

**Cultural Equalities Now**  
**Stevenson Lecture Hall, The British Museum**  
**9 December 2011**

**Conference Report**

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011 a conference entitled “Cultural Equalities Now” took place, organised through a partnership between the Diversity in Heritage Group (DHG), The Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past, and The British Museum, with additional support from Arts Council England. The purpose of the day was to gather together practitioners from the heritage sector to critically assess the threats and opportunities of new policies, funding, and research landscapes in relation to diversity and equality.

John Orna-Ornstein of the British Museum began the day by welcoming the speakers and the delegates, quoting Ben Okri’s 2002 poem *Lines In Potentis*, and reflecting that the past eighteen months had been a period of incredible change across not only the heritage sector, but also wider realms of government, legislation, the economy, and society as a whole. He wondered if this era could also be looked upon as a period of great change for heritage thinking and practice. The intention of the day was to throw into the air some of the new and emerging issues in the area of diversity and discuss them and he concluded his welcome by expressing a hope and desire that the participants could find ways to maintain and extend their conversations beyond just today.

The morning session was chaired by Colin Prescod of The Institute for Race Relations. He reminded those present that they were all on a journey together, a journey which itself was constantly changing, and was different for each individual, as they grappled with the issues and problems relating to diversity in the heritage sector. He then introduced the first of the conference's two keynote addresses, to be given (as a pre-recorded interview with Helen Weinstein) by Baroness Estelle Morris. Baroness Morris was formerly a teacher, Secretary of State for Education, and Minister for Arts; currently she works with The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield. She began by urging everybody connected with heritage to continue, in their professional practice, to look outwards. Civic contribution is to be prized, especially in straightened times, and working to further participation and engagement with culture on the part of the public remains essential. Although we are all anxious at a time of great change, the challenge remains to command that change and remain confident. Such confidence is well deserved, because the cultural sector is stronger now than it has ever been: those who work with culture and heritage can look back at a recent period of heavy investment that has been matched by great achievement. Of the many forthcoming changes that the sector will have to deal with as a result of the new coalition government, one of the central ones is autonomy. The infrastructure of targets, box-ticking, and the meeting of set goals, which was so central to the previous government's regime, has now been abolished. In its place the heritage sector has been granted autonomy and finds itself largely left to make its own decisions. This can be a time of great potential: new partnerships can

be put in place and a new culture of participation can be created. Morris warned about the dangers of pessimism: if cuts to public spending become the only thing people in the sector can talk about, then it will damage the potential work that they can do. Instead everybody connected to the cultural sector must remain confident and optimistic, committed to doing the very best that they can in the circumstances. Asked about the continued importance of participation as a core value of museums, Morris reflected that the traditional dichotomy of ‘Excellence *versus* Access’, where a museum must supposedly choose between being very good at its ‘core duties’ of collections and research or alternatively opt for being open and accessible to all, was a false choice: every institution must strive for both. The important job at hand is to connect culture with its audience. In this at least, the sector has a long-standing familiarity with the kinds of values that seem to constitute the Conservative Party’s ‘Big Society’ mantra. Volunteering and outreach are far from new to museums, libraries, archives, and other locations of culture: they know that many institutions are driven by people other than the professionals, but that this doesn’t mean that there is no room for professionalism. A marriage between those paid for their expertise and those who choose to work with culture and heritage as engaged volunteers is vital. These are precisely the kinds of partnerships that we all have to look for as we hope to invigorate the sector in these challenging times.

The second keynote address was given by Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG). He too began by reflecting, as Baroness Morris had done, that although these are dark times, socially and

economically, they aren't challenges that we haven't seen before. The absolutely crucial point is that we cannot retreat. Nairne recalled that he began his career very much influenced by the landscape of theory in the 1970s and its radical commitment to feminism, gender equality, and gay rights, all of which were frequently embedded in the avant-garde art he worked amongst. These ethics took a long time to work their way through into the arts hierarchy and establishment – he remembered working for The Arts Council at a time when they ruled that 4% of their funding should be reserved for “ethnic” art because this proportion matched that of the national population's notional diversity – but work through they did. All movements must have their start, and the campaign for greater diversity moved from representation, to equality, to fraternity, and beyond. He commended the work undertaken by the Heritage Diversity Task Force in London, which attempted the radical challenge of thinking not just about audiences, but also about collections, about governance, and about employment (in a sector which has a white-dominated workforce). Difficult questions were asked about reconsidering the equitability of partnerships and about finding the appropriate forms of recognition and respect. He was also able to point to several individual moments when diversity was recognised and represented in a highly visible manner in the sector, calling to mind the Marc Quinn's statue of Alison Lapper on Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth, and the NPG's recent *Gay Icons* exhibition. Looking to the future, he remarked that he had been humbled recently talking to practitioners across the globe who are challenged to do their work in contexts very different from our own: talking with a curator from, for example, Belize, can remind us that

