

**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of
Australia
Travelling Fellowship Report
By
Dr Terrence Hays**



**To Study
Creative and Positive Ageing:
Arts Festivals for Older People**

Churchill Fellow 2005

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication. I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on the website for access over the internet. I also warrant that my Final report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which in the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed: _____

Dated: April 10th 2006

Introduction

The correlation between active engagement in the arts, healthy living and positive ageing is well documented in the gerontology and creative arts literature, yet in Australia, there are few specialised creative arts programs for older people which celebrate ageing or provide opportunities for people to come together and experience positive ageing through the arts. However, in the USA and UK, there are major research projects and programs being developed, which focus on well-being, health and lifestyle for older people. Such prominent programs include the National Centre for Creative Ageing in New York, the Age & Opportunity Marino Institute of Education, and Bealtaine Festival in Dublin, WearPurple Arts Project, Cheshire, Aberdeen Senior's in the City Festival in Scotland, and the multicultural Older People's Festival in London supported by the city council.

The Fellowship has provided me with wonderful opportunities to meet with key people in the US, England, Ireland and Scotland who have developed and administering specialised creative arts programs with older people and which directly relate to my goal of establishing a unique Australian National Creative Arts Festival for Older people in Australia. This Festival will bring older people together who will work with specialised arts people in the areas of music, visual arts, drama, creative writing and dance. The Festival is planned to be bi-annual with the first project being the Australian National Senior's Choral Festival to be held in Newcastle 4th-8th of July 2006.

At the inaugural Festival in 2006 participants will be working with Heather Buchanan who is an internationally recognised choral conductor in the preparation and performance of major choral works and the premier of a new work composed by the eminent Australian composer, Dr Peter Sculthorpe based on the Shelly poem 'When Soft Voices Die'. Participants will take part in four days of workshops culminating in a public concert. The project to date has already drawn together people and organizations together including the University of New England, the University of Newcastle, the Australian Council on the

Aging, Australian Gerontology Association, and the New South Wales Council for the University of the Third Age (3UA).

The following report details the meetings with people and organizations undertaken during the Churchill Fellowship travel. While the travel schedule (attached as an appendix: I) details the timing and place of meetings, the following report provides a more detailed perspective of the people and organizations visited. These people and organizations were selected because they are unique creative arts programs and projects for older people. Many people like Susan Perlstein at the National Centre of Creative Aging, and Mary Anderson from the Aberdeen Senior's Festival are pioneers in leading the way for the use of creative arts based projects in the promotion of positive ageing in the community. The people and organizations visited have provided me with a wealth of knowledge, provided encouragement and advice, and facilitated the forging of strong supportive and professional links that will help progress the concept of a Creative Arts Festival in Australia. In the case of Aberdeen, Los Angeles and Montclair there is also the possibility for international interchange of participants which has the potential to provide another dimension to the Australian and overseas festivals.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Churchill Trust of Australia for the awarding me this Fellowship. The experience will always remain one of the highlights of my life, and I feel very honoured and privileged to have been given the opportunity to visit so many organizations and to meet key people to discuss my vision for developing a National Creative Arts Festival here in Australia. I also see this award carrying a responsibility to continue to work diligently to achieve this outcome regardless of the financial and psychological setbacks that so often occur with embarking on such a large project.

I would like to thank all the administrative team at the Churchill Trust who patiently and kindly supported my Fellowship – always quick to respond to queries and to help in every way possible. Many thanks also to the staff at QANTAS business centre (especially Sue) who so patiently and professionally helped me to organise my travels and find ways to make the travel seamless and manageable. Many thanks to all my colleagues at the University of New England who covered my teaching and administration responsibilities

during my Fellowship travel. I am most fortunate to have supportive friends and colleagues who also believe in my project.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank and acknowledge all the people and organizations that I visited during my travels. I am well aware that time is precious for most people regardless of position or organisation, and I am greatly indebted to all the people who not only found time to meet with, but who also looked after me, welcomed me, shared information and took a personal interest in my Australian project. There are far too many people to individually cite here, however, I thank you for your kindness, time, interest and sharing of ideas. I am also sure that we will be meeting again as a result of the links we now share in our projects.

Executive Summary

Name: Dr Terrence Hays

Address: School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 251

Email: thays@une.edu.au

Phone: (2)67 733649

Position: Artistic Director
Australian National Senior Choral Festival
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351

Project Description:

To investigate creative and positive Ageing through participation in Arts Festivals and creative arts projects specifically organised and designed for older people

Fellowship Highlights:

- National Centre for Creative Aging, New York.
- Levine School Community Choral Program, Washington.
- Age & Opportunity: Bealtaine Festival Administration, Dublin, Ireland.
- Wear Purple: arts project: Age Concern Cheshire. Vale Royal, Cheshire.
- Invest and Save: Arts in Healthcare / Connecting Health and the Arts.
- Aberdeen Seniors City Festival administration, Aberdeen, Scotland.
- London Older People's Resource Facility, London Festival for Seniors, City Hall, London, UK.
- Festival Planning and Artistic Management, Vienna Symphonica, Vienna, Austria.

Findings:

The Fellowship has provided me with a broader perspective of the understanding of the power of the arts in health and has challenged me to think in broader terms about the development and logistical organisation of my project here in Australia. The Australian project of a National Creative Arts Festival, while being a first in Australia also has a number of innovative strands that are not yet being undertaken in the US or UK. For

example, a specialised choir and orchestra programs where there is an expectation of higher levels of excellence and competency from participants.

The Churchill Fellowship has challenged me to consider aspects of Festival administration and the broader issues concerning creative arts, positive ageing, health and older people. For example, in Australia we need to establish training programs, provide educational opportunities to people working in all areas of arts administration and gerontology, and develop advocacy strategies to influence funding and policy opportunities between creative arts and health.

