

Call to Action for The People's War



Above: Two service women who dropped by at the NIACE Adult Learning Festival at Croft Castle



Above: D Day Veterans telling their stories on Remembrance Sunday at the Mailbox, Birmingham



West Midlands' libraries, museums and archives have been busy collecting stories for the BBC's People's War project over the last year. Supported by grants from Culture Online's regional fund and working in partnership with volunteer bureaux, Age Concerns, WRVS, veterans, local interest groups and IT trainers, 86 different events have taken place across the region since June and more are in the pipeline.

Events include drop-in sessions, speaker events and tea parties hosted in libraries, supported variously by volunteer bureaux, local record offices and museums. IT classes for older people are being held at Shrewsbury and Coventry Library and Hereford WRVS centre and trained volunteers from Age Concern and local bureaux have collected stories in day centres throughout Shropshire, Birmingham and Worcestershire.

The largest event funded by Culture Online so far was a lunch party thrown by Age Concern Birmingham for 90 day centre users from Ladywood and Handsworth. Stories poured forth about wartime life in England, France, the North Atlantic, Ireland and Jamaica, stimulated by artefacts provided by Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and Birmingham local studies library.

As we enter 2005, the 60th anniversary of the end of WW2, we must make every effort to capture the memories and stories of those who experienced such momentous times.

If you are interested in becoming a People's War partner, seeking another partner or need funding from Culture Online to make your activity go with a swing, please contact Jenni Waugh, BBC Outreach Officer, at MLA West Midlands, jenni.waugh@mlawestmidlands.org.uk (for full address details please see back page).

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2005 – ‘Year of the Sea’, ‘Einstein Year’ and ‘Year of the Volunteer’ (Chinese Year of the rooster)

Society and Culture anniversaries of 2005:

- 25th anniversary of the death of John Lennon, launch of CNN and introduction of the Sony Walkman
- 40th anniversary of the death of Winston Churchill
- 50th anniversary of Tolkein’s ‘Lord of the Rings’, Disneyland and the first Guinness Book of World Records
- 60th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day
- 75th anniversary of Sigmund Freud’s ‘Civilisation and its Discontents’
- 100th anniversary of Einstein’s ‘Special Theory of Relativity’
- 150th anniversary of the first institute to grant academic degrees to women, Elmira Female College, New York
- 200th anniversary of Nelson and Napoleon, Battle of Trafalgar – *celebrated by the Year of the Sea*
- 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot
- 500th anniversary of the first International Postal Service, between Brussels and Vienna

Veterans Reunited

In January 2004 the Big Lottery Fund launched its Veterans Reunited programme to provide funding to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the events leading up to the end of World War Two. The programme comprises three different schemes, which help ensure that all generations of UK residents can commemorate the anniversary together. The three schemes are:

Home Front Recall - veterans of WW2 are to take pride of place across the West Midlands at dramatic performances, reunions, photographic exhibitions and a variety of commemorative events to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of WW2. The £7.3 million Home Front Recall scheme is a joint initiative from the Big Lottery Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Grants of between £500 and £20,000 are provided for regional and local projects that commemorate the events of the WW2.

For full details visit: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Heroes Return – this £10 million scheme provides funding to WW2 veterans, their wives/husbands, widows/widowers and, where required, their present day carers, to visit the overseas areas where the veterans saw active service. Heroes Return is also helping to give young people a better understanding of the efforts and sacrifices made by veterans.

(Applications for both of these schemes must be submitted by 31 March 2005.)

Their Past Your Future – this is a UK wide schools and education scheme to give young people the opportunity to learn first-hand from veterans about their experience of war. The BLF is working closely with the Imperial War Museum and the museum, library and archive sector to help young ones research and learn about the roles played by forces personnel and civilians.

www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk

Sea Britain 2005

Staff from museums, libraries and archives are warmly invited to a meeting to be held on **26 January next year at MLA West Midlands**, Birmingham, to explore a regional approach to Sea Britain 2005 the National Festival to celebrate our relationship to the sea.

