

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 419, 18 June 2025

Events

Events have been added to the Courses & Events pages on The Network website – see: <https://seapn.org.uk/events/>.

Black Lives Matter/Anti-racism/Decolonisation

Paramilitary policing against the people: colonial continuities and the challenge from below

<https://irr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Paramilitary-policing-Final91.pdf>

(Source: *IRR News*, 29 May 2025)

New study from the IRR:

- “It warns of the dangers of the US experience being replicated in Europe. In the first two months of the Black Lives Matter protests in the US, 115 people were shot in the head, with at least 30 people suffering permanent eye damage as a result of crowd control weaponry.
- It records in Europe, 69 deaths of migrants, refugees, and other racialised people through the use of ‘less-lethal weaponry’ such as rubber bullets and tear gas grenades. Most involved asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa at the Spanish/Moroccan border.
- It highlights life-changing serious injury, caused by rubber bullets and tear gas grenades, such as explosive eye and loss of part of the skull, particularly in relation to the policing of the Summer 2023 urban disturbances in France.” [Taken from: Press release, https://irr.org.uk/article/paramilitary-policing-against-the-people-colonial-continuities-and-the-challenge-from-below/?ml_sub=2755366915722450617&ml_sub_hash=q4j8&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=new_irr_study_paramilitary_policing_against_the_people&utm_term=2025-06-09]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“We mapped 18,000 children’s playgrounds and revealed inequality across England”

https://theconversation.com/we-mapped-18-000-childrens-playgrounds-and-revealed-inequality-across-england-252239?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%204%202025%20-%203400534666&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%204%202025%20-%203400534666+CID_e516475f81f8101830fe82f751ee0e6b&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=We%20mapped%2018000%20childrens%20playgrounds%20and%20revealed%20inequality%20across%20England

(Source: *The Conversation*, 5 Jun 2025)

Important new research:

“Outside of the home, public playgrounds are the most common places for children to play and the fundamental right of every child to play is

even recognised in a UN convention. Despite this, there has been very limited research exploring inequality in the provision of playgrounds.

To help address this, we have analysed data from almost 34,000 playgrounds in England – the largest national dataset on playgrounds yet. In particular, we looked at England's largest 534 settlements with populations over 15,000 and mapped patterns from the 18,077 children's playgrounds within them.

We found substantial inequalities. For example, with two places broadly comparable in population size, one might have five times the number of children per playground [...]

With the exception of London, deprived settlements in England tend to have fewer, smaller and further-away playgrounds – a serious social justice issue. In London however, relationships were found to be the opposite, with deprived areas tending to have more playgrounds in close proximity."

Health & Wellbeing issues – Other Agencies

"The warning signs someone is lonely and how to help them"

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/health/wellness/the-warning-signs-someone-is-lonely-and-how-to-help-them/ar-AA1FHAei>

(Source: *Later Life AGEnda*, 30 May 2025)

Helpful short article, to tie in with Loneliness Awareness Week (9-15 June).

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

Disability Access to Heritage: what are the experiences of disabled people in the heritage sector in 2025?

Full report: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/services-skills/experiences-disabled-heritage-sector-2025/>

Executive summary: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/services-skills/experiences-disabled-heritage-sector-2025-executive-summary/>

Easy Read executive summary:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/services-skills/experiences-disabled-heritage-sector-2025-executive-summary-easyread/>

Web summary:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/inclusion/sector/experiences-of-disabled-people/>

(Source: *Heritage Update*, 544, 29 May 2025)

Important research project results:

"Historic England has developed the Disability Access to Heritage project to identify and tackle the barriers to heritage for d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people, with the aim of enabling better jobs and careers, volunteering opportunities, and visitor and participation experiences [...]"

The first phase of this project is research, developing an evidence base of the experiences of disabled people who are currently engaged in heritage, as well as those who have left the sector or are not currently engaging with heritage. This evidence helps Historic England and the wider heritage sector target its resources and capacity to overcome the barriers identified.”

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

“What does it mean to be information literate for an autistic librarian in the academic library workplace?”

<https://journals.cilip.org.uk/jil/article/view/723/657>

(Source: *News from CILIP*, 4 Jun 2025)

Useful & interesting article in the *Journal of Information Literacy*, which centres on the experiences of autistic librarians in academic library workplaces.

Migration issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations: Libraries of Sanctuary

“Newham Library Service awarded the prestigious Library of Sanctuary Award in recognition of work welcoming refugees”

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/news/article/1445/newham-library-service-awarded-the-prestigious-library-of-sanctuary-award-in-recognition-of-work-welcoming-refugees->

(Source: *Public Libraries News*, 8 Jun 2025)

Congratulations, Newham!

