
Press release

Migration Museum appoints Charles Gurassa as Chair and seeks new Trustees

The Migration Museum is announcing a number of changes to its Board and launching a large-scale Trustee recruitment drive to equip it with the leadership, skills and representation needed to deliver a landmark national Migration Museum for Britain.

The board changes are:

- **Charles Gurassa** has been appointed as Chair of the Migration Museum. Charles has been a Trustee since 2014 and has a wealth of expertise in leadership roles across the corporate, charity and heritage sectors, including as Non-Executive Chair of Channel 4 and Oxfam GB.
- Charles succeeds **Barbara Roche**, who is stepping aside after almost a decade as Chair. Barbara will remain involved with the ongoing development of the museum in her new role as Founder.
- **George Alagiah OBE**, BBC News at Six presenter and author, has joined the Migration Museum board as a Trustee, having been a Distinguished Friend of the Museum since 2012. George will serve alongside current Board members: broadcaster and historian **David Olusoga OBE**, charity and TV executive **Sarah Caplin**, author **Robert Winder**, and Treasurer **Mohan Mansigani**.
- **Zelda Baveystock** is stepping down as a Trustee after nine years on the Board. Zelda has been integral to the development and growth of the Migration Museum and will remain involved as a Distinguished Friend.

Charles' first task as Chair will be to lead a wide-ranging recruitment drive for new Trustees with the skills and passion to challenge, inspire and lead the Migration Museum through the crucial next stage of its development, as it seeks to build on the success of its current temporary home in the heart of a busy South London shopping centre and establish a high-profile new landmark cultural institution for the UK. This process will begin with immediate effect, with the deadline for applications being Monday 3 May 2021.

"I'm delighted and honoured to have been appointed as the new chair of the Migration Museum and I look forward to building on the strong foundations that Barbara and the current Board and team have established," says Charles Gurassa, Chair of the Migration Museum.

"From the language we speak to the food we eat, migration has helped shape our identity, both as individuals and as a country. Our ambition is to build a landmark contemporary cultural institution where this rich and vital story can be explored, debated and celebrated.

"My first task as Chair is to further strengthen our Board and recruit new Trustees to take the Migration Museum to the next level. We are looking for potential candidates who share our passion for this project, who can bring skills, energy and fresh perspectives to help us realise our ambitions, and who reflect and represent the multi-faceted make-up of modern Britain."

"I've been working to create a national Migration Museum for the best part of two decades, and, with a fantastic staff team and Board in place, now feels like the right time for me to pass on the baton to a new leadership team," says Barbara Roche, founder of the Migration Museum.

"I have every confidence that Charles and the new Board can build on what we've achieved to date and realise the creation of a landmark cultural space that puts migration at the heart of our national story – where it belongs."

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Notes for editors

About Charles Gurassa

Charles Gurassa has extensive senior leadership and governance experience across the charity, corporate and heritage sectors. As well as being Chair of the Migration Museum, Charles is Chair of Oxfam GB, Non-Executive Chair of Channel 4, Chair of Great Rail Journeys, and a Trustee of English Heritage. Recent non-executive positions include Senior Independent Director of Merlin Entertainments plc and Deputy Chair of easyJet plc. Charles is a former Chair of Virgin Mobile plc, LOVEFiLM, Phones4U, MACH, Tragus, Parthenon Entertainments and Alamo/National Rent a Car and former Deputy Chair of the National Trust. His executive career included roles as Chief Executive of Thomson Travel Group plc, Executive Chair TUI Northern Europe, Director TUI AG and as Director, Passenger & Cargo business at British Airways. He is a former Non-Executive Director at Whitbread plc, trustee of the children's charity Whizz-Kidz and a Member of the Development Board of the University of York.

About George Alagiah

George Alagiah OBE was born in Sri Lanka in 1955, and in 1961 his family moved to Ghana in West Africa. George subsequently came to England to undertake his secondary education at a school in Portsmouth, and went on to study politics at Van Mildert College, Durham University. George joined the BBC in 1989 after seven years in print journalism with *South Magazine*. Before going behind the news desk, he was one of the BBC's leading foreign correspondents, reporting on events ranging from the genocide in Rwanda, the plight of the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq and civil wars in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Somalia: he also covered the and 9/11 attacks on New York. A specialist on Africa and the developing world, George Alagiah interviewed, among others, Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan and Robert Mugabe. Since December 2007 George has presented *BBC News at 6*, Britain's most-watched news programme.