Places are still available and Dr Stephen Riley, Director of Maritime Heritage, the National Maritime Museum will be present to give a presentation on the National Campaign. This offers an opportunity to explore partnership opportunities, collaborative working and to feedback to MLA Council any development needs to help set-up or manage events.

For further details please contact either Philip Kiberd, Content Coordination Officer 0121-631-5822 philip.kiberd@mlawestmidlands.org.uk or Paula Brikci, Standards and Stewardship Officer 0121-631-6814 paula.brikci@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Just some of the events taking place in 2005 are:

Oceans of Learning, young people under 25, from disadvantaged backgrounds, will be invited aboard two vessels to sail halfway around the world.

Action Medical Research Charity Gala, 10 March 2005. Sir Trevor McDonald will host the event and it will be an evening of nautical fun, inspired by the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The Bristol Harbour Festival, Friday 22 - Sunday 24 July 2005. The city's most spectacular waterside event.

Christ Church, Oxford, study and stay in the historic surroundings. Hear lectures by expert speakers and enjoy visits to some of our leading maritime attractions.

For a full listing of events visit: www.seabritain2005.com

Please Note: The full meanings of all acronyms used within this newsletter can be found in the '**Glossary of Acronyms**' box on the back page.

Collections and Stewardship

Museum Accreditation Scheme replaces Registration

One hundred and forty museums in the West Midlands region have been helped to improve their standards and raise their profile by identifying areas that need attention and encouraging further development.

Launched on 17 November 2004, the MLA Museum Accreditation Scheme gives clear, basic requirements for how museums should care for and document their collections, be governed and managed and on the information and services they should offer to their visitors. The Scheme replaces the previous Museum Registration Scheme and sets out 'foundation level' standards for museums across four key areas: Governance and Museum Management, User Services, Visitor Facilities and Collection Management. The Scheme builds on existing professional standards, which have been extensively revised and updated after a major consultation process, to reflect people's growing expectation of visitor attractions. It covers all museums, from major national institutions to the smallest, volunteer-run independent museums.

Museums will be invited to apply within the next 5 years and a county by county timetable for invitations has been organised.

If you require pre-application support and advice please contact,

Katerina Kremmida, Accreditation Advisor at:
katerina.kremmida@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Tel: 0121 631 5804 or 0121 303 3969

If you are a new museum and would like to apply for Accreditation or you wish to discuss the assessment process please contact,

Paula Brikci, Standards & Stewardship Officer at
paula.brikci@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Tel: 0121 631 5814

The Accreditation Standard is available from:
<http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/accreditation/00accreditation.asp>

The Designation Scheme opens to Libraries and Archives

The new extended Scheme, run by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, will identify

library and archive collections in non-national institutions that are deemed of national or international importance.

Since 30 November 2004 libraries and archives can now join museums in this scheme and enjoy the following benefits reported by museums: a strengthened support from their governing bodies, enhanced ability to raise funds to support their collection, added national profile-raising through MLA Council's promotional materials, and the creation of a local focus for advocacy and awareness-raising.

Chris Batt, MLA's Chief Executive, said: "*Collections are the bedrock of our sector – they are the foundations upon which all of our work is based. I'm delighted that Designation is now a cross-domain scheme and encourage colleagues in libraries and archives to take this opportunity to highlight the collections in their care.*"

MLA are inviting applications from libraries and archives and joint applications from existing formal partnerships of organisations with complementary collections, which can demonstrate that their collection is of pre-eminent quality and significance.

For full guidance notes and application form visit:
<http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/designation/00desig.asp>
or contact Yvette Burrows, Designation Advisor, 020 7273 1409 or, Yvette.burrows@mla.gov.uk

The deadline for applications is 11 April 2005.

Successful applicants will be announced by the end of September 2005.

Please also see enclosed leaflet.

West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance is now called the 'Regional Spatial Strategy'

Are you responsible for historic buildings or spaces? Then please refer to the new Regional Spatial Strategy.

From April 2003 the Assembly has been the Regional Planning Body for the West Midlands region, charged with producing and implementing the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, formerly Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 11).

This new document has many new references to the importance of the historic environment, making it significantly more important than in previous documents. This is a result of comments made during consultation by English Heritage, the National Trust, the Historic Environment Forum and others.

