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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.

Contents List

Did you see ...?

- *CILIP Update* – page 2
- *Access* – page 2
- *Museums Journal* – page 2

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

- *Telling the story of everyone's rights, every day* – page 3
- *Families in need of food parcels – the food poverty crisis unwrapped* – page 4
- Migration Policy Institute's Transatlantic Council on Migration's key recommendations for fostering greater cohesiveness – page 6
- *Shaping the future: getting the best for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people – seminar series report* – page 7
- Spring Online 2014 – Help someone get online this spring – page 10

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

- *Dementia: a state of the nation report on dementia care and support in England* – page 11

Disability issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

- *Reading groups, libraries and social inclusion: experiences of blind and partially sighted people* – page 12

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

- *How Americans value public libraries in their communities* – page 13

Abbreviations and acronyms – page 14

Did you see ...?

CILIP Update

The January 2014 issue has a very useful article¹ about Cumbria Library Service's work with people living with dementia; they working with a number of agencies, including Dementia Care Matters².

Access

The new Public and Mobile Libraries Group of CILIP has just launched its new journal³.

It includes contributions from Annie Mauger and John Dolan, an article by Ian Anstice on the success of *Public Libraries News*, an article on information literacy and its relevance to public libraries, plus book reviews and an introduction to the PLMG Committee.

The article celebrating the work of the "Mobile Library Champion of the Year 2013" (Donald Ewen Morrison) outlines just how important the mobile library service is, especially in a very rural authority such as Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council).

Museums Journal

The December 2013 issue⁴ has some interesting articles, including:

- Rob Perks "Oral history is under attack" ["Comment" section, p15]
- Paddy Gilmore and Sara Selwood "What can we do to get impoverished communities into museums?" ["Comment – the conversation" section, p17]
- Louise Gray "Glenside Hospital Museum", which looks at how the museum, which is set in a former psychiatric hospital, is promoting mental health and wellbeing ["The Museum of ..." series, p37]

¹ Sue Cochrane, Sally Knocker and Helen Towers "Opening doors to people living with dementia", pp36-38. *CILIP Update*, Jan 2014 – for further information, see: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/membership/membership-benefits/monthly-magazine-journals-and-ebulletins/cilip-update-magazine>.

² See: <http://www.dementiacarematters.com/index.html>.

³ *Access: Journal of the Public and Mobile Libraries Group*, issue 1, Oct/Nov/Dec 2013. Available to download as a pdf (400.04 kb) from: <http://info.cilip.org.uk/FS/2834/Documents/PMLG%20Access%20Issue%201.pdf>.

⁴ *Museums Journal*, December 2013. Further information at: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

- Mary Stones “Destination Tyneside, Discovery Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne”, review of the new gallery which looks at migration to Tyneside [pp42-45].

The January issue⁵ includes some useful articles, including:

- Gareth Harris “Threat to prison-led initiatives”, which looks at possible impacts of the Transforming Rehabilitation programme (and also includes a comment from John Vincent) [p9]
- Geraldine Kendall “Disabled people are still museums’ missing audience”, which highlights “Cabinet of Curiosities”⁶, a performance piece by Mat Fraser, linked to “Stories of a Different Kind”, the initiative led by RCMG to challenge how museums interpret disability⁷ [pp12-13]
- Rebecca Atkinson “Under-fives”, which looks at museums and galleries embedding early learning provision into their work [p59].

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Telling the story of everyone’s rights, every day

As noted in a recent *Network Ebulletin*⁸, Equally Ours has just launched; it is a partnership between eight national charities:

“Equally Ours aims to help everyone to understand how human rights benefit all of us here in the UK, every day, in very practical ways; that they are an important part of our shared heritage, helping to make equality, inclusion and social justice real for everyone.” [p2]

They have just published their first briefing paper⁹ which “is designed for charities and voluntary organisations that work to secure dignity, respect, justice and equality for people.” [p3]

The briefing will help you:

- “Understand how people think and feel about human rights, and the opportunities this gives your organisation to connect with their values.
- Understand why sharing positive human rights stories is important for organisations working to advance equality and social justice.
- Understand what influences people’s thoughts and feelings about human rights.

