

The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

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The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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Did you see ...?

Information Professional

The Jan-Feb issue includes:

- Lee Taylor (Library Manager – Development, North Yorkshire Library and Information Service), “Joygernaut brings awareness of kindness”, which looks at how Joygernaut, a series of workshops and performance¹, got people thinking about kindness and wellbeing² [pp50-53]

Museums Journal

The Dec 2018 issue³ includes a number of useful articles:

- Caroline Parry “So much for the end of austerity”, which outlines some of the devastating effects of austerity [p6]
- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Social service” (“Funding news” column), which includes a short piece on the Cultural Impact Development Fund⁴ [p7]
- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Museums facing tough questions over sponsorship”, which looks at the increasingly thorny issue of sponsorship [pp12-13]
- Rachael Minott “Challenging inequality via active language”, which asks some hard questions about language – for example, rather than asking where “hard-to-reach audiences/workers” are, think about how organisations systematically exclude people [p15]
- Holly Black “Go figure”, an interesting look at statues and who they do/do not represent [pp26-29, 31]
- Review: website: *People On the Move: How Migration Has Changed the World* – brief review of this Europeana migration website⁵ [p59]

The Jan 2019 issue⁶ includes:

¹ See: <http://www.joygernaut.com/>. Joygernaut is coordinated by poet/performer Andy Craven-Griffiths, and the website gives further info about the process of gathering stories and research, and then creating performances. There is also a link to a reading list, http://www.joygernaut.com/further_reading/, as well as to The Reading Agency’s “Reading Well” resources, <https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/reading-well/>.

² This ties in to recent work by the Carnegie UK Trust: Julia Unwin. *Kindness, emotions and human relationships: the blind spot in public policy*. Carnegie UK Trust, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2018/11/15150558/LOW-RES-3729-Kindness-Public-Policy3.pdf.

³ *Museums Journal*, Dec 2018.

⁴ “A £3.7 million fund providing small-scale repayable finance to socially-driven arts, cultural and creative organisations”, see: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/cultural-impact-development-fund/>.

⁵ See: <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/exhibitions/people-on-the-move>.

⁶ *Museums Journal*, Dec 2018.

- Caroline Parry “Arts can play a major role in tackling social isolation”, which looks briefly at the cultural sector’s role in tackling loneliness, allied to the Government strategy⁷ [p11]
- John Holt “We are the champions”, interviews with winners of the first Museums Change Lives awards⁸ [pp26-29, 31]
- “Websites” (“In practice” column):
 - Alex Stevens “Creating an effective and accessible online presence” [pp60-61]
 - “Understanding audiences” [pp61-62]
 - Matthew Cock “Ten ways to ensure your site is accessible to all” [p63]

The Feb 2019 issue includes:

- Simon Stephens “Creative opportunities are needed at all levels” [Editorial], which welcomes the launch of the Cultural Development Fund⁹, but also says that it demonstrates “a lack of joined-up thinking” by the Government, giving money to help unleash creativity whilst, at the same time, squeezing creative subjects in schools [p4]
- Caroline Parry “Sector embraces wellbeing”, which looks at the involvement of museums in Wales with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act¹⁰, drawing on a report¹¹ published in 2018, that assesses the work of six museums¹² [p6]

⁷ *A connected society: a strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change*. DCMS, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748212/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web.pdf. Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 210, Aug 2018, pp11-16, <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-210.pdf>.

⁸ Noted in *The Network Newsletter*, 212, Oct 2018, pp10-11, <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-212.pdf>.

⁹ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/five-areas-to-share-20-million-to-unleash-creativity-across-the-nation>.

¹⁰ “This Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales [...]

The Act will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

This new law will mean that, for the first time, public bodies listed in the Act must do what they do in a sustainable way.

Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. It will expect them to:

- work together better
- involve people reflecting the diversity of our communities
- look to the long term as well as focusing on now
- take action to try and stop problems getting worse - or even stop them happening in the first place.”

Taken from: <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>.

- Eleanor Mills “Living cultures”, which interviews Laura van Broekhoven (Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum) about “repatriation, decolonisation and contested histories” [pp32-35]
- Jasper Hart “Learning spaces: places for learning and engagement” [“In practice” column], which looks at modern design and thinking when creating learning spaces. It also includes a very useful brief piece, “Friendly faces: making spaces accessible to those with autism”, which includes examples of good practice from the National Museum of Computing¹³ and from Eureka! The National Children’s Museum¹⁴ [pp60-62]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Equality, diversity and the creative case: a data report, 2017-2018

ACE have just published their fourth annual report¹⁵ on equality, diversity and the creative case.