cultural work can (and must) be done under any and all circumstances. Similarly, we must also ensure that we do not always rely on the cues that politicians offer us; we have to take charge, take the lead, in order to ensure that circumstances are not allowed to dictate our practices when it comes to ensuring equality of access to culture and heritage.

After the keynotes, the next speaker was Gay Moon, who is Special Legal Advisor to the Equality and Diversity Forum. Seeking to outline the implications for practitioners of the recent Equality Act 2010, which came into force in October of that year, she summarised the key areas where legislation impacts upon the work museums may do. The Act itself is intended to be a consolidation and harmonisation of much of the pre-existing legislation about discrimination, but it specifically covers access to goods, facilities, and services, a provision that includes museums, libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions. The Act also applies to everyone, in terms of the grounds for potential discriminatory practices, legislating on grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation, and marital/civil partnership status. Newly provided is stronger protection against discrimination for those associated with or connected to people who might suffer discrimination (such as, for example, carers). Most crucially, though, the public sector now must give strong regard to advance equality of opportunity within organisations. They must also ensure that they take the necessary steps to remove or minimise disadvantages from any protected groups, to take steps to meet their needs when those needs are different from others, and to encourage their participation in public life. Moon did happily concede that most

cultural institutions are likely already fulfilling such obligations, and have been doing so for many years. She concluded with some words on Positive Action Provisions, which are an optional part of the Act; these steps can be taken if people with a protected characterisation are suffering disadvantage or are participating in disproportionately low numbers. Measures can thus be taken under the Act to open out opportunities for all, rather than merely acting retroactively to prevent discrimination.

The next part of the conference moved away from individual papers, and on to a panel of four speakers who had been convened to address the issue of 'Policy Now', as they saw it in the field in which they worked. First to speak was Julia Slay, Senior Researcher at the New Economics Foundation (NEF). Slay deconstructed the 'Big Society' initiatives, initially rolled out by the Conservative Party in 2010 as part of their election manifesto, but now integrated into the policy priorities of the Coalition Government. Essentially, the term is a catchall referring to a raft of measures intended to replace the notion of 'Big Government'; this includes localism, volunteering, and devolving aspects of centrally held power to communities and individuals. This broad rhetoric has been backed up by legislation, including provisions for the establishment of free schools and giving the community the right to buy, to build, and to challenge. Thus, groups of volunteers are capable of banding together and competing for the right to take over assets and run what were formerly state-administered public services; funding, if forthcoming, would be from local authorities, but the institutions would be volunteer-led. The government hoped to train five thousand community organisers who

would then be introduced into communities to stimulate and advise on these activities. Slay pointed out that volunteering had been going on for decades (and more), but that the term ‘Big Society’ might be seen to particularly refer to these activities taking place in a context of government austerity. In circumstances where the institutional frameworks that enable and facilitate public volunteerism are themselves being drastically cut, it remains difficult to see how these hopes for community-led action will materialise. Issues surrounding equalities are also intimately bound up with this situation: communities where volunteering is common tend to be those where people are time-rich, and those which generally are not thriving will struggle to achieve the capacity to participate in these initiatives. Seen from a distance, much of the rhetoric embedded in the idea of the ‘Big Society’ is admirable: opening up public services, opening spaces up to communities and the Third Sector, reducing bureaucracy, and increasing accountability are all laudable objectives. However, many of these things are very hard to achieve, precisely at a time when the infrastructure to support them is being reduced. Yet a sense ultimately remains that even if the term ‘Big Society’ lapses and falls by the wayside, there are opportunities here that the cultural sector may be equipped to grasp.

