

Arts: Contribution to Education, Health and Emotional Well-being

Question for Short Debate

25 July 2013 : Column 1508

5.13 pm

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the contribution of the arts to the nation's education, health and emotional well-being.

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: My Lords, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this debate. As I have been told that I have only one bite of the cherry, I thank noble Lords in advance for what I know will be a very fascinating and learned debate.

Two weeks ago, we had an excellent debate initiated by the noble Baroness, Lady Wheatcroft, on the contribution of the arts to the economy. The case was made then by a number of noble Lords that the contribution of the creative industries to jobs, growth and tourism is considerable, but often understated. Yet we have a reputation globally as world leaders and innovators in the arts and it will be undoubtedly one of the drivers for future economic growth and prosperity. This point was echoed in a recent Arts Council report that showed that there was a four-fold return on every pound invested in the arts.

I am very pleased that this is the case but even if it was not, I believe that the investment would be worthwhile. That is why I was prompted to table this Question. I want to make a different case—the arts for their own sake, for what they provide to our civilisation and the benefits they impart to our well-being as a nation. This should be a sufficient reason to celebrate, to defend and to invest in our arts culture. It is why I share the concern expressed by many arts leaders that Maria Miller's recent speech focused so heavily on the economic benefits that could accrue from our arts activities. For example, she said that arts organisations should,

“demonstrate the healthy dividends that our investment continues to pay”.

2In other words, they have to keep making a profit. This demonstrates some flawed thinking. If we invest only in arts that are guaranteed to make a profit, we damage the very innovation and creativity that has generated our reputation for excellence in the first place. However, one of our challenges is that, while it is relatively easy to measure the economic contribution of the arts, it is a much bigger challenge to provide evidence of the wider benefits to society. I was struck when preparing for this speech by how many research projects have recently been launched to measure difference aspects of the impacts of the arts on our lives. This is obviously to be welcomed, but it will take time.

I also have considerable sympathy with the advice of my noble friend Lord Howarth to the recent Culture, Health and Wellbeing International Conference. He suggested that they should not wait for the holy grail of a definitive, conclusive report on the benefits of the arts, but should pool the existing research findings which already demonstrate a positive impact on health

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and well-being. It is also helpful that the National Alliance for Arts Health and Wellbeing has been established, supported by the Arts Council, to draw together the case for the positive impact of the arts on health and well-being. It has been working with the Office for National Statistics, which was famously and quite rightly asked by the Prime Minister to measure the factors which affect well-being.

Incidentally, it is a bit worrying that the funding cuts may result in that well-being research being scaled down. Nevertheless, since the Windsor conferences in 1998 and 1999, we have increasing evidence of the positive impact of the arts on health outcomes. For example, the Art Council reports that singing has been found to affect the hormones that facilitate emotional balance. The use of music in cardiovascular units led to reduced anxiety and to improved blood pressure and heart rate. Patients who experience visual arts and live music on trauma and orthopaedic wards stayed in hospital, on average, a day less. A recent large-scale study in Norway showed that visits to the theatre, concerts, art galleries and museums result in better health and well-being, and that the more often people engaged in cultural activities, the greater the health benefits.

In the UK, the Taking Part survey has reported that taking part in the arts and cultural activities once a week has a positive effect on an individual's well-being. UK museums and art galleries are increasingly involved in art and cultural activities, providing a welcoming non-clinical

setting to support initiatives for those with mental health, dementia and learning difficulties, with measurable benefits. I recently visited a groundbreaking project at the Geffrye Museum, providing a safe and stimulating environment for adults with learning difficulties. The Dulwich Picture Gallery's initiative entitled "Good Times" provides a range of communal activities for an increasingly isolated and vulnerable ageing population. I have been impressed by the outcomes of the Men's Room charity in Manchester which provides creative expression for young men previously involved in crime or homelessness. All this evidence confirms what we intrinsically know to be true: that creativity, whether active or receptive, lifts the spirits and increases a sense of well-being.

The same can be said for the contribution of the arts to education. The Henley report on cultural education showed that young people involved in the arts at school also performed better in other subjects. The impact of the cultural activity spilled over into other aspects of learning and behaviour. Henley made the point that the highest-achieving schools—including, of course, the private schools—tend also to offer a high standard of cultural education. He also quoted the outcome of a United States longitudinal study of education which showed that:

"Students with high involvement in the arts, including minority and low income students, performed better in school and stayed on longer than students with low involvement".

These themes were echoed by the national curriculum review expert panel, chaired by Tim Oates, which identified that art and music lessons not only had intrinsic worth, but also brought,

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"benefits to pupil engagement, cognitive development and achievement, including in mathematics and reading".

So a good arts education enhances other educational outcomes. It also produces young people with the life skills and creative innovation increasingly in demand from employers.

This is why there continues to be frustration at the failure of the Department of Education to embrace and champion these principles. The original EBacc proposals completely sidelined arts education. Even in its new format, teachers report that less time is being allocated to teaching creative subjects. The new national curriculum, while a considerable improvement on earlier drafts, does not, for example, have any meaningful inclusion of dance, drama or film. While we welcome many of

the steps outlined in the belated government response to the Henley report, it feels like it is too little, too late. Obviously we welcome initiatives such as the new National Youth Dance Company, the music hubs and Artsmark, but there is a sense that creative learning is moving out of mainstream education and into extra-curricular activities, when the opposite should be happening.

It would also be good to see the Government do more to address the inequalities in access to the arts, both for young people and for adults. Initiatives such as the Paul Hamlyn programmes to widen the demographic profile of those regularly accessing the arts are hugely important, but more needs to be done by Government to make the arts relevant to the widest possible audience.

I hope that I have been able to demonstrate this afternoon that there are widespread benefits to both individuals and society from being immersed in the arts. However, it would be a great shame if we had to put a price on all those benefits. Art funding should not just be about economic returns, but also the less tangible advantages: that it raises our quality of life, improves our sense of well-being and contributes to our future success as a nation. Ultimately, none of these issues matters as much as a belief in art and creativity for its own sake. However we choose to express it, art is what makes our nation civilised, it shapes our identity and it informs our heritage. If we are always looking over our shoulder at balance sheets to justify expenditure, we risk losing the essence of what makes the UK such a special place to live.

I hope that the Minister, in responding, is able to reassure the House that the widest contribution of the arts, and the contribution that they make to society, will be reflected when future funding of the arts is considered.

5.23 pm

Baroness Bakewell: My Lords, I am delighted to speak in this debate and I congratulate my noble friend Lady Jones on bringing it forward. It sits very happily in parallel with the debate brought forward by the noble Baroness, Lady Wheatcroft, some weeks ago. She made the economic, nuts-and-bolts argument for the arts, and today we deal with the real core, civilising values of the arts in our lives.