Abid Hussain (the ACE Director for Diversity) has written a useful brief blogpost, “Five takeaways from this year’s Equality, Diversity and Creative Case report...”¹⁶. These include:

- There have been positive improvements in female and ethnic minority representation at leadership level
- The pace of change in some areas must improve:

“In relation to disability, we’ve seen very little movement. The total percentage of disabled workers across the National Portfolio has

¹¹ *Welsh museums and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*. The Happy Museum, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: http://happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HM_Welsh_report_2018_WEB_4.pdf.

¹² “To engage and respond to the ambitious Future Generations Act goals, six Welsh museums teamed up with the Happy Museum project to deepen their understanding of the Act, review the ways in which they were already responding to the goals, and plan new activities and ways of working that would take their response to the next level. The aim is to make the goals integral to everything they do.” Taken from p3 of the report.

¹³ See: <http://www.tnmoc.org/>.

¹⁴ See: <https://www.eureka.org.uk/>.

¹⁵ *Equality, diversity and the creative case: a data report, 2017-2018*. ACE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from:

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Diversity_report_1718_hi-resV3.pdf.

¹⁶ See: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/blog/five-takeaways-year%E2%80%99s-equality-diversity-and-creative-case-report%E2%80%A6>.

increased from 4% to 5% whilst remaining static for both Major Partner Museums at 4% and the Arts Council itself at 6%, which is significantly lower than the percentage of disabled people of working age (20%). The percentage of disabled people on National Portfolio boards has remained static at 7% and we have seen a decrease from 4% to 2% across Major Partner Museums.

The data highlights the scale of underrepresentation of disabled people across the Arts and Cultural workforce, including at the Arts Council. This can't continue."

- Over half of NPOs are now rated as 'good' against the Creative Case for Diversity
- We continue to experience high levels of 'unknown' returns in data reporting

"When reporting the data for all protected characteristics we have two categories to help us distinguish between individuals choosing not to disclose data, and organisations that do not have/have not submitted data. These categories are 'prefer not to say' and 'unknown'.

This year, we've continued to experience high levels of 'unknown' responses when it comes to workforce and governance and this is something we're very concerned about.

Looking at the data from NPOs, for ethnicity we received a total 32% of unknowns, whilst 44% unknowns were reported for disability and 58% for sexuality [...]

Looking more closely at the data, we can see that unknowns are much higher when organisations are reporting on contractual and voluntary staff than their permanent employees. In response to this, we'll be looking into how we can support organisations in improving the capture rate for this data going forward.

More broadly than this however, we'll be taking steps to reduce the number of unknowns that NPOs are reporting and we will put pressure on organisations which consistently report high levels of 'unknown' data, reminding them of their obligations under their funding agreements"

- We'll be making some changes to equality and diversity reporting for our 2018-22 Portfolio

"From next year we will be introducing a number of changes to the way we report on our equality and diversity data. Some of the changes we will be introducing include:

- Publishing individual Creative Case for Diversity ratings for all National Portfolio Organisations to increase transparency and accountability
- Publishing NPO workforce, leadership and governance data on protected characteristic categories by scale of funding, enabling us to present a more nuanced insight by scale of investment.
- Provide a breakdown of data by art form and discipline to identify key trends across different art forms, which will provide more useful insights to inform future policy directives”

As the report states, there is still a lot of work to do – and we must get away from the idea that having returns saying “unknown” is acceptable in 2019.

Incidentally, some of the same issues have been highlighted in the recent Cultural Cities Enquiry report¹⁷:

“A more representative cultural sector, reflecting the strength inherent in our cities’ diverse populations, will promote cultural innovation, engage more audiences, and better connect people with each other and the places in which they live, study, work and visit. In addition, it will strengthen the talent pipeline into our creative industries, helping them grow, while enabling people from all backgrounds to share in the benefits of that growth.

To unlock the potential of the cultural sector for all people and communities, we need to:

- Ensure that the cultural sector is representative of the diversity of our cities and of our country as a whole
- Embed diversity and inclusivity in strategy and governance of city culture, including monitoring diversity within the workforce, leadership and in the provision and take up of cultural opportunity
- Widen access to careers and employment in the cultural sector, so that people from every background can benefit from growth in our cities’ creative industries and ensure that sufficient local talent is available to power that growth” [p47]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Addressing inclusion: effectively challenging racism in schools

This important new guidance¹⁸ has been produced by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) and *respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service. It

¹⁷ *Cultural Cities Enquiry*. Core Cities, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20%5Bweb%5D.pdf>.