To download the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy please visit:

<http://www.wmra.gov.uk/documents/20211.pdf>

Museums & Galleries Month 2005 – Objects of Desire: The Art of Collecting

Museums and Galleries Month is a good opportunity for all to work together on a common theme to raise the profile of your organisations.

The theme for 2005, 'Objects of Desire' is inspiring many interpretations. New ideas for events linked to the theme and the Museums Association consultation on collecting have been developed. Why not explore some of these ideas with your colleagues?

National events: lectures and discussions on issues relating to collecting, for example, collecting intangible heritage; collecting contemporary culture and different cultures; link to the portable antiquities scheme – metal detecting. Or subject specialist networks.

Exhibition and events: individual collections, online collections with school children using 'Museum in the Classroom on the 24 Hour Museum'; private collections and the private collector through history; an online 'swap shop' where museums can loan or swap objects; a House Doctor to clear out the stores; conservation – vote for the object to be restored; votes for today's most desirable objects that should be collected; celebrity choices of objects; or link with other events during 2005 through maritime collections and World War II memories.

Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence 2005

The Restoration and Conservation Award is a new category for this years Awards. It will highlight the quality of work undertaken on restoration and conservation projects within the UK over the last year, and how projects have been managed and implemented. This can be the renovation of a single painting or the restoration on an entire historic house. The Awards will take place in London on 11 May 2005 to coincide with the opening of the Museums & Heritage Show.

The public vote will commence online and within pages of The Independent at the beginning of 2005, allowing members of the public to nominate their favourite attractions for an Award.

The **Award for Excellence Overseas** has also been further developed to include entries from companies working with a host of overseas contracts rather than just one single new build.

For entry details
visit: www.museumsandheritage.com

Black Country Archives Prepare for Disaster

Two training days ensured that all the staff from the four Black Country Archive and Local History Services of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and

Wolverhampton, knew how to react to potential fire or flood disasters. The first training day provided specialist facilities for the drying of books, documents, photos and artwork, specialist cleaning of mould contamination, secure freezer storage and learning of smoke and fire contamination.

Jon Overall and Ian Maver, conservators at Wolverhampton and Walsall, delivered the second training day. The staff heard best practice guidelines on storage, basic conservation and preservation issues. Dudley and Sandwell found this day extremely useful, as they do not currently have conservators of their own.

Funded under the Development Fund Grants Programme by MLA West Midlands the 'Keeping our Word' project enhanced all members of staff in their skills in taking care of the unique and irreplaceable collections in their care.

"It was an excellent opportunity for the staff at each of the organisations to meet and share their expertise. Thank you to MLA-WM for the grant, which provided such an excellent training opportunity." –

Jenny Childs, Assistant Archivist, Dudley Archives and Local History Service.

Coventry Transport Museum wins Best Attraction Award

Coventry Transport Museum was voted the top visitor attraction in Coventry and Warwickshire in the region's 'Godiva' Awards. The award was a 'People's Choice' with votes cast by a regional, national and international audience. The museum was re-launched on 18 March 2004 following a £7.5 million facelift and welcomed 180,000 visitors in the first 6 months alone.

New attractions include a gallery dedicated to cars, cycles and even skateboards, a hi-tech interactive 'Futures' gallery, an 'Introductory' gallery profiling Coventry's transport heritage, and a temporary gallery providing a stage for programmes of high profile exhibitions.

Before redevelopment the museum attracted on average 140,000 visitors a year. The museum is now on course to attract over a quarter of a million visitors a year. School visits account for an average of 17% of visitors, and educational visits or 10%, thus a total of some 30,000 pupils a year.