⁵ *Museums Journal*, January 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

⁶ See: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/documents/cabinet-of-curiosities-jan-2014>.

⁷ See: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/new-perspectives-on-disability-and-medicine>.

⁸ *The Network Newsletter Ebulletin*, 142, 25 Nov 2013, p4.

⁹ *Telling the story of everyone’s rights, every day*. Equally Ours, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (290.34 kb) from: <http://www.equally-ours.org.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/13-11-18-Briefing-1-vFinal-Approved.pdf>.

- Think about how your organisation can share a positive human rights story.” [p3]

Of particular interest is the section which analyses how people think and feel about human rights issues. Based on a survey¹⁰ of adults in England, Wales and Scotland, they found the following attitudes:

- 22% supportive
- 41% conflicted
- 26% opposed
- 11% uninterested.

Perhaps not surprisingly, they identify the media as a key creator of these attitudes. Further research¹¹ in 2012 found that:

- “Few articles in the leading national newspapers examined the basic principles of human rights or argued for the importance of protecting human rights in law.
- Human rights were rarely associated with advances in equality, tolerance and fairness.
- There was substantial opposition in the media to applying the fundamental principles of human rights to everyone; instead, minority groups were regularly presented as undeserving of human rights protections.
- The dominant media narrative linked human rights with “undeserving” groups and used them as a proxy for anti-European views.
- Human rights were portrayed as undermining rather than enhancing traditional freedoms and legal protections, rather than empowering and enhancing citizenship.

Our research also confirmed that the media influences people’s attitudes to human rights, but that it is out of step with the broad nature of public opinion on the issues.” [p12]

This all helpfully gives the overall context within which charities and voluntary organisations – and, by extension, I think the cultural sector too – should develop their use of stories to illustrate the human rights work they are undertaking.

Families in need of food parcels – the food poverty crisis unwrapped

This new report^{12, 13} from Barnardo’s explores the growing issue of food poverty amongst families and young people.

¹⁰ YouGov sample of 2,280 GB adults, 25th – 29th May 2012.

¹¹ *Talking about human rights: media, public and political discourses and public understandings*. Glasgow University Media Group, 2012 [unpublished].

¹² Jenny Peachey, Nicola Smith and Neera Sharma. *Families in need of food parcels – the food poverty crisis unwrapped*. Barnardo’s Strategy Unit, 2013. Available to

“This comprised ... a nationwide survey, conducted online, followed up with in-depth interviews to find out the extent of the problem and whether it was getting worse. 118 of Barnardo’s services responded. Those services working primarily in areas affected by poverty and deprivation responded.” [p2]

The ‘headline’ findings include:

- “94 per cent of services reported that food poverty was an issue for the families and young people they work with
- 90 per cent of services reported referring families and young people to food banks in the past 12 months
- 94 per cent of those services making referrals to food banks stated that the number of referrals made over the past 12 months had either stayed high or increased.
- Almost half (45 per cent) of the services surveyed provide food directly to the families and young people
- 86 per cent of the services surveyed provided help with budgeting; 67 per cent provided cooking classes and 81 per cent ran healthy eating sessions” [p3]

The research also identified specific groups of people who struggle to afford food – these include care leavers and young families.

The report then highlighted the main reasons for the increase in food poverty – these include:

- The rising cost of living
- Cuts to the levels of welfare support
- “Delays in getting benefits, combined with a stricter sanction regime for claimants who can lose their benefits if they do not attend interviews at the job centre or training schemes. This means we are seeing an increasing number of people who should be entitled to state support that are not, in fact, receiving it.” [p15]
- Reforms to the Social Fund¹⁴ have also had an impact on families and young people.

The report concludes with some urgent messages to the Government about reforms needed. This is a powerful report – and it is also very useful as it pulls together the evidence of the extent of food poverty. Recommended.

download as a pdf (153.61 kb) from:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/families_in_need_of_food_parcel - 2013.pdf.

