

Advantage West Midlands Libraries Challenge Launch



Left to right: Steve Fuller, West Midlands Libraries Project Officer; Judi Locke, West Midlands Libraries Project Administration Assistant; Robert Johnson, BITS For All Project Lead; Rebecca Graham, BITS For All Project Officer; Anthony Blagg, CreationZone Project Officer; Anne Dixon, Ticket to Find Training & Development Officer; Dave Potts, Ticket to Find Web Designer; Vicki Watkin, Chrysalis Project Officer; Don Yuile, Shropshire Routes to Roots Project Lead; Helen Gibbons, Shropshire Routes to Roots Project Officer.

An internet gateway, which will help people of the West Midlands find information, was launched on 25 March 2004. West Midlands Libraries Challenge and the project Chrysalis will assist people with their learning and skills development. The well attended conference, celebrating the culmination of a year's work within the West Midlands Libraries Challenge (jointly funded by Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency), was opened by Nigel Summers, Chief Executive Sandwell MBC at the Lakeside Conference Centre, Aston University.

The event featured speakers from MLA Council, Advantage West Midlands, Learning & Skills Council, Technology Innovation Centre, HE & Public Libraries and MLA West Midlands. Whilst highlighting the achievements to date, the event also emphasised the importance of building lasting partnerships to sustain the framework for cross-domain content creation and maintain the momentum developed by the Libraries Challenge. MLA West Midlands will be co-ordinating discussions on how to move forward.

Details of the projects are on page 2.



Knowledge on your doorstep. An easy pathway to learning for the people of the West Midlands.

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Chrysalis is now home to regional collections relevant to cultural identity and local history with a selection of links to quality websites on cultural diversity, study skills, careers and subject information. www.chrysalisinfo.org.uk

BITS for All created three basic IT learning packages in English and Indic languages and delivered training courses across the Black Country.

CreationZone developed a creative website produced to support students, designers and businesses in the Jewellery sector. www.creation-zone.co.uk

Shropshire Routes to Roots produced an interactive website with six learning packages aimed at supporting creative teaching at key stages 1-4. www.shropshireroots.org.uk

Ticket to Find developed an accredited training course and web site to encourage the use of information resources on the internet. www.tickettofind.org.uk

For further information about the West Midlands Libraries Challenge please contact: **Steve Fuller, West Midlands Libraries Project Officer.**

Tel: 0121 631 5804

stephen.fuller@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Or visit: [www.wm-](http://www.wm-libraries.org.uk/AWMLC/awmlc.htm)

[libraries.org.uk/AWMLC/awmlc.htm](http://www.wm-libraries.org.uk/AWMLC/awmlc.htm)

You can find the full meanings of all acronyms used within this newsletter in the 'Glossary of Acronyms' box on page 8

Funding

MLA West Midlands Index of Funding Sources

MLA West Midlands Funding Team originally compiled this index to gain a better understanding of current regional sources of funding, eligible themes and relevance to each domain.

The index is updated monthly and acts as an interim measure to provide museums, libraries and archives with a listing of potential sources of funding prior to the proposed development of a national funding database.

To obtain a copy contact:

Lee Perry, Funding Team Assistant

Tel: 0121 631 5806

Email: lee.perry@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Strategic Development Fund Grant – successful applicants (2004/05)

The following four projects were awarded Strategic Development Grants for work that will affect individual workforces and following dissemination of the resulting resource materials and evaluation reports, will provide wider benefit to other organisations across the sector.

University of Wolverhampton on behalf of the West Midlands Higher Education Association Libraries Group (WMHEALG) have been awarded £13,500. The project **Developing Diversity: Moving Towards Culturally Diverse Staffing, Collections and Curriculum Development** aims to address issues around West Midlands universities library staffing; collections; curriculums, and cultural diversity. It will achieve this by investigating perceptions of diversity within higher education and individual collections. It aims to initiate training in cultural diversity, promote library careers to ethnic minorities and to build links to other library sectors.

Herefordshire Heritage Services on behalf of the Marches Curators' Group are awarded £40,000. **Marches Counties Museum Development 2004/05** will enable the successful Museum Development project within the five rural counties to continue for a further year. It will support either dedicated museum development officers or backfill senior officers' time spent in this role.

