

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 ...?

BBC Music Magazine

The November issue¹ includes “Diverse thoughts” [pp50-52], an interesting article by pianist Nick van Bloss (who has Tourette’s syndrome) who argues that classical music’s leaders are not taking diversity seriously enough and are letting down disabled performers.

He is critical of the approach taken by leading orchestras to diversity, and also worries that some of the excellent – and much-praised – initiatives (such as the creation of Chineke!, the majority-BAME orchestra; and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra’s six-member disability-led ensemble):

“[...] don’t always tackle diversity. They create division [...] There should be no need for ‘special’ musical ensembles in 21st-century Britain.” [p52]

Runnymede Bulletin

The Runnymede Trust is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and has produced this special issue of the *Bulletin*, “Retrospective 1968-2018”².

It includes a range of important, challenging articles, including:

- Dipak Nandy “The birth of the Runnymede Trust”, which looks briefly at how the Trust began [p4]
- Ludi Simpson “Race, statistics and the census”, which “[...] reviews questions around the Census, as seen through the pages of the Runnymede Bulletin over four decades, and reveals how grassroots campaigns originally fought against ethnic monitoring” [pp8-9]
- Ben Gidley “Reframing immigration”, which looks briefly at the recent history of immigration [pp10-11], and argues:

“Reframing the debate means understanding the trade-offs involved in all our options, listening to the evidence, and being transparent about what’s at stake – the principle of visible social justice. And reframing the debate means thinking about integration as dynamic and multi-faceted process in which the public and institutions of receiving societies have a responsibility – not just migrants – and which is (as the Runnymede Trust has insisted since its founding) interlinked with the patterns of persistent disadvantage which constrain migrants’ opportunities to participate in the various domains of social, economic, cultural and political life.” [p11]

¹ For further information, see: <http://www.classical-music.com/magazine/current-issue/bbc-music-magazine>.

² *Bulletin 50 years*. Runnymede Trust, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/bulletin/pdfs/Retro%20Bulletin%2029%20Oct%20Final%20from%20Nick.pdf>.

- Sondhya Gupta “Round up all the usual suspects: policing since the 1970s” [pp12-13]
 - Duncan MacLean “The changing face of the NHS”, which looks very briefly at the key involvement of migrants in the Health Service, and concludes by arguing that there is still a lot more to do, for example in terms of employee progression [p14]
 - Robin Richardson “Examining education”, which looks briefly at race equality in education [p15]
 - Kimberly McIntosh and Florence Eshalomi “The long road to representation”, which “look[s] back at the milestones for non-white Britons in politics over the past 170 years” [p16]
 - Omar Khan and Kimberly McIntosh “Black Britain since Windrush”, a timely piece on racism and integration [p17]
 - Lester Holloway “Political activism and the media”, which outlines the development of Black politics and the media’s treatment of this – and insists on the importance of learning from the past 50 years [pp18-19]
 - Anthony Robinson “Still a lot left to do”, which “[...] remembers the work of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and reflects on the equalities watchdog (EHRC) that replaced it” [pp20-21]
 - Jatin Haria “A view from Scotland”, which questions how much progress has been made on race in Scotland [p22]
 - Omar Khan “Director’s column”, which concludes:

“Reflecting then on 50 years since Runnymede’s founding and on the current moment, there are clearly opportunities to learn from the past to better tackle racial inequalities in the present. While evidence alone isn’t enough, we know that it is one of the most important tools we have for creating social change. The idea of ‘nailing the lie’ was not simply to provide evidence but to fashion evidence in such a way that it could be used to improve the lives of BME people living in Britain. That has been and will remain Runnymede’s key focus as we enter a sixth decade, and we will continue to work with and listen to others similarly [sic] committed to racial justice to ensure Britain better lives up to the values of freedom, equality and democracy in 2018 and beyond.” [p23]
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Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people

CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards: Independent Diversity Review final report

(Please note: John Vincent facilitated the first scoping workshop with key stakeholders in July 2017.)

CILIP published the final report³ of its Independent Diversity Review at the end of September.

There is a brief summary in the press release⁴ of the report and subsequent actions taken.

