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22 January 2010

Local Residents Helping the Arts in the North East

Nick Brown Minister for the North East, Says Thank you

Contact

Penny Sychrava

Telephone

0796 791 5339

Email

Penny.sychrava@artsandbusiness.org.uk

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle; Seven Stories, Newcastle; Hexham Book Festival; Northern Stage; The Castle Players; Northern Roots; Theatre Royal, Newcastle; Lamplight Arts Centre, Stanley; Discovery Museum, Newcastle; Empire Theatre, Consett; New Writing North; Dodgy Clutch Theatre, Newcastle; Live Theatre, Newcastle; Northern Architecture, Pakistan Cultural Society; Preston Hall Museum and Park, Stockton on Tees; Tyneside Cinema

A select number of residents from across the North East have been identified as "Cultural Champions". They will attend a celebratory reception at Seven Stories, Newcastle Upon Tyne, where Nick Brown, Minister for North East and MP for Newcastle East and Wallsend will publically acknowledge and thank them for their outstanding cultural support.

The arts cannot survive without the support of thousands of people who are generously giving their time, expertise and money to make culture thrive in the North East. Today we will celebrate all those individuals who have given dedicated support to their local arts scene.

Arts organisations both big and small from across the North East have stepped forward to recognise these crucial individuals. Support can come in many forms from giving time, offering business acumen, donating funds or even re-potting plants.

Colin Tweedy of Arts & Business says: "Arts & Business is always looking for new ways to celebrate and profile the work of individuals who bring the very best resources to their local cultural organisations. Our recent figures confirm that the recession is putting pressure on private investment to the arts across the board - local and individual support becomes increasingly vital. We owe huge thanks to these Cultural

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Champions as they freely give their skills, energy, ideas and money to help the arts go from strength to strength.”

Nick Brown Government Chief Whip; and Minister for the North East said “Today’s event recognises everything that is good about the arts in the North East. The work that Arts & Business does to support local arts organisations and artists is to be applauded. I’m really pleased to be at Seven Stories today to see the real diversity of our region’s cultural talent. Thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm and encouragement.”

Adam Lopardo, Regional Director for the North East said:
“The North East has a rich history of talented and enterprising individuals enhancing the region especially in the cultural sector. Without the drive and support of these individuals many of the cultural benefits we enjoy, and are recognised nationally and internationally, may not have come about. They are indeed Cultural Champions.”

Elizabeth Bartlett and Janet Hall have put in more than 500 hours as volunteers at Preston Hall Museum, Stockton. Their work includes everything from assisting in teaching “Victorian School Day” and Wash Day” workshops for local school children to demonstrating how to make an African Bag Garden. They have re-potted plants in the Winter Garden, written interpretation panels and family trails as well as looking after 120 people on “family fun days”.

In Newcastle, Lindy McKinnel is passionate about children’s literature. She helped set up Seven Stories, a museum of children’s literature with a gift of £100,000. Her partner was the respected children’s author Robert Westall and she donated his archive to the museum as well as funding an exhibition of his work in 2006.

From its inception Janet Wilson has been an outstanding advocate and loyal friend of Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art. She has provided accommodation to stranded artists and is a great supporter of all BALTIC’s events and exhibitions.

Pam Clarke first visited the Theatre Royal Newcastle in 1964 to see Peter Pan. She has served on the Friends of the Theatre Royal Committee for 20 years and is currently organising a major concert to raise funds for the Theatre’s restoration project. Dame Margaret Barbour is a leading figure in the North East business world, and a great supporter of the Theatre Royal

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Newcastle as well as a frequent visitor to Theatre Royal shows and events. She was a major donor to the Theatre's new Learning Centre. The Learning Centre has reached over 20,000 people in the past year, and its work focuses on children from less prosperous backgrounds who have never been to a Theatre before.

Live Theatre, Newcastle has been helped immensely by Cultural Champions James Ramsbotham and Alexander Dickinson. They have provided substantial support for a scheme that encourages 9/10 year olds in the poorest wards of the city to start writing as well as donating £50,000 for capital development.

Pat Holmes was a founder member of the Friends of the Empire Theatre in Consett in 1978 and has provided consistent support to this beautiful old theatre and cinema, raising thousands of pounds to fund equipment and other improvement as well as organising special concerts and events.

Tim Bailey a practising architect has helped Northern Architecture immeasurably from leading architectural tours for the public to developing projects and offering financial support.

Across the region the arts have had immense support from individuals from all walks of life and at all levels. From vast capital donations to stuffing envelopes, the arts organisations of the North East are richer, and more successful for the contributions made by local residents.

For further media enquiries and images please contact:

Penny Sychrava on 0796 791 5339 or
penny.sychrava@artsandbusiness.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Arts & Business sparks new partnerships between commerce and culture. We connect companies and individuals to cultural organisations and provide the expertise and insight for them to prosper together.
- Arts & Business' total figure for private sector investment in culture in the UK currently stands at £653.8 million for 08/09. Business investment fell by 6% (a smaller decrease than last year) and now stands at circa £157 million and accounts for 24% of the overall contribution from the private sector. The amount of support from

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Trusts & Foundations also fell from £141 million to circa £135 million, also experiencing a 7% decrease from last year.

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- In 08/09, investment from individuals dropped to circa £363 million, an 7% decrease of £19 million, However, investment from business declined falling 7% from the previous year to now stand at £163 million and accounts for 24% of the overall contribution from the private sector.
- On November 24th 2009 HRH The Prince of Wales presented his five Medals for Arts Philanthropy. This medal celebrates individuals who support the arts and recognises the contribution of the most inspiring cultural philanthropists in the UK.

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