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What is the price of joy? What is the price of celebration? How do you cost the human rewards of the Last Night of the Proms? That is the climax of more than 100 concerts, over eight weeks, playing every night

in the Royal Albert Hall to audiences of more than 6,000 people. It is the world's largest, most democratic musical festival. It is, in many ways, beyond price. It involves enormous performances of world class. As you will be aware, the last night inspires sentiments of warmth, loyalty, patriotism and fellow feeling. People come pouring out of the Royal Albert Hall, alive with joy. How can you cost that?

At the other end of the year, there is the Messiah, sung in 1,000 churches and enjoyed by amateur groups who come together to give their own performances. It is true that singing is an exercise for the lungs and for breathing, but it is an exercise also in the recognition of the awesomeness of music. Choirs across the country share pleasure in that—a pleasure beyond price. Music also plays a big part in the lives of the handicapped. I have personal knowledge of this. Small children who cannot speak can sing. I bear witness to the fact that they can sing loud and often and that they enjoy it very much.

I will be more serious for a moment because I want to speak of the more profound rewards of the arts. The arts teach us what it is to be human, to know ourselves and to know others. In the 1790s Wordsworth stopped at Tintern Abbey and tried to recall how he had been moved when he had been there five years earlier. "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" reminds us that,

"with an eye made quiet by the power Of harmony ... We see into the life of things".

That is what the arts do. We see into the life of things. Consider human activities which we all take for granted such as the relationships between the sexes and the joys and crises of marriage. Think of Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedick, "the married man", Strindberg's "The Dance of Death", Ibsen's "A Doll's House" or Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?". Who can say that seeing these works does not help us see into the life of things? That is what we seek when we teach children through the curriculum about the lives that they will live in the communities that they will be a part of.

It is not just personal, either. Empathy matters in the lives we live, one with another. Empathy is the understanding of the other. It is the attribute psychopaths lack—the capacity to understand others. Callousness, cruelty and murder follow. That is why, when the arts go into prison, they make a real difference. Acting companies take the plays of Shakespeare to prisoners and then stay to discuss with their audience, the inmates, what are human motives and what are the feelings of other

people. That helps the prisoners grow to see their own lives. It helps them to see into the life of things.

Finally, as it is summer, I must mention literary festivals. There are now more than 250 of them in this country, events to which authors come to talk about their books to audiences that grow year on year. These festivals have spin-offs abroad. There are now festivals in north Africa and Mexico that are run from this

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country, and next year I will go to Burma in the footsteps of George Orwell. These festivals are arenas of ideas. I chaired a debate in which two Egyptian feminists came to discuss the role of women in Islam. There was an audience of more than 1,200 people. These places are indeed the cradle of ideas, debate and exchange. At a time when human discourse and the popularity of political meetings are perhaps on the wane, these places are locations where the debating of ideas and politics is gaining strength. They are places of ideas, opinions and cultural exchange.

That is my case to the Government: celebration, insight, empathy and intellectual exchange. The arts lead us to see into the life of things. They deserve a higher place in the school curriculum than at present. As we know, dance scarcely figures and music is neglected. We want our children to see into the life of things.

5.29 pm

Lord Cormack: My Lords, I am inspired to begin by saying:

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”.

I am sure that we are all extremely grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, not only for what she has said this afternoon so succinctly and so powerfully, but for what she has done over so many decades to further the cause of the arts.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Jones of Whitchurch, for two things: first for initiating this debate and the manner in which she did it, and secondly for her—and the Minister’s—kindness to me. This debate has started a little later than many of us hoped and as there is only one train to Lincoln at 7.06, I will have to leave here at around 6.10 so that I can get to Kings Cross in time. I hope that other colleagues in all parts of the House will be as kind to me as the Minister and the noble Baroness, and acquit me of any discourtesy.

Whenever I go into that glorious Lincoln Cathedral, which is now within 50 yards of my home, for a great service and I sit there and look at the marvellous shards of Purbeck marble rising to the roof, see the dappled, stained glass as the sunlight comes through the window and listen to the choir, I realise that this is the full beauty of “craftsman’s art and music’s measure”. What I want is for more people to be able to share it. Of course, some are conscious every year of the all-encompassing quality of the arts when they see the television broadcasts of the King’s College choir on a Christmas eve, and now similarly at Easter, with the Rubens masterpiece, the “Adoration of the Magi”, at the high altar, the marvellous fan vaults of Henry VI and, of course, the glorious music of the choir.

The noble Baroness is right to say that the arts are of overwhelming importance, educationally and to the health and well-being of the nation. She referred to the Dulwich Picture Gallery experiment, where not only the old, but also the sometimes quite recalcitrant young are brought to a greater understanding. They are—to quote Wordsworth, as did the noble Baroness—“seeing into the life of things” in a very different and new way. I saw this many years ago when I was involved in the beginning, in this country, of the Music Therapy Charity. One saw what effect music

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had on severely handicapped children who otherwise would have had no outlet. It began with a glorious service in Westminster Abbey when Yehudi Menuhin played Bach partitas on the chancel steps. The two remarkable Americans, Nordoff and Robbins, who started this charity, were there. It has now grown considerably and is known around the world.

If you go into prisons—I had two in my constituency, one a young offenders institution and the other an adult prison—you see that people who have often been written off by society, quite wrongly, can be moved by art. They can be moved by lovely pictures, by poetry, by drama and by music. If you go into hospitals, you see the therapeutic effect of art on severely sick people, when they look at wonderful images and listen to glorious music.

The arts are, in every possible sense, priceless. To equate them with commercial calculations is doing us all a disservice. You cannot quantify it; if you want to start quantifying it—I am sorry I could not take part in the debate of my noble friend Lady Wheatcroft—you can provide a very good justification. After all, the thousands of tourists who are flocking here this year—there seem to be more than ever—are not coming for the

glory of the weather, although they are enjoying it at the moment, and they are not coming for the excellence of our cuisine, although that has improved very dramatically in the past 30 or 40 years. What they are coming for, as their forefathers did before them, is to see our fine buildings, to go to our wonderful galleries, and to listen to the music at the Proms and other concerts. The arts bring in to this country enormous sums of money—a fact that no Government of any political persuasion have ever fully recognised.