In terms of the full report, after a Foreword from the Review Chair, Margaret Casely-Hayford, the report looks briefly at:

- The Awards and how they function
- Background to the Review:

“In 2017 CILIP, the library and information association, launched an independently chaired Diversity Review of the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards after concerns were raised about the lack of BAME representation on the 2017 Carnegie Medal longlists.

Dr Margaret Casely-Hayford, Chancellor of Coventry University and Chair of Shakespeare’s Globe, took on the role of independent Review Chair to oversee the Review Process and work with CILIP to provide recommendations about how diversity, inclusion and representation can best be championed and embedded into the work of the Awards and its accompanying shadowing scheme.

The Review considered visible and invisible diversity – looking at the representation of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, social class and education – and sought effective and inclusive participation to guide CILIP towards outcomes and recommendations informed by diverse perspectives.” [pp6-7]

- CILIP’s work on equality and diversity

³ Natalie Jones (comp). *CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards: Independent Diversity Review final report*. CILIP, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_09_ckgfinalreport/cilip_ckg_diversity_review_f.pdf.

⁴ “Review of CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards creates and promotes opportunities for improvement in diversity, representation and inclusion in children’s books”, CILIP, 27 Sep 2018, <https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=CKG-Diversity-Review-Final-Report>.

- Equality and diversity in children’s books and publishing, which states that: “There has been sector-wide acknowledgement of the importance and need for diverse and inclusive books that represent and reflect society as a whole.” [p8] This section also rounds-up a number of initiatives⁵ and lists some newer publishers.

This is then followed by the Recommendations from the Review Chair:

1. “Explicitly champion diversity through the Awards’ strategies, development plans and messages including a statement of a robust and proactive strategy for the Awards that clearly states a commitment to diversity and inclusion with clear vision, objectives, and positive action towards stated intended outcomes.
2. Recognise a diverse range of voices and perspectives in the nominations, longlist, shortlist and prize winners.
3. Expand the diversity profile of the judges by increasing the variety of backgrounds and lived-experiences amongst CILIP’s panel of librarian judges.
4. Establish an equality, diversity and inclusion advisory panel to accelerate the embedding of diversity and inclusion throughout the Awards.
5. Strengthen the diversity training that librarian judges receive to instil heightened awareness of diversity and inclusion and understanding of the impact of power dynamics, as well as acknowledgement of inevitable personal biases in all members of the panel.
6. Review the Awards criteria through an open and collaborative process that includes a diversity of perspectives and lived-experience. Consider the inclusion of criteria for innovation, shifting perceptions, or writing about different backgrounds and experience as indicators of quality and excellence.
7. Empower and celebrate the children and young people involved in the Awards through the shadowing scheme by giving them a significant voice and visible presence in the process and prize giving.
8. Strengthen the governance that supports the Awards’ strategic direction calling on internal and external experts to lead the Awards through a sustainable change process over the short and long term.
9. Raise greater awareness of diverse books amongst librarians and identify opportunities for further championing of diversity with the library supply sector.
10. Increase outreach by opening up and amplifying the nominations process, discovering and recognising new and diverse talent and forging new partnerships.” [pp9-10]

The Recommendations are followed by a summary – and then more detailed – response from CILIP as to the actions it is already taking and intends to take in 2019 and beyond. These include, for example:

⁵ These include the CLPE “Reflecting Realities” initiative, noted in Newsletter no.208 – see: <http://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-208.pdf>, pp10-12. *Reflecting Realities: survey of ethnic representation within UK children’s literature 2017*. CLPE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research/reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children>.