Tony Butler, who is Director of the Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL), gave the second short paper in the panel. He began by emphasising the fact that MEAL had taken a strategic decision to make social enterprise a crucial part of its stewardship duties, and that participation and volunteerism were absolutely central to the particular

image of a museum that it was trying to fulfil. With these priorities, of remaining progressive and engaged in all that it did at the forefront of his mind, Butler said that he could then approach the particular context of East Anglia's micropolitics, as local authorities desired to divest themselves of the direct responsibility for running certain public services, with an eye for potential opportunities. Butler was in negotiations with Suffolk County Council about running several services. He suggested that the public was on the whole pragmatic about the sorts of services offered by the local authority, although he echoed Slay's concerns about the patchy level of volunteering: certain communities with lower socio-economic conditions will frequently have lower levels of volunteering. Ultimately, if MEAL can take advantage of the political and social context surrounding the 'Big Society' legislation, then he can foresee them bidding for small subcontracts to deliver aspect of social and cultural well-being in their local community.

Speaking next was Ayub Khan, Head of Library Services Strategy in Warwickshire. Khan began by looking at the preconditions and circumstances under which his decisions have to be currently made. The library sector as a whole is facing big budget cuts, and this demands new business models. One existing area where the sector is on firmer ground is volunteerism: libraries have a strong tradition of this, which Khan suggested could be built on and taken to a new level, if those who run libraries seek to mitigate the effects the cuts are having. This should be viewed not only as a means to help staffing in those libraries that are centrally administrated, but might also be seen as a way for communities



to run their own libraries which might otherwise be under the threat of closure. Khan remarked that this might represent something of a return to nineteenth-century models of subscription libraries. Despite the potential good inherent in this situation, there are possible problems and difficulties. Libraries are unlike museums in so far as they are required to be formally integrated into much wider national networks, through things like their IT systems. He had seen proposals for sixteen community-led libraries in the area under his remit, thirteen of which would become volunteer-run with support from central library staff, but how sustainable they would in the longer-term be was difficult to say. Once again, the issue was raised about the extent to which volunteer-run services will only flourish in affluent areas, and they depend very much on the groups remaining committed. But, he concluded, continued support would be offered wherever possible. It was, as ever, a good thing that more power and responsibility was resting in the hands of local people, but he cautioned that libraries were culturally absolutely vital to communities, and they required support to ensure that they remained accessible for all.

The final paper in the panel was given by Bridget McKenzie, Founding Director of the consultancy firm Flow Associates. She suggested that local authorities and councils essentially viewed public-owned cultural resources as assets: they were seen as items that could always be potentially monetized at some point in the future, sold off, or otherwise dispersed for capital gain. This was a position in sharp contrast, of course, with how heritage practitioners viewed these resources, but she suggested it was always worth bearing in mind. Reflecting on the ‘Big Society’ policy

initiatives, she welcomed the fact that much of its rhetoric was concerned with enabling community participation, but she went on to ask if the barriers that it claimed had hitherto been preventing people from doing these activities were really in place. She then went on to examine two case studies, both projects with which she had been involved. The first was the Livesey Children's Museum in Camberwell, which was closed down by Southwark Council in 2008. However, the Council's desire to sell off the building that housed the Museum was thwarted by the terms of the bequest that had left it in their safekeeping in the first place and prevented them from "cashing in" on what they viewed as a saleable asset. Proposals for the museum to reopen as a community-run project were rejected by the council initially in favour of a theatre group, but once again the original bequest did not allow this because it had emphasised the need for the building to serve the needs of the entire community. McKenzie reflected that from the standpoint of the community, this entire process was drawn out and attritional, exhausting the group of formerly hopeful volunteers and depleting their energies. Her second case study concerned the New Cross People's Library, an institution that had formerly been centrally run (by Lewisham Council), but which had been turned over to a group of volunteers who had been supported by a Trust. The council however, still owning the building, sought to charge the equivalent of a commercial rent from April 2012, which has left the venture with a great challenge. Overall, energy is a key issue for volunteers, McKenzie warned: people may have intra-group disagreements, which depletes these resources. These are especially common around discussions of whether the key role of the group is maintaining the asset or perpetuating the

service (i.e. safeguarding culture or serving people). Disagreements over money are also inevitable in some form or other. In the austerity climate funding is hard to secure, and only available if the volunteers can prove that they are solidly united with a good strong reputation for effectiveness. This may point to a need for more volunteer-run groups to seek partnerships with larger organisations, despite the risks of joining up with people who lack local expertise. The ‘Big Society’, she concluded, may well mean that more of the cultural sector is being run by corporations, who are inevitably inclined to put profit first. It’s vital that in response practitioners ensure that there is equitable partnership at every level. Ironically, the very qualities that the cultural sector requires at this difficult time – energy, enthusiasm, organisation – are those that an engagement with culture fosters and encourages, so we all ought to strive for a kind of feedback loop, in which we derive from culture the very qualities we need to administer it equitably.