I wrote a book about this in 1976, in which I tried to argue that our heritage was in danger and that it was in everybody's interest to safeguard it not only because of its innate glory but because of what it brought in to the country. This remains true. People come and are moved by this great building in which we are privileged to work. Of course, they have a passing interest in the constitution, but what really turns them on is the majesty of this Chamber and the glory of Barry and Pugin's architecture. Therefore, the noble Baroness was quite right to say that we should evaluate what the arts do for our education, our health and our well-being.

I will close on education. As a former schoolmaster—although that was more than 40 years ago—I believe that we sell our children short if we do not open their eyes and minds to the wonderful heritage of European civilisation, and of the civilisations beyond. Our young people should be made more aware of the glories of Italy, the majesty of France and the wonderful beauties in our own country. Every young person, as part of his or her education, should go to the National Gallery and spend an hour in the company of someone who understands and appreciates the paintings. Every young person, before he or she leaves school, should spend an hour or two in one of our great cathedrals and should be able to listen to wonderful music. That is easier because the musicians can travel.

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The noble Baroness did us all a signal service. The day began in a rather strange way, as days in this House often do. We had a debate on the cultural impact of Premier League football—not just football, but Premier League football. What we are considering this afternoon is premier league art, which is far more all-encompassing, far more moving, far more valuable and far more lasting, so we are very grateful to the noble Baroness for introducing the debate.

5.37 pm

Lord Winston: My Lords, by 1944 some 6 million people had died in Auschwitz in appalling conditions. Sometimes the question is asked—it might have been asked earlier this afternoon in another debate—“Where was God in Auschwitz?”. Perhaps the answer might be, “Where was man?”. However, there could be another answer. Perhaps it came from a place that fed Auschwitz: Theresienstadt.

During its life, Theresienstadt housed between 120,000 and 150,000 individuals, all but about 22,000 of whom died in Auschwitz. For them, God was in their music. In that remarkable place, people were starving. They had no proper water supply and sanitation. They lacked almost every accompaniment of humanity, but they celebrated their humanity by singing Verdi’s “Requiem”. It was conducted by Rafael Schächter, one of the Jewish composers in Theresienstadt. Towards the end of the life of the camp, the composer Viktor Ullmann composed an opera called “Der Kaiser von Atlantis”, a satire on Hitler. It is a short opera that lasts for less than an hour. In it, pretty well every human emotion is described, including love, hope, longing and sadness. Interestingly, the one thing that is missing is anger, even though the chief singer is der Kaiser: Hitler. What we cannot forget is that Ullmann never saw the production, because when the Nazis saw it in rehearsal, they banned it, and of course Ullmann and his librettist ended up in Auschwitz, where they perished.

I shall talk about music only and declare an interest as chairman of the council of the Royal College of Music. I suggest that music is central to this debate. In some respects it is one of the most basic of the arts, because it is the closest to being unrepresentational in a way. One of the great things about music is that it expresses all humanity. It expresses longing, sadness, anger and humour, it looks at joy, as my noble friend has already mentioned, it looks at sadness and at love and, in the case of Theresienstadt, it looked at hope as well. It is a basic civilising influence on our population.

When you look at music in scientific terms, you see that it affects different parts of the brain. For example, memory is enhanced by listening to music. Recent studies using magnetic resonance imaging scanning show that different parts of the brain, including the hippocampus, expand when we listen to or play music, whether we are musicians or non-musicians. When it comes to dexterity, the motor cortex at the top of the brain is also enhanced. The auditory cortex is enhanced as well; most importantly, Broca’s area, which is on the left side for a right-handed person and central to

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language, is also very closely linked to music. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why so many musicians have been amazing linguists.

These things are developed by people who use and play music, particularly schoolchildren. I want to speak mostly of schoolchildren in this instance. Although we think that musicians are born and not made, it turns out that this is not the case. Recent evidence in a beautiful German study clearly shows that pretty well anybody who is given enough time and practice can compete with the best opera singers, and that their brain can expand in the areas that are needed. That has been demonstrated in scanning.

On a lighter note, a pop video made by One Direction was launched on the web this week. On the first day of launch, it received 14 million hits, which was extraordinary. One Direction are delightful young men. They are responsible. I think that they are altruistic, although I do not know that for certain, my impression is that they are. At many levels, they are an interesting role model for young people and you can see that they are massively followed by them. It is a pity that we do not have that same following for classical and other music which have so much depth in terms of our learning experience and give us wealth, not financial wealth, of course, but wealth in how we perceive the world and react to it and the wealth that is in our humanity and relationships.

For schoolchildren, music and learning music do not foster just memory and probably better intellectual capacity, although, in spite of the rumours, not intelligence, but they certainly foster collaboration and, as the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, has said, empathy, which is obviously important. These things are really important to children, and the lack of musical education in schools is great concern in our society at the moment.

The Minister may not have figures to hand at the moment, but perhaps they can be dug out. Under the previous Government there was the singing initiative, which I do not think is anything like adequate enough. In music, it would be better if far more schoolchildren had access to instruments because that increases that collaboration in a new way. They help understanding of the structure of music and increase dexterity. It would be of interest to know what the Government are doing about the number of schools, particularly primary schools, which have access to musical instruments.

Finally, as someone who supports the Royal College of Music and other areas in musical education, will the Minister tell us how the Government view the outreach programmes that conservatoires are doing to spread

music among young people? The Sparks programme run by the Royal College of Music takes primary school children, and there is no question that children who come from very different backgrounds achieve amazing success. They collaborate and play music so well that it is difficult to believe they have not been learning music for a great deal longer than they have. Many conservatoires have a junior department which is closer to more, if you like, adult children. It would be helpful if the Minister in her summing up could affirm support for those sorts of activities, which I believe are really important to the health of the nation.

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5.45 pm

Lord Rea: My Lords, I, too, thank my noble friend for bringing this important area before the House. I feel somewhat diffident speaking with those of such calibre. Previous speakers have shown that a good story well told can have a very big impact, which probably should be a rule for my future speeches. As a former medical practitioner, I will speak today on the effect that the arts, in the broadest sense, can have on health. Here, I am using the long WHO definition of health, which considers it to be not only the “absence of disease” but also,

“complete physical, mental and social well-being”—

a condition we aspire to but seldom achieve individually and probably never as a whole society.

This definition is useful because it recognises that health is not only physical but includes emotional and social components, factors which have tended until recently to be neglected in healthcare. Sir David Weatherall, when the regius professor of medicine at Oxford University more than a decade ago, explained how scientific medicine, which dominated the last century, changed the emphasis in healthcare from the whole patient and whole organs to diseases of molecules and cells. This caused many to feel that medicine had become reductionist and dehumanising. Although himself a molecular scientist, Professor Weatherall said that,

“we will now start putting the bits ... together again ... The old skills of clinical practice, the ability to interact with people, will be as vital ... as they have been in the past”.

