

Wellcome Collection

Skeletons: Our buried bones

Tour dates:	Available 2021
Size of exhibition:	Flexible – from 250m ²
Target Audience:	14+ but suitable for all
Hire fee :	No hire fee – host venues to cover all associated installation/de-installation costs including transport and insurance
Min & max hire period:	3 – 9 months

A man and a woman are looking at a museum exhibit. The man is standing and looking up at a display case. The woman is standing next to him, also looking up. In the background, there are several framed pictures on a wall. The display case contains a white bust of a man with curly hair, mounted on a black stand. The bust is facing left. The background is slightly blurred, showing other museum exhibits and a person walking in the distance.

**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection is a museum and library which aims to challenge the way we all think and feel about health. We create opportunities for people to think deeply about the connections between life, art, medicine and science.



Wellcome is a global charitable foundation that exists to improve health by helping great ideas to thrive.



A rare glimpse into the
lives of the individuals who
have gone before us and
the history beneath our feet.

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SKELETONS

OUR BURIED BONES

26 May–28 Aug 2016

wellcome
collection



Skeletons: Our buried bones is a collaboration between
Wellcome Collection and the Museum of London, touring
to Glasgow, Bristol and Leeds over 2016 – 2018.



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12
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19
Spitalfields House (1698-1999)
Spitalfields House, London
Established by a group of Quakers on the site of Spitalfields Church in the 17th century, the house was one of the first of its kind in London. It was a large, multi-story building that housed a variety of businesses and industries. In the 19th century, it was used as a warehouse for the textile industry. In the 20th century, it was converted into a residential building. The house is now a Grade II listed building and is used as a museum and gallery.





[5]

St Bride's Lower Cemetery

(1770–1849)

Farringdon, London

St Bride's Lower Cemetery was established in 1810 due to overcrowding in the churchyard at nearby St Bride's Church, on Fleet Street. The rebuilding of the church by Sir Christopher Wren started in 1667, following the Great Fire of London in 1666. It was one of 7 churches that occupied this site over 2000 years. The diarist Samuel Pepys visited the church in 1633 to find a place in which to bury his brother, and described how for expense they would 'jostle them together' to make room for him. Social status was reflected by how close to the church you were buried, with the crypt reserved for wealthier people. The Lower Cemetery served the poorer inhabitants, including those of nearby Bridewell workhouse and Fleet prison. The churchyard was closed in 1849 following complaints from the local population. In 1990 the site was excavated for a new office building, and over 600 burials were revealed.



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“Compelling... this show probes the most intimate recesses of human experiences” Times

We are seeking 3 – 5 venues in major cities across Europe to host the exhibition.

There are no hire fees but host venues are to cover all costs associated with hosting the exhibition including installation and deinstallation, transport and insurance.

Venues are responsible for the loan and costs of all skeletons, including those from the Museum of London.

To host the exhibition you will need:

- Access to skeleton collections (your own or other locally excavated skeletons)
- A gallery of at least 250m²
- Environmentally-controlled conditions

Wellcome Collection will provide:

- Display cases and lightboxes
- Newly commissioned photographs of the burial sites
- Design and marketing toolkits



Rachel Sturgis
Touring Exhibitions Manager

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NOTES

SLIDE 1 -

SLIDE 2 - Wellcome Collection is a free museum and library in central London which aims to challenge how we think and feel about health by connecting life, art, medicine and science.

SLIDE 3 - Wellcome Collection is part of Wellcome, a global charitable foundation that exists to improve health by helping great ideas thrive.

Both politically and financially independent, Wellcome funds science and health research.

SLIDE 4 - I am here today to talk to you about *Skeletons: Our buried bones*, a partnership project between Wellcome Collection and Museum of London.

The original *Skeletons* exhibition was shown at Wellcome Collection in 2008 and in 2016 we re-visited the exhibition and created a 3 venue UK regional tour which travelled to Glasgow, Bristol and Leeds.

We are now seeking 3 – 5 venues in major cities across Europe to work with us to host the exhibition.

SLIDE 5 - Drawn in part from the Museum of London's astonishing collection of over 20,000 skeletons spanning 16 centuries, this touring exhibition examines the bones of some of those who lived, died and are buried beneath us.

For this new European version of the exhibition we will work with venues to display skeletons from their own collections or locally excavated skeletons alongside those from the Museum of London.

SLIDE 6 - Through careful scientific analysis led by experts from the Museum of London working with each venue, skeletons will reveal their own stories, allowing us fascinating insights into the times in which these individuals lived and the health hazards of the day.

SLIDE 7 - Skeletons can tell us about how a person may have lived. This skeleton excavated from the Cross Bones cemetery for paupers and prostitutes, shows two conditions associated with London's poor in the 19th century. The scarring on the skull is from ulcerated lesions caused by syphilis and you can see evidence of tooth decay.

SLIDE 8 - This skeleton shows the impact of what we do above ground, you can see the green discolouration of the bones and teeth caused by copper passing through the ground from London's Royal Mint built on the same site.

SLIDE 9 - The simplicity of the exhibition design is key to the creative vision. The skeletons are displayed in cases against black gravel, with minimal distraction.

This emphasises the impact of entering the gallery whilst offering a respectful environment and giving visitors a chance to focus on the scientific analysis of the pathology and health of each individual.

SLIDE 10 - Newly commissioned photography of the local burial sites are displayed alongside each skeleton creating a poignant connection between the death of an individual who may have lived hundreds or thousands of years before us, and the cities which are homes to millions of Europeans today.

SLIDE 11 - Venues are encouraged to create their own 'lab' areas to enhance the content and tell more detailed stories about their local skeletons and to develop additional public programming to accompany the exhibition.

SLIDE 12 - The exhibition is aimed at a 14 plus audience but suitable for all ages. By including local skeletons host venues have the opportunity to showcase and shed new light on their collections.

SLIDE 13 - There are no hire fees for the exhibition, but you will need to cover all installation and de-installation costs including insurance and transport.

You will need access to your own or locally excavated skeletons. Venues will be responsible for managing the loans and associated costs for all skeletons, including those from Museum of London.