar Eclipse Live in 2022, which is a testament to both the presentation and production quality

## **5. Run a high performing organisation**

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Implement the Pay Award (including LLW) and publishing criteria for RMG roles, and their associated bands.
- Implement agreed actions from the 2023 People Engagement Survey
- Initiate the implementation of the RMG Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Observe National Volunteer Week
- Review the Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Conduct the Bi-annual Staff and Teams Award
- Oversee the implementation of the actions from the safeguarding audit in collaboration with the Safeguarding Working Group
- Improve staff efficiency and compliance with Data Protection legislation through training and clear guidance on use of approved systems
- Secure budget relieving revenue funding for planned activities (especially Pirates exhibition) and grants for festivals and engagements programmes
- Support redevelopment of Ocean Court; seeking funding for The Great Map and other interventions
- Prepare to reopen Ocean Court as a flagship event venue for both festivals and other museum events and to relaunch for commercial event hire
- Manage sensitively the programme of commercial events at the Queen's House

Achievements:

- Created Pay and Rewards Policy and Guidance document
- Reintroduced in-person induction programme for new starters
- Conducted Investors in People (IiP) survey for reaccreditation and achieved reaccreditation for three years
- Relaunched the RMG Management Development Programme (MDP). 49 managers participated across four cohorts, of which, 20 managers from seven departments completed the program and received their certificates of completion
- Delivered Safeguarding Awareness Training for Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3
- Secured £1.4m budget relieving revenue funding from grants, sponsorships, donations and legacies
- Launched event promotional activity in readiness for reopening of Ocean Court as a flagship commercial event venue

## **6. Care for our collections & buildings**

Activities set out in May 2024:

- Continue the Comprehensive Storage Review
- Continue the Aft Deck replacement works on Cutty Sark
- Work on the feasibility of bringing Turner's *Battle of Trafalgar* back to the Queen's House
- Deliver a new decorative scheme for the perimeter walls at NMM
- Agree the design of a new lighting rig serving commercial events as well as providing a user-friendly banner system to dress the Ocean Court space for major public festivals and events
- Develop refreshed wayfinding signage to be implemented on re-opening of Ocean Court

- First Light:
  - Obtain Outline Business Case approval
  - Appoint Exhibition Designers and complete RIBA Stage 2 Exhibition Concept Design
  - \*Begin RIBA Stage 4 technical design for the base build
  - Achieve planning consent
  - \*Appoint exhibition design teams in July 2024
  - \*Complete RIBA Stage 2 concept design for the exhibitions by December 2024.
  - \*Start RIBA Stage 3 Spatial Coordination in early 2025
  - Develop outline of the future programme for ROG site
  - Develop stage 2 delivery phase NLHF application for submission in May 2025
  - Progress fundraising applications, £17M worth of outcomes by summer 2024 (not including NLHF) and continue cultivation of major donors
  - Plan for phased development if necessary

Achievements:

- The Ocean Court infrastructure project was largely completed by end of March 2024
- We were awarded Full Museum Accreditation in June 2024. This scheme, run by Arts Council England, is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries
- In March 2025 we were awarded Archive Service Accreditation for the second time. Archive Service Accreditation, run by The National Archive, is the UK standard for archives and enables us to retain our role as a Place of Deposit for public records
- Loan Registration managed and dispatched 15 new loans out, totalling 46 objects to venues across three different continents including new venues: Estonian National Maritime Museum, National Maritime Museum Korea, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. This took our total number of venues displaying RMG objects up to 52
- Registration continued to manage our existing long-term loans in, totalling around 11,000 objects and archive collections
- We acquired 253 objects this year (183 gifts, bequests & transfers and 70 purchases). Highlights are the tea set made by Jacqueline Bishop; a ceremonial Mangaian toki (adze); a pair of oil paintings by Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom; a ship model of HMS Iris
- Conservation continued routine collections care across all sites assessing c. 1000 objects for loan, display and acquisitions. The Conservation and Collection Care Plan (2024-2029) was updated and submitted as part of the archive service accreditation process. Significant progress also made on updating the collections emergency plan
- The Charles Hare uniform underwent extensive textile conservation before being displayed in *Nelson, Navy, Nation*, enriching storytelling around the Napoleonic wars
- A total of 20 audits were carried out in the 2024 audit programme, covering a total of 34,986 objects. 17 of these audits had 100% of objects located. 1057 record shot images were added to object records on our collections management database
- Our Comprehensive Storage Review project continued, consolidating large museum objects into a single commercial store, saving approximately £25k per annum
- The Cutty Sark team successfully completed the poop deck replacement project as well as preparing for repairs work to the main deck
- First Light
  - Secured £50.3m for First Light (including Heritage Fund Development Phase)
  - Outline Business Case approved by DCMS in May 2024
  - Planning Permission and Scheduled Monument Consents secured