Since then the need for this is becoming more widely accepted but dehumanised healthcare is still the experience of some patients. The events in Mid Staffs, although not the rule, unfortunately are not unique.

But, despite increasing pressures, most patients in the National Health Service receive expert, considerate and friendly care.

Where do the arts fit into this health story? The three components of health—physical, mental and social—are not separate entities. We all know the much quoted phrase created by the Roman poet Lucullus 2,000 years ago:

“Mens sana in corpore sano”.

The relationship between mental and physical health has now been demonstrated in a number of studies. Cheerful or normal people live longer and recover from illness more quickly than depressed people, who place a very heavy load on the National Health Service. The immune response of non-depressed people is better. My noble friend Lady Jones cited a number of other instances where mental health and social care can have a big impact on people’s physical health.

The relationship between social deprivation, even relative deprivation in prosperous societies, and physical and mental health and longevity is well known and is being increasingly better understood through the world-wide studies of the social determinants of health being led by Professor Michael Marmot of University College London. That is as relevant to the UK today, when our health problems are largely due to long-term, non-communicable diseases, as it was 100 years ago, before the era of antibiotics. Living conditions, nutrition and lifestyles are among the most important of these

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determinants. Here it should be emphasised that lifestyles are not simply a matter of individual choice, they are a product of economic and social pressures. It is only the exceptional individual from a deprived background who can battle their way to overcoming these commercial and social pressures and live an optimally healthy life.

I hope that this brief description of the factors underlying health will show why the arts are so relevant. As my noble friend said, is not the purpose of art to lift the spirits, open one’s eyes, educate and inspire? The emotional impact of music, so well described by my noble friend Lord Winston and the noble Lord, Lord Cormack, and works of art and sculpture as well as the written word, is often enormous. I would add high-quality media presentations on the radio and television, and let us not forget film as well. I could recite a long list of all the arts which are important. To say that the arts entertain us and cheer us up is only part

of the picture. By helping to lift depression, the arts can improve our mental health and this can, in the ways I have suggested, lead to better physical health.

I have not mentioned one important aspect of our culture: the built environment. The noble Lord, Lord Cormack, talked about the majesty of Lincoln Cathedral, and of course there are other inspiring buildings all over the country. Good and imaginative design of neighbourhoods and individual buildings, apart from pleasing the eye, can have important effects on physical health. We have too many boring, or at the worst ugly, housing developments, while thoughtless redevelopment has plucked the heart out of many towns and cities. The result has been a loss of cohesive community support which can have effects on social well-being. The building of arts and cultural centres in many towns and cities has been a positive move that partly compensates for the destruction of city centres, and the evidence is that they have a sizable positive impact on the morale of their communities. However, they cannot replace the need for much more well-designed housing which, as all noble Lords know, would also act as a kick-start for the economy and have a beneficial effect on mental and social well-being. Well-designed housing, apart from being more carbon efficient, can improve mental, physical and social health through aesthetically pleasing design, good spacing, convenience and social facilities. It should also be ergonomically pleasing and more sustainable through well thought-out heating and ventilation. There are examples of excellent projects of this kind in many places throughout the country.

I do not have any specific questions for the noble Baroness, but I hope that she can reassure us that funding for the Arts Council at least will not be cut and hopefully be increased in the next spending round. I hope also that she can say that local authority support for community and other arts projects will be protected in the next round of cuts, which we are told will shortly arrive.

5.54 pm

The Earl of Clancarty: My Lords, I, too, thank the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, for introducing this debate. As an artist, my instincts to some extent are to reverse

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the terms of the debate; in other words, to ask what, for example, education can do for the arts and creativity. That might strike one at first as the standard way of looking at things, but for me, generally speaking,

artists make and publicise their work as best they can and it is for others to draw conclusions about the wider social effects that work may have.

I am emboldened in further pursuing my instincts on this on three counts. First, I understand that although the DCMS is responding to this debate rather than the Department of Health, that department will be listening in with the other cap that the Minister wears. Secondly, there is the wider ever-present arts narrative that needs to be addressed. It is very difficult to persuade successive Governments of the case for art for its own sake—a term which the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, used in her speech. That obstacle characterises the overarching narrative driving most of the debate on the arts at Westminster, whereby the effects of the arts on education, well-being and health are still the justification for them, while being a corrective to our previous debate on the economic effects and to Maria Miller's insistence on the arts' economic value. Thirdly, there is the rather remarkable speech made by the Scottish Culture Secretary, Fiona Hyslop, on 5 June at Edinburgh University, in which she said:

"It is our job ... to create the conditions which enable artists to flourish ... I don't need or want the culture or heritage sector to make a new economic or social case to justify public support for their work. I know what these sectors can deliver because I see it in action. I visit hardworking artists and practitioners who are exploring new ways of working; and who are creating dynamic and exciting new ways of enjoying and sharing their work and the work of our ancestors".

Artists and the arts sector would have to wait forever to hear a message like that from a Government at Westminster. There will be cynics, of course, who say that the SNP has an agenda in trying to court artists. That may be, but that does not have to invalidate its cultural policy. The key thing here is the facilitation of artists, which I believe is a good in itself, whatever the specific effects may be, because the artist's work is the contribution to society. The Government's primary job in relation to the arts is—or should be—to do just that and must of course include encouraging the potential for creativity from all classes of society. It also means facilitating not just contemporary artists but those artists of the past—"the ancestors", as Fiona Hyslop calls them, a term which properly draws them closer to us—whose influence may thereby still be felt through our collections, exhibitions, buildings and public sculpture. From this, everything else should proceed. Indeed, in the short term, good art may not give a feeling of well-being at all but may be disturbing and highly critical of society, as much of our best post-war drama was. It is a healthy society which allows artists to have their say, encourages that

criticism and, all importantly, offers spaces within which that can happen.

The newest space of course is the internet, but there is also what might be termed an attitudinal or mental space and, furthermore, physical or geographical space. That space is now becoming hugely underestimated and increasingly neglected locally. I am thinking about theatres, art venues, studios and rehearsal rooms as well as the streets themselves. In part, this is because of the attraction of the internet, but also because of the

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cuts, particularly at the local level, and the largely unthought-through council sell-offs of buildings and land alongside the now much looser planning guidelines. Overall, this is an ongoing neglect that is detrimental not just to artists but to the well-being of local communities. Publicly owned spaces have the potential to be public spaces, as well as providing significantly cheaper rents. Privatised spaces that are open to the public, such as shopping malls, will always be primarily commercial spaces where the public are only present by invitation.