(i) Organisation and administration

The setting up of a National Festival needs long-term organisation and planning. It was interesting to note with many of the projects visited during my Fellowship that there was a need and interest in media technologies such as digital photography and that there was a gender imbalance of participants in creative arts activities such as writing, drama and visual arts activities. While this might also be a natural consequence of an ageing population where there are higher female numbers, it was also acknowledged by most project coordinators that males are more reticent to join creative arts activities, which traditionally might be perceived as feminine activities. However, by careful promotion and providing diverse activities as suggested by the activities suggested by the Aberdeen and Bealtaine festivals should appeal to a broader cross-section of the community.

(ii) Political landscape: collecting data from projects

It is importance to use every opportunity to gather data on the effectiveness of programs and projects so that they can be used as platforms to advocate greater awareness of the effectiveness of the creative arts, well-being and health. Many of the sites visited were actively engaged in undertaking research to evaluate the effective and strengths of the projects, which was considered just as important as the arts project because it had the potential to secure future funding.

(iii) Training institutes and on-going support

Arts projects in the community need to engage people rather than being passive activities that are designed to only to entertain. While this mode of delivery has merit,

many older people want to be actively engaged in the making and appreciating, which is also part of a life-long learning perspective. We in Australia need to start thinking about training programs whereby artists and people working in the arts field have some initial training in being able to develop, administer and evaluate projects when working with community groups.

Since my return from my Fellowship travels I have discussed the possibility of setting up similar programs here in Australia with colleagues in the arts, gerontology and also at my university, The University of New England has a large gerontology program and following discussions with my Dean, Professor Victor Minichiello (who has a strong research and publication background in gerontology) is very interested in faculty staff working in arts education and health to collectively work together to develop training programs using the models developed by Susan Perlstein and to support the development of specific arts projects with older people in the community.

(iv) Advocacy: Challenging stereotypes, new learning, providing opportunities

While the Australian National Choral Festival has an immediate agenda of fostering participation, musical excellence and facilitating well-being, positive ageing and social networking, it will also have an important role to play in breaking down the stereotyping of ageing in the negative as opposed to the enriching experience of working together with arts specialists and other older people to produce a creative shared outcome that is based on using and developing learnt skills, continuing to be cognitively stimulated through life-long learning and engagement in intellectual pursuits.

This perspective is not one that all older people see for themselves, nor is it fostered in the community either by the media or government agencies. If it were valued and fostered, there would be many more projects happening and funding available through arts funding bodies at the regional and national level. Research also shows that older people often internalise a sense of uselessness and ill health largely because it is portrayed constantly within the media. In the case of music, people can easily be enriched in their lives either through participation either by performing or listening, learning new works, physically playing or singing, or individually engaging. Music,

for example, can be considered one of the most social of the art forms for the very reason that can facilitate all of the above and is often the 'social glue' that brings people together regardless of age, ethnicity, or social background.

Since my return to Australia I have initiated discussion follow-up with many of the people and projects visited my Fellowship to look at organising an International Forum where specialised creative arts project organisers and could showcase and their work. This has been warmly welcomed would also facilitate greater exchange of idea and support. At present, a possible planning date for the forum is November 2007.

Program Schedule

8th-11th February

Lifespan Wellness Clinic, Californian State University, Fullerton

Community Programs Development

Contact: Dr Jesse Jones, Director of Programs

Ph: (714) 278 2620

Email: Jjones@fullerton.edu

Music Department, Californian State University, Fullerton

Contact: Dr Dennis Siebenaler, Head of Music Education Programs

(development of links to create an international Festival for Older People through University of New England, Californian State University and Montclair University in New York)

Email: dsiebenaler@Exchange.FULLERTON.EDU

13th-15th February

National Centre for Creative Aging/Elders Share the Arts

138 S. Oxford St. |Brooklyn, NY 11217

Contact: Susan Perlstein, Executive Director

Email: sperlstein@creativeaging.org

Music Department: Montclair State University

Montclair, New York NY.

Contact: Heather Buchanan

(Conductor for Australian National Seniors' Choral Festival, 2006).

Ph: 0011 1 (609) 275-8320 Email: heather@bodymapping.net

16th-18th February

Levine School of Music, 2801 Upton Street, NW Washington, DC 20008

Contact: Dr Lisa Shaw, Director of Adult Programs

Ph: (202) 686-8000, ext. 1127 Web: www.levineschool.org

Email: LShaw@levineschool.org

21st-24th February

Age & Opportunity, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9

Ph: 01 805 7737 Web site: www.olderinireland.ie

Contact: Dominic Campbell (Artistic Administrator

Beltaine Festival of Arts for Older people

Email: ageandop@mie.ie

27st February –1st March

Wear Purple: arts project. Vale Royal, Cheshire

Contact: Simone Cobbold, Coordinator and Artistic Director

Invest and Save: Connecting Health and the Arts

Loxford Tower
Manchester Metropolitan University
Contacts: Peter Senior Director
Amanda Leahy: Project Administrator
Email: p.senior@mmu.ac.uk
Ph: +44 (0) 161 247 1091

6th– 9th March

Aberdeen Seniors Festival, Balgownie One, AECC
Conference Way, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. AB23 8AQ
Contacts: Mary Anderson, Administrator.
Telephone: 01224 814615
Email: MARYANDERSON@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Ron Clark: Council Member. Email: RClark@aberdeencity.gov.uk

(Mary also organised meetings with people from the theatre, Lemon Tree Centre and Art Gallery and Concert House in Aberdeen). Other contact included:

Alex Patience: drama development officer at the Lemon Tree
Lesley Thomson and Alison Watson: arts development workers
Fiona Mair: lifelong learning coordinator at the Aberdeen Art Gallery
Chris Croly: Archaeologist and realistic re-enactments specialist in recreating of historical events.

