

At National Museums Scotland this spring

Looking for somewhere to go? National Museums of Scotland always have lots to offer and most of it is free. Here is a list of their events from today until around May. There are events at National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street as well as the Museum of Rural Life at East Kilbride, and the National Museum of Flight.

Exhibitions & displays

National Museum of Scotland
Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF
Open 10:00–17:00 daily

Injecting Hope: The Race for a COVID-19 Vaccine

Until 27 Apr 2025
Special Exhibition Gallery, Level 3
Free

Injecting Hope is a new, free exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland that presents the science behind the COVID-19 vaccine. This exhibition brings together more than 80 objects that were acquired in real time during the peak of the pandemic by curators across the UK. Learn the science behind the creation of the vaccine and understand the logistics

behind its global roll-out.

Find our more nms.ac.uk/exhibitions/injecting-hope

Cold War Scotland

Until 4 Jan 2026

10:00 – 17:00

Special Exhibition Gallery 2, Level 3

Free

Scotland's unique geography and topography provided a useful base for Allied military preparations and research during the Cold War, a 40-year nuclear stand-off between the USA and the Soviet Union following the end of the Second World War. Cold War Scotland is an output of Materialising the Cold War, a collaborative research project between National Museums Scotland and the University of Stirling. The project explores how the Cold War heritage is represented and how museums can adapt to tell this story in future. The exhibition will explore both the visible and invisible legacies of the war in Scotland.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/ColdWarScotland

COMING SOON Monkeys: Our Primate Family

28 Jun – 30 Nov

See some of the rarest and most endangered primates on Earth in Monkeys: Our Primate Family at the National Museum of Scotland. This exhibition explores the remarkable lives of our primate relatives and demonstrates how they have adapted to survive in different habitats. The exhibition brings together more than 50 species of monkeys, apes, lemurs and lorises.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/exhibitions/monkeys-our-primate-family

Events

National Museum of Scotland

Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF

Open 10:00–17:00 daily

Edinburgh Science Festival 2025

5 – 20 Apr

All pricing and booking through Science Festival website

Join us as we host two weeks of science-fueled exploration, from free interactive exhibits to family workshops and adult talks and events. The 2025 Edinburgh Science Festival will explore the challenges of living on a planet with finite resources, through the lenses of science fiction and space exploration.

View

events <https://www.edinburghscience.co.uk/whats-on/#national-museum-of-scotland>

Mission Planet Earth

5 – 20 Apr

10:30 – 16:00

Free, drop in

As part of the Edinburgh Science Festival, join us in Hawthornden Court for a landing capsule game and the chance to create your own mission craft at one of our craft tables. Our Learning Team will also be at the sparkcart with fascinating facts and stories behind our collections as well as our handling objects.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/events/mission-planet-earth

Relaxed Morning

6 Apr & 4 May

10:00-12:00 (quiet space open until 12:30)

Free admission, drop-in

Join us for our monthly Relaxed Morning for anyone who would appreciate a calmer visit to the museum. This session is primarily for, but not limited to, families with autistic children; autistic young people and adults; adults living with dementia; adults and children with mental health problems and

any other visitors with sensory needs or who may prefer a more relaxed experience, plus their families, friends and carers. Friendly staff will be there to give you a warm welcome and support your visit, as you explore some areas of the museum without noisy interactives and videos to give a more relaxed environment.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/events/relaxed-morning

Sensory Sunday

6 Apr

11:00-12:00 and 14:00-15:00

Free, booking required

Exciting, hands-on sensory play sessions for children with additional support needs. Families with children with additional support needs and disabilities are invited to join our programme of sensory play sessions. Explore the museum's collections, get creative and meet other families. Sensory Sunday sessions are relaxed, fun hands-on, and respond to the needs of the families participating. You are welcome to come and go at any point during a session.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/sensory-sunday

Communicating Science Through Art

17 Apr

19:30 – 20:15

Online via Zoom

Free with optional donation

In this online panel discussion, artists Angela Palmer and Alec Finlay, whose artworks feature in our current Injecting Hope exhibition, will explore artistic responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and consider how art can help us gain new insights into and understandings of complex science and shared experiences.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/communicating-science-through-art