- Base Build has reached the end of RIBA Stage 4a Technical Design. Tender documents drafted
- Exhibition designers appointed in August 2024, one each for north and south sites. RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design completed. Work started on RIBA Stage 3 design on the north site
- Work on the National Lottery Heritage Fund Delivery Stage (stage 2) application progressed for the Interim Review in April 2025 (includes Engagement Programme)
- A fallback delivery plan for the project developed



## THE RMG PLAN 2025-29

### *Building Reach, Reputation and Resilience*

#### **PART 2: Our Primary Aims**

Over the life of this four-year plan **our primary aims and values are to:**

##### **1. Give people a reason to visit again and again**

- *Build and sustain meaningful relationships with audiences*
- *Create a calendar of engaging, memorable and meaningful experiences that people want to share and that encourage repeat visitation*
- *Interrogate the past thoroughly, to revitalise and to better understand our present, encourage and host conversations around different perspectives and divided memories of history*
- *Deliver an inspiring visitor experience at ROG with new and refurbished gallery spaces and outdoor experiences – a place of 'awe and wonder' combining the concepts of Time and Space with a dynamic offer and diverse programming*

##### **2. Engage with the environmental challenges facing our future**

- *Raise the level of consciousness around climate change and sustainable living*
- *Increase the environmental sustainability of our sites and buildings*
- *Ensure our ways of working meet our values around sustainability, integrating our approach to reducing human impact on climate change through all our activities; Be an advocate for change in the museum sector*

##### **3. Increase the relevance of our expertise and collections for our audiences**

- *Use research and collaboration to increase the relevance of RMG's collections*
- *Use the collections, sites and themes and pursue opportunities for research to meet the needs of audiences through supporting skills, knowledge and an understanding of the world around them*
- *Fulfil our social purpose and responsibility as a national museum by responding to issues that are important to our visitors and stakeholders; be brave, bold, relevant, inclusive, ethical, informed, expert; for everyone to feel welcome*
- *Inspire new audiences and advance ROG's remit as a place for the public understanding of astronomy through increased public engagement with our experts*
- *Put the Ocean at the heart of the Museum as the essential link to all of our maritime galleries when we re-open Neptune Court as Ocean Court*

##### **4. Maximise opportunities offered by digital technology**

- *Support and coordinate digital change and digital project work across RMG, particularly in support of First Light*

- *Develop our approach to digital, as well as our skills and capacity, to increase access to our collections and content for the widest possible audience*

#### **5. Run a high performing organisation**

- *Use our capacity and resource effectively to ensure a resilient and successful organisation*
- *Create an environment that is wellbeing-focused, diverse and conducive to learning, through effective programmes and opportunities, that meets the needs of our visitors and reflects our social purpose*
- *Ensure financial sustainability with adequate resources to meet our needs*

#### **6. Care for our collections & buildings for the benefit of people now and in the future**

- *Fulfil our statutory obligations in caring for our collections and buildings, providing curatorial and conservation expertise*
- *Ensure our collections, stories and expertise are accessible to as wide an audience as possible, on site, in store, online and across global media*
- *Transform physical and intellectual access at ROG by integrating the historic buildings and collections with the modern astronomy offer and excellent visitor facilities, in a single unified site*
- *Repair and restore historic features at ROG as well as focusing on physical, cultural, intellectual and economic access*



## THE RMG PLAN 2025-29

### *Building Reach, Reputation and Resilience*

#### Part 3: Our Aims and activities for 2025-26

##### **1. Give people a reason to visit again and again**

We will continue to deliver and promote a dynamic year-round programme of 'must see' activities, festivals, events and displays designed to give people a compelling reason to visit; to feel welcome, to connect and return.