Cate MacPherson who works in His Majesty's Theatre and is the education Officer. Jim and Marisha Addison who have been working with 250 singers (mostly older people)

Mary is also organising a working lunch one of the days when I can set fixed dates.

10th – 14th March

London Older People's Resource Facility
Greater London Authority
Contacts: Anna Roberts, Acting Senior Project Officer
Joan Matthews (Operational Director, Capital Age Festival).
Email: pjoan.matthews@btopenworld.com

16th-18th March

Chief Administrator and Manager
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
Barawitzkagasse 8/16, WIEN A-1100 Austria
Contact: Peter-Sylvester Lehner, Director Administrator.
Ph (431) 3698189
Email: PSLE@AON.AT

People, Projects and Organizations

(1) Lifespan Wellness Clinic, Californian State University, Fullerton

Contacts: Dr Jesse Jones; Director,
Community Programs Development
California Sate University, Fullerton USA

Dr. Jessie Jones is Professor in Health Science and Gerontology, co-director of the Center for Successful Aging, and director of the Gerontology Programs at California State University, Fullerton Campus (CSUF). She has an extensive teaching and research background in the area of gerontology and developing community programs for older people. Her research focuses on the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles of older adults, and the reason for visiting CSUF was to follow-up her interest in exploring the possibility of establishing a similar program to that of the Australian Creative Arts project for Older People at the Gerontology Centre.

While visiting Californian State University at Fullerton Campus, I also met with Dr Dennis Siebenaler from the Music Department to explore the possibility of creating links for future Festival collaboration between Australia and the USA. He was very positive about the Australian project and suggested the possibility of international exchanges and offered to help in recruiting future specialised people who might consider being guest artists in residence. The music department at Cal State University is renowned for the training of musicians who go on to work in the film industry as composers, arrangers or recording artists. While the discussions were only preliminary they were valuable in terms of developing future international links.

(2) National Centre for Creative Aging/Elders Share the Arts

138 S. Oxford St. | Brooklyn, NY 11217
Contact: Susan Perlstein; Executive Director

National Centre Programs,
Instructional Manuals and publications
Health benefits and advocacy

The National Centre for Creative Aging (NCCA) was established in 2001 and is renown worldwide for promoting networking, training and advocating in the field of creative aging.

Each year, the NCCA provides thousands of professionals in health care, social work and the arts with the theoretical framework and hands-on skills they need to implement sustained, quality creative programs for older people. The training faculty of the NCCA regularly presents at regional and national conferences and also offers a certificate in creative aging through attendance at three-day institutes held in summer.

The NCCA manages an Arts & Aging Directory, publishes an e-newsletter, and provides training and technical assistance to emerging organizations in the field of gerontology. It is also active in every state and region of the USA, and aims to continue to expand and enhance the creative opportunities available for all older people. The Centre is a valuable resource for all gerontologists and is a clearing house for the exchange of information regarding creativity and aging, evaluating arts and aging programs, identifying best practice models, and for advocating better public policy in support of quality arts programs. The Centre works on the basic premise that creative arts programs are essential to the well-being of older people.

The NCCA supports and strongly encourages project coordinators to document the role of creative expression in the lives of older people. It also has a mission to provide quality training and education programs to help establish new projects that foster the creative expression and the quality of life of older people.

While visiting the Centre I had long discussions about the development of my project and the benefits for older people with the Director of the Centre, Susan Perlstein. We also discussed the need for linking research and evaluation with projects so that they not only were better placed for future funding applications, but also could be use for advocating greater resources for older people. Susan has also provided me with training manuals, which she developed to train people working in the arts for establishing and developing specialised community projects.

(3) Music Department, Montclair State University, Montclair, New York.

Contact: Associate Professor Heather Buchanan; Head of Choral Programs, Music Department, Montclair State University.
(Principal Conductor: Australian National Seniors' Choral Festival 2006.)

My visit to Princeton was to spent time working with Associate Professor Heather Buchanan on the organisational and artistic planning for the 2006 Australian National Senior's Choral Festival. Discussions specifically focused on the development and selection of repertoire to be sung at the July Festival. (While this might seem straight forward, much time was spent discussing timing, preparation of works, deciding on levels of difficulty, division of parts, tonal balance and overall effectiveness of the concert repertoire to achieve a diverse, interesting and achievable program).

Other aspects of planning focused on the daily workshop rehearsal schedules, budgeting for the purchase and supply of music, and ways to promote the Festival, either through organizations or key people in Australia. It is through Heather's contacts in the US we have been able to reduce the cost of the supply and purchase of the music for the July Festival to less than 50% of the original budget.

Discussions also took place around the development of a similar program to be held in alternative years at the University of Montclair. This could mean replicating the Australian Festival within the US and also providing opportunities for cross-institutional and international exchanges between participants taking part in the Festivals. This might also have links with a possible CSU Festival on the west coast through Professor Jesse Jones and Dr Dennis Siebenaler.

(4) Levine School of Music.

2801 Upton Street, NW Washington, DC 20008
Contact: Lisa Shaw; Director of Adult Programs

The Levine School of Music serves as a vital community resource and it's central mission goals are focused on excellence and accessibility for all. The school is one of the USA's largest and most prestigious community music schools and is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. It offers music education for students of every age, ability and background and maintains its accessibility by offering an extensive scholarship program that is both need and merit based. It is also the only all-Steinway community music school in the world as well as being certified by the National Guild of Community Schools of Arts as exemplifying the highest standards of excellence and access in community arts education.

