



ISSN 1475-8202

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

Number 97, May 2009

(formerly published as *Public Libraries & Social Exclusion Action Planning Network Newsletter*, issue 1, May 1999 – issue 29, September 2001)

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 ...?

Literacy Today

The latest issue¹ has a number of interesting articles, including:

- Diane Hofkins “Two primary reviews”, a comparison of the findings of the Rose and Cambridge reviews [p7]
- Andrew Shenton “A new two-cultures debate: information literacy and school practices”, which argues the case for school libraries’ role in information literacy [p12]
- Jonathan Douglas “Viewpoint” column in which he summarises the successes of the NYR and announces the launch of “Reading for Life”, and also looks at the issue of social mobility [pp13-14]
- George Dugdale “A manifesto for literacy” in which the NLT Policy Adviser invites contributions to the development of a manifesto [pp15-16]
- “Breaking the cycle of inequality”, an assessment of the latest OECD report² which concludes that “testing, targets and parental choice have perpetuated rather than broken Britain’s cycle of inequality” [pp34-35]

ARC Magazine

The April issue³ focuses on archives for education and learning, and includes a number of interesting short articles about education/learning projects, including:

- David Bond “Ninety years of remembering”, Hampshire Archives and Local Studies’ schools project which challenged students’ perceptions of why we hold Remembrance Day [p16]
- Christopher Weir “From slavery to success: the life and times of George Africanus”, Nottinghamshire Archives’ work via the Young Cultural Creators programme [pp18-19]
- Joanne Fitton and Katharine Carter “Safety in numbers”, Bury Archives and Greater Manchester County Record Office exploration of mental health issues [20-21]
- Rowen Fisher “Warwickshire Archives come alive for the under 5s”, using storytelling with young children and their carers [p24].

¹ *Literacy Today* 58, March 2009. Further information from:

<http://www.educationpublishing.com/>.

² Anne-Marie Brook. *Raising education achievement and breaking the cycle of inequality in the United Kingdom*. OECD (Economics Department Working Papers no. 633) 2008. Available to download as a pdf (766.19 kb) from:

[http://www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2008doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00003792/\\$FILE/JT03249755.pdf](http://www.oilis.oecd.org/olis/2008doc.nsf/LinkTo/NT00003792/$FILE/JT03249755.pdf).

³ *ARC Magazine* 236, April 2009. Further information from:

<http://www.archives.org.uk/publications/arcthesocietysmonthlymagazine.html>.

Adults Learning

The May issue⁴ includes:

- “There’s light at the end of the tunnel”, an outline of the ‘In Touch’ volunteer programme run jointly by Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North, which offers training and volunteering opportunities [pp11-13]
- “It opens doors you thought were closed” looks at Liverpool University’s ‘Go Higher’ access programme [pp18-21].

Public Library Journal

As you may have seen, to improve accessibility and attract new readers, *Public Library Journal* is making all its articles fully available online, nine months after publication of the print version. Amongst those now available are:

- Elizabeth L Chapman and Briony Birdi “Fiction for all”, a report on research into the provision of LGBT-related fiction for young people⁵
- Alison Wheeler and Sue Nicholson “Information on prescription”⁶.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Hidden from public view?

This important new report⁷:

“... offers a rare insight into the plight of Chinese victims of racism in three different towns and areas of the United Kingdom: London, Manchester and Southampton. Some of the stories and experiences cited in the report are not only harrowing but unique because they belong to a community that is hidden from official view.” [p8]

In 1999, The Monitoring Group⁸ established the Min Quan project to support Chinese victims of racial harassment, domestic violence and general policing problems, and they commissioned this research.

⁴ *Adults Learning*, 20 (9) May 2009. further information from: www.niace.org.uk/adultslearning.

⁵ See: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E1F08891-A050-4C7A-B0F1-01F4A9E00FB8/0/plj231chapman.pdf>.

⁶ See: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/28511741-C1F3-4FF0-8AF3-0F610D9FA8A6/0/plj231wheeler.pdf>.

⁷ Sue Adamson *et al.* *Hidden from public view? Racism against the UK’s Chinese population*. The Monitoring Group, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0-9561785-1-0). Available to download as a pdf (1300 kb) from: <http://www.racetoday.org/pages/projects/mq/bm09019-HiddenFromPublicView.pdf>.

