

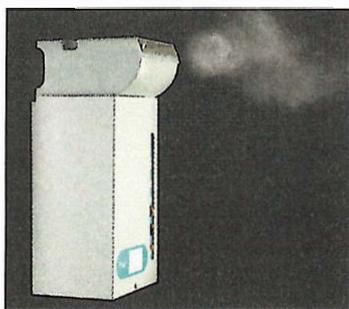
**Effective humidity control makes all the difference to the protection of exhibits, as John Barker of Humidity Solutions explains**

# Taking control of humidity

Controlling the impact of humidity on works of art and other exhibits to ensure compliance with BS5454 (*Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents*) can be particularly demanding, both for public areas and storage facilities. Environmental conditions may also be dictated by insurance companies or benefactors.

Most UK humidity problems relate to low relative humidity (RH), so humidification is a more common requirement than dehumidification. In either case, humidity control systems must be tailored for the specific project, taking account of type(s) of exhibits, capital budgets, running costs and the nature of the building.

Where RH needs to be raised, steam humidification is usually the preferred choice, combined with appropriate water treatment to prevent limescale. For example, at the old Westminster Abbey Museum a humidification replacement project involved Humidity Solutions providing a new steam humidifier, whilst also refurbishing existing reverse osmosis plant.



A CMS steam humidifier.

An alternative to steam is to add water vapour directly into the space, via small fan-assisted nozzles at high level, using high pressure to ensure fast absorption of moisture in the air to avoid wetting of exhibits. Use of cold water also improves energy efficiency and provides some free cooling of the air.

For short-lived exhibitions/displays temporary solutions such as evaporative coolers are ideal; whilst for projects requiring dehumidification a desiccant dehumidifier with optional heat recovery is a cost-effective choice. Crucially, all humidity control systems require strategically located humidity sensors to achieve the required level of control.

Whilst the principles of humidity control are relatively straightforward, the practical requirements often introduce a level of complexity that makes it helpful to partner with specialists to ensure the best results. Further information: [www.humiditysolutions.co.uk/](http://www.humiditysolutions.co.uk/)

## Museum Accreditation Review

During 2017-2018 we have been reviewing the Museum Accreditation Scheme to make it more useful and user-friendly.



**Museum Accreditation has been running for 30 years!**

Thank you to everyone who has taken part. We will launch the refreshed scheme in the autumn. In the meantime, here's a quick look at what you told us:

### Your Feedback

800

people engaged with the review in the UK

Museums of all sizes responded to the survey, from volunteer run organisations to the biggest national museums



Museums are proud to achieve the national standard

The top reasons for being Accredited were

86%



Demonstrating that you've met a national standard

84%



To access funding

76%



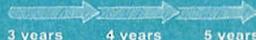
As an organisational health check

73%



As a motivator to ensure policies and plans are in date

Museums would like to increase the time between returns from 3 years to 4 or 5 years.



Writing the forward plan and reviewing policy and procedures are the most useful parts of the process



60%

agreed the standard was realistic to achieve

Mentors do an amazing job – thank you!

We heard that you would like more training and support to continue this work.



### What you thought

“ We are so proud to have achieved it. It means a lot to a small independent museum like ours. We are a small museum with a big heart. ”

“ It is beneficial as it makes you consider all aspects of how you run your museum. It clarifies and encourages you to improve in some areas. ”

“ It shows that we are a properly managed and governed organisation, meeting a good standard of collections care and public engagement. Although the paperwork feels onerous at the time, it's also a useful exercise to go through making sure all the relevant policies and procedures are in place and up to date. ”

“ In the past I have been very happy with it. But it has lost its way. ”

“ One of the most important things to have happened within British museums. ”

“ Minimize and simplify wherever possible. ”

## In Brief

### Scottish representation on AIM Council

Gill Poulter, heritage & exhibitions director of the Dundee Heritage Trust, has stepped down from AIM Council after serving since 2010. Gill has been an essential and dedicated representative for Scottish independent museums, usually travelling the furthest of any council member to meetings around the country. Her insights into the needs and challenges of AIM members in Scotland have been greatly valuable to AIM, many of whose smallest member museums are in Scotland. Her place has now been taken not by one, but two, Scottish representatives, Charles Brien, trustee of the Almond Valley Heritage Trust, West Lothian and Mhairi Cross, chief executive of the National Mining Museum Scotland.

## What you said about Museum Accreditation

The refreshed Museum Accreditation Scheme will be launched in the autumn following a consultation with the sector and beyond. The scheme, which has been running for 30 years in various guises, acts as a benchmark for quality and standards in museums and galleries and is run by Arts Council England and sector bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Museums expecting to make a return this year have had their deadlines extended and will learn their new schedules as soon as these have been completed. Eight hundred people engaged with the review, and an infographic has been produced (above) giving a flavour of reactions to the scheme. The main reasons for museums seeking Accreditation have been identified as showing that a standard has been reached (84%) and to access funding (82%). Respondents also felt the time between returns should be increased from three to five years, and that writing a forward plan and reviewing policies and procedures was the most helpful part of the process. Mentors are highly valued and should receive more support, and 60% believed that the standard was realistic to achieve.