The reason for visiting the Levine School was to meet Lisa Shaw who has developed specific choral music programs for older people in the community. She presently administers and conducts several large choirs that meet weekly and consist mostly of older people 60 years and above who want to participate in choral activities and expend their musical knowledge. She also organises performances for these groups and access for the continuing recital series of performers studying at Levine. While visiting the Levine School and meeting with Lisa Shaw, I also had the privilege of observing a senior community choir in rehearsal and to speak with the group before the session began. The following statements by some of the choral participants highlight the importance of such programs for the individual and also the community.

... I've always enjoyed music, but more as a listener than as a participant. I've thought of learning to play an instrument or perhaps singing, but I could never seem to make the time.

...As I'm sure many other adults do, I felt that one must be gifted if they expect to play an instrument or sing. It's sad to think of the number of people who have never taken up a musical instrument or participated in the joy of singing because of this belief. Also, since I'm now in my mid-sixties I'm thinking I'm probably too old. Then, last September, I learned of Levine's A Little Day Music program. Having undergone coronary bypass surgery only 9 months earlier, I was intrigued by the program's emphasis on music's health benefits.

The program is open to any adult in the community who is available during daytime hours and would like to participate in an enjoyable instrumental or choral ensemble. For many participants it is about learning of music from the ground up, reviving old skills or learning new ones, and more importantly, for those in the coral, program, joining a community of like-minded music lovers.

(For the interest of this report I have included the following press release about the Levine School Choral Programs only to provide a broader perspective of the power and need of music and creative arts programs for older people. The press release is a reminder to me of the importance and need for my project in Australia – especially when it is easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated with the politics and organizational aspects of establishing a festival for older people. While research shows the importance of the arts for older people, it is very difficult to find a sympathetic audience with arts funding bodies in Australia who are prepared to invest in projects for seniors).

Press release December 19th, 2005 re: Levine School Community Music Programs for Older People (Reference: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/metro/20051218-105859-9998r.htm>)

Miriam O'Neill found her fountain of youth in music. The 78-year-old Arlington resident is one of about 120 members of the Senior Singers' Chorale, a group made up of three senior citizen choirs in Northern Virginia that are sponsored by the non-profit Levine School of Music. The average age of the singers is 80, but their spirit in song belies their number of years. 'It's fabulous, it is the best thing that ever happened to anybody,' Mrs. O'Neill said. 'It helps your brain, it keeps you alert. I can't praise it enough.' The chorale was formed five years ago in conjunction with a George Washington University study to determine the effect of arts education on the aging process. Its singers come from the Goodwin House retirement communities in Alexandria and Baileys Crossroads and from the Langston-Browne Community Centre in Arlington.

So far, the study has shown that the senior singers experience better overall health, have fewer falls and take fewer trips to the doctor -- effects the groups' members say stem from an opportunity to participate in musical programs normally geared toward younger singers. 'It's really an asset,' said K.T. Johnson, 87, a tenor in the Alexandria group. 'The rehearsals are fun, [and] they're rewarding in terms of being able to accomplish something ... it's something you look forward to.' The choirs practice separately and come together to perform pieces that include challenging medleys from Broadway musicals, as well as holiday and patriotic music. They have held concerts at the Kennedy Centre's Millennium Stage, and last week, they performed at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel for the White House Conference on Aging.

Jeanne Kelly, an accomplished concert singer who has directed the Georgetown University choir and sung with the New York City Opera and National Symphony Orchestra, conducts the senior singers but said she doesn't take it easy on them because of their age. 'I really don't treat these seniors any different than I did my younger groups,' Mrs. Kelly said. 'Many times, choirs

will dis-invite older people because [their] voices change. All you have to do is want to learn and want to have a great time.' Mrs. Kelly said she selects pieces geared toward the seniors' vocal range, and her singers step up to the challenge -- singing superbly and getting into it a bit as well.

'They can be very theatrical,' she said. 'When the guys sing 'Nothing Like a Dame,' they all get up and it's fun. ... [Conducting the chorale] is the most rewarding thing I have ever done with my musical career, hands down.' For the singers, the chorale has served to show them that age is no longer a limit to what they can do. Some of the performers are in their mid-90s, making Mrs. O'Neill, a soprano, a spring chicken by comparison. 'You see these older people walking in on walkers or canes, and you say 'I'm gonna be that active when I'm 90-something,' ' Mrs. O'Neill said. 'I'm gonna do this even if they roll me in on a wheelchair.'

(5) Age & Opportunity: Bealtaine Festival.

Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin.

Contact: Dominic Campbell; Artistic Director and Coordinator Bealtaine, National Irish Festival for Older People

At the launch of the Bealtaine Festival in 2004, the Irish Minister of State at the time, Ivor Callely stated 'Such participation is both life-enhancing and health promoting, and is crucial to one's sense of connectedness with community and wider society'. (<http://www.dohc.ie/press/releases/2004/20040420.html>).

In Ireland, it is the Age and Opportunity organisation, which promotes the participation of older people in the arts throughout the year by administrating and coordinating the Bealtaine month-long national Festival. This Festival is largely funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and is celebrated across the midlands and north-east including Cavan, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly and Westmeath. The Festival is specifically designed to celebrate creativity in older age and aims to promote meaningful participation in all areas of the arts by older people. Its focus is to also celebrate the contributions of older artists within their own disciplines whether it be music, drama, visual arts, writing, craft etc..

In administrating the Bealtaine Festival, the Age and Opportunity organisation also coordinate the efforts of a wide range of contributors for the Festival. These include the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Irish Film Institute, the National Theatre and Local Authorities, Public Libraries, local Arts Centres, Active Retirement Associations, Senior Citizens' Clubs, and Health Boards. Events for the Festival are organised independently by arts institutions, arts officers, libraries, active retirement groups, health boards and other organizations, and coordinated through the Marino Centre and the Age & Opportunity organisation. This organisation also oversees all of the media and printed materials, coordinates the press campaign promoting the festival, as well as providing support to the individual Bealtaine organisers. This year Dominic Campbell was appointed Artistic Director and Coordinator of the Festival and it was Dominic who I met with to discuss the logistics of planning and administrating such a large national event.