We will underpin programmes with consultation to remain relevant and useful and to enable the audience to shape the activities. Partnerships will increase our expertise to interrogate shared histories and stories. The purpose of activity is to bring people to our physical and digital sites, to gain knowledge and skills, for an enjoyable social experience and to support a better understanding of heritage, identity, and place. To retain and grow our audiences we must continue to understand the influencing needs and resulting choices made by our visitors, to align activities and activate meaningful relationship building. Analysis of cross museum visitor data and feedback creates a responsive and strategic approach to removing barriers, increasing repeat visits, improving our offer and making RMG a destination visit for local, national and international visitors.

##### Activities 2025-26

- Provide a compelling new Ocean-centred offer for visitors to mark the opening of Ocean Court and ongoing programme of activities to reposition NMMs role in supporting Ocean literacy.
- Continue to promote the new *Pirates* exhibition and associated events (29 March 2025 – 4 January 2026) to ensure high visitor numbers and levels of engagement
- Enable visitors to see Turner's iconic *Battle of Trafalgar* in the Queen's House alongside other new works, as part of RMG's 2025 Trafalgar Day commemorations
- Use the annual Queen's House refresh to offer fresh new perspectives on the historic collections and architecture of the building, including, in spring 2026, the work of Caird fellow, artist Sharon Walters
- Launch a new display in Cutty Sark's dry dock, enhancing the visitor experience and encouraging repeat visitors. Continue to offer a programme of special events, tours, hands-on activities, character actors and screenings
- Deliver programmes celebrating the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ROG, including a *Meet the Authors* session and a Moon festival
- Deliver the final season of *Evening with the Stars* at the ROG ahead of site closures
- Develop an engaging school and public Astronomy programme to be delivered at the NMM during the closure period for First Light

- Continue to build a better understanding and representation of communities through annual festivals, consultation, research and collaborative working
- Build better, longer lasting relationships with audiences to be more resilient, relevant and connected through the delivery of the Audience Action Plan

## **2. Engage with the environmental challenges facing our future**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified human activity as the root cause for the rising trend in global temperatures. Humans need to understand how this has happened to reduce their contribution to climate change or lessen their impact on the environment. Damage will affect the social, economic and cultural lives of individuals differently, but the consequences are experienced globally through communal properties such as our oceans and atmosphere. Therefore, any progress will inevitably require change socially, economically and culturally, as much as technologically. Those changes need framing in the cultural context of the past and connections to the present.

Our purpose is not to find solutions or offer advice but to reframe dialogue in a wider discussion to inspire changed conversations. We need to address our own activities and their environmental impact and look more widely at museum practice and certification.

### Activities 2025-26:

- Plan a full rollout of Carbon Literacy for Museums training, maximising our investment in the toolkit and licence
- Develop plans for decarbonisation of NMM to RIBA stage 4, taking advantage of grant funding opportunities should they arise
- Continue to develop decarbonisation plans for ROG and set ambitious sustainability goals for the First Light project
- Collaborate with our grounds maintenance contractor to set a biodiversity baseline and improvement plan for our estate
- Continue to implement an energy savings strategy across collections spaces. Provide ongoing environmental monitoring across all galleries and storage sites to ensure stable storage/display conditions

## **3. Increase the relevance of our expertise and collections for our audiences**

RMG's Research Framework and Action Plan sets out how we will cultivate and champion a broad and inclusive community research culture beyond the Museum, bringing diverse voices and under-researched histories to the fore. We will leverage and enhance RMG's status as an Independent Research Organisation (IRO). Through cultivation of relevant networks, we aim to develop new collections-related partnerships with international, national and local museums, Higher Education Institutions, cultural organisations and community partners, with a view to developing new research projects aligned with our strategic priorities.