- **“Establishing an equality, diversity and inclusion advisory panel [...]”**
- **Enhance training for judges**
CILIP is working with Diversity Dynamics and Inclusive Minds on a suite of training for the judges including guidance notes on identifying inclusion in children’s books, bias testing and individual coaching sessions. This is to build on and complement the unconscious bias training incorporated into the judges training day delivered by academic professionals.
- **Champion new voices**
“CILIP will publish a quarterly list of ‘Top 10 New Voices’ eligible for the upcoming Medals to showcase new and emerging talent in children’s books and a diversity of voices and perspectives [...] The aim is to both champion diverse talent and raise awareness of diverse books among librarians.
- **Increase children’s participation**
CILIP will introduce a children’s choice award to be presented by participants of the Shadowing scheme at the winner’s ceremony. Children’s voices will be heard in the judging process by voicing shadowers [sic] reviews during judging sessions.
- **Review the nominations process**
CILIP will review the nominations process to consider how best to manage the workload for the judges while ensuring the nominations list is diverse, inclusive and representative.
- **Review the criteria**
CILIP will lead an open and collaborative review of the Awards criteria with external advisors.
- **Ensure a diversity of lived experience on the judging panel**
CILIP will introduce a co-opting procedure for any year where the judging panel is not sufficiently diverse.
- **Improve recruitment processes for judges**
The recruitment process changes will be reviewed to ensure a coordinated approach across all regions of YLG, calling for diverse applications and updating the application form and process to reflect this.
- **Work with librarians and library suppliers to champion diversity**
CILIP will work with sector partners and lead organisations to promote diversity in the library supply chain and to encourage libraries to review their procurement of books and content to ensure that it reflects equalities and diversity policies, and to encourage library suppliers to do the same.
- **Strengthen governance**
CILIP will assess the governance of the Awards, reviewing terms of reference, terms of service and introducing reporting lines into the CILIP

board, utilising the expertise of external advisors to oversee the change process and strategic direction for the Awards.

- **Evaluation and improvement**

CILIP will build additional time into the yearly cycle for strategic evaluation and review of the Awards to ensure constant reflection on effectiveness of strategies that are implemented and to explore further opportunities for improvement.” [pp14-15]

The bulk of the report contains the methodology (both how the Review was undertaken and also data uncovered) and the findings of the Review (which have found their way into the Recommendations).

The report is supported by four separately-published appendices:

- CILIP’s interim report⁶ which includes the notes from the focus groups, for example
- Coventry University’s survey results and analysis and Analysis of the Shadowing scheme by postcode⁷
- Children’s survey results⁸
- Focus group report⁹.

In an interview with *Information Professional*¹⁰, Margaret Casely-Hayford broadens the focus of the Review to include discussion of how it was informed by her own experience of “society’s ingrained inequality”:

“She has experienced a kind of blindness to the issues of race and gender in society. ‘I talk to people who really don’t understand the extent of their privilege. It’s not misogynistic, or racist, they’re not saying they don’t like women or black people. It’s just not even in their contemplation, that certain people should be entitled to walk into a boardroom.’

Evidence from the review and elsewhere suggests such blindness is applied equally to disabled and other visible and invisible differences.”

⁶ CILIP *Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Children Book Awards: Independent Diversity Review: interim report – progress update*. CILIP, 2017, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_09_ckgfinalreport/appendix_a_-_interim_report.pdf.

⁷ See: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_09_ckgfinalreport/appendix_b_-_coventry_univer.pdf.

⁸ See: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_09_ckgfinalreport/appendix_c_-_children_s_surv.pdf.

⁹ See: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_09_ckgfinalreport/appendix_d_-_focus_group_rep.pdf.

¹⁰ Rob Mackinlay interview with Margaret Casely-Hayford, “Diversity review: making the unknown known”, *Information Professional*, Oct 2018, pp16-18. Also available at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=InterviewMargaretCaselyHayforddiversity>.

She then goes on to make a fairly gentle, but, at the same time, pointed, criticism:

“The review acknowledges that diversity is weak at an early stage in the book industry process and that the review of the librarian-judged awards, needs also to take place ‘amid a number of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the publishing sector.’

Does this mean criticism cannot be levelled at librarians? After all, as a profession, librarians enjoy a good reputation. The statistics show that public libraries serve more ethnic minorities than all other cultural institutions. ‘I know what you’re going to say,’ Margaret says, ‘and you’d be surprised. One of the interesting things that I’ve found is that nice people can be quite hard people to shift. It’s because they’re so lovely they don’t realise that we all have some element of unconscious bias, or it could be that they have a concern about destabilising the status quo.’

