

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 ...?

Information Professional

The Summer issue includes:

- Louis Coiffait-Gunn [editorial] which heralds the new five-year strategy and calls for CILIP members to get involved [p3]
- “Join the celebrations for Libraries Week this summer” [“News” column] which talks about the theme of ‘Libraries Change Lives’¹. Libraries Week runs 2-8 June 2025 [p5]
- Yasir Haniff “Practical solutions builds work place improvements”, in which Yasir, the CILIP Disability Network Accessibility Award (in memory of Lynne Mackie), talks about his work to create a deaf-friendly working environment [pp42-43]
- Sue Williamson “How Libraries have been impacted by war, conflict, and looting and the implications for society”, which is a wide-ranging look at some key issues, including the role of libraries in maintaining intellectual freedom [pp45-47]
- Beth Montague-Hellen “The time is now for allies to step forward and take a stand” [“LGBTQ+ Insight” column] which makes an urgent plea for LGBTQ+ people and our allies to stand up for those who need us [p49]
- Mora Clarkson “Kindness matters in the workplace” [“Disability Network Insight” column] which argues that kindness “is the foundation of respectful and meaningful service” and sets out the positive effects² [p55]

Museums Journal

The latest issue³ includes:

- Beth Williamson “Spaces for creative learning” [“Analysis” column], which looks at examples of museums’ work with under-18s [pp8-9]

¹ There is more info at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/libraries-change-lives>.

² The column notes the publication of Helen Rimmer *The kind librarian: cultivating a culture of kindness and wellbeing in libraries* (Facet Publishing, 2024) – further info at: <https://facetpublishing.co.uk/page/detail/the-kind-librarian/?k=9781783307128>.

³ *Museums Journal*, May/Jun 2025.

- Crispin Day “Our aim is to give kids the best start in life” [“Comment” column], which reports on the Mini Wonders programme⁴:

“Mini Wonders is an early-years research and development programme [...] that will explore how museums can support child and family development.” [p14]

- Anna Woodham and Jennie Morgan “Museum staff’s emotional wellbeing is not a side issue”, which highlights a pilot study into the emotional demands of different types of museum work⁵ [p15]
- Saskia Randle “Museums can drive climate justice action” [“Comment” column], which, drawing on work at New York’s Climate Museum, argues that museums have a key role to play [p17]
- Ghada Dimashk “Archiving the war in Gaza”, a very brief outline of Ghada’s work⁶ [p29]
- Clare Barlow, interviewed by Eleanor Mills “People power”, which looks at the powerful activist role that museums can play, as Clare takes over as Director of the People’s History Museum [pp30-33]

ARC Magazine

The latest issue⁷ includes:

- Philip Milnes-Smith “Inclusive cataloguing: ‘an ancient tale new told’”, which looks at a recent project at Shakespeare’s Globe that has created four thematic finding aids to the collections (eg *Finding queerness in our collections*) [pp22-25]
- Elizabeth Shepherd “My life, my records: child-centred social care record-keeping and access”, which reports very briefly on a conference held in London in April [p27]

Books for Keeps

The latest issue⁸ includes:

⁴ There is more on Mini Wonders at: <https://www.artfund.org/professional/news-and-insights/next-steps-for-mini-wonders-early-childhood-development>.

⁵ The study report is available – Jennie Morgan and Anna Woodham. *New futures of care: investigating emotionally laden work in museums*. University of Stirling, 2025, https://museumemotion.stir.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/New-Futures-of-Care_Report.pdf

⁶ On 14 Feb, Ghada presented a webinar for CILIP CDEG about her work – the webinar is available to view at: <https://seapn.org.uk/archives-fighting-erasure/>.

⁷ *ARC Magazine*, 404, May/June 2025.

⁸ *Books for Keeps*, 272, May 2025, <https://booksforkeeps.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/BfK-272-May-2025.pdf>.

