

# 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](http://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 ...?

### **Museums Journal**

The March issue includes:

- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Will it all come up roses under ACE’s new strategy?”, which assesses the new ACE strategy, *Let’s create*<sup>1, 2</sup> [pp12-13]
- “Voxpop” column: “Why do we need a new approach to displaying disability?”, which reflects on why disability is largely absent from museum displays (and follows on from the recently-published guidance<sup>3</sup>) [p15]
- Caroline Parry “Museum labels: rethinking the narrative”, which outlines recent changes in attitudes and how these are reflected in labelling [pp60-61]. This is followed by two brief examples of this “In practice”: Jewish Museum London, and Museum of Transology [p63]

The April issue includes:

- Geraldine Kendall Adams “Scotland’s strategic papers set out an ambitious vision”<sup>4</sup> [pp12-13]
- Stephanie Tierney “Museums must be part of social prescribing” [“Comment” column], which argues that the role that the cultural sector can play needs to be more widely promoted [p14]

### **GEM Case Studies**

As noted previously, it’s great to be able to share this good practice more widely.

The latest *Case Studies* focuses on Early Years<sup>5</sup> and includes a range of really useful and interesting examples of good practice:

- Lynsey Anderson “Our first tentative steps toward Early Years provision”, which looks at how the Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum widened its

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<sup>1</sup> *Let’s create: strategy 2020-2030*. ACE, 2020 [dated 2021 in document]. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloadfile/Strategy%202020\\_2030%20Arts%20Council%20England.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloadfile/Strategy%202020_2030%20Arts%20Council%20England.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 226, Dec 2019, available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-226.pdf>, pp7-13.

<sup>3</sup> *An ethical approach to interpreting disability and difference*. Wellcome Collection/RCMG, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/disorder-dissent-disruption>. Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 226, Dec 2019, available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-226.pdf>, pp6-7.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news-analysis/12032020-scotland-culture-strategy-delivery-plan>.

<sup>5</sup> *Case Studies*, vol.25, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: [https://gem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/0\\_GM157-Gem-Case-Studies-25\\_FINAL.pdf](https://gem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/0_GM157-Gem-Case-Studies-25_FINAL.pdf).

brief to encourage more families with under-5s to visit the Museum [pp4-5]

- Heather Whitt “Baby Mindful at Orleans House Gallery”, which developed targeted provision for parents and babies [pp6-7]:

“Having considered statistics on postnatal depression in the borough of Richmond we knew that there was a demand for activities to support positive mental health for new parents as they went through the transition of pregnancy and caring for a newborn. We knew that this wasn’t something currently on offer in the borough and that we were well placed to provide this because of our setting, contacts, and experience.” [p6]

- Kate Mail “How we turn ‘a lovely day out’ into a valuable learning experience?” [pp8-9], which looks at a project at Hampton Court Palace “To develop a high-quality schools programme for Under 5s with clear impact on learning” [p8]. The article is particularly useful in the way it uses the ‘lessons learned’ to add to future work – and partnerships: “We are collaborating with the Centre for Literacy in Primary education (CLPE) to ensure that pre and post visit resources are rich in literacy and oracy links to maximise children’s learning.” [p9]
- Debbie Goldsmith “East Prescot Road School residency”, which looked at how “Tate Liverpool worked in partnership with East Prescot Rd Nursery School, exploring how to take measured risks within early years practice through the lens of creative learning.” [pp10-11]
- Victoria Smith “Treasures of the Museum”, “The project was aimed at families with children aged 2-3 years who were accessing activities and services at Chrisp Street Children’s Centre, and particularly to those who had never visited the Museum of London Docklands, or any other museum, before.” [pp12-13]
- Emma Spencer “Welcoming the artists of the future”, which looked at family learning at Yorkshire Sculpture Park [pp14-15]
- Alex Bogard “A new direction: Early Years workshops at Pallant House Gallery”, which outlines how the Gallery “[...] worked to develop a more sustainable programme, which is cost effective and has a dynamic participant base.” [pp16-17]
- Nicola Wallis “Creative families: Talking Together at the Fitzwilliam Museum”:

“Creative Families: Talking Together is a course for families with children under five. It promotes early communication and language development through playful exploration of museum objects & spaces and experimentation with art materials.” [pp18-19]