She points out that the Carnegie Greenaway diversity review took place within the context of CILIP’s profession-wide Equalities and Diversity Action Plan, to address a number of diversity issues within a context of data showing a predominantly white, female, middle class, postgraduate profession, in which most of the leadership roles are still held by men. ‘This tells us something about the innate conservatism of all of us in society. The thing that’s broken is the same thing that’s broken in the rest of society. So, bearing that in mind, it is very hard to imagine the profession shifting inequalities until we realise that our own innate conservatism is preventing us from seeing them as inequalities.’”

Reactions from the broader media have been generally positive¹¹. In addition, in *Teen Librarian*, Matt Imrie¹² makes some very useful points, including

“The recommendations and actions that give me a sense of joy and elation are that future Awards will include recognition from the Shadowing scheme, I and many other judges and observers over the years have asked for and pushed for this, or something like it to be included in the ceremony. The already excellent training that judges go through before they sit on the panel is to be improved with diversity training to assist judges in identifying bias and inclusion.

Maintaining awareness of new books is an on-going struggle for library workers, this is made more difficult with services such as supplier selection which removes choice from staff in libraries; often popular titles

¹¹ See, for example: Charlotte Eyre. “CILIP makes changes at Carnegie and Kate Greenaway following diversity review”, *The Bookseller*, 27 Sep 2018, <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/cilip-changes-running-carnegie-and-kate-greenaway-after-diversity-review-869276>.

Alison Flood. “Carnegie medal promises immediate action over lack of diversity”, *The Guardian*, 27 Sep 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/sep/27/carnegie-medal-promises-immediate-action-over-lack-of-diversity>.

¹² Matt Imrie. “The CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway medals: a change has come”, *Teen Librarian*, 30 Sep 2018, <http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2018/09/30/the-cilip-carnegie-kate-greenaway-medals-a-change-has-come/>.

and authors are purchased to the exclusion of new authors and illustrators or small and independent publishers. I will just say that many of my best sources of information about new and diverse books are librarians that I know personally and on-line as we are passionate about discovering new authors to enable us to put books in the hands of readers who will enjoy them.

Allied with this is the inclusion of new nominating bodies, including IBBY, CLPE, Booktrust, Inclusive Minds, the RNIB, CommonWord [¹³] and the National Literacy Trust. At first I was skeptical [sic] of opening nominations to outside organisations but after some reflection I have come to realise that the organisations involved are all allied in some way with CILIP and may catch and nominate diverse titles that are missed by librarian nominators.

Expanding diversity and experience among the judging panel is a process that has already begun with judges being recruited from a wider pool within CILIP, the first judges recruited in this way will be judging the 2019 Medals.”

This is an immensely important topic, and the Review has created a timely opportunity to open it up for further discussion. The report is highly recommended.

That said, I did find the whole discussion profoundly depressing, as I had been involved in parallel debates in the 1970s and 1980s, which, then at least, showed that there was greater awareness amongst many publishers, booksellers, and librarians of the range of books and other materials available.

One visible aspect of this work was the “Other Award” (1975-1987) (of which I was a panel member), and it is worth revisiting some of the existing records of this just to see what was being achieved at this time.¹⁴

There is not space here (or, indeed, the time) to analyse what exactly has happened over the last 30+ years to get us into the position that the Review has found, but it would be useful at some point to look more closely at this.

Incidentally, this is a big topic in the US currently too, as a recent article^{15,16} in *School Library Journal* showed:

“[Recent research] revealed that the majority of librarians, 81 percent, consider it ‘very important’ to have a diverse book collection for kids and

¹³ See: www.cultureword.org.uk/.

¹⁴ See, for example: Rosemary Stones “13 other years: the Other Award 1975-1987”, *Books for Keeps*, Nov 1988, <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/53/childrens-books/articles/other-articles/awards>.

“Book awards: The Other Award”, *LibraryThing*, [no date], <https://www.librarything.com/bookaward/The+Other+Award>.

¹⁵ Kathy Ishizuka. “Can diverse books save us? In a divided world, librarians are on a mission”, *School Library Journal*, 22 Oct 2018, <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=can-diverse-books-save-us>.