Can more help be given to artists and artist groups in relation to commercial spaces and greater incentives provided for the cultural and artistic use of vacant shops, for example? The Minister should also be aware that the removal of planning permission for landlords to turn studios and workshops into flats is hugely threatening to the arts and the creative industries. That is not to say that public spaces are not also becoming increasingly problematic for artists. Perhaps the Minister can confirm that the DCMS is giving particular attention to the Bill recently introduced by the noble Lord, Lord Clement-Jones, to remove restrictions on leafleting, which is having such a bad effect on the local arts scene in some areas.

One English architectural ancestor springs to mind: Sir Horace Jones, who gave us Tower Bridge and Leadenhall Market, and whose Smithfield Market, a landmark that many of us have enjoyed and wandered through, may well be gutted if the City of London Corporation planning committee has its way. I hope that the DCMS is taking a critical view of a proposal that many see as vandalism, and will give active consideration to alternative ideas for the site.

I will mention one other building: St Lawrence's Hospital in Bodmin, built by the Cornish architect Silvanus Trevail. It is a notable building in the Edwardian baroque style, which used to be owned by the NHS and

whose preservation has the support of SAVE Britain's Heritage, the Cornish Buildings Group and the Ancient Monuments Society, which says that,

"a really interesting building by one of the county's great architectural sons, and one surrounded by local goodwill, faces needless oblivion".

It seems that Cornwall Council, too, supports its preservation but, at the same time, has given permission for development without an environmental assessment, public consultation or planning permission. This case again illustrates the fact that once one effectively tears up the planning guidelines and there is no concerted decision-making—which is not the same as autocratic decision-making—there is likely to be chaos and rampant development, and the arts will be the loser in all this.

However, it does not have to be a one-way street. It is good news that Taunton Deane Borough Council has purchased the lease on the Brewhouse Theatre, which means that it will reopen, although whether it can put on the kind of challenging performances it used to depends on who the council gets to run it.

In this same context of the protection of our culture, I mention also the Riesco Collection of Chinese ceramics in the Museum of Croydon, from which the council intends to sell off 24 important items. As the Minister will be aware, both the Arts Council and the Museums Association have been hugely critical of this proposal,

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and I hope that the DCMS is taking an interest in this as well. The collection would have been donated to the public in perpetuity and therefore should remain so. There is a history here. In 2010, Croydon Council threatened to axe all arts services and sell off 13 local libraries. Fortunately there has been enough of a public outcry for this not to happen, although the popular David Lean Cinema, which was also part of the Clocktower complex, has already been closed.

The irony is that a great many of us are often not aware of remarkable collections or treasures until they are under threat, although that does not mean that others have not already greatly enjoyed them. I would like to make a suggestion to the Government, and I hope they will forgive me if this is something that they have already considered. As a follow-up to their successful GREAT campaign, perhaps they would consider a series of posters highlighting our local collections and

treasures to an international audience, with perhaps a number of locations featured on each poster. One example that springs to mind is the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, which won this year's Museum of the Year award. Britain has a huge wealth of treasures and collections, often in out-of-the-way places, that are not part of our national collections and are not as well known. Providing such posters would do at least two things: it would re-emphasise the importance of a local or regional Britain, and it would help, I believe, to protect those treasures.

6.03 pm

Lord Sawyer: My Lords, I, too, thank my noble friend Lady Jones for initiating this debate. Perhaps I may also say how much I am enjoying debating with people who have great experience and knowledge of the subject. My noble friend Lady Bakewell began her speech by talking about the Proms and the "Messiah". I start mine by talking about the Durham miners—perhaps at the other end of the spectrum. I will not be talking about the great-great-grandson of a Durham miner, the bonny lad who was born this week to be King; to do that, I would need to talk about the Middleton family. I will be talking about another mining family, the Elliot family. There cannot be many people in this country or in this Chamber who have not heard of Billy Elliot. He was the subject of a film in 2001 and of a West End show in 2005 which is, almost 10 years later, playing to packed houses all over the world. It is, of course, the story of a miner's son from the north-east of England who became a ballet dancer.

Why has this journey of discovery from coal-mining to ballet captured so many hearts around the world? There are many reasons, one of which lies at the heart of today's debate: the transforming power of art—in this case, dance—and its ability to bring joy and happiness, which have the power to actually change lives. "Billy Elliott" is based on an individual but the story cannot progress without the power of the community—the village, the teacher, the family, the neighbours, the public space, the public scholarship and the solidarity of a deprived community all go together to make it a heart-rending story that shows the power and joy of people engaging in art.

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Billy's is an individual transformation and achievement, often against adversity, but, linked with the power of the support of a wider community, it taps into one of the most powerful veins of successful public art: whether theatre, film or dance, it is where communities and people fight against adversity using the power of art to achieve things.

"Billy Elliot" was part of a voyage of artistic discovery and renaissance in the north-east of England, from the "Angel of the North", to the Sage music and arts centre on the banks of the Tyne, to Sir Anish Kapoor's "Temenos" on Teesside, to hundreds of small organisations that provide intellectual, emotional and physical spaces, including galleries, libraries and theatres, where people can go time and again to experience what I consider to be the invigorating and healing power of art, which is very powerful indeed.

Of course, there are many Billy Elliots in our world, thankfully. I will tell your Lordships about one young man, who grew up in central Middlesbrough—not the most well-heeled or prosperous part of our country—in the 1990s. He went to Teesside University, which I know because I have the joy of being chancellor of that university. He became a performing arts teacher because as a teenager—as a young man not really knowing where to go—he became involved in a youth theatre, a project supported by Middlesbrough Council.

Eight years later, this same man graduated from the Royal Academy of Music here in London—quite a big step, almost as big as Billy's. Then he started work as a teacher. He began to work professionally as an actor, both on stage and in television. He continued to teach music and drama to college students throughout south-east London. These teenagers, who are from a deprived part of south-east London, many from estates and difficult places, now go to the Globe to watch plays. They go to the National Theatre because of the influence and support of their teacher and their college. They speak lines of Shakespeare just for fun. For weeks after each play, they come to the college repeating lines they heard from the actors and swapping one-liners with each other as well as writing lines of their own. They stand up confidently in front of the class and other audiences and perform their new work.

The theatre gave these young people language, confidence, the power of communication, and an interest in other members of their community, humour and stature in a way that nothing else could. Particularly today, with the absence of that kind of thing from the world of work, where young people do not get it in the way that they used to and the way that they should, the power of art is far more important than ever. Their teacher had learned about the transformational power of theatre and art, and he made sure that his students could access it as well.