Warwickshire Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards have been awarded £11,690. **Supporting Learners – Opportunities for a Lifetime – Developing staff to better support lifelong learners** is a training programme that will be developed in partnership with the Open College Network Central England. It will provide 3 Units of learning which will be delivered over 2 years to 40 staff, to create learning facilitators with relevant skills for learner support.

Black Country Libraries in Partnership: Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Public Libraries have been awarded £3,900. This will help provide three **Community Cohesion Training Sessions** to equip staff in the four Black Country Library Authorities. The training will contribute to and develop services for the Civic and Community Values strand of 'Framework for the Future'. The sessions will cover: Community Cohesion, Basic Skills and marketing to Disadvantaged Groups.

Growing Leaders with Vision, developing a skilled workforce

MLA Council have identified 'leadership' and 'workforce development' as priorities from a number of events held with museum, library and archive representatives, from the West Midlands.

In response to the need to manage change, and equip the people who work in services for the changes now taking place, MLA West Midlands is currently operating a two year Strategic Development Fund Grants Programme on the theme of Workforce Development. In parallel with this, the development of an outline bid to Advantage West Midlands with two objectives over the period 2004 to 2008 is:

- Delivery of a leadership and workforce development programme for up to 1,000 staff co-ordinated within MLA Council using commissioned trainers and developers. This is with a budget of up to £300K.
- Capacity for funding more partnership projects beyond the £200K over two years already available through the Strategic Development Fund. This is with a budget of up to £300K.

Various partnerships are being explored and we have consulted the sector to assess the relevance of this proposal and to gauge the potential levels of take-up. A Sounding Board would be created to test out more specific ideas ahead of a full bid going in at the end of May 2004.

Service Development Fund Grants for Collections / Stock Management

Grants from £400 up to £2,500 are available.

They are to support and improve the sector's stewardship and resource discovery of the region's cultural and historic assets through projects that will improve the care and management of collections/stock in museums, libraries and archives.

For Application forms and Guidance Notes contact Lee Perry, Funding Team Assistant.

Tel: 0121 631 5812

Email: lee.perry@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Promoting Social Enterprise to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Birmingham

This project offers an ideal opportunity to increase the profile of social enterprise and the available support services amongst Voluntary and Community organisations, ensure better representation at strategic level

and suggestions for more effective operation.

Running until March 2005 this project offers voluntary organisations and development trusts which have a trading arm in Birmingham or Solihull areas, the support of a dedicated Birmingham and Solihull Social Economy Consortium (BSSEC) worker.

For more information, please contact Matt Feeley, Development Manager – BSSEC.
Tel: 0121 753 0668 Fax: 0121 766 5401
Email: mfeeley@jobs4brum.org.uk

Your views on Gift Aid and Admission Charges

Inland Revenue are seeking the views from any charity likely to be affected by a change to the statutory exemption. In the Budget Report the Chancellor announced that the Government would continue to consult with charities to develop a new definition of the special statutory exemption for heritage and conservation charities. The special exemption allows the right of free admission to be disregarded as a benefit for the purposes of Gift Aid, where the charity's sole or main object is the preservation of heritage property or the conservation of wildlife.

The Government recognises that heritage and conservation charities are different from others in the sector and rely on visitors for much of their income. They want to focus efforts on encouraging new donations in line with the underlying principles of the Gift Aid Scheme – *to promote additional giving to charity*. They do not believe that existing day memberships schemes generally give rise to additional giving and are now looking to explore in more detail with charities and their representative bodies how this might best be achieved.

Gift Aid is about encouraging additional donations to charity – the donor should clearly be giving more than simply paying the equivalent of an admission charge. *How much more than the normal admission charge should qualify as a donation? As many season tickets are priced around 3 times the day admission charge, should the donation payment be in line with this practice? Is there a case to be made for a lower amount, such as twice the normal admission charge?*

The commitment or relationship might be most obviously demonstrated by a period of membership during which free admission would be available. *What minimum period would be sufficient to demonstrate an ongoing commitment: 1 year, 6 months, 3 months or less?*

Are there other ways in which an ongoing relationship or commitment could be demonstrated?

Do you have any other ideas on an approach that would address the concerns of heritage and conservation charities while meeting the principles of the Gift Aid Scheme?