The Bealtaine Festival covers all art forms including theatre, literature, dance, film, storytelling, music, painting, sculpture and critical events. In the 2005 national program there were 800 events covering 25 counties. According to the Artistic Director, Dominic Campbell, the Festival is growing each year in quantity, quality and variety. This he says is evident by the diversity of the art forms, the range of settings and the number of different ways in older people are engaging and participating.

This year the organizing committee for the Bealtaine Festival are experimenting with a theme, which is titled '*From Hand to Hand – The Creative Exchange*'. Dominic suggested that is a way of focusing on the vital and integral role older people take in passing on traditions in the arts and also a way of raising the profile of quality inter-generational work between older and younger people. Bealtaine is the only arts festival that specifically targets older people and this year the Festival will include some 560 events country-wide, covering a broad range of artistic endeavours that emphasis the importance of participation of older people in the arts.

(6) Wear Purple: arts project: Age Concern Cheshire. Vale Royal, Cheshire.

Contact: Simone Cobbold
Artistic Director, Founder and Administrator

WearPurple is an Arts Project run by Age Concern Cheshire, based in Vale Royal, Cheshire. The project gives people over the age of 55 years the opportunity to work with professional dancers, musicians, poets and visual/media artists with the view of creating exciting new artwork and performances and positively engaging older people. Vale Royal has the highest proportion of older people in Cheshire; the project grew from a need to increase access to the arts and the Internet for older people and to provide new opportunities for training and volunteering. The project was started in March 2001 and since then *WearPurple* has employed artists of various media to work with local groups, individuals, day care centres & residential homes across the Borough, resulting in a wealth of new work.

The project has been extremely successful and gradually gained a reputation amongst the local community for its high quality art workshops and for providing positive and engaging experiences for older people within a supportive environment. Examples of the kind of initiatives include: Group poetry programs in 16 day centres, an eight week dance and music project in partnership with Weaver Vale Housing Trust, an on line vending poetry workshops, an intergenerational dance activity project, regular open groups focusing on craft, poetry and digital photography, digital photography surgeries, e-card workshops and involvement in local public art projects. Other project outputs have included: 2 CDs, a booklet of poetry, videos, developing a bank of photographs which promote a positive image of older people, the writing and performance of songs, 20 web poems, performances of dance and music, art exhibitions that have included willow, mosaic, textiles, craft, painting & printing.

WearPurple is presently building on the successes of its early programs and is continuing to provide employment opportunities for local and national artists to work with older people. The project is aiming to produce a data base of artists experienced in working with older people, people with disabilities and mental health problems and where possible provide shadowing opportunities for less experienced artists to gain confidence/experience in the field of arts healthcare. The artists involved in the projects are invited to the steering group meetings to give their views on the various projects and also have direct input into the development of *WearPurple*.

The initial proposal put forward to Age Concern to establish a creative arts project called *WearPurple* was focused on new media and involved interactive web site learning, new

media projects, and online poetry sessions. In the early stages a large percentage of their target audience (the over 55's) had no basic computer knowledge or skills, and were often scared off by the mention of computers and new media. The *WearPurple* has now set up various groups that meet on a regular basis including craft/art groups, digital photography and photoshop groups, along with creative writing programs. This allows staff to gradually introduce new skills to the groups and to be more experimental with new techniques and art forms. Most of the older people taking part in the initial sessions according to Simone Cobbard, said that they felt they were not 'creative' in any form, and it so it was only gradually over time that the groups after working with creative artists learnt and experimented with new skills, thereby allowing the confidence of the groups and individuals to grow. New people can join the groups on a monthly basis and there are now waiting lists for many of the sessions and activities.

Simone Cobbard stated the benefits of this approach can be easily seen with all individuals taking part including the residents of day care & residential homes. Simone also stated that people are often reluctant at first to be involved, but now they are more confident to try something new and will often travel to other sites to take part in the project. There has also been a turn around with many of the day care and residential staff as they begin to see the benefits of creative projects. She believes the benefits to individuals, groups & volunteers has been evident from the start of the project, and the project is presently taking part in a project with *Invest and Save* (discussed next) to provide documentary evidence that the projects have a major influence on people's lives. By doing this, the project is directly contributing to research and can be an advocacy program for north-west England arts funding for older people projects

The initial funding for *WearPurple* was for three years this funding is due to finish in November 04. We are now looking at various funding options to continue and develop the project. As part of our evaluation package we are looking to employ an independent evaluator to evaluate the project over the next two years. It is hoped this evaluation will provide us with a tool to leaver future funding & support for *WearPurple* and for similar projects nationally. It would also provide us with the evidence of the benefits of creative work & older people, to allow Age Concern to use the *WearPurple* project as a 'model of good practice', promoting similar projects across the organisation.

Over the next few years the *WearPurple* project is also looking to develop in the following areas, including:

- Training programs for volunteers, day care & residential staff in creative activities – setting up a series of artist residences within day care centres and residential homes and to produce a ‘how to’ tool kit (hard copy & on line) developed by community artists.
- Producing a database of qualified/ experienced artists and less experienced artists who might undertake shadowing experiences. This database will be available to other arts officers and organisations wanting to employ artists to work with older people.
- Developing the project in rural areas. Much of the work so far has taken place within the larger towns; we would like to develop more activities in rural areas – older people affected by rural isolation.
- Investigating links to the Vale Royal current GP referral system.
- Encouraging the development of a programme of regular activities for older people to promote key venues and encourage long-term availability & sustainability for arts activities around the Borough.
- Developing more intergenerational work and investigating the setting up of sustainable links between young people, schools, colleges and day care centres etc.
- Undertaking an independent evaluation of the project that can be used as a tool to encourage further partnerships, funding and to gather evidence of the mental and physical health benefits of arts and older people - so that a future case can be made to other organisations with a view of sustaining the work of *WearPurple*.
- Continuing to promote a positive image of older people & getting older.
- Continuing to build and develop new partnerships with existing groups and organizations within the community.