After lunch the second panel convened, chaired by Hilary Carty, a consultant and Director of the Cultural Leadership Programme. First to speak was Andrew Flinn, Senior Lecturer in Archives and Resource Management at University College, London. He said that although straightened times were undoubtedly on the horizon, archives had thus far not been quite as badly affected by funding cuts as libraries and museums. He acknowledged that diversity in the workforce remained a serious problem, and that more broad measures across institutions were still relegated to short-term, project-based initiatives, and were infrequently incorporated into an organisation’s core principles. The quest for greater

inclusivity needed to be part of a long-term commitment implemented across the sector, rather than being short-term and therefore peripheral.

The panel's second speaker was Victoria Hollows, Museum Manager at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art. Concurring that these were very challenging times, she posed a series of questions that the sector as a whole needed to answer: what is the wider point of the work it does?; how does it fit into society as a whole?; how can practitioners push themselves beyond the work they're already doing? It is vital that the sector does not simply retreat to what it might perceive of as its 'core work' of collections. Its work with real people, so vulnerable now to being cut, requires attention now more than ever, and a long-term commitment is required to recognise the value of civic institutions. Most importantly of all, it is crucial that an assessment of values is made, and that the decisions are then taken (including those about funding issues) based on these values.

Next to speak was Baroness Lola Young, who expressed her desire to bring a multi-disciplinary viewpoint to the issues in hand, reflecting her own background in many different areas of the cultural sector. She suggested that there ought to be a desire in the sector for a fuller integration with wider civic society. 'Diversity' too, although it may be a useful buzzword, should be something that people need to aspire to go beyond, to get to real issues of identity that sit behind it. Thus practitioners need to think across the whole range of social identities in ways that don't make the public feel uneasy. Similarly, there is a need to

move beyond thinking of art and culture only through the prism of 'display' alone, and instead view the entirety of its lifespan, from commissioning to production to curation and beyond, in order to find other nodes where the public might be encouraged to interact and engage. Ultimately, there is a need, she concluded, for this sector to renew its relationship with other parts of civic society, and through doing so, reinvigorate itself.

Rita McLean, Head of Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries, was next to speak, and she began by briefly outlining the particular situation in which her own organisation found itself, moving from direct local authority control to being run and managed as trust. This is symptomatic of the national picture: it is a time of enormous change across the entire sector, arising from the difficult economic situation the country is in. With very limited recruitment, and a steadily shrinking paid workforce, it will be very difficult for new people to enter the sector. Yet mergers and devolvments are also seeing lots of new institutions being created out of old ones, so there remains a challenge concerning how these new groups are going to operate. At a time of great stress and change, she remarked, it is vital that everyone remains committed to being as outward facing as possible. She concluded by urging delegates to remember that the wider context in which this is all taking place is one which sees the rapid retreat of the state, and stressing the importance of being able to understand the ideological motives behind these policy changes in order that the sector can be equipped to respond, and not itself retreat.

The panel's final paper was given by John Vincent, founder of The Network. He outlined his organisation's key objective: collaborating with museums, galleries, archives and libraries to tackle exclusion and work for social justice. Agreeing with the final point of the preceding paper, he reminded those present that specific political decisions had been taken that had created social changes that would affect the entire population. The result of these policy decisions was that funding was being slashed for museums, libraries, and galleries, with the result that cultural provision will become increasingly patchy across the whole country. We may, in fact, see a sector where the so-called 'core services' around collections are continued, but the good work on social justice, inclusion, and diversity, is allowed to fall by the wayside if the volunteers who have taken over an institution find that they happen to be uninterested in those issues. This is a dangerous time, and continued work is needed to ensure this work remained a valued part of the cultural sector's mission.

The next contribution to the conference was a paper given by Mark O'Neill, Director of Policy and Research at Glasgow Life. He began by offering two representations for understanding museums and their relationship to wider society: the 'Vicar of Bray Model', which prized survival and endurance above all despite challenging circumstances, even at the risk of hypocrisy; and the 'Gramscian Model', which viewed culture not as a passive reflection of economic reality but as an active hegemony that works to persuade people to conform, but which can be participated with in order to further social change. He then went on to look at three models of museums and the ways in which they might operate in their

