

MEG Digital Lab: Digital Resident (3-Month Pilot)

Candidate Information Pack

Museum Ethnographers Group (MEG)

Location: Remote, UK-based preferred.

Duration: 3 months

Compensation: £450 total, paid across the residency. This is outcome-based pay for delivering the agreed outputs below, not an hourly rate.

Contract type: Freelance only.

About the Programme

The Museum Ethnographers Group is launching the MEG Digital Lab, a new pilot programme offering paid residencies to early-career museum and heritage practitioners. Each resident develops a small, focused body of work that becomes a lasting, practical resource for museums, practitioners, and students across the sector.

The three-month residency has been designed for early career talent who want to get their first steps in conducting and delivering heritage reflective and creative-based research. The structure, optional themes and guidance are meant to bring as much support as possible.

This is the first residency in the pilot and as such the first step in building a longer-term, better-resourced residency programme. Outcomes from this cohort will directly inform MEG's case for future funding to expand paid opportunities for early-career practitioners. We are committed to reciprocity beyond the residency itself. This means alumni residents will be kept informed of and given priority consideration for future MEG opportunities as the programme grows.

The Role

The resident for the three-month program will choose one of the available themes to work within the duration of their residency. Every theme follows the same staggered structure, giving each output a full month of runway:

- A background/reflective research blog (minimum 800 words), published at the end of Month 2.
- A second output exploring the theme through direct engagement with practitioners or communities. We suggest an interview as a starting point. Nonetheless, residents are encouraged to propose an alternative approach that better fits their interests, skills, or access. The final delivery of the second output will be a reflexive blog (minimum 800 words) and published at the end of Month 3.
- An optional public-facing event, held early-to-mid Month 3, if the resident chooses to run one.
- A final resource, developed throughout the residency and delivered before it ends, drawing together both blogs and (if held) the event into an action- or advice-based piece (minimum 1,500 words), published at the end of Month 4.

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Available themes

1. Democratising the Museum: Working towards accessibility and reachable spaces

Exploring how museums can better reach working-class and under-accessed communities. A suggested starting point is a conversation between practitioners at two different museums about their approaches and lessons learned, but residents are welcome to propose alternative ways of exploring this theme, building toward a resource usable by museums, practitioners, or students.

2. On Improvisation, Passion and Organic Collaboration: Exploring MEG's Archive

An internally-focused theme exploring MEG's own history and archive. A suggested starting point is a conversation with MEG's current and previous chairs about improvisation, passion, and organic collaboration in the organisation's development, though residents are welcome to propose their own approach.

3. To Not Forget Our Lived Experiences: DIY and repurposing practices in personal and community archive-making

Exploring how tools and methods can be improvised or repurposed for community and personal archival heritage projects. A suggested starting point is a conversation with a community archival project, though residents are welcome to propose an alternative that fits their own interests or access, with a focus throughout on practical, transferable skills.

4. Tracing Tails and Reverb: Creative Practices and Advice on Provenance Research

Exploring the practical and creative sides of object biography and provenance research, tracing the echoes an object leaves through the archive long after its original context is gone. A suggested starting point is a conversation with a provenance practitioner on practical, hands-on advice for conducting provenance research, though residents are welcome to propose an alternative approach.

5. Between Octopuses, Owls, and Ferrets: The Unseen Labour and Hidden Costs of Getting Into the Heritage Industry

Exploring the often-invisible labour and access barriers facing underrepresented role-holders across the sector, from front of house to conservation, handling to volunteering, and what it actually takes to get in and stay in. A suggested starting point is a conversation with an underrepresented role-holder about life history and industry access, though residents are welcome to propose an alternative approach.

These themes are a starting point, not a fixed script. If you have a particular angle, community, or focus you'd like to bring to them, there's room to shape it together with the coordinator during onboarding. The core theme and structure (background research blog, a second engagement-based blog, an optional event, and a resource) stays the same, but who you speak to and how you approach it can flex to suit your interests and strengths.

Available support

For themes 1, 3, and 5, MEG can share a portfolio of partner institutions and contacts you're welcome to draw on if useful. That said, we'd genuinely encourage residents to explore museums, archives, and projects local to them where possible. Smaller and local institutions are often under-represented in this kind of work, and it can make for a richer, more grounded output.

Support During the Residency

You won't be doing this alone. Weekly support meetings with the Digital Lab coordinator are available throughout the residency. These will take form of informal, opt-in spaces to check in, talk through where you're at, and get creative-practical guidance if you want it. The coordinator

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is there to support you, not to monitor your hours or output; how much you use these sessions is up to you.

Our head editor is also available for optional meetings, offering a separate space to talk through your writing. This might be shaping an angle, working through a first draft, or getting feedback before you submit. Like the coordinator check-ins, these are opt-in and there to support you, not a required part of the process.

Costs Covered

- Reasonable local travel and food costs connected to your interviews/engagements or optional event (e.g. train fares, bus fares) are covered as reimbursements. Keep receipts and the coordinator can talk you through the claims process.

What You'll Gain

- A paid, structured introduction to museum digital and archival practice
- Direct experience producing reflective research writing and conducting practitioner engagement
- A published, portfolio-ready output tied to your name, with promotion of your work across MEG's channels
- A reference or letter of recommendation on completion of the residency
- Guidance on setting up a portfolio website using free tools, including practical tips on SEO and getting indexed
- Local travel costs connected to your residency covered as reimbursements
- Optional, informal weekly support meetings with the Digital Lab coordinator

Who We're Looking For

This residency is aimed at early-career museum and heritage practitioners with a deep interest but minimal direct experience in conducting research and in the sector. For example, those recently graduated, in the first few years of their career, or building a portfolio toward museum or heritage work. No formal digital or technical background is required; curiosity, initiative, and genuine interest in the themes matter more. The structure and output-timeline are meant to bring ease and support

How to Apply

Please send a CV and either a written cover letter or a short video/audio submission (whichever format you're most comfortable with), covering which theme interests you and why, how you'd approach the residency's outputs, and any relevant experience or perspective you'd bring. Video and audio applications are welcomed as an accessible alternative to a written cover letter and will be considered equally.

Deadline: 2nd November 2026 **Residency start date:** 8th February 2027 **Applications to:** lab@museumethnographersgroup.org.uk

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