- Amy Baird, Bruce Davenport and Kate Holden “Learning to play together in the Museum” – in thinking about how best to redevelop their under-fives’ gallery, an interdisciplinary team at Great North Museum: Hancock explored “[...] how we better connect with our youngest audiences in ways that are meaningful for them remains an active objective for the museum.” [pp20-21]
- Kathryn Wharton “Supporting families living in poverty”, which also looked at innovation at Great North Museum: Hancock, and includes some practical examples of how museums can support people, for example recognising ‘Holiday Hunger’ and period poverty [pp22-23]
- Lawrence Bradby “Story Pot: co-created stories improvised in response to artworks”, which outlines how the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts developed ways of making families feel at ease in the museum, using group storytelling [pp24-25]
- Chrissie Weltike and Christina Parker “Paint and Custard: parent and child bonding through creativity” [pp26-27]

“The museum has been running creative Early Years sessions for fifteen years – starting with one monthly session and now five sessions per week in term time [...] Children mostly attend with a parent, but some are accompanied by another relative or a childminder. This case study explores the unexpected outcomes of the sessions and shares some of the practical lessons that we have learned that can be applied to similar groups.” [p26]

### ***ARC Magazine***

The June 2020 issue<sup>6</sup> includes in the “Backchat” column, an interview with Dr Safina Islam (Director of the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust & the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre) [pp8-10]:

“Our vision is an inclusive, equally represented and racially just society and our mission is to make Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) history, heritage and culture more visible, supporting excellence in research and learning through ethical and inclusive practice.” [p8]

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## **Climate emergency – Other Agencies**

### ***Faster, further, fairer: putting people at the heart of tackling the climate and nature emergency***

This interim report<sup>7</sup> from the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission:

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<sup>6</sup> *ARC Magazine*, 370, June 2020.

<sup>7</sup> *Faster, further, fairer: putting people at the heart of tackling the climate and nature emergency*. IPPR, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.ippr.org/files/2020-05/faster-further-fairer-ejc-interim-may20.pdf>.

“[...] finds that to act with the ambition and at the scale that the climate and nature emergency demands, requires a new approach. An approach where we take faster action to tackle the climate and nature crisis, go further in the transformation of our economy and deliver a fairer transition for all. Central to the ethos of the commission is the recognition that there is an inextricable link between addressing the climate and nature emergency and tackling economic and social injustice.” [p8]

The report starts with the Commission’s vision:

“Our vision is of a vibrant, healthy society, and a clean, innovative economy, driven by the key principle of fairness. To realise this ambition, we envisage a transformation that is both rapid and fair and that places people at its heart. It will require a fundamental change to our economic, democratic and societal model: a programme of renewal.

We want to build a net zero economy where all citizens are able to thrive alongside nature. The transition will have been one where the impacts and opportunities have been fairly shared and people will have had a meaningful say in the decisions that affect them. Support will have been provided for those citizens and communities most impacted, as well as the most vulnerable, allowing them not just to survive but thrive.

At the heart of this new economy will be the promotion of citizens’ wellbeing. Health, quality of life, and the positive impacts of a thriving environment will all be driven through strong climate and nature policies with ambitious targets to deliver clean air, warm homes, access to open spaces, and healthy diets. Our homes will be largely powered and heated by renewable energy, much of it decentralised and all of it smart. Sustainable public transport will be abundant, electric vehicles available for those that need them and take-up of cycling and walking increased.” [p9]

It then outlines the key challenges:

- The UK must guarantee no one is left behind and provide opportunities for all
- The UK must get its own house in order
- The UK must transform its economic model.

This is followed by a framework for transformation:

- Faster: Action to address climate change and to restore nature
- Further: Action to transform our economic model
- Fairer: A better life for all, with no one left behind.