Learning & Access

West Midlands Learning Directory

Developed by NIACE and 2wm this directory is intended to act as a signpost to learning resources in the region. It is continually being updated for the benefit of all adults who are seeking

personal and business improvement training that can be delivered at home, work or at a learning centre. The website includes a search function for learners to identify their nearest public library or museum, thus recognising the role our sector has to play in supporting adult learners. The site also includes a calendar of conferences, seminars and training events. Organisations are invited to advertise their own events via this calendar.
www.wmld.org

Adult Learners' Week Awards 2005

Available on the WMLD website are the nomination forms for the 2005 Adult Learners' Week Awards, 21-27 May 2005. These highlight the stories of people whose lives have been transformed through learning. In addition to acknowledging the achievements of individual learners, NIACE are keen to recognise the role of museums, libraries and archives in the West Midlands as organisations that support and promote learning. This is a great opportunity for our sector to publicise its important contribution to the lifelong learning agenda. ***The closing date for nominations is 21 January 2005.***

Celebrating the value of libraries to people and communities – Last chance to enter

The CILIP / LIS Leading life-changing Award opened for entries in November 2004. The Award offers an excellent opportunity for entrants to share good practice, recognise the efforts of staff and partner organisations, and bring projects and services to national attention.

Entries could be for reading projects, learning projects, or projects that have affected people's lives for the better.

Closing date for entries is 28 January 2005.

For entry forms please visit: www.cilip.org.uk/lcla

Disability Access Steering Group

This regional steering group arose out of the consultation carried out at the MLA West Midlands Disability Database Launch event in April 2004. It has 15 museum, library, archive and disability organisation staff from around the region looking at how to set up a Disability Access Network, which will run regular networking, skills sharing and training events.

We are currently at the stage of setting up a constitution that will enable the network to attract external funding. This is part of the strategy being developed to ensure the network is sustainable in the long term. The network aims to be up and running in 2005. For further information please contact Heather Hollins, Access and Learning Development Officer on 0121 631 5817 or via email: heather.hollins@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Initial Teacher Training 'Literature Matter' Initiative for Libraries

The project arose out of research that indicated Initial Teacher Training students had a poor awareness of what libraries could offer their teaching across curriculum subjects and was therefore not utilising school and children's library services.

Funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Arts Council England and the Department for Education and Skills, the 'Literature Matters' initiative aims to:

- enhance links between Initial Teacher Training providers, libraries and the literature sector;
- increase teacher trainee's knowledge of children's books and libraries (with particular reference to diversity)
- increase teacher trainee's confidence in promoting children's books and in using libraries services.

MLA West Midlands has set up a working group with representatives from the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians, the Arts Council and the Teacher Training Association to look at how the initiative, which runs from January 2005 to September 2006, will be developed in this region. For further information, please contact Heather Hollins, Access and Learning Development Officer on 0121 631 5817 or via email:

heather.hollins@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Take part in a New Publication aimed at Early Years Practitioners

Does your museum/gallery work with children aged 2 to 5? Would you like your organisation's Early Years provision to feature as a case study in the book? Do you have inspiring examples of built environment education work with early years?

The book will be aimed at Early Years practitioners and will emphasise that visits are an integral part of the curriculum guidance at Foundation Stage. It will include activities which Early Years settings can do prior to and after their visits to cultural venues, including museums, art galleries, zoos and arts performances, and how to get the most out of their visits.

The author of the book, Anna Salaman is looking for case studies to include in her book. She would be happy to administrate every stage of the process with the teachers and pupils so that it would involve little or no work for yourselves but you will receive full glory in this glossy educational resource.

To be involved or for more information contact Anna Salaman at: mail@annasalaman.com

A Brief Guide of the exciting online library services from the NLB

NLB Online – the main website and an Aladdin's cave of 'book stuff' including booklists; reviews; Book of the Month; news about books, reading and NLB; Read On and New Reading magazines; and information on how and where to find more accessible e-books and e-library services.

www.nlb-online.org

NLB Booktalk – NLB's email group for book lovers to discuss all things to do with reading.

To register, send a blank email to:
nlbbooktalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Online Reference Service – a comprehensive service that includes around 300 free newspapers and magazines, and over 100 free reference publications. To access these periodicals go to: <http://validation.nlb-online.org>

Unseen History – as part of the Unseen History collection, NLB offers a selection of local history e-books. www.onlineoriginals.com/showitem

Online Originals – access free e-books from a leading electronic publisher.

www.onlineoriginals.com/showitem

A-Sites – is a portal offering links to hundreds of accessible websites. www.visugate.org

Visugate – offers authoritative information from the UK's leading organisations in the field.

www.visugate.org

Vision Support Guide – contains lots of information about different eye conditions, and the services and professional people who can help. www.vsg.nlb-online.org

Steps to Independence – aims at educators and focuses on mobility and independence education for visually impaired children. www.sti.nlb-online.org

Access Technology Primer – an easy to use introduction to access technology course.