¹⁶ Source: *LJXpress – Library Journal*, 31 Oct 2018.

teens. (Diverse collections, in this context, were defined as books with protagonists and experiences that feature underrepresented ethnicities, disabilities, cultural or religious backgrounds, gender nonconformity, or LGBTQIA+ orientations.)

Some libraries have adopted diverse content as part of the institutional mission. About half of all respondents (54 percent of public libraries and 50 percent of school libraries) have inclusive collection development goals stemming from their administration or district. This rises to 68 percent in urban communities and 65 percent in private schools.

But a significant driver here is individual conviction—of the 1,156 survey respondents (school and public librarians serving children and teens in the United States and Canada), 72 percent told *SLJ* they consider it a personal goal to create a diverse collection.”

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

“Tackling loneliness through the proven power of reading”

At the end of October, the Libraries Taskforce published this useful post¹⁷ on their blog.

It outlines the work of “Reading Friends”:

“Reading Friends brings people together to read, share stories, meet new friends and have fun. We use reading – whether books, magazines, newspapers, or anything else – to start everyone chatting.

The Reading Agency has developed the programme with funding from the Big Lottery Fund. We work in partnership with Scottish Book Trust, Literature Wales and Verbal in Northern Ireland to deliver Reading Friends across the UK.

Reading Friends has been co-created with older people and tested for the past year with local project partners. Our groups meet regularly in venues including libraries, care homes and community centres. Our projects also arrange one-to-one sessions.

We work with volunteers of all ages to build social connections, using reading to spark conversations. Together, we reach some of the most vulnerable members of our society: older people, people with dementia and carers.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Debbie Hicks. “Tackling loneliness through the proven power of reading”, *Libraries Taskforce blog*, 30 Oct 2018, <https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2018/10/30/tackling-loneliness-through-the-proven-power-of-reading/>.

¹⁸ Taken from: <https://readingfriends.org.uk/what-we-do/>.

The Reading Agency has also published a brief summary¹⁹ of the evaluation of “Reading Friends”, which, according to *The Bookseller*:

“[...] reported 88% of participants appreciated the increased social contact and the same percentage felt they added purpose to their week. A national rollout is planned for 2020.”²⁰

The Reading Agency contributed evidence on the impact of reading on loneliness to the Government’s new loneliness strategy²¹ which we looked at in the previous Newsletter²².

The blogpost also highlights the major reasons why tackling loneliness is so important.

In addition, The Reading Agency and Demos have published a key research report²³:

“Demos carried out research over the summer of 2018 to assess the potential impact of reading on several great challenges of our time: loneliness, mental health problems, dementia and social (im)mobility. If left unchecked, our research shows, these challenges will grow into insurmountable problems.” [p7]

The report looks at reading and loneliness; health & wellbeing; and social mobility; as well as highlighting what needs to be done by 2030.

As the Executive Summary says:

“Building on existing data, we forecast the effect these problems will have on society by 2030. For example, by 2030, we will still be struggling to improve social mobility. The attainment gap – a key measure for social mobility – is closing so slowly that it could take half a century or more to close. The attainment gap for the most deprived students will not budge at all. Between now and 2030, this will have affected over 1.5 million pupils.

¹⁹ *The Reading Friends programme test year: at a glance*. The Reading Agency, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: https://tra-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/entries/document/3056/Reading_Friends_evaluation_summary.pdf.

²⁰ “The Reading Agency urges for £200m government intervention and 'Book Relief'”, *The Bookseller*, 2 Nov 2018, <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/reading-agency-urges-200m-government-intervention-and-book-relief-885071>.

²¹ *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.

²² *The Network Newsletter ...*, 210, Aug 2018, <http://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-210.pdf>, pp11-16.

²³ Sacha Hilhorst, Alan Lockey and Tom Speight. *A society of readers*. Demos, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <https://www.demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-Society-of-Readers-1.pdf>.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the age distribution, we may expect more and more of us to eventually develop dementia. By 2030, an extra 134,000 places in care homes will be required for dementia patients, putting tremendous pressure on quality of care. There will also be demand for over 1 million informal carers. Even conservative estimates suggest that the cost would be as high as £38 billion – a 58 per cent increase compared to now. Under these conditions, preserving dignity and quality of life for older citizens will be one of the greatest challenges the nation has ever faced.