draws on content originally developed by LGBT Youth Scotland and *respectme* for their publication, *Addressing inclusion ...*¹⁹

“This resource provides information and guidance to school staff on addressing racist bullying in Scottish schools and has been written to complement [the national strategy²⁰]” [p5]

It starts with brief introductions to definitions of bullying and of racism; and then looks at prejudice and prejudice-based bullying:

“Prejudice is a social problem and is not limited to schools, however schools can contribute to social change and assist to prepare children and young people for adulthood. In order to thrive and achieve their full potential, children and young people need learning environments which are safe, nurturing, respectful, and free from fear, abuse and discrimination.” [p7]

followed by a section on racist bullying, including its impact on individuals and on the wider school.

To tackle these issues, the guidance recommends beginning with early intervention and prevention:

- Addressing language and negative messages (including encouraging reflection on language:

“It's important to challenge racist language in a way which avoids making young people feel defensive. Evidence suggests that feelings of defensiveness can actually worsen any underlying prejudiced attitudes.” [p10]

- Ensuring staff are trained and have opportunities to learn
- Developing inclusive policies and procedures
- Involving young people and connecting with the wider community

“Every school is different and the best people to articulate what the day to day environment is like for young people are young people themselves. Schools should talk to their students about

¹⁸ *Addressing inclusion: effectively challenging racism in schools*. CRER/*respectme*, no date [2018]. Available to download as a pdf from:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b0353f_dc2e501101154002b90e87b9dfaea6d8.pdf.

¹⁹ *Addressing inclusion: effectively challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia*. LGBT Youth Scotland/*respectme*/Scottish Government, no date. Available to download as a pdf from:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/inc65addressinginclusion.pdf>.

²⁰ *Respect for all: the National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's children and young people*. Scottish Government, 2017. Available to download as a pdf from:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlands-children-young-people/>.

their awareness and experiences of racism in the school. Young people should also have a voice in interventions and strategies to address these issues.” [p12]

- Creating visually inclusive learning environments:

“This can be accomplished through displays and posters which feature an ethnically diverse range of people. Although displaying images or information specifically about race equality or minority ethnic community interests can be useful, this should always be done as part of a broader approach which features minority and majority ethnic people together within the overall range of posters and displays. This creates an environment where community cohesion and a shared sense of belonging is visible within the school.” [p12]

- Including minority ethnic identities in the curriculum

“An inclusive curriculum can be achieved by using minority ethnic voices and identities to contextualise learning. It should be possible to build this context across all subject areas, with particularly good opportunities to incorporate this into areas such as English language and social sciences.” [p12]

- Involving minority ethnic people in school life
- Encouraging attitude and behaviour change

The next section looks at recognising and understanding racist bullying. This includes advice on:

- Identifying racism:

“It's important for practitioners to develop informed, effective approaches to addressing racist behaviour. Similarly to approaches to addressing bullying generally, identifying and dealing with this behaviour does not mean labelling a young person as 'a bully' or as 'racist' [...]

Most importantly, in line with the Macpherson definition of a racist incident, an incident should be considered racist if it is ‘perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.’ [...] This includes young people experiencing bullying, parents, teachers and any bystanders who witness the behaviour. Use of this definition is crucial to ensure the impact of what's happening can be addressed, regardless of intention (or claims about intention) from the person responsible.” [p14]

- Is prejudice-based bullying a hate crime?

“Whilst many incidents of prejudice-based bullying will not be criminal, the underlying attitudes may lead to future behaviour

which does constitute a hate crime. In extreme cases, young people displaying this type of behaviour may even become vulnerable to radicalisation by far-right organisations. Effectively addressing prejudice-based bullying can help to prevent future risks.” [p15]

- Is online bullying different?

“Online bullying is most effectively addressed as part of a whole anti-bullying approach, not as a separate area of work or policy.” [p15]

- Prejudice-based bullying and racist incidents

“Not all incidents where racism occurs would be considered bullying. It is important to maintain a way of addressing and recording racist incidents which are not part of prejudice-based bullying.” [p15]

The final section looks at responding to racist bullying. This includes:

- Recording and monitoring racist bullying incidents
- Encouraging young people to report bullying
- Confidentiality:

“Children and young people should be made aware that they can talk to staff and know that, unless there's a child protection or wellbeing concern, their right to privacy will be respected. If a racist bullying incident has occurred in school, it's important to talk to the children or young people involved before talking to parents or guardians. Failing to do this can worsen the sense of helplessness or lack of agency often experienced by people who face bullying. Young people's confidentiality should also be respected within the school, only sharing information with those who 'need to know' and informing the child or young person of who information will be shared with.” [p18]

This is followed by a series of appendices:

1. Contacts and resources
2. Terminology (which is a very useful brief introduction to key terms, including some that are now commonly used in describing racist incidents: intersectionality, white privilege, racial microaggressions)
3. Policy and legislation
4. Using restorative and solution-oriented approaches.