The key findings include:

“The UK Chinese people are subject to substantial levels of racist abuse, assault and hostility. The types of racist abuse suffered by the UK’s Chinese people range from racist name-calling to damage to property and businesses, arson, and physical attacks sometimes involving hospitalisation and murder.

The failure of many statistical and research reports to identify the experience of Chinese people separately from that of ‘other’ minorities has meant that their experience of racism remains hidden from view.

The impact of racial abuse, harassment and attacks on UK Chinese people is significant, ranging from serious psychological effects, to issues of significant concerns about the safety of their family members including children, hospitalisation, loss of businesses leading to poverty and even death.” [p12]

The majority of the recommendations are for the criminal justice system, but there is one set – around the need to improve education in schools about these issues – where we may well have a part to play:

“There is a need to increase awareness among school pupils of the true impact of racism and racist violence.” [Recommendation 15, p22]

There is clearly a need for a lot more awareness of the racism faced by the UK’s Chinese population, and MLAs could assist in making this information available.

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

Learning to live ...

“*Learning to Live: Museums, young people and education* was commissioned by the National Museum Directors’ Conference in partnership with the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr). It brings together leading figures from the worlds of culture and education to explore what more museums and educators, working with policymakers and delivery bodies such as schools, can and should be doing, both within and beyond the classroom, to inspire learning and creativity among all young people.” [blurb, back cover]

⁸ See: http://www.racetoday.org/pages/about_us/about_us.html.

This important collection of essays⁹ by key figures in the worlds of culture and education looks at:

“... the role of museums and other institutes of material culture in young people’s wellbeing and learning. Our aim in bringing their thinking together was to explore what museums, working with policymakers and delivery bodies such as schools, can and should be doing, both within and beyond the classroom, to inspire learning and creativity among all young people.” [p9]

“Our view is that museums as a sector offer a huge and still relatively untapped resource which is relevant to, and can support, inspiration and learning – in its widest sense – for everyone. To fulfil this brief, however, there will have to be concerted action by museums, schools and government to:

- Enable children and young people to have equal status with adults within museums
- Put learning at the heart of museums and museums at the heart of learning
- Embrace a more holistic approach to learning: valuing informal and formal learning equally
- Reach out to all young people, including the hard to reach.” [p9]

It includes the following chapters:

- Kate Bellamy, Louie Burghes and Carey Oppenheim “ Learning to live: museums, young people and education”
- Nicholas Serota “Museums and young people: where are we now? “
- David Anderson “The listening museum”
- Sally Bacon “The power of cultural learning: the role of museums within a new cultural learning agenda”
- Diane Miller “American museums as a borderland”
- Estelle Morris and Martha Spurrier “Museums and schools: nurturing an indispensable relationship”
- Tim Desmond “Beyond the school: museums and young people”
- David Fleming and Carol Rogers “Museums, young people and social justice”
- Jane Finnis “Online technology: unlocking opportunity, unlocking collections”
- Alec Coles “Museum learning: not instrumental enough?”
- Kate Pontin “Why young people? Attracting a new audience to our museums”
- Jean M Franczyk and Alexandra Burch “Science, learning, museums and young people”
- Mick Walters “Creating a learning adventure”.

⁹ Kate Bellamy and Carey Oppenheim (eds). *Learning to live: museums, young people and education*. ippr/NMDC, 2009. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=665>.

The book has a number of major recommendations (particularly relating to education) and also that museums should:

- “Deliberatively engage with all children and young people in their communities
- Continue to build relationships with other museums and institutions experienced in engaging and supporting all children and young people.” [p19]

It concludes:

“Leadership is a recurring theme throughout this book and museums will need committed leaders and champions to achieve the four key objectives called for here – to achieve an equal status for children with adults in museums; for learning to be put at museums’ hearts; for a holistic approach to learning; and for museums to reach out to all young people.

Museums and policymakers should not be daunted by the current economic recession. Museum learning is more important than ever, as young people now need to develop skills for the future economy. The resource that museums have to offer, the richness of their collections, the spaces and expertise they provide and their experience of engaging young people in learning, should be fully exploited and new opportunities for partnership working explored.” [p19]

Highly recommended.

Abbreviations and acronyms

NLT = National Literacy Trust

NYR = National Year of Reading

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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: 0845 128 4897
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

May 2009