Please send in your responses by 11 June 2004 to Tom Parsons, IR Charities, Room 108, New Wing, Somerset House, Strand, London, WR2R 1LB.

or Email: Tom.Parsons@ir.gsi.gov.uk

Learning & Access

Libraries Change Lives - Award

Creative projects show that libraries are reaching out to their communities. Three projects have been short listed for the CILIP/LIS Libraries Change Lives Award, 2004. The projects are:

- **'Get a Life'! - Dumfries and Galloway Libraries.** This is an interactive online narrative in which young people aged between 10 and 14 take part in creating a story live online.
- **A Community Portal Project 'Holocaust Remembrance' - East Renfrewshire Libraries.** Creation of a website and CDROM allow local survivors of the holocaust to tell their story. The project aims to include the Jewish community and educate other residents about the Nazi Holocaust and other genocides. www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/holocaust
- **The Mobile Library Travellers project – Essex County Council Libraries and Essex Travellers Education Service.** This project was set up in 2001 to explore ways in which Essex Libraries could provide a library service to a group of potential customers at risk of social exclusion. They now work on five travellers' sites in Essex, with eight primary schools and eight mobile libraries providing weekly stops.

The Library & Information Show (LIS) takes place at ExCel in London on 21–22 April 2004. The Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion on 21 April, will announce the winner of the award.

For information on the exhibition or about visiting, please visit: www.lishow.co.uk

Citizenship in Action

Education and Culture Commissioner Viviane Reding has announced details of a programme to replace the Culture 2000, Media Plus and Youth Programmes, which all end in 2006. Running from 2007-13, the Citizenship in Action programme puts more emphasis on fostering European culture and diversity in order to encourage and develop European citizenship.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm

British Library worth £363 Million a year

How do you demonstrate the value of Libraries & Information Services? The British Library believes they have the answer. The results of a research study showed that if the BL did not exist, the UK would lose £280m of conomic value per annum.

For more information on this study visit: www.bl.uk

A New Research Service Launched

The British Library has launched a research service aimed at companies and organisations that do not have their own libraries or information departments. The service will also appeal to larger organisations that may be struggling to cope with a high volume of research requests. BL can select and provide information to customers on anything from science, technology and patents, to medicine and commerce.

For more information visit: www.bl.uk

The Past to be the Future for Children's Learning

Stoke on Trent's Museum Service (incorporating Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Ford Green Hall and Etruria Industrial Museum) has been selected as one of only five museum services in the West Midlands to be given funding by DfES. Over the next three years a selected number of museums, in three of the English regions, will receive a significant amount of funding. It will fund educational programmes providing teachers and children with resources and activities to enhance their learning development.

Two examples of these are:

Living in the Past enables children to take part in historical role-play. During their visits, they will be able to find out what it would have been like to be a mould runner in a pot bank, a Victorian

domestic servant, or a worker for the Ford family at Ford Green Hall.

Toilet Times designed to support the teaching of the Citizenship curriculum by addressing children's rights to clean water and sanitation. By participating in a mystery tour, each child learns about the development of sanitation and that everyone has equal rights to good sanitary conditions. Please visit the "Flushed with Pride" gallery in the Gladstone Pottery Museum.

For more information contact:

Sally Coleman, Branch Museums Manager –
Tel: 01782 319232 / 235391

Renaissance Education Team – Tel: 01782 235390

Help spread the word on Research Projects – large and small

Clear evidence shows that all sectors carry out a wide range of research. These vary from large-scale funded projects to quick in-house surveys, all of which can contribute to the development of library and information practice.

LIRG, a special interest group of CILIP, would like to encourage researchers from academic, public, special, health and government libraries, as well as independent consultants and research units, to spread the word about their current and recently completed work.

Enter your information (c.50 words) via an online form: www.lirg.org.uk/lir/directory.htm

Or, email: Stella Thebridge, Associate Editor at: stella.thebridge@uce.ac.uk

MLA West Midlands is currently consulting upon its draft research and data collection policy. We will concentrate on cross domain research (i.e. across museums, libraries and archives) but we will also be regularly involved in studies which refer to single domains within our remit.

For more information regarding the draft MLA West Midlands research and data collection policy please contact: Simon Bennett Knowledge Development Manager

Tel: 0121-631 5821 Fax: 0121-631 5825
simon.bennett@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Workforce Development

CSV Lending Time – Opening Doors

Community Service Volunteers help to position libraries at the heart of communities. This visionary project demonstrates the many

ways that volunteers can support and enhance libraries, bringing benefits to library staff, library users and local people.