<http://atp.nlb-online.org>

Revealweb – the national online database of books and materials in accessible formats.

www.revealweb.org.uk

An Invitation to join the British Library

The British Library would like to welcome anyone who thinks that they can benefit from the breadth of their collections to come and use them. Anyone can get access to the library's resources by applying for a Reader's Pass. To join they will need proof of your identity, signature and home address, (e.g. bank card, passport or drivers licence along with a utility bill or bank statement. The Readers Admissions office is

open Monday to Saturday, except for seasonal closures.

For more information visit: www.bl.uk

Brussels supports working plan for Culture

European Ministers of Culture are investigating the contribution of the cultural and audiovisual industry to European competitiveness. This investigation is one of the proposals from the State Secretary Van der Laan's new work plan for culture. Once the investigation has been completed, a report will follow in the European Council.

The EU sees the mobility of museological collections and artists as an effective means of bringing more Europeans into contact with heritage and culture.

The Council of Education, Youth and Culture approved an action plan for the digitalisation of heritage, to connect different initiatives of member states. The action plan will be ready in 2005. The European Council will also be presenting a new plan for a new web portal. It will promote the mobility of those who work in the culture sector, support museological collections and encourage intercultural dialogue.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.eu2004.nl/200441116-121535-X>

Workforce Development

Award Winning Trainer, CILIP, Launches 2005 Programme

CILIP Training and Development headed the 2004 Business Information Resources Survey as the most popular training organisation. They have launched their 2005 programme of over 90 workshops ranging from topical workshops to essential foundation skills. After hosting workshops for more than 15 years their experience helps to create a comprehensive programme to develop the modern day library and information professional.

For a copy of the training directory contact CILIP on 202 7255 0560 or view all the workshops on www.cilip.org.uk/training

Top Film Makers Volunteer to tell Charities' Stories

Are you a charity organisation that has a turnover under £2 million? Would you like to raise your profile and recruit volunteers by making a three-minute film? The Media Trust is offering 25 charities the chance to have a film made for them at a fraction of the usual cost in an initiative to support the Year of the Volunteer 2005.

Volunteer Films is recruiting independent production companies, broadcasters and freelancers to give talent, time and enthusiasm to make these three-minute films. The films can be factual or drama and must be made by the end of March 2005. They will be broadcast on the Community Channel throughout the year and will have interactive capability. There will be a major screening and competition to judge the best films during 2005.

For further information contact Sally George,
Tel: 020 7874 7631 or at: sallyg@mediatrust.org

The Robert Logan Award

A cash prize plus an all expenses paid conference weekend. An opportunity for a young person – do you know a suitable candidate?

The Robert Logan Award is for a paper by a person of 30 years of age or under working in the heritage sector as a paid employee or as a volunteer. The paper should be based on work undertaken in the course of voluntary or paid work for the heritage sector. The winner will join an experienced panel of speakers and will be the honoured guest of BAFM for the conference weekend on 7-9 October 2005.

For full details and an application form please visit:
www.bafm.org.uk

Funding

NESTA 'Illuminate' Award

Between autumn 2005 and spring 2006 NESTA will make awards totalling £1 million. They have funds available in sums of between £2,000 and £80,000 for successful applicants to spend on turning a great idea into reality. If you have an idea that could involve a partnership with another museum, the project could attract funding of up to £120,000.

This award for science and discovery centres, museums and galleries, aims to breathe new life into existing collections and exhibitions through grants for innovative approaches to learning. Science centres, museums or galleries, must lead applications but they are eager to encourage them to work in partnership with creative practitioners and suppliers.

The deadline date for Round 2 of the scheme is 13 June 2005. For further details visit:
www.nesta.org.uk/illuminate

"Appeal for a Wheel" – can you help?