I will give your Lordships another example of the arts in the north-east: MIMA, the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art—what a great thing to say. People would not normally associate an institute of modern art with a town such as Middlesbrough. You might associate it with New York,

Paris, Melbourne or Sydney but to have the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art—I just love saying it.

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MIMA is an outstanding example of the contribution of the arts to our nation's education, health and emotional well-being. On my previous visit to MIMA, I was hugely impressed to see 7,000 drawings on display from every primary school in Middlesbrough. We have all seen this on our travels round the schools—the power of art to engage with local communities and schools. The gallery is free to all, and contributes to the social framework of Middlesbrough and the wider Tees valley. MIMA has attracted more than £4 million in external funding for arts provision in Middlesbrough, and has welcomed 900,000 visitors since it was opened by the noble Lord, Lord Bragg. On my recent visit the gallery was showing work by Sir Anish Kapoor, David Hockney, Picasso, Francis Bacon and Andy Warhol—and all these alongside the work done by the local kids from Middlesbrough. Is that not a fantastic thing to see? I know that we have all seen such things in our travels, because we all do this kind of work in our own communities.

MIMA is supported by the Arts Council and by the forward-looking Middlesbrough Council. It is a partner to my own university. We should applaud such organisations for their contributions to the arts and the wider contribution that they make to society. The Arts Council now recognises MIMA as what it calls a “national portfolio organisation”. I am one of the three patrons of the MIMA Friends; another is the noble Lord, Lord Crathorne, who we all know has also had a distinguished career in the arts and made a distinguished contribution.

I fully commend this art gallery to the House, especially the Minister, who would be very welcome to visit it any time and enjoy the joys of that part of the world. I know that she gets many invitations, but none quite as powerful as this one, I am sure. The director of MIMA, Kate Brindley, has said:

“We are proud to be in Middlesbrough and to be able to act as a key driver for the local economy ... inspiring civic pride, supporting local arts infrastructure ... and creating opportunities for enjoyment”,

employment and learning.

We—all of us who have spoken in the debate—have to battle for this space, do we not? It is not easy. We have not said much about that fight, but it does go on. We know that we cannot do without these things in

our community. If we slam the doors, we slam them not just on aspiration but also on knowledge, confidence, communication and language—and we are just not prepared to see those doors slammed. We are going to keep them open, and we shall have to fight to do that. That is our job, no matter what the funding issues are, no matter what the trials and tribulations of the Government of the day are. It is incumbent on all of us who care about future generations to keep those doors open and to keep fighting for our arts. We should work to protect the space, and we need to work hard to help people understand the benefits that they bring to all, and to our nation's education, health and well-being. This small debate, initiated by my noble friend Lady Jones of Whitchurch, is an important small step in that direction.

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6.12 pm

Lord Howarth of Newport: My Lords, the greatest contribution that the arts can make to education is to offer young people the opportunity of beauty, and an understanding of it, and to take them into new imaginative realms. Many people tell us that the poems they were required to learn by heart when they were young have been an abiding treasure for them in their lives. I was glad that the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, responded positively to the proposal by the Poetry Archive, of which I was a trustee, that there should be a competition for schoolchildren across the country to recite poems aloud. The national finals at the National Portrait Gallery were a great occasion.

The value of that kind of experience is not measurable; it is over and beyond the utilitarian calculus of Mr M'Choakumchild—or, all too often, of the Department for Education and of the DCMS, with the Treasury lurking behind them. It has been said that poets are unacknowledged legislators; in that respect they are rather like noble Lords. Poetry, drama and the novel offer insight into human nature, and a moral education—the best kind of moral education, because it is not dogmatic. Matthew Arnold was professor of poetry at the University of Oxford, and also Chief Inspector of Schools—what a good appointment that was by the Govt of the day. He said that the study of literature helps one to answer the great question: “How to live?” The study of literature teaches people—to use a term that has lost too many of its positive connotations—discrimination. It teaches them to make moral distinctions, to recognise integrity and quality.

The study of poetry is the study of language at its most expressive. Young readers of poetry learn to see cliché, jargon, linguistic slackness and the meretricious and manipulative use of language for what they

are, whether it be the language of journalism, of advertising or of bureaucracy—or, indeed, of politics. They learn to value linguistic precision, authenticity and power. It is a survival kit for them, and it is certainly a preparation for their participation in democracy.

I do not think that I would make such a claim for the other arts. The Nazi guards at Theresienstadt and Auschwitz loved Mozart. Dr Goebbels accumulated a magnificent collection of art at the point of his gun. Architects and autocrats have been locked in mutual admiration for centuries.

Performances of dance, plays and music provide young people with an experience of teamwork and discipline. There is evidence that these experiences release a kind of primal energy and creativity across the whole life of the school. We have seen the power of El Sistema for young people in this country—in Glasgow and in Norwich, where I live.

The study and the practice of the visual arts are an education for the imagination. The education of the imagination has been too much neglected in the British educational tradition, which has put most of its emphasis on logic and analysis. It also teaches the history of our civilisation and of our own heritage and that of others.

So where should one stop? Professor Marcus du Sautoy tells us:

“Maths is a creative art, not a useful science”.

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Cookery is an art according to Ferran Adrià, the creator of elBulli. We must leave it to the gauleiters of the national curriculum to determine these matters. I would simply say that it is an error to marginalise the arts and the school curriculum, as it is to underfund the humanities in higher education.

I shall speak about the contribution of the arts to health and emotional well-being. The crisis at the Mid-Staffordshire hospital and other hospitals, and that at the Care Quality Commission, have been crises of organisational cultures that have been drained of humanity—dehumanised as the noble Lord, Lord Rea, said—organisations in which systems have become more important than people and in which care has become too little imbued with kindness. The managerial reforms that the Government have proposed will be necessary but not sufficient. The remedies for this crisis will not ultimately be bureaucratic or mechanistic; they will lie in improving the ethos and morale of these services, in

nurturing the empathy of the people who work in them and in improving the quality of relationships within them.

Here, the values and the practice of the arts in health movement have a profoundly important contribution to make. Across the country, practitioners of arts in health are ready to offer their contribution to health and social care for the benefit of patients, the frail and elderly, staff, and carers at home. We saw recently in London Creativity and Wellbeing Week the array of such practices and services. The Royal Society for Public Health in its recent publication, *Beyond the Millennium*, has documented the range of organisations and excellence in this field. The National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing was formed last year to represent practitioners across the English regions. It is available to engage with policymakers and decision-takers. Its work is international. At its recent conference in Bristol, people from 22 countries came together to share their experiences and ideas. The chairman of the national alliance, Clive Parkinson from Manchester Metropolitan University, has been engaging with Governments across Europe in this field.