CSV Lending Time shows how volunteers have an impact in six contrasting settings – from urban to rural, from shire to city. Staffordshire's library services have been participating in this initiative for the West Midlands.

For more information:

Email: information@csv.org.uk

Or visit: www.csv.org.uk

Volunteering England

Volunteering England came into being on 1st April 2004. It is formed from the National Centre for Volunteering, Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England. Its first conference, **Building on Success: the conference for volunteering infrastructure agencies** will be held at the University of Exeter, 19-21 April. The conference offers dedicated training to help volunteering infrastructure agency staff and trustees in their daily work.

www.volunteering.org.uk/centre/conference.htm

Volunteers Week 2004 – 1-7 June

If you will be using Volunteers Week to recruit volunteers and would like your details added to the lists please email a brief description and contact details to

volunteersweek@thecentre.org.uk

To see if your organisation is already listed please visit:

www.volunteering.org.uk/volunteer/index.html

ICT Issues and E-Society

Natural History Museum Launches Nature Navigator

Nature Navigator provides a single access point to information on more than 8,000 of the best known species in Britain. The Natural History Museum and Information Services, funded by NOF Digitise Programme, have recently launched Nature Navigator. It has enabled the digitisation of over 6,000 original paintings and illustrations held in the libraries of the Natural History Museum. A powerful, yet easy to use interactive display, allows you to explore relationships between organisms.

www.nhm.ac.uk/interactive/biodiversity/naturenavigator/index.html

Oxford Scholarship Online

A 30-day free trial is available to institutions including universities, colleges, libraries, corporations and schools for this new web-based research and teaching tool. Unveiled by Oxford University Press (OUP) it makes many of its scholarly books in humanities and social sciences accessible online for the first time. Oxford Scholarship Online (OSO) contains more than 700 of the OUP's works (approximately 250,000 pages and 100 million words) ranging from classics to cutting-edge scholarship by contemporary authors. 200 new titles will be added to the service every year. OSO, integrated with other online resources, enables the user to cross-reference information generated by a single search.

The online reference tool is a result of a £2m project between OUP Oxford and OUP New York spanning over five years and will conclude in 2005.

www.oxfordscholarship.com

Collections & Stewardship

Cuban Collection – on the move

Wolverhampton University are transferring The Cuban Collection, to Nottingham University in the summer of 2004. The Cuban Collection (originally donated by Prof. Hennessy) is a mostly post-revolution collection and is one of the largest collections of journals, newspapers, books and printed-paper in Europe.

Tithe Map Project

This project provides on-line access to digitised 18th and 19th century maps of Worcestershire County, together with their attached documentary evidence. This partnership of the Record Office and Archaeology Departments in Worcestershire County Council continue to add to the regions digital content with the launch of the Tithe Map project. It transforms flat maps into a powerful searchable research tool. For access to images please visit: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cs-archeo-tithe-maps.htm> Photocopies of the maps on CD are available at the Record Office and the Worcestershire History Centre search room.

MLA West Midlands would like to wish Tony Wherry a happy retirement after 28 years service at the Worcestershire County Council Record Office. Tony has been a valued colleague and greatly supportive of regional working and we

would like to extend our thanks for his enthusiasm and support.

Registration News

Stafford Castle has recently achieved Full Registration Status under the Museums Registration Scheme.

The castle, built by William the Conqueror has dominated the Stafford landscape for over 900 years. Today, it provides a fascinating insight into this period. Visitors can follow an informative trail of interpretation panels to discover more about the castle's turbulent history. Stafford Castle is also a regular host to an exciting year round programme of events from historical re-enactments and Shakespeare productions to torchlight tours and children's activities.

www.information-museums.co.uk/museum

Compton Verney - a major new art venue

Compton Verney House in Warwickshire has now reopened to the public after extensive restoration.



Sat 27 March saw the Opening Day of this new Art Gallery, and proved to be highly successful. Two days before the opening, they enjoyed a visit by Prince Charles. The

opening day itself received over 3000 visitors, greeted by a 'live sleeping woman' in the entrance hall to the gallery.