¹³ Source: *Children & Young People Now*, 19 Dec 2013.

¹⁴ The Barnardo’s report states: “The social fund operated up until April 2013. Applicants used to be able [to] apply for either ‘budgeting loans’ to meet intermittent needs, ‘crisis loans’ for emergency situations, and ‘community care grants’ to help vulnerable people live independently. As of April 2013, community care grants and crisis loans were abolished, and the responsibility handed to Local Authorities (LAs). Crisis loans for benefit alignment only are available through the DWP, and are known as ‘short term advances.’” [p15]

Migration Policy Institute's Transatlantic Council on Migration's key recommendations for fostering greater cohesiveness

These were cited in a recent article¹⁵,¹⁶ which had a link to an earlier article¹⁷ that listed the recommendations: it is worth reminding ourselves of these:

1. "Leaders must hone their listening skills to truly understand their electorate's anxiety about immigration (and related issues); not all concerns are illegitimate, and efforts to ignore or dispute these concerns will only inflame them.
2. Countries that emphasize a process of belonging and "becoming," rather than a static sense of "being," are better able to manage diversity to advantage.
3. One way of overcoming concerns that large-scale immigration has eroded national identity is to involve all citizens in shaping the identity of the new "we," thus giving them a sense of ownership in the integration process.
4. Efforts to curb plural identities are beyond the reach of state authority and will be counterproductive; accepting such identities does not erode social cohesion, whereas limiting their expression can make them more salient.
5. States must create clear and transparent pathways to permanent residence and citizenship. This will encourage immigrants to make a long-term commitment to society.
6. Governments should offer practical integration assistance that genuinely helps immigrants negotiate their new environment more effectively and access the same opportunities as natives.
7. Even though some of the 'fault lines' of the identity crisis may point to cultural 'conflicts,' the solution may not be in the realm of culture. At their core, integration problems are socioeconomic in nature. Therefore, governments must make their most sustained investments in workplaces and schools.
8. When a state's own citizens are suffering, it may be difficult to argue for investments in policies seen as benefiting newcomers. Instead, governments should consider gradually targeting sets of circumstances, like poverty and lack of education; such initiatives (if effective) will benefit immigrants disproportionately.
9. Legislating cultural practices should be a last resort, not a first impulse. States should create incentives for individuals to move toward certain norms rather than restricting or banning unwanted (but nonetheless legal) cultural practices.

¹⁵ "Speaking the Language of Inclusion on International Migrants Day", *Cities of Migration* ("Conversations in Integration"), http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezine_stories/speaking-the-language-of-inclusion-on-international-migrants-day/.

¹⁶ Source: *Cities of Migration Newsletter*, 45, Dec 2013.

¹⁷ "Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration: Demetrios Papademetriou", *Cities of Migration* (Conversations in Integration"), http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezine_stories/rethinking-national-identity-in-the-age-of-migration-demetrios-papademetriou/.

10. States should signal, both with words and body language, that it is in the society's interest for immigrants to be full, productive, and completely engaged members of the community in which they live.”

Shaping the future: getting the best for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people – seminar series report

This new report¹⁸ follows on from a series of seminars:

“Between November 2011 and February 2013, ROTA delivered the *Shaping the Future* seminar series across London, which ... looked at progress made against race inequality since 1993 and identified new forms of racism and inequality emerging from a challenging economic climate and wide ranging policy reforms and public spending cuts.” [p6]

The overall findings were that:

“The seminars found that racism and race discrimination still exist in British society, and are frequently evident in the school system and in higher education. Racism and race inequality persist in new and emerging forms and in a denial of racism that sees it as ‘no longer an issue’. The language of equality is being lost to public discourse.” [p9]

There are specific recommendations for the EHRC and for the BAME voluntary sector:

“Implement public awareness raising campaigns about the persistence of racism and its impact on individuals as well as mainstream society. This should address racism within the public and create safe places for mainstream society to talk openly about racism without fear ...