Museums and galleries in recent years have become more than repositories of cultural artefacts; they have become places for learning, for social engagement and for well-being. So, too, theatres, orchestras and heritage sites have been developing their arts, health and well-being agendas.

This resource is still under-recognised and underutilised in official policy. Policy has seen fits, starts and setbacks. The Department of Health and the Arts Council produced *A Prospectus for Arts and Health* in 2007. Then there was a faltering. But then, Alan Johnson, as Secretary of State, made a very important speech at the Wallace Collection in 2008 in which, using the authority of his office, he said that the arts should be in the mainstream of health and social care provision. Then there was again a phase of retrenchment and defensiveness. It would be timely now for the Secretary of State, with his responsibility for health and social services, to renew the leadership that his predecessor displayed.

A growing body of research and evaluation has been developing since the groundbreaking work of Rosalia Staricoff demonstrated that arts interventions

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in healthcare produce benefits in terms of shorter hospital stays, reduced pain, improved blood pressure in patients and less need for drugs, as

well as finding that staff turnover was less where this was happening. Eminent academics Professor Mike White of the Centre for Medical Humanities at Durham, Professor Jennifer Secker at Anglia Ruskin University and Professor Paul Camic at Canterbury Christchurch University are leaders in this field. I will give just two instances of important research. In 2009, the Arts and Humanities Research Council commissioned Dr Helen Chatterjee at University College London to examine the impact on the wellbeing of hospital patients of handling and discussing museum objects. The findings were statistically significant and positive. Professor Stephen Clift of Canterbury Christchurch University was funded by the National Institute of Health Research to conduct a randomised controlled test of the benefits of choral singing for older adults. It was, again, found that there were statistically significant beneficial effects on their health and well-being. That research has been published in the British Journal of Psychiatry. There is, therefore, robust research which demonstrates the clear and substantial value of the arts and design in health and which also shows that it is economic and cost effective.

Other foundations have been persuaded to support this work. We should thank Lankelly Chase, Wellcome, Nuffield, Clore, Hamlyn, Rayne and Baring, who are working with the Arts Council of England on the arts and older people in care project.

Senior members of the medical profession are increasingly recognising the importance of this. Professor Sir David Weatherall, the former Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, who was quoted by the noble Lord, Lord Rea, has given his view that orthodox, specialised medicine, based on clinical science, is insufficient. What he calls "patch-up medicine" is "reductionist" and "dehumanised". He also observes that it is prohibitively expensive and fails to address the causes of malaise. He says we should do more to prevent people falling ill through promoting lives of well-being.

New policy dispositions open up new possibilities. Clinical commissioning groups are at liberty to commission arts organisations if they wish. The Health and Social Care Act created Public Health England which is entrusting to local government significant funding and responsibilities to link their services for young people and old people with the services of the NHS, to find the roots of ill-health in their localities, and to develop their work through joint strategic needs assessments and health and well-being strategies. There is a new recognition in Government of the importance of well-being: the recognition that GDP is not a sufficient measure of national progress and that "getting and spending", to quote

Wordsworth again, is insufficient. The Office of National Statistics index of national well-being includes a category under arts and culture.

There are many ways in which we can do better to provide true care and to build social capital and individual and social resilience. However, the arts have a special contribution to make beyond the benefits of social

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engagement and human kindness. It may be that the therapeutic benefits of rhythm, colour and stimulus to the imagination are what count. Perhaps it is access to beauty, insight and the renewal of the life of the spirit. More research, including magnetic resonance imaging, will cast more light on this. However, the health and social care establishments, as they become more integrated, would be foolish not to grasp the opportunity of what the arts can contribute to health and well-being.

6.23 pm

Lord Storey: My Lords, I, too, thank the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, for securing this debate and for her important contribution.

I want to look at children in schools and in particular at how disadvantaged children can access the arts. The great and the good can go to the opera, visit art galleries and hear symphony orchestras, but how do we make sure that children living in abject poverty on council estates also have the joy and benefits of the arts?

Before I develop that theme, I have a message for Mr Gove. The attainment in maths and English of students who engage in the arts improves, particularly in the case of children from low-income families. I will give two examples from my own city of Liverpool. The first is in West Everton, which is one of the poorest, most deprived communities in the country. There is a project there where every primary school child—not just some, every single primary school child—learns a musical instrument. They form an orchestra, which has performed within the community, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and here at the Royal Festival Hall, and when they leave their primary school a second orchestra is formed at secondary school level. That has been hugely significant for those young people.

My second example came from Liverpool being the European Capital of Culture in 2008. A programme was set up called Creative Communities. Ordinary communities could bid for and secure grants for arts projects. We are talking not about arts organisations but about individuals within

the community, or groups of individuals, securing grants. One school for 11 to 16 year-olds in one of the most deprived parts of inner-city Liverpool, with high truancy and absenteeism rates, problems with drugs and very low attainment, applied for a grant to make a film. It secured a £20,000 grant, and a film producer worked with those young people. They made the film, and I remember going to the opening night; they were all in black tie, with a red carpet and all the rest of it. That project was life-changing for those young people, and I mean life-changing. When they had finished working with that film producer and put on the premiere night of the film, they wanted to carry on with what they had been doing. The school was for 11 to 16 year-olds, but they wanted to do A-levels, so the drama teacher, who was called Miss Jones, continued to work with them on Saturday mornings. Of that group of 12 children, two went on to be teachers. Truancy and absenteeism at the school decreased and results improved. Arts really can inspire young people. Projects like Kids in Museums and Shakespeare in schools are hugely important.

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I want to mention one final point in my allotted four minutes. I am terribly impressed by how the Arts Council's Artsmark has encouraged schools to focus not only on visual arts but on performing arts. Over the past four years we have seen a 44% increase in the number of schools recognising the importance of applying for an Artsmark, be it bronze, silver or gold. Does the Minister have any information on how we can encourage that Arts Council programme to continue?

6.27 pm

Baroness Northover: My Lords, I am delighted to be answering this Question for Short Debate on the contribution of the arts to the nation's education, health and well-being. I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, for opening the debate so ably. We have had an inspiring and wide-ranging series of speeches. As the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, said, involvement in the arts is quite simply part of what makes us human.

From the earliest times, even with problems of survival that must have seemed far more pressing than those that we face today, humans have created art, as we saw from the fantastic Ice Age exhibition at the British Museum. I am sure that they created music too; the earliest of drawings indicate both music and dancing. Of course, every culture shines in different ways, and our own culture has been and remains distinctive and outstanding. We have world-class theatres, artists, galleries, heritage sites and music. As I heard my noble friend Lord Cormack, I

was transported to Lincoln Cathedral and could hear the music. I could see the art in Middlesbrough and the unique hospital in Bodmin.