The gallery holds collections of Chinese bronzes, Neapolitan paintings, German Gothic sculpture, British portraits and the British Folk Art and Marx-Lambert collections.

British filmmaker Peter Greenaway's fascinating exhibit on Tulse Luper's life is currently on display. 92 suitcases represent significant events in his life. Three films and 92 DVD's, (one for each suitcase) will be made by 8 production companies.

The restoration has seen the previously derelict 18th century mansion converted into a fine and decorative art gallery. £64m has gone into the project over a ten-year period. The Peter Moores Foundation and the Compton Verney House Trust bought the house in 1993.

www.comptonverney.org.uk



Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) News

Many of you are now fully aware that as from 9 February 2004 Resource changed its name, dropping "Resource" from its title. Their new name is the **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council**, abbreviated to 'MLA Council' in this region.

MLA West Midlands will never use MLA as an abbreviation; they will always try to use the full name of **MLA West Midlands**.

Meanwhile, to avoid further confusion, we have re-christened our Newsletter and e-alerts to 'Insight', as you can see from our masthead.

New Appointments to the MLA Council Board:

The Board of MLA have appointed four new members:

- David Henshaw – Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council
- Sir Geoffrey Holland – Chair of SWMLAC

- Nicholas Kingsley – Chair of the National Council on Archives
- Virginia Tandy – Director of Manchester City Galleries

The Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year

Congratulations to Thinktank, Birmingham, for being one of the 13 short-listed museums for the largest single arts prize in the UK. The annual award of £100,000 goes to one museum or gallery, large or small, anywhere in the UK.

Thinktank, was short listed for its Futures Gallery exhibition. An example of just two extraordinary and unique exhibits on show are: ***Emo, an emotional robot that learns human expressions as it interacts with visitors*** and a ***micro machine only 1mm across, that has working parts ten times smaller than the width of a human hair.***

All the exhibits in the Futures Gallery Challenge encourage visitors to think about what the future might possibly be like.

Please visit: www.thinktank.ac

For a shortlist of the 4 finalists please visit: www.thegulbenkianprize.org.uk

British Archives Boom Prompts Call For New Approach To Services

The UK's archives are a powerful tool for learning, creativity and inspiration – that is the conclusion of the Archives Task Force. Archives can help transform people's lives and this rich resource should be unlocked and made accessible to everyone.

On 24th March the report, **Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future**, was published and launched by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). How the UK archives can be better understood, looked after and used is the result of an 18-month investigation presented to government and key policymakers.



Guest speakers at ATF Launch: left to right: Lord Filkin, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Dept for Constitutional Affairs; Benedict Allen, Author and Explorer; Mark Wood, MLA Chair.

Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future, demonstrates clearly the significant social, economic and learning power of archives, to engage people in study, but also in building evidence of their own histories. To broaden access to archives for people from all walks of life, the creation of an easily accessible online **Archives Gateway** was recommended. Dame Stella Rimington, member of the Archives Task Force says: "Archives show us, and future generations, how we came to be what we are as a nation, a community or individuals. They offer us secrets

about our past and can be a wonderful learning tool... We feel that broadening access via an exciting, dynamic online gateway is clearly an important way forward".

Over the coming weeks MLA Council will be championing the report across government, and embarking on a programme of advocacy. In partnership with archive stakeholders, the Archive Team at MLA Council will be developing an Action Plan based on the recommendations.

www.mla.gov.uk/action/archives/atf.asp

There are 1.5 million visits a year to archives.

75% of these visitors are undertaking private or personal research.

72% of users see archives as a way of strengthening family or community identity.

85 million requests were handled by National Archive websites in 2002/03.

The demand for archives has grown over 50% in the last 10 years.

MLA West Midlands News & Update

Lesley-Anne Kerr, our Access & Learning Development Manager will be leaving MLA West Midlands 30th April. She will be moving to CyMAL, the Welsh Museum, Library and archive council, as Head of Learning, Access and ICT. She will also be working as a Civil Servant for the Welsh Assembly.

We all wish her every success in her new post and thank her for her hard working contributions given to MLA West Midlands and WMRMC over the past 6½ years.