Reframe the discussion on race equality to explore and learn from racial advantage; to speak in terms of assets and aspirations most often and to nurture youth leaders and a sense of consciousness about race equality among young people.” [p9]

After that, the findings and recommendations are grouped under broad headings:

Policy influence and Voice:

“The voice of BAME communities is key in addressing inequality, yet BAME people remain under-represented in senior statutory roles and democratic processes, for example as Learning Trust board members, head teachers, [etc]” [p9]

¹⁸ Eleanor Stokes and Barbara Nea. *Shaping the future: getting the best for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people – seminar series report*. Race on the Agenda, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (1170 kb) from: http://www.rota.org.uk/webfm_send/246.

Recommendations for the public sector

Take positive action steps to ensure the most disadvantaged young people are engaged in the development of policy and practice. Undertake monitoring using comprehensive ethnic categories and take proactive steps to address under-representation in senior statutory roles and democratic processes.” [pp9-10]

There are also specific recommendations for the GLA and for **the BAME sector**:

“Support BAME parents to develop forums and work together to positively influence and hold education services to account.

Work in greater partnership with youth organisations and take specific steps to open up the race equality movement to young people.” [p10]

Criminal Justice

“The August 2011 riots had a disproportionate effect on BAME communities and a key factor in involvement was thought to be the failure of society to inspire marginalised young people.

Those in positions of power within the criminal justice system can learn from the experience of young people.” [p10]

These are followed by specific recommendations for the police.

Racism and discrimination in education

This section looks at:

- School exclusions
- Stereotyping
- Behaviour management (particularly relating to African-Caribbean boys)
- Vocational education
- Attainment and outcomes
- Non-formal education
- Teacher training
- Representation: “BAME communities have limited influence on education services: BAME people are under-represented in the capital’s classrooms (particularly men), as senior managers in schools and on bodies that oversee education; BAME families have limited influence on school systems – they often do not know what their rights are.” [p12]
- Support for families.

This is followed by recommendations for central and local government, Ofsted, “school alliances” and academies, BAME organisations, and also includes for the **public sector**:

“Resource voluntary sector youth initiatives including inter-youth support and mentoring, homework clubs and support for life skills outside the classroom to improve employability.” [p13]

Youth aspiration and opportunity

Includes: “Monitor the access which young BAME people from disadvantaged areas have to quality work experience, vocational and apprenticeship schemes.” [p14]

Pressures on young Londoners

This includes recommendations for the BAME voluntary sector, and for local authorities:

“Ensure that voluntary sector youth initiatives, which have a central role in ameliorating community pressures through developing leadership skills, providing training opportunities and employment programmes, are fully supported.” [p14]

Community cohesion

The summary says:

“In some boroughs such as Tower Hamlets, there are tensions in relationships between different ethnic communities and between different equality groups, which threatens community cohesion.

Many young people aspire to move out of the area they grew up in, which they see as disadvantaging their educational, employment and economic prospects.

Early engagement of young people in local politics pays dividends in addressing issues affecting their communities.” [pp14-15]

Finally, the report makes recommendations for ways for the **BAME voluntary sector** to develop.

The report also identifies a number of overarching themes. These include:

- The denial of racism – “... at the Islington November seminar, Rob Berkeley from Runnymede Trust noted an argument developing that society has reached a ‘post-racial stage’ whereby the success of some BAME people is being used to claim that ‘racism no longer exists’ – hence, no need for government or civil society to take action.” [p17]
- Emerging forms of racism, eg “Somalis are not accepted as ‘Asian’ or ‘Black’ and are not seen to fit into Tower Hamlets by many.” [quote from Council of Somali Organisations rep, p17]
- Race versus class

- The everyday meaning and impact of racism.

This is an important report. It concludes:

“While the impacts of wide-spread policy reforms and public spending cuts had yet to be felt in full during the seminar series, participants felt they were likely to have detrimental impacts on London’s BAME communities and, particularly in education, that much of the progress that had been made towards improving outcomes for BAME children and young people in recent years would be reversed. Furthermore, new manifestations of the impact of institutional racism were identified, such as the marginalisation (in terms of central government funding, shortages of school places and so on) of inner London areas where BAME children and young people reside in greatest proportions.