social context. The first was the ‘Elite Model’; here practitioners work away in a bubble, separate from politics, concentrating on their collections and their research, committed to notions such as universal beauty and objective truth. The second model was the ‘Welfare Model’; in this case, a museum would act, at its core, very much as an ‘Elite Model’ institution, but would have other units bolted on to it that were dedicated to wider social concerns. In this instance, staff at such an institution definitively identify as belonging either to the core or to the bolt-on: the former create the content and the latter disseminate it to the uneducated. The third kind of museum was the ‘Social Justice Model’; here the museum recognises that it unequivocally plays a role in socio-political reality, either opposing it or reproducing it: it either seeks to be part of a solution, or recognises that it is part of the problem. Such an institution has a multiplicity of notions of beauty and truth, and its staff spend a lot of their time thinking about their visitors and the things they need. O’Neill suggested that at times of great stress (such as the ones in which we find ourselves), it is easy to see what an institution’s priorities are by examining which parts of its organisation it decides to cut, and whether or not it places access at the heart of everything it chooses to do. He emphasised that neutrality is not an option for museums: staying out of the fray is simply not possible, because museums are fully embedded in their contemporary cultural contexts, and if an institution isn’t currently moving towards the ‘Social Justice Model’, then it is a serious part of the problem and complicit in the difficulties facing the rest of the sector. Looking back at the historical context of the role of museums in society, O’Neill could pick out several key phases. From 1800 to about 1880, museums sought to civilise the

masses through displays studded with national and civic pride, and they succeeded in bringing in swathes of the working classes. This commitment to outreach was set back, however, for the subsequent two decades, which saw a rise in elite aestheticism and the search for an ethic of professionalism (much influenced by the thought of Walter Pater), all of which took place against a backdrop of rising competition from universities for the right to be self-appointed guardians of culture. In the years after the Second World War, the Keynesian consensus created not only the welfare state, but also inculcated a commitment to reward excellence, with a result that funding for amateur study began to drop off. Eighteen years of Conservative rule after 1979 witnessed a purported return to Victorian values, subsequently overtaken by New Labour's commitment to a Third Way. Thus, as we now find ourselves in the midst of a call for a 'Big Society', we can see that the sector has been subject to vagaries of policy interference from its very inception. What is necessary now is to repeatedly ask ourselves to define our own true values, to enquire within ourselves about what we hold most dear about the sector's work.

With regards to equality and diversity, he charted a passage that begins with avoidance and denial of otherness, through tokenism, to project-based initiatives towards integration and co-production and ending with equability. If this is the scheme museums follow, O'Neill warned, then we must be at least wary of condemning tokenism out of hand: all movements towards equality have to begin somewhere. With regards to the specifics of the cuts, we must as a sector ensure that we remember



that there are others across the world who have to do as much (or more) with far less, and we should take this opportunity to step back and define our key principles and values and plan for the future. Strategic thinking is required: although in difficult economic circumstances smaller projects may seem to be the most useful, there is no guarantee they will amount to permanent change. They may be abandoned, have limited learning, or be taking place for the benefit of the staff rather than the public. Instead, practitioners should seek to work on projects that have long-term aims, that have the potential to be scaled up, and that can ultimately be part of the institution's core work. Finally, he concluded by looking back, through George Orwell's reflections on him, at the Vicar of Bray. Thinking longer term is always the best option, and even if fear and worry about the short term appears all-consuming, we must all make sure that a museum is perpetually moving in the right direction. He finished invoking Gramsci: we need "the pessimism of the intellect, and the optimism of the will".

After a brief break, the third and final panel came together, under the title 'Funding Now'. First to speak was Bernadette Lynch, a consultant who has worked with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF). Arguing that museums were barometers of social change, she suggested that they had the capability to make change happen. She had seen as much directly, Lynch explained, thanks to her recent work for the PHF which had seen her work with a range of museums across the country seeking to understand how strategies for engagement can become embedded in an organisation over the long term. Although much had been said already over the course of the day about the external forces facing museums, she

wanted to concentrate upon the internal obstacles that prevented outreach. Her reflections very much chimed with earlier speakers who concentrated upon the importance of defining institutional values. Even when times were good and more funding was available, there was still a systemic tendency to view public engagement as a commodity: that internally a museum might believe that it only had a limited stock of resources, and that it couldn't deliver to the public if it had already expended those resources on minding its perceived 'core' activities. She argued that funders needed to support whole scale organisational transformation that would alter attitudes and practices right through a workforce, including the very top: museum directors are civic leaders, Lynch argued, and it is time they began to recognise themselves as such. Funding needed to move away from a treadmill of project-led initiatives, because this perpetuated participation and engagement being seen as the periphery of a museum's mission. She warned of the danger of parachuting schemes in to a museum, however, as they could lack a local context. It was always important to avoid 'Empowerment-Lite', where communities were involved but only in a short-term, tokenistic fashion. She also emphasised the need for time to be built into the end of a project, which allowed for critical self- reflection and discussion about successes, failures, and how they impact upon values. Ultimately, as the funding crisis looms, the sector has to ask itself if it is going to retreat from participation, or if this is a moment that will in fact save the museum, as those who work in it can potentially recognise the necessity of involving the community and asking it to set the agenda.