- Charlotte Hacking “Reading for Pleasure – Why the decline and what could we do about it?”, which looks at some of the causes of this – including the closure of public libraries, the increasing number of children living in poverty, etc. [p3]
- Darren Chetty and Karen Sands-O’Connor “Beyond the Secret Garden: books for babies and toddlers”, which looks at the development of books for the youngest children and then a range of titles focusing on racially minoritised child characters [pp16-17]
- Rebecca Butler “Owning It: Our disabled childhoods ...”, in which she interviews Jen Campbell and James Catchpole, editors of the new anthology of stories, *Owning it*⁹ [pp18-19]

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“These two charts expose Nigel Farage’s immigration myths”

You may have seen these charts¹⁰ elsewhere as they have been reproduced across the media; if you haven’t, they show a fundamental misunderstanding of how public money is spent:

“‘Spending on migrants and asylum seekers’ is thought to be one of the top forms of government expenditure – ranked in between the NHS and national debt payments.”

LGBTQ+ issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

“Reform UK to ban Pride flags being flown from council buildings it controls”

According to an article¹¹ in *PinkNews*:

⁹ Jen Campbell and James Catchpole (eds). *Owning it: our disabled childhoods*. Faber & Faber, 2025. Further info at: <https://www.faber.co.uk/product/9780571380022-owning-it/?srsltid=AfmBOopK-B4oKYU2o9hPWUpzoawoMcIFjSljRzBIH1R-uG5TvCsTu72N>.

¹⁰ Sam Bright “These two charts expose Nigel Farage’s immigration myths”, *Substack*, 7 May 2025, https://writesbright.substack.com/p/these-two-charts-expose-nigel-farages?img=https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F3c7af8c2-e0de-4683-8e21-ef9c577c8f87_1470x960.jpeg&open=false&just_subscribed=true.

¹¹ Charlie Duncan “Reform UK to ban Pride flags being flown from council buildings it controls”, *PinkNews*, 7 May 2025, https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/07/reform-uk-pride-flag-ban/?user_id=john@nadder.org.uk.

“Right wing political party Reform UK are set to ban councils from flying Pride flags, allowing only the union jack, St George’s flag and county flags on council buildings.

The flag, which is used to demonstrate allyship with the LGBTQ+ community, will be banned alongside the flying of the Ukraine flag, which has been flown since Russia’s invasion of the country in 2022 to show solidarity.

Chairman for Reform Zia Yusuf said, ‘No other flags will be permitted to be flown on its flagpoles, balconies, reception desks or council chamber walls’.

The article also notes that Reform currently controls ten councils across England – Durham, Kent, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Doncaster, North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire.

LGBTQ+ issues – Other Agencies

“Liza Minnelli and Michael Feinstein Speak Out Against Recent Attacks on LGBTQ+ Artistry”

Broadway World does not feature that often in the Newsletter (!), but this is a very powerful brief article¹². It also includes the full version of Michael Feinstein’s recently published essay, “Fear of Queer?”, which is worth reading too.

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

“Contested heritage” and “Culture wars”

“Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden Is Fired”

This has been widely reported in the media; this article¹³ in *Library Journal* gives a more in-depth look.

¹² A A Cristi “Liza Minnelli and Michael Feinstein Speak Out Against Recent Attacks on LGBTQ+ Artistry”, *Broadway World*, 9 May 2025, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Liza-Minnelli-and-Michael-Feinstein-Speak-Out-Against-Recent-Attacks-on-LGBTQ-Artistry-20250509>.

¹³ Lisa Peet “Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden Is Fired”, *Library Journal*, 12 May 2025, https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/librarian-of-congress-carla-hayden-fired?utm_campaign=LJXpress&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9uSSY1B-EIIXSRDOK-b_SPPCrN2Sx4b9PqDhOBx9eIR4pyTSVxgO_e1V5c5C1Qk_GX7BIJHEUvfiMLmKnJ_ZmLa7V7eQ&hsmi=361323384&utm_content=361323384&utm_source=hs_email.