By 2030, the loneliness epidemic will take on disastrous proportions with 7 million lonely people in the over-60 age group alone. Two million of them may expect to see their lifespans shortened by loneliness. Across other age groups, too, we expect loneliness to rise because of long-term trends towards living alone. Loneliness will also put increasing pressures on public finances. On the current trajectory, loneliness among older people will cost almost 2 billion pounds by 2030.” [p7]

The report then poses – and answers a key question:

“Could something as simple as reading truly make a difference when the scale of the issue is quite so momentous? The short answer is yes.” [p7]

It gathers together evidence to show how reading achieves this (whilst also acknowledging that reading cannot solve every problem).

The report has a series of recommendations:

Recommendation one: The Government should build on the success of programmes such as Reading Friends and fund a £200m national loneliness intervention that uses reading to tackle loneliness for all ages.

Recommendation Two: The Government should provide both investment and practical guidance to encourage greater co-location of children’s centres and libraries.

Recommendation Three: The Government should include a dedicated focus on loneliness in its new guidance on health education. This should pay particular attention to the role that reading based community and volunteering activities can play in helping to tackle this issue.

Recommendation Four: The NHS should encourage Clinical Commissioning Groups to invest more in book-based interventions as part of its social prescribing strategy for mental health and dementia making funds necessary as required. Moreover, it should fund the distribution of medically-robust materials for book-based therapies in libraries across the country, as the Welsh government has done in Wales.

Recommendation Five: the Government should put a requirement on all schools and colleges to provide access to a dedicated mental health section in a library.

Recommendation Six: The Government should work with tech companies to develop new product standards that can allow users to control their settings more easily or that have default settings that promote a better reading environment – for example ‘a reading mode’ that immediately switched online browsing on smartphones to optimal settings for reading (e.g. blocking distracting pop-ups/adverts). They should also invest in school and college libraries with the ambition that all schools can provide safe reading spaces that protect children from the attention economy whilst they read online.

Recommendation Seven: The Government should launch a consultation with post-16 training providers about redesigning qualification standards so that every qualification contains a reading component. The aspiration is that no child or adult should be undertaking an education or training qualification that does not encourage reading beyond the classroom.

Recommendation Eight: The Government invest in encouraging adult reading for pleasure. The model for this should encourage volunteerism to create a sense of this as a national movement and also to give the participants a greater sense of agency.

Recommendation Nine: Building on existing best practice, the Government should work with reading charities to ensure that all disadvantaged children enjoy an entitlement to a universal summer reading programme over the summer holiday as part of a broader cultural enrichment strategy.

Recommendation Ten: Over time the universal summer reading programme should be developed, along the lines of the National Citizen Service, into an [sic] programme which can extend and promote reading-based volunteerism for young people, to help them inspire others to read

Recommendation Eleven: The Government should consult with reading charities and public libraries to develop a national lifetime book gifting scheme, enshrining book ownership and reading as a key citizen entitlement.

Recommendation Twelve: The BBC should work with relevant organisations and seek to create a “Book Relief” equivalent to “Sports Relief” and “Comic Relief”. As with Sports Relief the fundraising activities should be loosely themed around reading and education, and invest in reading and education causes both domestically and around the world.
[Taken from pp34-]

Incidentally, it is heartening that a wide definition of reading is used:

“Reading for pleasure: reading primarily for enjoyment, including fiction and non-fiction of many different genres. These include, amongst many others, novels, poetry and magazines as well as children’s books, picture books and audiobooks.

Reading for empowerment and information: reading primarily for information, instruction or self-development, for example a self-help book or a health leaflet.” [p10]

although disappointing that, in the end, the report is concerned with book reading, when we know that other reading is valuable too.

Nevertheless, an important report, well worth looking at and adding to the growing resources for tackling loneliness (and other social issues).²⁴

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

CLPE = Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

DCMS = Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

IBBY = International Board on Books for Young People

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²⁴ Source: *Public Libraries News*, 4 Nov 2018.