

PROUDHERITAGE

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How **Proud** is Our Nation? An Open Invitation to the Museums Sector

I am writing to initiate a dialogue exploring the exciting possibilities ahead, and to invite your participation in an unprecedented mapping exercise.

Proud Heritage is the new national agency for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) history, heritage and lived experience. Our goal is to create a national museum at first online and then as a physical institution, reflecting the diverse experiences of LGBT people across the country and through time. Proud Heritage will be driving a shift in culture, both amongst LGBT people and within the heritage sector.

Above all, we recognise two fundamentals: firstly, that our work must be sustainable in business terms over the very long term; secondly, that we need to explore all potential models of joint-working to achieve our ambitious vision.

After 18 months of careful planning — involving a core group of leading archivists, artists, business people, communicators, curators, educators, historians and writers — we are now entering a critical phase, with the launch of the Proud Nation Survey. Our aim is to establish the first listing of the distributed national collection of LGBT-related holdings in British museums, libraries and archives.

Backed by both Museum sector agencies (MDA and the MLA Council) and LGBT community bodies like Stonewall and Outrage, this is the first part of the PROUD NATION strand of our work. It will ultimately deliver an online information system that catalogues every LGBT holding in the country and links them to audio or video clips, images, scanned documents and other information, and where people are encouraged to donate memories, images or artefacts about their lives or places/people they remember.

Next month this will be joined by strands developing innovative partnerships in local history (Walking Proud in Britain) and collective memory (Proud Memories) — please contact me for an advance briefing and to explore collaboration in the next two years.

In this initial stage, we are distributing the Proud Nation Survey through sector partners as well as directly through Museums Journal. You may already have received a copy. All you have to do is complete the response form enclosed. We hope it won't take too much of your time.

We want to know if you hold any original documents, objects, recordings or other items, such as books, journals/monographs. We recognise that sometimes even mass-produced objects or publications are of interest because of their provenance.

We would encourage you to look at your holdings with fresh eyes in order to fully assess what might be relevant amongst your collection. There may also be confidentiality or language issues. We are here to assist you on these matters. Remember, please complete the survey even if you feel you hold nothing relevant, because establishing the extent of LGBT visibility/invisibility will help inform policy-making and future activity for the sector as a whole.

We are also asking if you could estimate how much of such material requires full cataloguing. We recognise how difficult it is to resource cataloguing. That is why one of the projects we will be seeking to facilitate will be to assist partner institutions in the full cataloguing of their current LGBT-related holdings.

In the meantime, we plan to publish the data gleaned from this exercise, unless an institution requests us not to make public their information, with a web link to each organisation with

Director: Jack Gilbert

holdings. Ultimately, the information will also form the core of the Proud Nation online system described above. We also plan to list accredited institutions who do not respond.

Please return the response form as soon as possible. Let me know if you feel you need more than six weeks from receipt in order to respond in full.

Please check www.proudheritage.org for further background information, and electronic versions of the documentation.

If you would like to discuss our work, or the Proud Nation survey, please contact me on 020 7609 1811 or by direct email on jack.gilbert@proudheritage.org.

Yours truly,



Jack Gilbert, Director



PRESS RELEASE

Leading Museums Organisation Supports Proud Heritage

Cambridge, 1 December 2005 – MDA, the UK's lead organisation for knowledge management in the heritage sector, has pledged its support for the innovative Proud Heritage project.

Proud Heritage is breaking new ground in developing a shared understanding of the heritage of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Britain. By sharing the insight and expertise gained while developing the project, Proud Heritage is helping to create a common language which will enable museums, galleries and other heritage institutions to interpret their collections and present them to visitors.

The UK's heritage collections represent an unequalled document of every aspect of human history and culture. MDA is working with a number of organisations including the Museum of London, Mayor's Assembly and Archives Libraries and Museums London (ALM London) to explore new approaches to unearthing the 'hidden histories' in these collections which can really bring them to life for diverse communities.

Nick Poole, MDA Director, commented, "MDA strongly supports the approach which Proud Heritage has taken. It is an exciting project, which will help to tell the story of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in Britain. At the same time, by working with us and other professional organisations, Proud Heritage is ensuring that the entire heritage sector is able to share a common understanding of how this story can be told through our collections."

MDA's work with Proud Heritage forms part of its *Documentation for Diversity* initiative, which is looking at new ways of using knowledge and information to record and represent the heritage of the UK's diverse communities.

PROUDNATION SURVEY

Mapping the distributed national LGBT collection

Your contact details

1. Name: _____

2. Position: _____

3. Organisation: _____

4. Address: _____

5. Postcode: _____

6. Email: _____

7. Telephone: _____

8. Fax: _____

9. Website: _____

Please tick as appropriate:

10. I would like to be briefed more fully about Proud Heritage and to explore the potential for joint work.
Yes: ☐ No: ☐

11. Please put me on your mailing list and keep me informed of developments.
Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Your LGBT-related holdings

Please indicate which of the following you hold and attach relevant sections from your catalogue, or — if not available — brief descriptions.

DOCUMENTS and PUBLICATIONS

12. Original documents:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

13. Journals/monographs published before 1970:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

14. Journals/monographs published 1970-1979:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

15. Journals/monographs published 1980-1989:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

16. Journals/monographs published since 1990:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

17. Books published before 1970:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

18. Books published 1970-1979:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

19. Books published 1980-1989:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

20. Books published since 1990:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

21. Magazines published before 1970:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

22. Magazines published 1970-1979:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

23. Magazines published 1980-1989:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

24. Magazines published since 1990:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

IMAGES, ART and OBJECTS

25. Photographs:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

26. Paintings:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

27. Sculpture:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

28. Other original artwork:
Yes: ☐ No: ☐
May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

Please specify in brief: _____

29. Mass-produced objects or publications of interest because of their provenance rather than intrinsic rarity:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

Please specify in brief: _____

30. Other objects:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

Please specify in brief: _____

ORAL HISTORY

31. Audiotape:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

32. Computer or CD-based sound recording:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

33. Videotape:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

34. Computer or DVD-based video recording:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

35. Transcribed oral history:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

May be held in uncatalogued holdings: ☐

Confidentiality and permissions

36. Do any of your holdings raise issues of confidentiality or donor/family permission:

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

If yes, please indicate on your attached catalogue entries the item(s) to which this applies, and what the issues are.

Your catalogue

If you have developed a system for cataloguing LGBT-related holdings, please share your methodology.

37. Please assess how much of your current LGBT-related collection needs to be catalogued:

Less than 25% ☐

25-50% ☐

50-75% ☐

75-100% ☐

40. From your experience please estimate, for indicative purposes only, roughly how many days of work this would require.

41. Could this be done by a team of trained local volunteers?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ In part: ☐

42. Would you be interested in us assisting you to recruit such volunteers?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Your feedback and other comments

43. Any additional questions, comments, feedback or information:

Returning your completed form

By email:

proudnation@proudheritage.org

By post:

Proud Nation Survey

Proud Heritage

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