RMG is an active and committed supporter of new research in relation to its collections, sites and subjects, including through its prestigious Caird Research Fellowship scheme. The refreshed scheme is open to those who demonstrate the ability to undertake independent research and public impact is ensured through a dedicated associated engagement strand.

Activities 2025-26:

- Continue work on our audience development plan to make informed, collective decisions in meeting the needs of new and potential audiences; use this insight to shape our offer to make it more relevant and engaging
- Continue to ensure the Caird fellowship scheme generates impact for RMG through generating new knowledge and identifying innovative ways to engage broad audiences with this research
- Deliver the last round of AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership funding as lead for the REACH consortium. Apply to the new AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Landscape award scheme (November 2025) to ensure RMG continues to benefit from doctoral-level research on its collections and practice
- Provide subject expertise to RMG's Publishing programme, including new publications on iconic objects associated with the ROG; ship plans and the history of Black and Asian seafarers, as well as further titles in the 'Spotlight' series
- Plan and deliver conferences and workshops which speak to key themes and issues and draw on RMG's extensive knowledge networks including, in September 2025, on *Britain, Conflict & The Sea* in partnership with Dr David Morgan-Owen of Kings College London
- Use the Unlocking Collections initiative, and associated team of research volunteers, as well as a new partnership with Black Beyond Data to continue to highlight and share evidence of the diversity of Britain's maritime history, through new cataloguing and digitisation activity
- Deliver a special ROG 350 Evening of Astrophotography session to compare and contrast historical ROG images with Astronomy Photographer of the Year images
- Develop the framework for the Annie Maunder Academy, a project aimed at providing a safe and encouraging environment for women and girls to engage with astronomy and astrophotography

**4. Maximise opportunities offered by digital technology**

Activities 2025-26:

- Continue development work on a new online ticketing store, aiming to launch end of July
- Continue the Collections Management System replacement project, to improve data quality and to investigate efficiency, functionality and consistency prior to transferring to a new system
- Building on the success of the livestreams delivered in 24-25, plan and deliver the following in 25-26: *Astronomy & Islam* livestream, *Tour of the Night Sky*
- Continue to offer digital school workshops as part of the ROG formal education programme
- Acquire images of celestial objects and the night sky using the Observatory's small scopes
- Continue the transfer of the digitised Historic Negative files to improve their accessibility on Collections Online
- Continue the development of the Digital Preservation Procedure, best practice, infrastructure and resources (both staff and budget) required to manage our digital collections to sectoral standards. Investigate sectoral best practices for both Digital Preservation System and Digital Asset Management System

- Continue to work on the Reynolds Digital Research Resource project which unites leading UK institutions with significant Joshua Reynolds painting collections and detailed technical documentation to develop a new digital resource
- Continue to work with Black Beyond Data (BBD) group. The BBD project aims to develop a scalable digital humanities signposting platform and digitise endangered archives in the Caribbean and other relevant collections

## **5. Run a high performing organisation**

The Executive Committee (Executive Directors plus Senior Leadership Team) meet fortnightly to discuss major projects, review budgets and future planning. The Senior Leadership Team also meet every other week to assess feasibility of projects and to propose options and make recommendations to the Executive Directors.

Our Visitor Experience Team remain central to all we do as they represent our visitors. The General Managers for the four sites now attend Executive Committee meetings monthly to review visitor numbers and past and future activities.

With Grant in Aid representing approximately half of our expenditure, it is essential we continue to raise revenue from our various income generating activities: Admissions; Fundraising; Events; Retail; Catering etc.

We aim to develop a strong reputation as an employer, offering competitive pay and benefits, and create opportunities for development, such as learning, coaching, and mentoring to enable employees to develop new skills, advance their careers, and feel more engaged in their work. We aim to expand on the provision of our wellness programs and encourage staff to take time to rest and reflect. We will continue to provide professional development opportunities and recognise and reward employees to increase job satisfaction, employee engagement and reduce turnover rates. We aim to create policies and implement best practices that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, so that employees feel valued and respected.