(7) **Invest and Save: Arts in Healthcare / Connecting Health and the Arts**

Loxford Tower, Manchester Metropolitan University

Contact: Peter Senior

Principal Researcher and Project Investigator

Arts for Health is an International Centre offering advice and consultancy for creative planning, funding and commissioning of arts and cultural projects in the health services for North West region of England. The centre monitors completed arts projects and publishes results of the projects as a way of raising awareness of the benefits of the arts in healthcare and is directed by Peter Senior who has an extensive background in visual arts and is also the head researcher leading the project.

The Centre has an international reputation throughout Europe and is part of Manchester University's Faculty of Art and design founded in 1988. To date the Centre has developed many innovative arts programmes and is a valuable resource for providing direct advice for the integration of the arts and design solutions for all healthcare environments.

The Centre's philosophy is centred around the precept that the arts should be an integral part of the environment and society, and not viewed as an add-on luxury to people's lives. Essentially, the arts should be perceived as having the capacity and potential to:

- improve the quality of all healthcare environments
- enrich the lives of patients, visitors and staff in medical situated environments
- demonstrate care and be used to reassure patients
- assist recovery, alleviate stress and encourage feelings of well-being
- enable staff and patients in the community to contribute to the healthcare environment
- empower a greater sense of ownership in healthcare
- enhance way-finding systems for personalised healthcare, and
- promote personal identity in an environment which often is devoid of personal space.

The Centre was important to visit because it will be a valuable resource for providing advice on the practical aspects of setting up projects in healthcare environments and also providing practical guidelines and models for good practice for implementing arts projects. It was clear from visiting the Centre, that the Creative Arts and Older People Project presently being developed in Australia needs to incorporate protocols for assessing the

effectiveness of the program. This is not only for funding purposes, but also so it can be an effective advocate for arts in healthcare and the facilitating of well-being and positive ageing for older people.

Discussions also centred on the possibility of organising an international forum where key administrators and project developers could meet to showcase their particular creative arts work with older people. This was an idea of the author, based on the fact that many of the projects that I had visited during my Fellowship did not necessarily know of the outcomes or establishment of similar projects elsewhere in their own country or overseas. Since returning to Australia, I have followed this up with other project administrators and the consensus is very positive encouraging. A possible date being considered is November 2007).

(8) Aberdeen Senior's in the City Festival.

Balgownie One, AECC, Conference Way,
Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. AB23 8AQ

Contacts: Mary Anderson: Administrator

Ron Clark; Older Persons Alderman and Council Member

Alex Patience; drama development officer at the Lemon Tree Theatre, Lemon Tree Arts Centre, Aberdeen).

Lesley Thomson and Alison Watson; arts development workers

Fiona Mair; lifelong learning worker at the Aberdeen Art Gallery

Chris Croly; Archaeology and organiser of realistic re-enactments of historical events

Cate MacPherson; Arts Education Officer His Majesty's Theatre Aberdeen

Jim and Marisha Addison, Choral Directors for Sing 300 - older singers group

Steven Stenning; Artistic Director of the Aberdeen International Youth Festival

The city of Aberdeen has a lively senior's arts activity program essentially administered through the Lemon Tree Arts Centre and the Aberdeen City Council. Programs include: Aberdeen Seniors in the City Festival, *CityMoves* (dance group), *Get Oot and About in Aberdeen*, Fifty Plus Out and About Outdoor Activities, Fit for Life Activities, Music and Drama Arts group, and *Seniors in the City Art* – all of these subsidised and supported by the Scottish Arts Council.

I am most grateful to Mary Anderson from Aberdeen for organising 3 full days of meetings with people from all of the arts groups in Aberdeen mentioned above, and including the Artistic Director of the Aberdeen International Youth Festival. My meetings included

talking with a focus group of older people who take part in the music, drama, creative writing and dance, a special lunch with a broad cross section of participants in the senior's Festival, Arts Education Officers, the Aberdeen Theatre Trust, Council, and Councillor Ron Clark who represents older people's needs on the Town Council. Mary also organised for me to visit various performing spaces such as the Music Hall, opera space, Art Gallery, an archaeology project, the cathedral and the Lemon Tree older rehearsal and performance space.

The meetings in Aberdeen were invaluable in terms of understanding the administrative aspects of organising a performing arts festival. It was also important in terms of meeting and speaking with older people about their experience of participating in music, drama, dance and visual arts programs. The meetings provided me with excellent organisational links, facilitating the exchange of ideas, and looking at possible participant interchange for future Festivals.

The city of Aberdeen in Scotland has a very lively seniors program largely because of the support from the Town Council, Scottish Arts Council and a healthy sponsorship by the Common Good Fund (which I was informed had ties back to the ancestry of *Bruce the Good*). The Aberdeen *Seniors in the City Festival* is held every year in the first two weeks of October and is run in conjunction with Older peoples Week. The activities are diverse and many. The following list is provided as an overview of the variety and scope of activities. They include: an art exhibition, watercolour classes, jewellery making, stain glass, digital photography, concerts, choirs, dance, a film festival, drama workshops, drama productions, cooking classes, jazz, etc. All these activities encourage participation and are well accessed and patronised by the older people in the Aberdeen and surrounding communities.