The report makes a series of major recommendations, aimed at ensuring that:

“The UK should seek to decarbonise much faster over the next decade if it is to make the most of the opportunities, act prudently on the risks, minimise the costs of the transition, and meet its extra responsibility in relation to the climate and nature crises.” [p12]

These recommendations, together with the proposals which will form part of the Commission's final report, aim to achieve:

1. "Transform our economic model: Our economic model must place environmental and human sustainability, resilience and people at the heart of economic health. Meeting the climate and nature emergency requires ambitious climate targets, new legislation to ensure our environmental footprint is brought within sustainable limits, and new economic metrics which go beyond the measurement of economic growth alone and place value on nature and wellbeing.
2. Finance the green economy: A transition that delivers for climate, nature, and people will require finance to be invested on an unprecedented scale into new solutions for a green economy. Both public and private finance will play a key role in getting us there - with new roles for both fiscal and monetary policy. There is considerable work still required to determine how best to fund the transition to net zero.
3. Support sustainable industries and create high-skill, high-wage jobs: A proactive and purposeful industrial strategy must support the transition to climate and nature safe methods of production, manufacturing, resource utilisation, and consumption. Subsidies for sectors of the economy that have a high carbon footprint must be replaced by significant investment in innovation and new technologies to support them to decarbonise.
4. Build an education and skills programme for a zero carbon economy. The commission is exploring what reforms are needed to education and skills to ensure that we can progress the transition across the existing workforce in carbon intensive industries, but also ensure the UK has the necessary skills in the workforce of the future.
5. Deliver a new 'green social contract': Covid-19 has exposed the insecurity of work for many. In the aftermath of this public health crisis and to secure a just transition in respect of the climate and nature crises, we must reassess the 'social contract'. The commission is exploring the role of the institutions needed to embed the idea of a 'green social contract', Consideration will also be given to the financial support required as part of economic development funding to support the drive to a low carbon economy and mitigate against the negative impacts of decarbonisation. It will also consider income and job guarantees for workers, improvements in collective bargaining and trade union rights and support for worker ownership models. New powers to organise and ensure worker voice is at the heart of transition are vital, as will be the involvement of the self-employed and workers in the gig economy.
6. Deliver warm homes for all: The commission is exploring the best means to decarbonise heating from buildings and deliver a dramatic roll out of energy efficiency measures across the country, delivering warmer homes, lower energy bills and creating jobs in every region. While the housing sector has in recent years expanded its capacity to build new homes that meet high energy standards, retrofitting the existing housing

stock and decarbonising heat remains the biggest challenge for the housing sector.

7. Decarbonise mobility: The UK's transport infrastructure contributes significantly to the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, transport is essential to our everyday life. People rely on infrastructure networks to access the labour market and everyday services. The commission is exploring the best means of investing in – and, as importantly, making accessible – sustainable forms of transport and zero-carbon vehicles. This will include policies to reduce car-use and free or significantly subsidised public transport. The benefits of such a programme will reach far beyond just climate but will also include significant improvements in air quality and health outcomes.
8. Transfer power to communities: Covid-19 has revealed the strength of solidarity and depth of generosity in communities across the UK. Solutions for a sustainable future for climate and nature lie in these very communities all of whom have varied and diverse needs, and cannot be developed centrally. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Power and money must be devolved to enable tailored and nuanced plans to emerge, and to enable communities to take control of the decisions that will affect them. This must include new forms of deliberation for policymaking including citizens juries and assemblies as well as digital tools. Vulnerable, disadvantaged and minority groups who have been previously left out of policymaking must be at the heart of this new approach.
9. Repair our natural environment: Repairing nature and biodiversity must be a priority for the benefit of our wider economy, for climate and for the health of our citizens. Doing so will require a reshaping of land use and agriculture and the restoration of our oceans, to provide both environmental and health benefits to our citizens. The commission is exploring how best to achieve agricultural reform, nature based solutions, healthier diets and improvements in the quality and availability of affordable food, and the reconnection of people with nature. As part of the work on agriculture, the commission is reviewing the supply chains and labour market that underpin our food system.
10. Lead the world: As the host of COP26 in 2021, the UK must increase its domestic policy ambition significantly in order to be a credible example to the rest of world and leverage greater ambition and delivery from other developed countries. However, as the fifth-largest contributor to the stock of greenhouse gas emissions and given its unsustainable global environmental footprint, the UK also has a responsibility to make a broader contribution. The commission is exploring the contribution the UK should be making in terms of finance to the Green Climate Fund, for example, to fund mitigation, climate adaptation and resilience as well as support for loss and damage. The commission will also examine the role of UK export finance and trade, as well as the role of sharing innovation and technology.” [pp16-17]

Recommended.<sup>8</sup>

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## Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

### ***The Black curriculum: Black British history in the National Curriculum report 2020***

Although this report<sup>9</sup> by The Black Curriculum group<sup>10</sup> was published in Jan 2020, we had not seen it referred to until June 2020.