“Glasgow Women’s Library becomes Scotland’s first Library of Sanctuary”

<https://www.cilips.org.uk/gwl-sanctuary>

... and congratulations, Glasgow Women’s Library!

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“Four myths about ‘low-skilled’ migration busted”

https://theconversation.com/four-myths-about-low-skilled-migration-busted-258046?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%205%202025%20-%203402434688&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%205%202025%20-%203402434688+CID_b50febff14e1234213a8ce88c3b0e885&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Four%20myths%20about%20low-skilled%20migration%20busted

(Source: *The Conversation*, 6 Jun 2025)

Interesting article, making some key points:

“The UK government has outlined plans to reduce low-skilled migration to the country. A central aspect is linking skills and training to the immigration system. This, so the thinking goes, will mean that no industry is able to rely on immigration to fill skills gaps.

Research I carried out with colleagues on employer strategies in the wake of Brexit shows that pitting legal routes for migrant workers against investment in the local workforce is based on flawed assumptions.

Evidence from sectors historically reliant on migration, such as transport and storage, food manufacturing, hospitality and social care, debunks four myths about migration and the labour market that underpin the government's immigration plans."

"I got British citizenship via the five-year route. Labour's new 10-year rule will cause untold pain"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/02/british-citizenship-five-year-labour-immigration>

Important article about acquiring British citizenship, which argues that the new rule changes do not support integration:

"But being stuck on work visas for year after year amounts to the opposite of integration. It means you can't vote, cannot have recourse to public funds if needed, cannot fully lean in to British society and participate with a sense of safety and belonging, as you're constantly trying to minimise costs in case a change in circumstances means relocating. The policy creates a tier of second-class worker, a sort of migrant labourer welcomed for their work and paying of taxes, but shut out from the privileges enjoyed by British nationals."

"Syrian Alawites flee to Lebanon, with little aid to meet them"

https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2025/06/04/syrian-alawites-flee-lebanon-little-aid-meet-them?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Mon+09+Jun+2025&utm_campaign=Free+Movement+Weekly+Newsletter

(Source: *Free Movement Weekly Newsletter*, 9 Jun 2025)

A news-story that hasn't had a great deal of coverage so far:

"Nearly 40,000 people have fled Syria's sectarian violence for neighbouring Lebanon over the past three months. With many fearful of returning anytime soon, their arrival adds a new layer to Lebanon's protracted humanitarian crisis at a moment when aid groups are badly underfunded and overstretched.

Most of the new arrivals are Alawites, a religious minority who were the target of an early March wave of killings that saw forces affiliated with the new Syrian government carry out retaliatory massacres in Alawite-majority areas."

"University Finances"

https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v47/n10/ed-kiely/short-cuts?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Mon+09+Jun+2025&utm_campaign=Free+Movement+Weekly+Newsletter

(Source: *Free Movement Weekly Newsletter*, 9 Jun 2025)

Interesting *London Review of Books* article which comments on the recent migration White Paper and argues that international students are not “unfair to Britain”:

“Among other measures – fewer visas for skilled workers, stricter language requirements, more deportations – the government wants to reduce the number of international students in the UK. Starmer complained of ‘young people weighing up their future’ who are shut out of ‘colleges in their community almost entirely dedicated to one-year courses for overseas students’. ‘Is that fair to Britain?’ he asked. ‘I don’t think it is.’

The image of foreign students coming here and taking our college places misrepresents the reality of university recruitment. In 2023-24, 75 per cent of students who started new degrees were from the UK. It’s true that the number of overseas students has risen in recent years, from 550,000 in 2019-20 to 730,000 in 2023-24; over the same period, the number of UK students increased by 200,000, reaching 2.2 million. The composition of the student population has also changed. Before Brexit, EU students paid the same tuition fees as those from the UK; unsurprisingly, between 2020-21 and 2023-24 the number of new students from the EU halved. In their place, universities have recruited heavily from elsewhere, in particular China and India (which together account for more than 40 per cent of international students), as well as Nigeria and Pakistan.

It’s laughable to suggest that this situation has been unfair to Britain. Even putting aside their contribution to the economy (£41.9 billion in 2021, according to the Higher Education Policy Institute), overseas students have been propping up the university sector for years. In 2023-24 they paid 46 per cent of tuition fees, equivalent to 23 per cent of total funding.”