While visiting Aberdeen I also had the privilege of attending a drama workshop with a group of older people working with drama specialist, Alex Patience. This group has successfully presented their work to the public and have used their productions to focus on specific issues that concern older people living in the community. An example of this is their recent production that focused on issues concerning ageing and the home environment – including ways to make the home safer if living alone, ways of dealing with loneliness, relationships and loss. While the specific workshop I attended was mostly given over to rehearsal and planning for an up-coming event, it was also interesting to note the vitality,

commitment and non- stereotyping that occurred in the group. Each person was supportive of each other and the group collectively discussed and workshopped issues around relationships, sex, healthy living and positive ageing. Topics which are often times completely avoided by mainstream society because they are consider taboo or too difficult.

(9) London Older People's Resource Facility: London Festival for Seniors

Greater London Authority

Contacts: Anna Roberts; Acting Senior Project Officer

Joan Matthews; Operational Director, Capital Age Festival

The Capital Age Festival is organised by the London Older People's Strategies Group and is supported by the Mayor of London, Arts Council England, Association of London Government, Transport for London, Bridge House Trust, SELF and Home Front Recall.

The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has developed a ten-year framework to focus London as a centre of cultural excellence and creativity. It is the first strategic and coordinated approach to arts, sport, heritage and creative industries in London and was prepared with extensive consultation with key organizations and stakeholders associated with the arts. The Greater London City Authority consists of 3 cities and 27 Boroughs. While it is the Mayor who is required to produce a cultural strategy for London, the strategy is development by the Cultural Strategy Group which is chaired by Assembly member, Jennette Arnold, as well as representatives from the organisations associated with the delivery and administration of the arts.

Arnold as chair of the Cultural Strategy Group which developed the plan, believes that it is culture that underpins London's economical and physical dynamism and is key to the capital's success and it is the city's rich cultural life that is extremely important to Londoners and central to the sense of identity for it's diverse communities. The strategy strongly advocates the need to supports the capital's great museums and other institutions that are recognised around the world. It also seeks to ensure that newer cultural activity is able to develop right across the capital, and that cultural activity can benefit and reflect the lives of all Londoners regardless of age or

social economic background.

Through the London Development Agency, initiatives include the establishment of Creative London, Film London and the annual music and fashion event City Showcase. The LDA has also provided funding for a range of projects, including the Unicorn Theatre for children (Southwark); the Laban Centre (Deptford); the Rich Mix Centre (Tower Hamlets); Westbourne Studios (Westminster); and the Chocolate Factory (Wood Green). Other practical examples include free travel on public transport for children under 11, making it cheaper for families to travel to cultural institutions; involving different London boroughs in this year's Olympic Torch relay through the capital; the Kids Swim Free initiative; the Liberty disability arts festival. The Mayor has also lent his support to GAIN, which aims to increase the representation of Black and minority communities on the boards of various arts institutions.

The cultural strategy has four key objectives, which are directly focused on excellence, creativity, access and value. Underpinning each of these objectives is the principle of diversity. The cultural and creative sector generates between £25 billion and £29 billion and is second only to financial services in the wealth it creates per annum. More than 500,000 people are employed in the creative industries alone.

The research that has gone into the development of the strategy and consultation underlines the significance of the cultural and creative sectors and how they are perceived to the cultural life of London. The strategy shows how London wide planning, transport and other strategic powers can be used to promote and develop the established and new cultural and creative projects in the capital. The London Cultural Consortium is also working to bring together funding bodies and decision makers to help forward this strategic plan..

The 2005 London Capital Age Festival took place on Sunday 21 August at Bernie Spain Gardens, Upper Ground, South Bank. It was attended by thousands of older Londoners, families and friends. The festival is free to all and last year featured

performances by people including Geno Washington and the Ram Jam Band; Nostalgia – the oldest steel band in the UK; and a ‘Dance Around the World’ stage showcasing a range of seniors acts from Cuban, Spanish and Indian dance to South African Quadrille. Other activities included the exercise demonstrations, East London Dance workshops, arts and crafts stalls, and the Imperial War Museum’s exhibition titled ‘Their Past, Your Future’ in the large tea-tent.

My meeting with Joan Matthews was a very exciting one where we were able to share ideas and since arriving back in Australia I have been in follow-up contact to provide information that will help assist their planning. While the London Festival is different in terms of the administration and organisation to the Festival being planned in Australia, it was clear from my meetings that we collectively can help each other in terms of developing assess programs for our projects and looking at ways that we can become strong advocates for arts funding from national and regional bodies to support creative arts for older people.

(10) Festival Planning and Artistic Management.

Vienna Symphonica Orchestra
Barawitzkagasse 8/16, WIEN A-1100 Austria
Contact: Peter-Sylvester Lehner
Chief Administrator and Manager.

My visit to Vienna was to meet with Peter-Sylvester Lehner, who is the Chief Administrator for the Vienna Symphonica and also agent manager for various European notable conductors such as Fabio Luisi. The time spent with Peter focused on the administrative protocols of working with cross institutional arts organizations, organisational aspects of planning music festivals, planning and managing budgets, public relations, and media releases, and the planning of suitable repertoire for large scale ensembles, for example, tracking down publishers and the hiring of orchestral and vocal scores for public performance.

While visiting the administrative headquarters for the Vienna Synphonica, I was also privileged to be invited to attend a concert performance of the Mahler Symphony No 1 and the Schumann Piano Concerto performed by Helene Mibaurd in the Vienna Concerthaus.

The insights gained by spending time with the administrators of the Synphonica was invaluable for my project and will be an excellent professional contact for on-going support and follow-up in the future. I am most grateful for the time Peter and his colleagues were able to afford me during my visit, especially when my visit occurred at crucial time of budgetary planning. Like many of my contacts during my fellowship travels, there has been follow-up emails and correspondence and Peter Lehner has kindly suggested that he would be happy to stay in touch and provide advice any time I needed it and in any way he might be able to help in the future.