### Activities 2025-26:

- Secure budget relieving revenue funding for approved and confirmed activities: salaries, exhibitions, festivals and engagement programmes
- Continue to run successful programme of commercial hire events across our sites, striking balance between event operation, client need and sensitivity of the sites
- Increase promotion and actively assess commercial events; responding to challenging economic climate and reduction in client budgets
- Implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Review the Wellbeing Strategy
- Implement the actions from the Investors in People (IiP) reaccreditation outcome report
- Conduct refresher training for line managers on the Continuous Performance Management (CPM)
- Implement People and Culture Hub for Compass
- Implement new Onboarding platform
- Under our new contract, work with our catering provider (Benugo) to enhance the offer across our sites with an immediate focus at NMM

## **6. Care for our collections & buildings for the benefit of people now and in the future**

Underpinning all of the priorities outlined above is our core responsibility set out in the National Maritime Acts, 1934 and 1989 to care for the national maritime collection and our historic buildings on behalf of the public.

The replacement of the glazing in the roof at the NMM has fixed leaks and enabled improvements in heat reduction and acoustics. It has also allowed us to re-think the space and develop the 'Ocean moment' on arrival at the Museum, with a new Ocean Map, bolder colour schemes and a reinterpretation of the surrounding 'streets'.

Our First Light project to transform the ROG will continue apace in the coming year. It will enable us to repair worn out infrastructure, refresh tired gallery spaces, improve access as well as providing new spaces and innovative ways of presenting complex and fascinating topics.

We shall continue our work in rationalising our collections and storage at Wroughton and at Kidbrooke, improving public access to off-site storage facilities.

### Activities for 2025-26:

- First Light
  - Continue to progress the fundraising, with a particular focus on high-net-worth individuals
  - Aim to secure pledges ahead of awarding main base build contract October 2025
  - Complete Delivery Phase application to National Lottery Heritage Fund May 2025 with a decision in October 2025
  - Stewardship of our growing pool of donors and ambassadors (ongoing)
  - Procure and complete works to South Building (PBIF funded) by end March 2026
  - Procure main contractor for construction works October 2025
  - Mobilise main contractor for construction works winter 2025/2026
  - Complete RIBA Stage 3 Spatial Coordination for exhibitions by autumn 2025
  - Complete RIBA Stage 4a Technical Design by spring 2026
  - Direction of ROG closure programme (in SEG at NMM) agreed by summer 2025
  - Begin delivery of Engagement Programme (lottery funded) autumn 2026
- Continue to make improvements to the access and security arrangements at RMG's Brass Foundry collections storage facility in Woolwich Arsenal. Undertake an options appraisal to review means of ensuring the best care for and widest public access to the collections stored at this site
- Continue the work of developing RMG's holdings of oral history, including a unique collection of recordings made by Campbell McMurray of the experiences of seafarers, which involves digitisation, digital storage and copyright research. Explore further opportunities to secure recordings of key historical experiences and perspectives not yet represented in RMG's collections
- Continue the Comprehensive Storage Review. Rationalise the Museum's Commercial Storage and consolidate large objects into a single commercial store. Continue the work of the Wroughton Working group to rationalise and review the collections and Cutty Sark material stored there
- Work with Estates to improve the storage provision, efficiency and environmental conditions within the Boatshed and C5 spur in Kidbrooke stores. Continue work and planning for both C5 and Boatshed
- Carry out the Deck replacement works and Structural Survey on the Cutty Sark in line with the Conservation Management Plan

- Work with the First Light team to plan and scope for the Conservation, removal & storage of objects for re-display and the environmental condition requirements for the new galleries
- Continue the work of the Conservation and Collection Care Plan (2024–2029) across all Museum collections, loans and sites
- Develop and update the Museum Collections Emergency Plan