Museum Socials

18 Apr

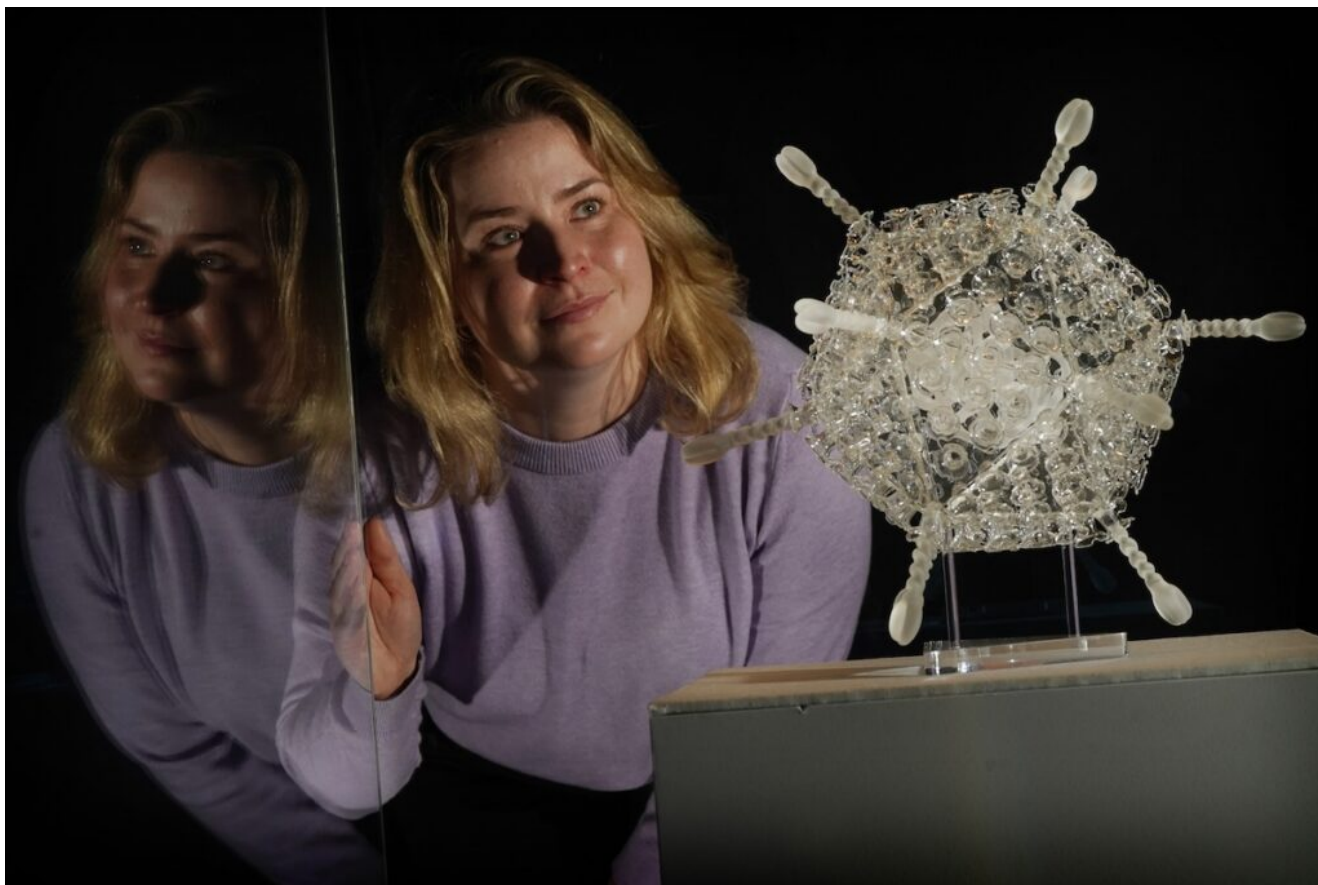
10:30-12:00

Learning Centre Seminar Room, Level 4

Free, booking required

Museum Socials are designed for people living with dementia, their relatives, friends, carers, and supporters. Relaxed and informal, each session explores a different museum theme through various interactive activities, including curator talks, object handling and creative crafts. And tea, cake and a warm welcome are always provided.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/museum-socials



Curator Sophie Goggins with a sculpture of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine in glass by Luke Jerram. Photo © Stewart Attwood

Injecting Hope: Deaf Experiences of Lockdown

23 Apr

17:30-19:00

Free, booking required

Join us for a film screening and discussion exploring the Scottish Deaf community's experiences of lockdown.

Trudi Collier, Deaf Heritage Coordinator, and Will Clark, Deaf filmmaker, will present a film screening exploring experiences of Scotland's Deaf community during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/injecting-hope-deaf-experiences-of-lockdown

Centre for Open Learning: Understanding Colour

24 Apr – 26 Jun 2025

11:00 – 13:00

£215 for 10 sessions

National Museums Scotland are delighted to host a new term of University of Edinburgh Short Courses – a great way to explore our collections with experts. This course offers an introduction to the uses of colour using the National Museum of Scotland's collections. Examine objects from the Art & Design, Natural Science and Science & Technology galleries to consider the role of colour in our world. Students will be shown some simple techniques to record the colourful images, creating a lasting reminder of their studies.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/centre-for-open-learning-understanding-colour