The need for new approaches to progressing race equality were identified, including a revived race equality movement, which engages the general population and young BAME people more effectively, and which is built on self-determination, resilience and an independent grant fund.” [p52]¹⁹

Spring Online 2014 – Help someone get online this spring

“I came to this event today scared of a laptop even though I owned one, As I leave today I can turn it on, surf the net and even send an email to my dear friend abroad.”

Can you show someone how to use a computer keyboard, browse a tablet or smartphone and send an email? Then get involved with Spring Online 2014, have some fun and hold a free internet taster event for local people!

Spring Online in association with Carphone Warehouse is Digital Unite’s award-winning initiative that makes it possible for thousands of people, often older people, to try out using computers and tablets and the internet, many for the first time. Currently around 7 million people have never used the internet and 6 million of those are aged over 55 years. Many more can’t do basic online tasks like sending emails or searching the web.

During one week (31 March – 4 April 2014) thousands of free taster events and sessions are held by volunteers and organisations across the UK to help and inspire local people achieve a lasting use of the internet.

Digital Unite will support you all the way with downloadable posters, leaflets and certificates, activity ideas to do with your learners and friendly advice and guidance.

So whether you have access to one computer or tablet or a whole room full of them, Spring Online is a fantastic opportunity to help others in your area to get online.

¹⁹ Source: Clinks *Light Lunch*, 326, 10 Jan 2014.

As one previous Spring Online event holder said: “*I treasure the squeaks of delight and excitement and the giggles from learners and volunteers. The fear barrier had been broken.*”

Visit www.digitalunite.com/spring-online for more information on how to get involved.

Katharine Teed, Digital Unite

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Dementia: a state of the nation report on dementia care and support in England

This important new report^{20, 21} from the DH sets out what is known about dementia care, support and research.

In his Foreword, Jeremy Hunt sets the context, drawing on the Prime Minister’s “Challenge” report²²:

“Around 670,000 people in England have dementia and this number is set to double in the next 30 years ...

This Dementia report ... shines a light on the quality of dementia care in England. The very best services are excellent and show what is possible. But the worst show that we still have some way to go. The message is clear: we can and must do better.

There has been some major progress. We are better at identifying and assessing people with dementia in hospitals and have responsibly reduced the prescription of antipsychotic medication ...

But it is unacceptable that less than half of people with dementia receive a diagnosis and that there is such variation across the country in how long people wait before being seen by a memory service. The availability of post-diagnosis support varies far too much as well.

²⁰ *Dementia: a state of the nation report on dementia care and support in England.*

Department of Health, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (2620 kb) from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262139/Dementia.pdf.

²¹ Source: email from Jo Ward.

²² *Prime Minister’s challenge on dementia: delivering major improvements in dementia care and research by 2015.* Department of Health, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (852.97 kb) from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215101/dh_133176.pdf.

47 percent of people with dementia do not feel part of their community. They often experience anxiety and depression and three quarters do not feel society is geared up to deal with dementia ... 62 percent of people with dementia living alone are lonely and it can sometimes be hard to access services, which only adds to this isolation ...” [p2]

The report then assesses the scale of the challenge of dementia, particularly focusing on the impact on individuals living with dementia and their families/carers and also on wider society.

It then looks at:

- Prevention
- Diagnosis
- Living with dementia
- Dementia education and training
- Dementia friendly communities
- Research.

The section on developing dementia friendly communities is particularly useful; the report uses case studies as examples throughout.

Recommended.

Disability issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Reading groups, libraries and social inclusion: experiences of blind and partially sighted people

Ashgate have just published this new book²³. I should start by declaring an interest, in that I have worked with Eileen on developing some parts of the book, and also provided an endorsement for it for the ‘blurb’ and for Ashgate’s website. The research focuses on the experiences of the Newell reading group, and Eileen Hyder used a participatory method to produce an ethnographic study (using ‘new ethnography’²⁴).