The Chasewater Railway operates heritage trains over the sole remaining section of the former Cannock Chase Collieries extensive railway network. To ensure that this colliery connection is understood and appreciated by future generations, the Railway

wishes to provide a small display at each end of the line, comprising a small pithead (jockey) wheel and, if possible, a couple of colliery tubs.

The Railway has obtained sufficient items for a display at its Brownhills West Station, but is now on the look out for similar items for display at Chasewater Heaths Station.

If anyone has any knowledge as to the availability of any suitable display items, the Railway's Chairman, David Bathurst would welcome details. Please contact him on 07770 600502 or email him at, dmb@ChasewaterRailway.co.uk

ICT Issues and E Society

The Success of the People's Network

A recent independent evaluation report, by the Tavistock Institute, shows that the People's Network has been effective in broadening the user base of libraries and repositioning them at the heart of local communities.

The People's Network is the product of a £100 million investment by the Big Lottery Fund which has linked all UK libraries to the Internet. A further £20 million was invested in ICT training for public library staff. Over 30,000 computers have been linked to the Internet in over 4,000 libraries.

As a result of the People's Network, libraries have helped thousands of adults and young people to become confident and competent in using ICT. Libraries are also providing a range of value-adding services such as portals to validated information resources in topic areas such as health and wellbeing, and are beginning to facilitate interactive learning environments.

The Tavistock Institute's final evaluation report and a summary evaluation report is available at:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Einstein Year Events Database

Einstein Year is a celebration of all physics – past, present and future – so make sure you're a part of it!

If you are organising an event for Einstein Year, it is essential that you add it to the Einstein Year Events Database as soon as you have finalised the details. People will be encouraged to search the database so if you want people to find out about your event, register it now. www.einsteinyear.org/events
Visit the Einstein Year website to access a range of resources and an Activity Support Pack, to help you organise your Einstein Year activity.
www.einsteinyear.org/get_involved/

The Einstein Year Grant Scheme – Round 2 is now open. The aim of the scheme is to support physics-based outreach activities during 2005.

Priority will be given to activities that include the wider community and not just school pupils. The maximum amount awarded is £1,500. **The closing date is 25 February 2005.**

www.einsteinyear.org/get_involved/funding

MLA West Midlands

Staff Announcements

Elizabeth Roberts, Learning Development Officer returned to MLA West Midlands at the beginning of November from her maternity leave. MLA West Midlands welcomes her back. This means that we have had to say goodbye to **Lindsay Tullock** who was covering for Elizabeth's maternity leave. Lindsay will now be a freelance IT Trainer. *We also congratulate her for her amazing win of £64,000 on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?'* Elizabeth will now be job sharing with **Rowan Carr**, Access & Social Inclusion Development Officer, who will be joining us on 17 January. We also welcome another new member of staff, **Laura Robinson**, who will be joining the Access & Learning Team at the end of January as Cultural Entitlement Officer.

ICT Network – Re- Launch

Given the central role that ICT, digitisation, e-learning and electronic knowledge management plays within the sector, it is felt that a Network is a useful concept to collate and disseminate information on and about ICT.

The aim of the Network is to reduce the distance between people with an interest in ICT. The Network will act as a communication tool to disseminate information about ICT issues affecting, and that has potential value and interest, to the sector. It will act as a focal point for sharing information on project issues, experiences of ICT products and partnership opportunities etc. It will therefore, be a link between the museum, library and archive sector and the wider ICT world.

MLA West Midlands will provide administrative support to the Network. **To join the Network all you have to do is submit your email address to MLA West Midlands.** Membership of the Network is open to any one within the museum, library and archive community in the West Midlands, as well as those in the ICT sector with an interest in supporting or developing products for and with the cultural institutions. Individuals or groups outside of the West Midlands with an interest in collections or activities in the region are also welcome to join.

During 2005 MLA West Midlands will produce an e-newsletter 3 times per year. It will be based around the discussion of thematic topics, as well as

highlighting details of completed, ongoing or emerging projects. It will also feature ICT developments internationally, a forum for questions and answers, debate, collaborative opportunities and training sessions.