Strategic Marketing

MLA West Midlands is developing a policy and strategy for its own marketing linked to the kinds of support we might be able to give to those across the sector. Museums, libraries and archives all share a common interest in marketing themselves. This is not just about good websites, promotional campaigns or effective PR. Strategic marketing is about the whole management processes of researching who are users, consulting them about the design of services and being market-orientated in all that we do. In 2004-05, this will involve particular approaches relevant to each of the domains:

- Working on marketing and impact with the (museum) hub as part of the Renaissance initiative
- Exploring public libraries marketing as part of Framework for the Future
- Starting to investigate archives marketing priorities in the light of the Taskforce report

This work will involve different members of MLA West Midlands' development staff and wide consultation. Geoff Warren will take the lead. He would be interested to hear about marketing approaches you are involved in across any of the domains or sub-domains where you work.

Contact Geoff Warren, Development Director:
geoff.warren@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Libraries Forum

The Libraries Forum is trying to find ways of including all kinds of libraries in the region, in line with the Routes to Knowledge Initiative (formerly WILIP). The Libraries Forum will be holding an event on 26th October 2004 following the successful day last November at BMI.

Inspiring Learning for All

Developed by the MLA Council, Inspiring Learning for All is to create a framework for developing and evaluating formal and informal learning opportunities at museums, archives and libraries. It was launched in London on 2nd March 2004. The framework is available at:
www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk

MLA West Midlands Announcements

Are you involved in any projects/exhibitions or have any interesting/success stories you would like to share with the rest of us? If so, please send in your article of approximately 200 words (and a related photograph if available).

A large print version of this newsletter is available on request.

If you wish to receive MLA West Midlands E-Alert service, please send in your name and email address details. *(Please note that we cannot resend an e-alert to individuals if their address is bounced back, due to the large numbers involved. Hardcopies are also available on request.)*

MLA West Midlands have a limited supply of the Museums & Galleries Yearbook One 2003 and Museums & Galleries Yearbook Two 2003. If any smaller institutions wish to receive a copy by post please contact us.

For any of these requests please contact:

Julie Bedward, Information Assistant.

Tel: 0121 631 5823

julie.bedward@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

MLA West Midlands will be announcing shortly the launch of our new website. In the meantime, please visit our interim site at
www.mlwestmidlands.org.uk

Publications

Three new books in copyright advice for information professionals are available for £24.95 each.

Practical Copyright for Information Professionals: the CILIP Handbook - Sandy Norman.

Copyright for Archivists and users of Archives, 2nd edition - Tim Padfield.

Copyright: interpreting the law for libraries, archives and information services, 4th edition - Graham P Cornish.

Order via Email: info@facetpublishing.co.uk

Order online: www.facetpublishing.co.uk

The BBC's People's War Project at Lichfield Library

Lichfield Library is a large town library in Staffordshire. Staffordshire LIS Heritage and Learning County Specialists are based there and began planning a programme of events as part of the BBC's People's War Project back in October 2003. The project is about senior citizens coming into the library to access and contribute their memories of WW2 on the BBC's online People's War site, which is of an inter-generational nature.

It was anticipated that many of those wishing to add a reminiscence would not be computer literate, so the county specialists set about to solve the dilemma by contacting local high schools to enlist the help of year 7/8 pupils with the project. A local section of the University of the Third Age (who regularly use the library for small self-help IT sessions) were also enlisted to assist, as were the library's 2 IT Buddy's. These volunteer helpers would provide the 1:1 IT skills to facilitate the senior citizens access to the site. (*The photograph below shows an example of this.*) The high school pupils in particular would benefit by not only experiencing an opportunity for 'community service', but also gain invaluable first hand knowledge of these historic events through the eyes and lives of ordinary people who lived through them.



A programme of 'booking in' those wishing to access the site was devised to match with those times when volunteers could attend the daily sessions in the Library's IT suite. Although it is early days, the sessions have had good attendances, with many saying they will come back for more visits.

Later in the year sessions, featuring a 'grandparents and grandchildren' afternoon are going to be held to continue the inter-generational theme of the project. As the 60th anniversary of D-Day approaches, (6th June), an oral reminiscence session will capture the history of the period. Several talks on the topic of WW2 in Lichfield are also going to be held for the celebrating of 'The People's War' programme.

The project has provided a real opportunity for cross-sectoral cooperative working and for 'widening-access', not only to our

superb IT facilities but also to opportunities for Life Long Learning within our libraries for all those participating. We hope that many of those who have contributed will return to the library with a little more confidence and with the continuous support of the staff will be able to make use of their new e-mail accounts.