Outcomes and Conclusion

The Fellowship has provided me with a broader perspective of the understanding of the power of the arts in health and has challenged me to think in broader terms about the development and logistical organisation of my project here in Australia. An interesting note concerning the Australian project of a National Creative Arts Festival, while being a first in Australia, also has a number of innovative strands that are not yet being undertaken in the US or UK. For example, a specialised choir and orchestra programs where there is an expectation of higher levels of excellence and competency from participants.

The opportunity provided by the Churchill Fellowship to meet and discuss with key arts project organisers in the New York, Washington, Dublin, Aberdeen, Manchester, Hartford, London and Vienna has not only informed my thinking with regards to the logistics and organisational aspects related to establishing a National Festival, but also challenged me to consider aspects that should be addressed concerning the broader issues concerning creative arts, positive ageing, health and older people. For example, we in Australia need to establish training programs, provide educational opportunities to people working in all areas of arts administration and gerontology, and to develop advocacy strategies to influence funding and policy and for developing awareness between creative arts and health. We therefore, need to continue to actively engage public and private agencies to support arts and health across all strands of the community. These ideas are now discussed in further detailed.

(i) Organisation and administration

The setting up of a National Festival needs long-term organisation and planning. It was interesting to note with many of the projects visited during my Fellowship that

there was a need and interest in media technologies such as digital photography and that there was a gender imbalance of participants in creative arts activities such as writing, drama and visual arts activities. While this might also be a natural consequence of an ageing population where there are higher female numbers, it was also acknowledged by most project coordinators that males are more reticent to join creative arts activities, which traditionally might be perceived as feminine activities. However, by careful promotion and providing diverse activities as suggested by the activities suggested by the Aberdeen and Bealtaine festivals should appeal to a broader cross-section of the community.

(ii) Political landscape: collecting data from projects

One important outcome learnt from my Fellowship and the visiting of various projects is the importance and need to use every opportunity to gather data on the effectiveness of programs and projects so that they can be used as platforms to advocate greater awareness of the effectiveness of the creative arts, well-being and health. Many of the sites visited were actively engaged in undertaking research to evaluate the effective and strengths of the projects, which was considered just as important as the arts project because it had the potential to secure future funding.

(iii) Training institutes and on-going support

Arts projects in the community need to engage people rather than being passive activities that are designed to only to entertain. While this mode of delivery has merit, many older people want to be actively engaged in the making and appreciating, which is also part of a life-long learning perspective. From the projects visited in the new York, Aberdeen, Manchester and Hartford, it was clear that we in Australia also need to start thinking about training programs whereby artists and people working in the arts field have some initial training in being able to develop, administer and evaluate projects when working with community groups. While visiting the National Centre for Creative Aging in New York I was able to review and purchase several training manuals developed by Susan Perlstein. For example, *Transforming Memory into Visual Arts*, *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, *Generating Community: Intergenerational Partnerships Through the Expressive Arts*, *A Stage for Memory: A guide to the Living History*, *The Arts and Dementia Care* etc. These

training manuals will be ideal models for initiating and developing training programs in Australia.

Since my return from my Fellowship travels, I have discussed the possibility of setting up similar programs here in Australia with colleagues in the arts, gerontology and also at my university, The University of New England has a large gerontology program and following discussions with my Dean, Professor Victor Minichiello (who has a strong research and publication background in gerontology) is very interested in faculty staff working in arts education and health to collectively work together to develop training programs using the models developed by Susan Perlstein and to support the development of specific arts projects with older people in the community.

(iv) Advocacy: Challenging stereotypes, new learning, providing opportunities

The establishing of a large project such as the Australian National Choral Festival while having an immediate agenda of fostering participation, musical excellence and outcomes that will facilitate well-being, positive ageing and social networking, also has an important role to play in breaking down the stereotyping of ageing in the negative as opposed to the enriching experience of working together with arts specialists and other older people to produce a creative shared outcome that is based on using and developing learnt skills, continuing to be cognitively stimulated through life-long learning and engagement in intellectual pursuits.

This perspective is not one that all older people see for themselves, nor is it fostered in the community either by the media or government agencies. If it were valued and fostered, there would be many more projects happening and funding available through arts funding bodies at the regional and national level. Research also shows that older people often internalise a sense of uselessness and ill health largely because it is portrayed constantly within the media. In the case of music, people can easily be enriched in their lives either through participation either by performing or listening, learning new works, physically playing or singing, or individually engaging. Music, for example, can be considered one of the most social of the art forms for the very reason that can facilitate all of the above and is often the 'social glue' that brings people together regardless of age, ethnicity, or social background.

As Artistic Director and Founder of the inaugural Australian National Choral Festival to be held in the Newcastle Conservatorium Concert Hall 4th-8th of July 2007, it is my aim to develop a sustainable and on-going Creative Arts project where older Australians will have the opportunity to work together with recognised arts specialists who will lead projects in music, drama, dance, creative writing and the visual arts whereby people's lives are enriched and valued. This is envisaged for the 2008 larger festival.

Since my return to Australia I have initiated discussion follow-up with many of the people and projects visited my Fellowship to look at organising an International Forum where specialised creative arts project organisers and could showcase and their work. This has been warmly welcomed would also facilitate greater exchange of idea and support. At present, a possible planning date for the forum is November 2007.



Photo: Launch of the Australian National Senior's Choral Festival – Newcastle Conservatorium of Music Concert Hall, September 30th 2005.

From left: Professor Nicholas Saunders (Vice Chancellor of Newcastle University), Professor Victor Minichiello (Dean of the Faculty of Education, Health and Professional Studies, University of New England), Dr Terrence Hays and Carmel Lutton (Head of the School of Music, Drama and Fine Arts, University of Newcastle).