Between e-newsletters MLA West Midlands will continue horizon-scanning and flag up relevant developments via e-alerts to the ICT Network discussion list. MLA West Midlands will also arrange two 'visionary visits' per year to significant projects where ICT has been used innovatively within service delivery or to ICT developers/suppliers. These will provide opportunities for Network members to discuss activities and issues in an informal setting. MLA West Midlands will also explore the possibility of arranging an ICT Research and Development event/exhibition, annually or biannually. They will invite developers, researchers, suppliers, consultants, digital artists etc to allow museums, libraries and archives in the sector to see and discuss ICT developments and applications.

If you would like to sign up to the Network or receive further information, please contact Philip Kiberd, Content Coordinator on 0121 631 5822 or by email at: philip.kiberd@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

Another Successful Year – Archives Awareness Campaign 2004

From introductions to researching Family History to the delights of allotments in Warwickshire and garden history in Herefordshire, record offices across the region have joined in the second national campaign to promote the value and potential of archives.

In Gaydon, the Wheels Around the World exhibition by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, picked up the National Routes to Roots theme to celebrate the spirit of expedition through objects, photographs and moving film detailing the impact of the motorcar on travel and adventure.

The combination of AAC 2004, the BBC Family History Series 'Who Do You Think You Are?' and the regional BBC road-shows on Family History over the weekend of 4-5 December has generated a vast amount of interest and opened people's eyes to the opportunities documentary heritage holds, whether something to be dipped into for fun or a source for detailed research.

During 2005, MLA West Midlands will look to work with the sector and holders of archives, whether record offices, museums or libraries to maximise the benefits AAC 2004 has brought. They will also continue to raise awareness of our archival heritage and the investment it needs.

Details of the 2004 campaign and the activities in the region can still be found at the national website: www.aamsept2003.com

A Two Tier Approach to launching Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA)

On 1 Nov 2004 MLA West Midlands held a higher management level launch to the Manager's Network. Seven sub-regional training days were run to introduce ILFA to senior managers and learning practitioners. These events reached 140 staff across the region.

The next phase of implementation, which will include strategic advocacy with Heads of Service and regional networks, is currently being planned. The ILFA framework includes Generic Learning Outcomes methodology for measuring the impact of museums, libraries and archives on learners. This is a significant step forward as it enables evidence to be produced in a format that demonstrates impact. The 10-15 museums, libraries and archives involved in the Pilot Scheme will be feeding back evidence of this methodology. The aim of the scheme will be to monitor and support these pilot organisations to enable us to gather case study materials about how ILFA is being implemented by different types of museums, libraries and archives.

MLA Council

Museum 'Renaissance' to be extended

Regional and local museums received a boost in December 2004 with the announcement of £17 million new funding for the Renaissance scheme, led by MLA. The announcement by DCMS will allow

MLA to extend the scheme across the country. Museums currently in the scheme have achieved astonishing results. In the first year visits by school children rose by 28% and museums have doubled their work with community groups, exhibitions and displays have improved, visitor numbers have soared, and some £7 million is being spent on improving collections.

For further information visit: www.mla.gov.uk

Online library seeks volunteers for the frontline

The first phase of the new People's Network Service was launched to professionals in December 2004. It will deliver a free real-time information service to the public by providing 'live' access to library and information professionals across the Internet.

Developed by MLA Council the service is being delivered collaboratively by public library staff across England. Currently 29 library authorities in England are piloting the service. MLA is now inviting library colleagues across the country to trial the new service by asking simple questions. MLA hopes that by the end of 2005 all 149 library authorities in England will contribute to the service.

To trial the Enquiry Service visit the pilot site at: <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk>

For more information about the PN and services visit: <http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/pn/00pn.asp>

...Around the Region...

What can a bursary of £300 do for Distance Learning studies?

MSc Econ / Dip in Archives Administration (University of Wales, Aberystwth) through Distance Learning.

My name is Sarudzayi Chifamba-Barnes. I am 34 years old and work at the Coventry City Archives as an Archives Assistant. First of all I would like to thank MLA West Midlands for offering me a bursary of £300 for the above professional training course. The course itself takes between 2-5 years to complete, comprises of 10 modules with a total of 120 credits (postgraduate diploma) and 60 credits for the dissertation (Masters), with three compulsory study schools. The Society of Archivists accredits the qualification. The total fees for the whole course is about £4,800, but the University is flexible and allows one to pay by monthly instalments spread over 3 years.