We fully recognise that engagement and participation in the arts generates a range of social benefits to individuals and society. It is not simply what makes us civilised. It goes beyond that; it is, indeed, what makes us human. The noble Lord, Lord Winston, went to the heart of this when he spoke so movingly of music in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. It was as others sought to strip people of their humanity and indeed their lives that they found they could not quell that human spirit, expressed through music, plays and art.

That the arts also generate income is a wonderful bonus, and we are delighted that they do. I answered a QSD from my noble friend Lord Storey the other day in which we drew out the economic contribution made by music, which clearly is significant. As the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, said, there was a debate in the House in the name of my noble friend Lady Wheatcroft which looked at the economic contribution the arts can make. The importance of this, in my view, is the recognition that the arts are significant economically but I can assure the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, that we have always understood their cultural and human significance and of course, as the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, said, you cannot cost joy.

Clearly, interest in the arts starts from the earliest point in life, as Kate and William will find. Their little prince—that descendant of a Durham miner as the noble Lord, Lord Sawyer, pointed out—will soon be sticking together cereal boxes and making things and drawing lines on paper and calling others to admire

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those lines. I would not be surprised if it is not long before he starts to bash saucepan lids together or sing “The Wheels on the Bus”. To silence him or prevent him doing these things would distress him. It is part of his emotional well-being that he can thus express himself.

Of course, once children go to school part of their wider education will include the arts. Anyone seeing children spinning out of school with their paintings and creations can see their enthusiasm. Who has not had a painted egg box pinned on the wall or given pride of place to an uncertain-shaped mug, or relished receiving a wonderful handmade card? We fully accept that cultural education forms an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum. I can assure the noble Baronesses, Lady Jones and Lady Bakewell, and the noble Lords, Lord Howarth and

Lord Storey, that the Government have confirmed that art and design, music, English, including drama, PE, including dance, and history all remain statutory subjects for all pupils aged five to 14, wherever they live and whatever their social origins. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Winston, that schools should indeed introduce pupils to various types of music, including classical. I also assure him of our wholehearted support for the work of our conservatoires.

A high-quality cultural education should ensure that all pupils have the chance to read books, sing, make music, film or animation, dance, draw, design, perform, be given opportunities to attend art galleries and museums, see films, including world cinema and go to theatre and concert performances. We see the wonderful sight of large groups of children, excitedly making their way on school trips with their amazingly patient teachers.

Noble Lords will, I hope, be pleased to know that we are setting up a new film academy to help train talented film makers; developing a heritage schools programme, helping schools to make effective use of their local environment; funding a museums and schools programme, and setting up a new National Youth Dance Company, managed by Sadler's Wells. We are also funding 10 teaching school alliances to help develop continuing professional development and, following on from Darren Henley's review of music education, we are investing £196 million in music education hubs and we continue to invest in the music and dance scheme.

Schools can and should give children the opportunity to engage in arts they may have no knowledge of at home which may whet their appetite for arts as they go through life. Nothing is more satisfying for a parent who has dragged an unwilling child round a museum or gallery to discover, as they reach adulthood, that they wish to continue to weave this into their lives. We need to ensure that adults too can access those arts they wish to, and I commend the previous Government for ensuring that museums are free. We need to ensure that the disabled can access buildings and, in later life when people may be less mobile or even in care homes, we need to recognise that the importance of the arts remains.

As the Arts Council chairman, Sir Peter Bazalgette said:

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"The arts are a demonstrable source of health and happiness, no matter what age we are".

Thus the Arts Council has jointly funded an arts and older people in care programme with the Baring Foundation to provide access to quality arts experiences for older people in residential care, as both participants and audiences. It funds the London Arts in Health Forum to develop the role of culture in well-being and to promote and support arts in health activity across London and nationally. With Routledge and other foundations, the Arts Council supported the Culture, Health & Wellbeing International Conference held in June, at which the noble Lord, Lord Howarth of Newport, gave the keynote address, which I found very interesting.

Engagement and participation in the arts can have significant impact on well-being and happiness. In recognition of this, the Office for National Statistics has included engagement with arts and culture within its measurements of national well-being, as the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, mentioned. We ensure that the widest possible range of people can enjoy this engagement with the arts. For example, the Arts Council-funded Youth Music supports music projects in the youth justice system and several other organisations work with young offenders. The noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, points to the importance of plays and the understanding of those plays, within prisons.

Of course, a number of factors may well make up a person's well-being, whether it is through their relationships, their work, their living situation and their general health, as the noble Lord, Lord Rea, pointed out. However, we know that well-being is more than simply physical, and that mental and physical health are inextricably intertwined, as the noble Lord, Lord Rea, again made clear. In addressing physical health, it is important to address mental health and that sense of well-being, which is why we emphasise that healthcare must be person-centred. We have given mental health a new priority, enshrining it in law for the first time as having equal importance with physical health.

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Public Health England is looking closely at well-being, and we recognise that arts activities can promote that well-being. Since 2010, a group of organisations across England has been working on a new national voice for arts and health, as the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, has said. Supported by Arts Council England, this work has involved the development of a charter for arts, health and well-being, and the establishment of a new organisation, the National Alliance for Arts Health and Wellbeing, which was launched last autumn. Of course, many hospitals include artworks, and there are participatory arts programmes. Some doctors have an arts aspect to their training; I know that because

I used to teach the intercalated BSc in the History of Medicine at University College London.

The National Institute for Health Research welcomes funding applications in this area. However, as the noble Earl, Lord Clancarty, was perhaps right in saying, we should need no justification for supporting the arts. He also asked a number of specific questions, which I will quickly address. He asked about the leafleting Bill of my noble friend Lord Clement-Jones. As I said in the music debate, my noble friend Lord De Mauley has agreed to look at guidance to local authorities. Both the noble Earl and the noble Lord, Lord Sawyer, flagged some wonderful places, and I can assure them that DCMS is concerned for them and watches this with great care. I can also tell the noble Earl that the GREAT campaign is indeed well placed to showcase our national and regional assets abroad, and is doing so. We will flag his points up with the campaign.

As I have said, enjoyment of the arts in all their wide variety is part of what it means to be human. One only has to see young people with their earphones in, listening to music—perhaps even if it is One Direction—to recognise that. That was why, of course, music played such a key part, along with the Lowry-esque landscapes and the NHS, in the opening ceremony of the Olympics. It is all part of who we are. We celebrate its diversity and creativity.

House adjourned at 6.38 pm.