Arts and Business Skills Bank Project Individual of the Year Award

Mel Cartwright, Customer Care Manager with RAC Motoring Services was commended in the UnileverUK, Arts & Business Individual of the Year Award at a thrilling awards evening held at London's Barbican on 19 February. The Award goes to a businessperson who has most effectively shared their experience with a museum or arts organisation, working through the Arts & Business Skills Bank, Board Bank or Mentoring programmes. Mel worked with Lesley-Anne Kerr at the former (WMRMC) West Midlands Regional Museums Council (now MLA West Midlands) completely re-organising its information storage and retrieval. Mel says. "This project enabled me to use my skills outside my own particular comfort zone and also made me review the way I work with my own managers. It isn't only the arts who benefit from these placements." Through the Skills Bank Programme, professionals from the world of business offer their skills, by acting as guides and mentors, to arts organisations as part of their own Continuing Professional Development. Mel began working with the WMRMC to help them develop the skills and confidence to manage the huge amount of information held by the organisation. This enabled them to develop new systems to take into MLA West Midlands. We very much appreciate Mel's advice, support and encouragement.

"This project enabled me to use my skills outside my own particular comfort zone and also made me review the way I work with my own managers. It isn't only the arts who benefit from these placements."

Business advice is available FREE to all museums, libraries and archives through the Arts & Business Skills Bank. If you feel your Organisation could benefit from expert business advice, please contact Janice Moraitis at Arts & Business on 0121 248 1200 or email Janice.Moraitis@AandB.org.uk

Events - 2004

Building on Success: the conference for volunteering infrastructure agencies. The conference offers dedicated training to help staff and trustees in the volunteering infrastructure agency in their daily work.	19-21 April University of Exeter
Library and Archival Disasters: effective planning, prevention, practical salvage and recovery. This course offers advice on writing an effective disaster plan, identifying biological hazards, salvage and restoration techniques and troubleshooting disaster plans. To register: www.harwell-drying.co.uk Email: info@harwell-drying.co.uk	21 April London
CILIP/LIS Libraries Change Lives Award at the 'Library & Information Show' bringing the library and information world together. The Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion will announce the awards and speak about the value of libraries. (see pg 2 'Learning & Access' for details on the short listed projects.)	21-22 April ExCel, London 21 April Theatre 2 at 2.00pm
Adult and Learners Week Co-ordinated by NIACE it is an annual festival that celebrates the achievements of adult learners in all their diversity.	15 May Victoria Square, B'ham
International Museum Day: Museums and Intangible Heritage Innovative activities organised throughout the world on International Museums Day will provide inspiration and feed into the debates at the 20 th ICOM General Conference to be held in Seoul, October 2004. For information on activities planned visit: www.icom.museum/irrid.html	18 May
WW2 Events include, rural craft, demonstrations, entertainment, an archaeological dig and access to BBC's WW2 information site to celebrate rural learning.	22-23 May Croft - Hereford
Volunteers Week The main theme of the week is 'Recruitment'. www.volunteersweek.org.uk	1-7 June
Artworks Children's Art Day Encourages and inspires children to encounter and engage with art in galleries, museums, schools and their homes. For a registration form and full programme details, visit: www.art-works.org.uk	3-4 July Museums, galleries, science/discovery centres and schools throughout UK

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS used within this issue of Insight

BL	-	British Library
BSSEC	-	Birmingham & Solihull Social Economy Consortium
CILIP	-	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
CSV	-	Community Service Volunteers
DfES	-	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
LIRG	-	Library and Information Group
LIS	-	Library and Information Show
NeLH	-	National Electronic Library for Health
NOF	-	New Opportunities Fund
NIACE	-	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
OSO	-	Oxford Scholarship Online
OUP	-	Oxford University Press
WILIP	-	Wider Information and Library Issues Project
WW2	-	World War 2



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MLA West Midlands Mission Statement...

"MLA West Midlands is working for the region to promote and develop excellent museum, library and archive services which are available to everyone, today and in the future.

We will do this by supporting and championing the development of museums, libraries and archives, to encourage them to inspire, enrich and record the life, environment and works of all its people and to enhance the cultural, social, educational and economic life of the region."