I have worked in Archives and Museums since I left school in 1995. With lots of in-house training which I received in Zimbabwe, Oman (Middle East), Netherlands and here in Britain at the Coventry City Archives, I felt that it was high time I attained a professional qualification to augment my experience, and also to become a qualified archivist. That is why I enrolled with the University of Wales, Aberystwyth for the study course through distance learning.

Distance learning allows me to gain practical experience while studying at the same time, look after my family, and study in my own home and at my own pace. I do have to emphasise though that it requires a lot of discipline and proper management of time. Distance learning is flexible. There are 14 students in my group from all over the UK, including two other students from the West Midlands, i.e., Wolverhampton and Sandwell. At our first study school we got the chance to meet our tutors and other students and shared our experiences and knowledge about the profession. Distance learning knows no boundaries. There are lots of students from Germany, Switzerland, Republic of Ireland, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad at the school who were also studying for various qualifications in Archives, Library and Records Management. I was really impressed to see people from around the globe pursuing professional qualifications via distance learning.

The MSc Econ/Diploma Archives Administration course structure itself looks at all the professional issues related to archives, from the definition of an archive and record, to acquisition, preservation, historical manuscripts, access, legislation, funding, archives buildings etc. It is very comprehensive and gives confidence in one's job. As a mother of two, with my younger one being 3 years old, I do not have to leave my family to go and study in Wales. I hope to finish my course in 3 years.

Publications

Third Age Learning – An Introductory Guide for museums working with older people.

The guide highlights the unique and special role that museums can have in inspiring and facilitating learning for older people. It offers insight into the 4 Cumbria pilot projects and provides guidance for museums developing their work within this area. The guide has been developed from the experience and evaluation of the 'Third Age Learning Initiative'.

For copies of this guide contact MLA North West on 01925 625058 or for further details about the Third Age Learning Initiative contact:
jane.fletcher@mlanorthwest.org.uk

Events

Tackling Social Exclusion: an introduction 8 February 10.00 – 4.30 Newcastle Library

This course is aimed at any staff interested in gaining an understanding of what tackling social exclusion involves.

For an application form contact John Vincent at:
john@nadder.org.uk

Copyright Law – 25 February 2005, am. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Copyright law affects every aspect of museum work, from managing collections to creating educational resources and generating income. This session will take you through the legal framework to develop a basic copyright law strategy.

(Developed in collaboration with the Museums Copyright Group.)

Marketing – 25 February 2005, pm. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Marketing is an essential skill for developing museum audiences. To make the best use of resources you need to know which audiences to target, how and when to talk to them and what to talk about. This session will help you develop a marketing strategy relevant to the size, context and aims of your museum.

(Developed in collaboration with the Campaign for Museums)

To book a place for either or both of these events contact: lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Or visit: www.museumsassociation.org

Adult Learners' Week – 21-27 May 2005.

NIACE would like to encourage individuals, groups of learners and projects that are innovative in attracting and educating learners, to enter for the 2005 Adult Learners' Week Awards. To enter your organisation or nominate someone for the awards contact the Campaigns Team on 0116 2044 200 or email:

alw@niace.org.uk

Box of Acronyms:

AAC	...	Archives Awareness Month
BLF	...	Big Lottery Fund
CILIP	...	Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals
DCMS	...	Department for Culture, Media & Sport
ICT	...	Information Computer Technology
LIS	...	Library & Information Services
NESTA	...	National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts
NIACE	...	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NLB	...	National Library for the Blind
PN	...	Peoples' Network
WMLD	...	West Midlands Learning Directory
2wm	...	West Midlands Support Website



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and archives

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Please tell us about your projects, events, exhibitions or interesting/success stories in approximately 200 words for our 'Around the Region' feature, and send them to: Julie Bedward, Information Assistant.

julie.bedward@mlawestmidlands.org.uk

**A large print version of this
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request.**



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