

Tuesday 6 July 2021



Horniman Museum and Gardens shortlisted for national Family Friendly Museum Award

The Horniman Museum and Gardens in Forest Hill, south London has been shortlisted for the Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award, it was announced today (Tuesday 6 July).

The prestigious annual award – run by charity Kids in Museums for the past 15 years – recognises the most family friendly heritage sites in the UK and is the only museum award to be judged by families.

From April to June, families across the UK voted for their favourite heritage attraction on the Kids in Museums website. A panel of museum experts then whittled down hundreds of nominations to a shortlist of 20 heritage attractions.

The Horniman is vying against two other museums in the Best Large Museum category – the Great North Museum in Hancock, Newcastle, and World Museum, Liverpool. All three will now be visited by undercover family judges who will assess the museums against the Kids in Museums Manifesto. Their experiences will decide a winner for each award category and an overall winner of the Family Friendly Museum Award 2021.

Nick Merriman, Chief Executive of the Horniman Museum and Gardens, says: 'In a year when the Horniman Museum spent more time closed than open, what brought the place to life was the excitement and energy of kids and families when they could be welcomed inside. The Horniman prides itself on being a welcoming and safe place for families to explore together – and when we were able to open 70% of our visitors were in family groups. They were in need of fun and entertaining things for their children to do, looking for inspiration and exploration and they chose the Horniman. We're incredibly grateful for that, and for their nominations which have put us on this year's Family Friendly Museum Award shortlist.'

The Horniman's family friendly highlights of a difficult year included:

- keeping the Horniman Gardens open throughout lockdown, for families to escape, explore and recharge
- reopening the toilets and Sound Garden play area quickly (with safety measures in place) and prioritising provision of buggy parking outdoors and inside the Museum when it reopened
- running virtual Busy Bees sessions for under-5s and their parents
- creating of a series of arts and crafts videos to help with home schooling
- live storytelling in the Gardens, once guidelines allowed – for many families *The Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole*, linked to Black History Month in October, was their first experience of live performance since the beginning of the pandemic
- finding alternative ways to engage families in the reopened Museum, such as an activity trail, colouring sheets for kids to take home, and a commissioned film especially for under-5s that encouraged touch-free interactivity
- launching an Environment Champions Club aimed at families with children aged 6 to 10, providing activities and inspiration for positive actions they can do at home, at the Horniman and in their local community, and a network for local families to share tips and ideas.

The Family Friendly Museum Award has been made possible by funding from Arts Council England. **The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in October.** Follow the Family Friendly Museum Award on Twitter by following @kidsinmuseums and #FamilyFriendlyMuseum.

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

The full list of museums shortlisted for the Family Friendly Museum Award 2021 is:

Best Large Museum

- Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle
- Horniman Museum and Gardens, London
- World Museum, Liverpool

Best Medium Museum

- London Transport Museum
- The Box, Plymouth
- ThinkTank, Birmingham
- University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge

Best Small Museum

- Abbey House Museum, Leeds
- Bailiffgate Museum, Alnwick
- Dorset Museum
- Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast
- Wisbech and Fenland Museum

Best Accessible Museum

- Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
- Postal Museum, London
- The Egypt Centre, Swansea

Best Digital Activity

- Ballymoney Museum – [From me to you: a journey of a postcard](#)
- Perth Museum and Art Gallery – [CPK Play Site](#)
- National Museum Wales | Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Sleepover: At Home Series | Amgueddfa Dros Nos: Cyfres Gartref
- Whitworth Art Gallery – [Play Live](#)
- National Maritime Museum – [Young Volunteers Project \(October 2020\), Across the Seas](#)
- **Kids in Museums** is a charity dedicated to making museums open and welcoming to all children, young people and families. It supports and champions family friendly organisations through wide-ranging initiatives, including the Family Friendly Museum Award and Takeover Day. It invites heritage organisations to sign up to its Manifesto, which sets out simple guidelines for making museums easy to reach for all ages. kidsinmuseums.org.uk and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
- Kids in Museums began the **Family Friendly Museum Award** in 2004 and the prize is now in its 15th year. The award champions museums who place families' voices at the heart of their organisations. Previous winners of the Family Friendly Museum Award include the Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum (2019), Leeds City Museum (2018), the People's History Museum in Manchester (2017) and York Art Gallery (2016). In 2020, Kids in Museums held the Family Friendly Museum Award From Home, a special one-off award celebrating how museums and heritage sites supported families through lockdown.
- **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. artscouncil.org.uk. Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million **Emergency Response Package**, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's **Culture Recovery Fund**. Find out more at artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- **Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. horniman.ac.uk/support-us/
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust,

registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.

- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman’s environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman’s manifesto commitments and progress so far at horniman.ac.uk/climate.