This is a very useful set of practical guidance which is obviously valuable for setting beyond schools. Recommended.²¹

Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Unexpected encounters: how museums nurture living and ageing well

This report²² was published in April 2018 – apologies for being so slow to mention it here.

It:

“[...] makes the case for the role that museums can play in supporting older people as individuals to live well, helping them to come to terms with the changes brought about by getting older and challenging negative, deficit models of ageing.” [p4]

The report is laid out in three main sections: “Big ideas”; “Our ‘experiment’”; and “It’s not the end, it’s just the beginning”.

The “Big ideas” section includes a brief introduction to the global ageing population (plus touching on the negative images and stereotypes of older people; and ageism), which is expanded in the section on “What do we mean by ageing?”.

This is followed by a rather damning section on “What (unconscious) assumptions do museums make about older people?”:

“Older people are an established audience for museums and galleries, with significant and powerful work taking place around memory and reminiscence, [...] health and wellbeing, [...] and the arts, [...] as well as the growing evidence of positive benefits from general participation in cultural activities [...] Yet, there appear to be a number of (unconscious) assumptions that museums make about older people that shape the activities and opportunities made available to them. Judging by the significant focus placed on reminiscence and memory, museums have the tendency to assume that the best of older people’s lives have been and gone, it lies in the past. When working with older people, the default position for museums is to use their social history collections as part of a reminiscence session; in a recent mapping of activities in museums connected to health and wellbeing all the examples of projects specific to

²¹ Source: *MEMO [Minority Ethnic Matters Overview]*, 600, 18 Feb 2019.

²² Jocelyn Dodd, Ceri Jones, Sarah Plumb, Henry McGhie and Luke Blazejewski. *Unexpected encounters: how museums nurture living and ageing well*. RCMG, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/publications/UnexpectedEncounters.pdf>.

older people were connected to reminiscence [...] When museums are thinking about their programming for older people, there is the tendency to focus on their health conditions (such as dementia, stroke), where the emphasis is on making them 'well', or using the therapeutic or healing value of museum collections to alleviate their conditions [...] This seems to mean that, generally, older people are treated as passive consumers of museum activities, such as talks and lectures, with the aim of providing 'a nice day out' (perhaps linked to the tendency in our paternalistic society to assume that if organisations are 'nice to [older people]... they will be ever so grateful' [...]). Older people are often considered by museums as grandparents or a free workforce for museums in the form of volunteers." [p10]

However, it does not need to be this way. In the next section of the first part, "The future we want", the report argues that:

"Museums have the opportunity to be part of a radically new vision of the future, one in which people of all ages are valued and inspired to participate in society to their fullest potential, alongside the need to create a better, fairer, more sustainable world that supports the wellbeing of the natural world as well as our own. In 2015, governments around the world, including the UK, agreed to a transformational programme of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to create 'the future we want' by 2030 through (for example) promoting good health and wellbeing for all, reducing inequalities (which includes the aspiration to empower and promote social, economic and political inclusion irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status), strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, and to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces [...] The goals are profoundly interconnected and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Finding ways to develop programmes that connect the goals together offers a promising way in which museums can contribute to this programme, supporting social justice issues, including the rights of older people and their access to nature and natural heritage, and the valuing of a safe, vibrant and healthy natural environment, which is ultimately beneficial for everyone's wellbeing." [p11]

It then goes on to look at "Museums for the future". This suggests that we can create museums that:

- Nurture living and ageing well – which, in turn, leads to ...
- ... Revitalising museum collections for living and ageing well.

To do this is not necessarily easy:

"Harnessing the value of natural heritage collections for nature connectedness has the potential to engage and enrich the lives of older people, however this potential remains largely undeveloped. Older people are often disconnected from the natural world, and are less likely to have contact with nature [...] Natural heritage collections are rarely used to target older audiences, except as grandparents, with museums tending to focus on

children and their families. As with other audiences, the majority of older people are also disengaged from the scientific, expert-led approach taken by museums to the use and interpretation of natural heritage collections.