Centre for Open Learning: Georgian Scotland

24 Apr – 26 Jun 2025

11:00 – 13:00

£215 for 10 sessions

National Museums Scotland are delighted to host a new term of University of Edinburgh Short Courses – a great way to explore our collections with experts. This course on Georgian Scotland explores Scotland's great changes and developments between 1714–1815. Making extensive use of National Museum

Scotland's collections, the course covers the Enlightenment and the growth of universities, trade, transportation and industry, as well as the impact of Jacobite rebellions and events overseas, from France and Spain to the American colonies.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/centre-for-open-learning-georgian-scotland

Centre for Open Learning: Scotland: Romance and Reality

23 May

10:30 – 16:30

£55 (concessions available)

This one-day course explores the Romantic images of Scotland formed in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Using contemporary primary sources and objects on display in the National Museum of Scotland, the course will discuss the influence of art, literature, transport and tourism on the Romantic image of Scotland, as well as the role played by figures such as Queen Victoria and Walter Scott.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/centre-for-open-learning-scotland-romance-and-reality

Family Day

24 May

10:00-16:30

Free, drop-in

Join us for a day of free pop-up performances and activities for the whole family as we kick off the 2025 Edinburgh International Children's Festival. The ever-popular Family Day returns for 2025. Experience exciting pop-up performances and creative encounters with local artists – from theatre and dance to walk-about characters – there is something for the whole family to enjoy.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/events/family-day

National Museum of Rural Life

Philipshill Road, East Kilbride, G76 9HR

Open 10:00–17:00 daily

Spring Explorers

8 – 11 Apr

Free with museum admission and Annual Pass

Become a Spring Explorer this April at the National Museum of Rural Life. Our Spring Explorers family activities are back, and this time they're all about pollination! Get hands on with seeds, soil and planting and sign up for storytelling, before exploring the museum galleries and historic farm.

This free family event is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Find our more nms.ac.uk/events/spring-explorers

Relaxed Afternoon: National Museum of Rural Life

22 Apr

14:30-17:00

Free with museum admission and Annual Pass

Join us for our monthly Relaxed Afternoon for anyone who would appreciate a calmer visit to the museum. This session is primarily for, but not limited to, families with neurodivergent children; neurodivergent young people and adults; adults living with dementia; adults and children with mental health problems; and any other visitors with sensory needs or who may prefer a more relaxed experience, plus their families, friends and carers.

Book your visit nms.ac.uk/events/relaxed-afternoon-national-museum-of-rural-life

Woolly Weekend

24 & 25 May

10:30 – 15:30

Free with museum admission and Annual Pass

Celebrate all things woolly with a weekend of family fun at the National Museum of Rural Life.

With themed activities and crafts throughout the museum and farm, there's plenty for all ages to enjoy! See woolly farm friends up-close, take part in wool-themed crafts in the museum and explore the galleries with our Dolly the Sheep Trail. Then head out to the farm to watch YouTube sensation Cammy Day at work with our Scottish Blackface flock. Learn how, when and why sheep are sheared and see demonstrations of some traditional and modern shearing techniques.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/woolly-weekend

Tractor Tots

4 & 7 Jul

10:30 or 13:30 blocks

£20 per child for block of 3, £15 per Member child for block of 3

Ages 0-4

Running in blocks of three Friday morning sessions, Tractor Tots offers a fun, focused experience for our younger visitors, introducing them to the museum and farm, and bringing it to life through interactive creative play. Each session will take place in a different location at the museum and working farm, and will feature handling objects from our learning boxes, singing, storytelling, rhymes, actions and sensory play to learn all about life in the countryside.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/tractor-tots



National Museum of Flight

East Fortune Airfield, East Lothian, EH39 5LF

Open Weekends only, 10:00–16:00

Sustainable Skies

14 – 18 Apr

11:00-16:00

Free with museum admission

Join us for family activities across five days at the National Museum of Flight, as part of Edinburgh Science Festival. As well as family-friendly fun, you'll also learn about the future challenges faced by flight and their solutions.

This free family event is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Find out more nms.ac.uk/events/sustainable-skies

Relaxed Morning

13 Apr & 11 May

10:00 – 12:00

Free with museum admission

Join us for a Relaxed Morning at the National Museum of Flight, for anyone who would appreciate a calmer visit to the museum. Friendly staff will be there to give you a warm welcome and support your visit, as you explore the museum without noisy interactives and videos to give a more relaxed environment. This session is primarily for, but not limited to, families with neurodivergent children, neurodivergent young people and adults, adults living with dementia, adults and children with mental health problems, and any other visitors with sensory needs or who may prefer a more relaxed experience, plus their families, friends and carers.

Book now nms.ac.uk/events/relaxed-morning-national-museum-of-flight



Street theatre by Close Act which wowed the children at Sprogmanay on New Year's Day 2025 © 2025 Martin McAdam