From 2002 to 2009 George Alagiah was a patron of the Fairtrade Foundation; he is also a governor of the Royal Shakespeare Company. He is married to Frances Robathan, with whom he has two sons. George Alagiah is the author of three books; the award-winning *Passage to Africa; A Home from Home*, a look at multicultural Britain; and critically acclaimed novel *The Burning Land*.

About the Migration Museum

The Migration Museum explores how the movement of people to and from Britain across the ages has shaped who we are – as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. Migration is a pressing contemporary issue and is at the centre of polarised political and online debate. But there's an underlying story of comings and goings stretching back many centuries. And this story goes to the heart of who we are today. Britain has thousands of museums, but none comprehensively focused on this important theme that connects us all. The time is right for a highly relevant, accessible visitor attraction that shines a light on who we are, where we come from and where we are going.

From our current home in the heart of Lewisham Shopping Centre, we stage engaging exhibitions and dynamic events, alongside a far-reaching education programme for primary, secondary, university and adult learners. Subject to the government's roadmap, we hope to reopen our museum to the public in May 2021. We also have a growing digital presence, and recently launched our first major digital exhibition, *Heart of the Nation: Migration and the Making of the NHS*. For more information, visit www.migrationmuseum.org.

The story so far

The Migration Museum was founded by Barbara Roche, who first made the case for a migration museum for Britain almost 20 years ago, stemming from her time as Britain's immigration minister, and from visiting similar museums in other parts of the world – notably Ellis Island in New York.

Barbara assembled a founding team of people from different professional backgrounds who shared her passionate belief that Britain's migration history should be placed at the heart of our national story, including author and journalist Robert Winder, whose book *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* she had read and been inspired by. Together, they began to scope what a national migration museum might look like. Sophie Henderson, a former immigration judge and barrister, came on board as Director in 2013, and began to assemble a staff team to realise this vision.

Between 2013 and 2017, the Migration Museum staged pop-up exhibitions and events and ran education workshops at a wide range of venues across the UK, including the Southbank Centre, the National Maritime Museum and City Hall in London, the Museum of Oxford, Leicester railway station, and the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. From 2017 to 2019, the Migration Museum was based in a former London Fire Brigade workshop in Lambeth, London, where it reached over 30,000 visitors through a series of acclaimed exhibitions and events.

Since 2020, the Migration Museum has been based in a dynamic venue in the heart of Lewisham Shopping Centre in south London, that was formerly home to a branch of retailer H&M, where it received almost 14,000 monthly visitors prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Migration Museum will reopen in May 2021 and will be based in Lewisham until at least 2022. Longer term, the Migration Museum continues to scope and seek permanent locations for a national Migration Museum for Britain.

More than 12,000 students from over 200 schools and colleges have participated in workshops run by the Migration Museum's education team since 2013. The Migration Museum's education team has delivered teacher training to hundreds of new teachers and is engaged in consultation and input into the national curriculum through its partnerships with major examination boards.

The Migration Museum also convenes a sector-supporting Migration Network, in partnership with the University of Oxford's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, Counterpoints Arts, Horniman Museum and Gardens, Museums Association, National Museums Liverpool, National Trust, and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. The Network brings together organisations from across the UK heritage sector and beyond to share knowledge and best practice on how to increase and improve work on migration themes across all regions and nations of the UK.

The Migration Museum has secured the support of a wide range of distinguished friends – high-profile supporters with a wide range of professional backgrounds and from across the political spectrum who back its vision and ambitions.

Info on trustee recruitment and how to apply

The Migration Museum is looking for Trustees to challenge, inspire and lead us as we move to the next level in delivering a high-profile new landmark cultural institution for the UK. Specifically, we seek outstanding guidance in the fields of cultural leadership, public engagement, migration education, fundraising, venue development and digital innovation. But we are also seeking people who have other skills and broader experiences and will sharpen our thinking and bring new and diverse talent to the table. Above all we seek individuals who, like us, believe that a permanent Migration Museum for Britain is necessary and long overdue and have the passion and commitment to champion our cause and bring this exciting project to fruition. The deadline for applications is Monday 3 May 2021.

For more information and to apply, visit: www.migrationmuseum.org/newtrustees.

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