Next came two contributions from Hedley Swain and Tony Panayiotu from Arts Council England. Swain began by urging the sector not to be too hard on itself: much had been achieved in recent years in the sphere of access and engagement. Certainly there was a way still to go, but it remained vital, he suggested, for practitioners to be upbeat and optimistic. That the sector is full of people working hard on projects of great social importance stands it in good stead, despite the worsening economic situation. With regards to his own organisation, the movement of the Museums and Libraries Authority to Arts Council England does not alter and diminish support offered to issues of access and diversity, as it is an institution that has long been driven by a belief in the important role art and culture have to play in society. He did not recognise the image some earlier speakers had described, of museums retreating towards their collections and abandoning participation and outreach. He concluded by echoing Estelle Morris' argument that we should not oppose excellence and engagement: we should concern ourselves instead with the excellence *of* engagement. Panayiotu opened by reflecting back on Gay Moon's paper, agreeing that whilst the Equalities Act may be about compliance, any passing examination of the cultural sector will show that most institutions have moved far, far beyond mere compliance and are achieving real and successful change in the area of equality and diversity. Here he pointed out the proximity of those two notions: it was vital they were viewed in tandem, and it was impossible to have one without the other. There are many good cases put for the importance of diversity, he pointed out: a moral case, a business case, and the legal case that sits behind the legislation; yet, he suggested, the strongest of all is the artistic

case. Increased diversity not only produces better and richer art, but it aids out understanding of culture too.

The penultimate speaker in the panel was Jo Reilly, Head of Participation and Learning at the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Beginning with statistics, Reilly outlined how heritage now receives 5.6p of every lottery ticket sold, which allows the HLF to spend £4.7billion on over 31,000 projects, making it the leading UK advocate of the importance of heritage to modern society. Its core values were that heritage should be broad, progressive, and inclusive, and that it has the capacity to change lives. The HLF had, in 2002, realigned some of its priorities to ensure that it had a commitment to learning, participation, and preservation. She assured delegates that there would be no major change to the organisation's priorities, and that it would seek to continue this mission by building on what had gone before, confident that these values were being endorsed by the majority of heritage practitioners. With internal monitoring in place to ensure a continued commitment to equality and diversity, Reilly said she was delighted that good applications for outreach projects continued to flood in, many of which were being funded.

The panel concluded with a paper by Helen Weinstein, who as well as being a Professor at the Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past, University of York, has also sat on AHRC funding committees in recent years. She sought to explain how current funding regimes open to university academics working in the humanities were encouraging applications that specifically considered how research projects might have

broader social, cultural, and economic impact on society at large. This offered opportunities for museums and galleries to be involved in forging partnerships with academics, working to ensure that research was fully disseminated to wider social networks. Furthermore, other funding opportunities, such as the Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme, offered potential pathways to research synergy so that universities and museums could benefit from each other's knowledge and work in partnership. She concluded by saying that although times were difficult, new funding streams were opening up that could see valuable work conducted and bring academia and the sector closer together.

Bonnie Greer, Trustee of the British Museum, gave her thoughts on the day by way of conclusion. The sector is threatened by unforeseen exogenous events, Greer stated, and to deal with them we must build flexibility into our systems. All the delegates surely understood that a commitment to diversity was the right priority to have, and they also had to realise that big government would never again return to the sector, whoever was in power. Following models of open-source, engaging with communities, and encouraging change were all absolutely key priorities, and very much a part of the work that the sector is already capable of. Thus, we have, Greer urged us, to realise that we already have the tools for coping with the massive changes faced by the sector, we just have to find a way to use them.

Tracy-Ann Smith, who had organised the conference alongside IPUP and the British Museum's teams, spoke on behalf of the Diversity in Heritage

Group. She offered a few words of farewell, hoping that we could all move forwards and onwards together and create a national dialogue: those responsible for overseeing institutional commitments to diversity could and should be capable of telling those in power precisely how changes were to be effected.