Using collections to nurture living and ageing well requires a massive shift, not only in how museums perceive and work with older people but also in how they use, and understand, their natural heritage collections. However, because these collections are not inherently connected to memory in the same way that social history collections are, using natural heritage collections can avoid some of the traditional, comfortable ways of working with memory that museums are prone to do with older audiences (and also older people ‘performing’ their memories in the way expected of them).” [p15]

The second section of this report then looks at the “Experiment”, drawing on:

“[...] the experiences of a two-year action research project *Encountering the Unexpected*, which challenged six museums [23] to change the way they work with older people, framing their natural heritage collections through the lens of nature connectedness, and living and ageing well. This work not only has profound implications for the museums sector – with the development of a framework that can support museums in their work with older people and their collections – but also speaks to broader debates about how older people are recognised and valued within wider society, and how the many diverse experiences of ageing can be rehabilitated as an essential part of the life course.” [p15]

It outlines some of the work undertaken and the learning from this. One major result was the development of a framework to support museums who want to use their collections in new ways with older people. This has three strands:

We need to change our perceptions of older people

- Ageing is a social justice issue, older people’s rights are as important as everyone else’s
- Ageing and age identity are fluid and multidimensional
- Ageing is experienced by everyone – shaped by social and cultural contexts (including background, education, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, personality)
- Older people are diverse (age intersects with other aspects of our identity including ethnicity, culture, sexuality, LGBTQ)
- Older people have desires, hopes, ambitions (now and in the future)
- Loss can shape people’s lives, we need to acknowledge and understand this

Older people and museums: questions to consider

²³ The six museums are: Manchester Museum; World Museum Liverpool; Bolton Libraries and Museums; The Whitaker in Rossendale; Gallery Oldham; and The Atkinson in Southport. Links to these and brief further info at: <https://unexpectedencounters.le.ac.uk/our-experiment/six-museums/>.

- What is it about older people that makes them different to the rest of the population? What is it about ageing and the ageing process that liberates us, but that limits us?
- What will enable older people to feel welcome, feel enjoyment, feel challenged, make them think and give them ideas? How can museums enrich their lives?
- What will make a difference to someone's life from engagement with collections?
- Why do you want to engage older people in museums and galleries? What is in it for older people?
- What will encourage older people into museums and galleries? What is it about your work that's going to bring in the people who wouldn't otherwise come?

Engaging older people

Active engagement

Open-ended engagement experiences (no curriculum, no end point); keep learning (in the widest possible lifelong way); adult, not childlike activities; venturing into curiosity; self-directed, active process; being playful, seeing new things, feeling wonder / magic / awe

Connecting

To people, things, nature, the wider world; family, friends, community; nature connectedness; to wider issues, political issues; with experts, specialists (in an everyday, accessible way); museum collections to wider social issues

Living in the moment

Immersion; being absorbed in activity; engaged in the present, the now; sense of flow; part of the life-course, older people as themselves (not as grandparents, carers); this moment in time; taking notice; seeing things differently; being mindful; contemplation, reflection

Meaning and purpose

Feeling valued by others, by organisations like museums, and by wider society; satisfaction with life; activism and political engagement; being listened to and having a voice; giving; something to think about and focus on; element of challenge [taken from p64]

The final section, "It's not the end, it's just the beginning", highlights a number of key points, including:

- The importance of challenging the medicalised framing of older people and ageing
- Asking different questions about older people: "Rather than asking what older people can do for museums, museums need to ask what can they do for older people? What can they offer such a diverse group – diverse not only in terms of age (as people aged between 50 – 100+ years of age should not be assumed to be a homogenous group) but in terms of

background, life experience, interests, sexuality, ethnicity and so on.”
[p67]

- Developing a new approach to “Living and ageing well”, involving “[...] connecting, living in the moment, meaning and purpose, and active engagement [...]” [p67]
- Using “nature connectedness” as a means of engaging with museum collections
- Museums and older people’s rights: “There is the need for a much more complex understanding, and acceptance, of ageing within society and museums have the opportunity to take a role in challenging the negative perceptions we place on ageing and on older people. As the global population ages, this becomes a more and more pressing social justice issue. Museums can play a proactive role by helping to shape a radically different future that places value on people of all ages, as part of a fairer, healthier, more sustainable society in balance with the natural world.” [p68]

This is a fascinating and important report, especially in its call for a reassessment of the way we work with older people – and the successes that can flow from this. Highly recommended.

In addition, to complement the publication, there is a project website, *Encountering the Unexpected*²⁴, which draws on experiences and voices of all those involved in the project, and which is laid out in similar sections with links to resources and further reading.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE = Arts Council England
DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
NPO = National Portfolio Organisation
RCMG = Research Centre for Museums and Galleries

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²⁴ See: <https://unexpectedencounters.le.ac.uk/>.