“This report explores how the current History National Curriculum systematically omits the contribution of Black British history in favour of a dominant White, Eurocentric curriculum that fails to reflect our multi ethnic and broadly diverse society [...]

This report reinforces the ideal that a diverse history curriculum can be a vehicle for creating greater social cohesion and tolerance of racial and ethnic difference in preparing learners to enter a diverse, multi-cultural society.” [p2]

The report looks briefly at the development of the National Curriculum, then focuses on the absence of Black history:

“The rejection of Black History in favour of a narrow conception of Britishness, which dismisses the influence of Black people on this construct has been publically [sic] contested by commentators, activists and educators alike. This has coincided with controversial revisions to the English Literature and History curricula, which have been heavily criticized for being insular and narrowly nationalistic [...]” [p7]

It then focuses on how to broaden the curriculum:

“The importance associated with featuring Black history in all facets of the curriculum positions the Black and ethnic minority contribution to British society as impactful and significant in shaping the dialogue for diversification and cultural integration and this should arguably extend beyond the subject discipline of just history [...]” [p10]

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<sup>8</sup> Source: email from IPPR, 27 May 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Jason Arday. *The Black curriculum: Black British history in the National Curriculum report 2020*. The Black Curriculum, 2020. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c4325439d5abb9b27980cd4/t/5e1530a2ecbb473fb909584c/1578447045883/The+Black+Curriculum+Report+2020.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> “The Black Curriculum is an initiative that teaches Black history all year round in the school year, to 8-16 year olds. We deliver our content into schools, using a range of art modes such as drama and poetry. We also provide consultations and training for teachers across the country to teach Black history all year round.

We believe in the importance of teaching and learning Black history – as history, through the arts. The value this teaching provides is relevant to all students in their learning, development and in building a sense of identity.” [Taken from: <https://www.theblackcurriculum.com/our-work>].

and particularly 'Understanding the ever-changing multi-diverse Classroom'.

Finally, the report looks at 'The Importance of mandatory and continuous Black History as History in Schools', with a strong, positive recommendation of ways forward:

"Understanding the importance of Black History within the British curricula moves beyond condensing the history of Black people to just one month (October every year) in the UK. The mandatory aspect of Black history should be positioned as essential knowledge that provides the contextual and historical backdrop to how generations of Black people from as far back as the 1700's have shaped constructions of 'Britishness' that moves beyond eulogising white endeavour as the only significant contribution to British history [...]"

The re-telling of British History has been romanticised, and educators can often be guilty of suppressing race and racism, by presenting a discourse that situates Britain as ending the Slave trade, while omitting that fact that Britain was a major slaving power that grew significant, generational wealth from the profits of trading in human lives [...]. This often filtered history facilitated by the National Curriculum positions Britain as having created medicine and technology, while granting independence to commonwealth countries, without highlighting the brutal subjugation techniques deployed in acquiring those territories in the first instance." [p14]

The report makes four main recommendations:

1. "Developing a multi-cultural diverse National Curriculum and curriculum's: Moving away from a very prescriptive curriculum requires teachers to reimagine the History curriculum within the UK and consider how to develop a discourse that interweaves the contribution of Black History to the canon as a form or body of legitimate knowledge.
2. Britain is multi-cultural and our past and present History National Curriculum must reflect this: Understanding that within an ever-changing multi-diverse society, conventions of Britishness will always require reconceptualizing to incorporate all of our histories and stories.
3. Diversifying History teaching workforces: The dearth of Black History teachers within the teaching profession is problematic and when aligned to discriminatory practices that exclude Black and ethnic minority teachers this remains a significant factor in the narrative of British history that get purported within our classrooms.
4. Teaching Black history not only benefits Black students, but it is also beneficial to British society as a whole: The cognition which ensues allows us as a nation to collectively pause and reflect on race relations. Widening the scope of Black history study can also help society to unravel many of the racial stereotypes that linger into the present." [p4]

This is an important report, recommended.<sup>11</sup>

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE = Arts Council England

RCMG = Research Centre for Museums and Galleries

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This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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<sup>11</sup> Source: email from HOPE not hate, 4 Jun 2020.