Chapter 2 is fascinating, showing the differing reading histories of the five participants who took part in the research, including the impact of sight-loss at different times of life, and the different types of reading that each most enjoys.

Chapter 3, “Reading Matters”, looks at a range of practical issues, including:

- Access to texts (eg availability, price)

²³ Eileen Hyder. *Reading groups, libraries and social inclusion: experiences of blind and partially sighted people*. Ashgate, 2013. Further info at: <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472403926>.

²⁴ “The goal of new ethnography is to arrive at a description and analysis of a culture as a member of that culture would see it, free from the biases of the outsider.” (taken from: <http://www.sociologyguide.com/anthropology/New-Ethnography.php>).

- Listening and/or reading
- The power of the narrator
- The range of different ways in which the Newell group engage with text.

Chapter 4, “Reading Groups and Social Justice”, looks at the policy context for libraries undertaking this work, and particularly focuses on the needs-based library service²⁵ and on the Canadian “Working Together” project²⁶.

Chapter 5 looks at “Libraries, Reading Groups and Lifelong Learning”, particularly at how a reading group can assist and support learning of different kinds, and what best facilitates these processes for blind and partially-sighted people.

Finally, Chapter 6 looks at parallel developments in Australia, South Africa, Belgium, Croatia; and investigates the thorny topic of whether groups are better organised as integrated or discrete. As Eileen Hyder concludes:

“The issue underlying this whole debate has to be who makes the decision about whether the reading group should be discrete or separate, and this leads back to the idea of a needs based library service. Applying the principles of a needs based library service, good practice for organising reading groups would be to use consultation to understand the needs of different library users. However, while this would undoubtedly be valuable, it would be naive to assume that such consultation would find that all of the members of a particular group would answer in the same way ...” [p90]

The book contains lots of very practical advice, drawn from the Newell group and from wider research, and, as I suggested in my endorsement:

“For anyone wanting a deeper understanding of the role of the reading group – particularly the impact they have on the lives of blind and partially sighted people – this book is a must. Drawing on in-depth, participatory research, Eileen Hyder sets the reading group in the context of the readers’ daily lives – and also the daily lives of the libraries where they meet.”

Recommended.

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

How Americans value public libraries in their communities

²⁵ See, for example: John Pateman. “Developing a needs based library service”, *Information for Social Change*, 26 (Winter 2007-2008), pp8-28, <http://www.libr.org/isc/issues/ISC26/articles/26%20Developing%20a%20Needs%20Based%20Library%20Service.pdf>.

²⁶ See, for example, <http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/>.

The Pew Research Center has just published this report²⁷ which shows how highly US citizens regard public libraries:

“Most say libraries are very important to their communities” [front cover]

“54% of Americans have used a public library in the past 12 months, and 72% live in a ‘library household’” [p4]

Of particular interest to us are the reflections on different services offered, and the importance to different library users of different services:

“Americans strongly value library services such as access to books and media; having a quiet, safe place to spend time, read, or study; and having librarians to help people find information. Other services, such as assistance finding and applying for jobs, are more important to particular groups, including those with lower levels of education or household income.

Women, African-Americans and Hispanics, adults who live in lower-income households, and adults with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely than other groups to declare all the library services we asked about “very important.” Adults ages 30-64 are also more likely than younger or older respondents to say many of the services are “very important,” as are parents with minor children.” [p2]

Abbreviations and acronyms

BAME = Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DH = Department for Health

EHRC = Equality and Human Rights Commission

PLMG = Public and Mobile Libraries Group

ROTA = Race on the Agenda

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:

John Vincent
Wisteria Cottage
Nadderwater
Exeter EX4 2JQ

Tel/fax: 01392 256045
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

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²⁷ *How Americans value public libraries in their communities*. Pew Research Center, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (959.76 kb) from:

http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP_Libraries%20in%20communities.pdf. There is also a web summary of the report, plus links to the individual chapters, at: <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/>.