“Keir Starmer says migrants should learn English to integrate. Is he being fair?”

https://theconversation.com/keir-starmer-says-migrants-should-learn-english-to-integrate-is-he-being-fair-256743?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%209%202025%20-%203406434725&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%209%202025%20-%203406434725+CID_a92aef8d2ff7059637a9713c3cde0871&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Keir%20Starmer%20says%20migrants%20should%20learn%20English%20to%20integrate%20Is%20he%20being%20fair

(Source: *The Conversation*, 10 Jun 2025)

Interesting article that argues for more support/facilities being available to learn English:

“The UK government’s proposed immigration reforms emphasise the need for migrants to learn English in order to integrate successfully.

Some of the new measures announced include raising the level of English language skills required from migrants that wish to work in the UK.

Those who wish to settle permanently will also need to demonstrate a stronger grasp of English. In the future they may also be asked to demonstrate how their command of the language has improved since they arrived.”

At a subsequent press conference, the Government argued that this was about “fairness” – however:

“No mention is made of the possibility that fairness in this context may also entail an obligation on government, or society more broadly, to take steps to ensure that learning English is a practical option for all migrants.”

“Let’s drown out the lies told about migrants & refugees”

https://www.praxis.org.uk/fight-the-lies?utm_medium=email&utm_source=subscriber

(Source: email from Praxis, 30 May 2025)

Important collection of resources from Praxis:

“Right now a small unrepresentative minority in politics and the media seek to divide us from our neighbours. They blame migrants and refugees to score cheap political points and spread lies and misinformation about what life is really like for people who’ve migrated to the UK.

We’ve collated some resources for you to share with your local community. Together, we can drown out the lies told about migrants and refugees.”

LGBTQ+ issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

How to queer your historic house: a practical guide

<https://a-queer-was-here.com/how-to-queer-your-historic-house/>

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 30 May 2025)

Important new toolkit, produced by freelance researcher, writer and heritage professional Indigo Dunphy-Smith:

“This resource advocates for rethinking and reorienting the narratives traditionally tied to objects and spaces within heritage sites. By doing so, it opens up space for everyday objects to be linked to queer stories, helping to fill the gaps left by the absence of LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) perspectives in heritage settings. This approach not only acknowledges and validates a legacy that is now tied

to modern identities but also opens the door to more inclusive public engagement.” [p3]

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

“The role of libraries in building a sustainable economy”

<https://dcmslibraries.blog.gov.uk/2025/06/04/the-role-of-libraries-in-building-a-sustainable-economy/>

Tying into this year’s Libraries Week, this DCMS blogpost celebrates the vital role libraries play in building a sustainable economy, focusing on the BIPC Network:

“The Business & IP Centre’s National Network, based in libraries across the UK, drives and sustains economic growth by offering free impartial business support to local entrepreneurs.”

Broader issues – Other Agencies

“Why ultra wealthy donors like Elon Musk and Zia Yusuf may just be fundamentally incompatible with the politics of the radical right”

https://theconversation.com/why-ultra-wealthy-donors-like-elon-musk-and-zia-yusuf-may-just-be-fundamentally-incompatible-with-the-politics-of-the-radical-right-258512?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%2010%202025%20-%203408034742&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20June%2010%202025%20-%203408034742+CID_779cf9d8522728d88621892d5ba6b84a&utm_source=campaign_monitor_uk&utm_term=Why%20ultra%20wealthy%20donors%20like%20Elon%20Musk%20and%20Zia%20Yusuf%20may%20just%20be%20fundamentally%20incompatible%20with%20the%20politics%20of%20the%20radical%20right

(Source: *The Conversation*, 11 Jun 2025)

This is an interesting background article – which also has a link to one I’d missed:

“‘Headed for technofascism’: the rightwing roots of Silicon Valley”

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/ng-interactive/2025/jan/29/silicon-valley-rightwing-technofascism>

which is well-worth reading.

Children and young people’s reading in 2025

Summary: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2025/>

Full report:

https://nlt.cdn.ngo/media/documents/Children_and_young_peoples_reading_in_2025_bqtGfIs.pdf

(Source: National Literacy Trust *Literacy News*, 11 Jun 2025)

Grim outline of the position:

“Our surveys show that the reading crisis persists, with the number of children and young people who say they enjoy reading, and read daily, continuing to decline.” [Taken from Summary]

However, there are things we can do:

“Children and young people who report low levels of reading enjoyment, though less engaged, still recognise reading’s educational value (nearly half said it helps them learn new words or new things). Many also chose to read song lyrics, news articles, fiction, comics and fan fiction in their free time, highlighting how we might re-engage this group with reading. Findings suggest that this group would benefit from reading being aligned with personal interests and other media that children and young people already recognise as part of their cultural life.” [Taken from Summary]