“President Donald Trump has fired Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden. In a two-sentence email obtained by the Associated Press, sent on the evening of Thursday, May 8, Deputy Director of Presidential Personnel Trent Morse wrote, ‘Carla, on behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that your position as the Librarian of Congress is terminated effective immediately. Thank you for your service.’ [...]

Hayden’s dismissal is seen by many as a continuation of the current administration’s efforts to check cultural and literacy institutions, including the attempted shuttering of the Institute of Library Services (IMLS) and the firing of Archivist of the United States Dr. Colleen Shogan.

In February, the *Guardian* reported that the American Accountability Foundation (AAF), a politically conservative organization backed by the think tank behind Project 2025, created a ‘DEI Watch List’ of federal government employees. Hayden, as well as Director of U.S. Copyright Office Shira Perlmutter, was recently targeted. AAF posted on X, ‘Americans want to FIRE the Obama-Biden cronies in charge of the Library of Congress who: Use the Library to promote children’s access to books on radical gender identity; promote anti-Trump activists like Douglas Brinkley & John Meacham; host radical groups promoting Black Lives Matter and trans-grooming of kids; celebrate liberals like Kamala Harris and Hillary Clinton.’

When asked why the President fired Dr. Hayden at a May 9 press briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt responded, ‘We felt she did not fit the needs of the American people. There were quite concerning things that she had done at the Library of Congress in the pursuit of DEI and putting inappropriate books in the library for children, and we don’t believe that she was serving the interests of the American taxpayer well, so she has been removed from her position and the president is well within his rights to do that.’”

The article describes Carla Hayden as a “transformative leader”:

“As the 14th Librarian of Congress, Hayden was the first woman and the first African American to serve in the role. Immediately after her appointment by President Barack Obama in 2016, she began work to expand LoC’s reach as both a digital presence and collector of the country’s cultural record. Her initial focus was on digitizing LoC’s vast collections, always with the guiding principle that they should be as accessible to schoolchildren in rural and underserved areas as to scholars. She also prioritized users with visual disabilities.”

Many of us here will have heard/read her keynote speech¹⁴ at the CILIP Conference in 2017 – and may have even met her.

¹⁴ See: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/CarlaHaydenLoC>.

“Outrage after man burns 100 library books on LGBTQ+, Jewish and African American topics”

PinkNews reports¹⁵ on a frightening incident:

“A man in Ohio has sparked outrage after checking out 100 books from a public library on Jewish, African American and LGBTQ+ history and topics, just so he could burn them.

According to the Beachwood Police Department, the man checked the books out from the Beachwood Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and subsequently posted a video of himself on social media burning them.”

“Trump 2.0: Precarious future for American museums amid censorship and federal cuts”

The MA has just published this report¹⁶ from Simon Stephens on the American Alliance of Museums conference, which looks at the impact of the Trump administration on the cultural sector (and also notes the sacking of Carla Hayden).

“We in the cultural sector must stand up to Trump’s attacks – if not now, when?”

Following on from the above, Gus Casely-Hayford (Director of V&A East) wrote a powerful “Opinion” piece¹⁷:

“In one of his recent Truth Social posts, Donald Trump appeared to fire Kim Sajet – the fearless and utterly brilliant director of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC. The president used his social media platform to claim that Sajet’s support for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) made her unsuitable for her role [...]

Good museums are not sleepy institutions trapped in heritage-aspic. Across its 178-year history, the Smithsonian has consistently evolved to reflect ambient change and address public need. Like many other national museums around the world, these changes, particularly in recent years, have been driven by an aspiration to engage and enfranchise, to

¹⁵ Sophie Perry “Outrage after man burns 100 library books on LGBTQ+, Jewish and African American topics”, *PinkNews*, 13 May 2025, https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/05/13/ohio-library-book-burning-jewish-african-american-lgbtq-crime/?user_id=john@nadder.org.uk.

¹⁶ Simon Stephens “Trump 2.0: Precarious future for American museums amid censorship and federal cuts”, *Museums Journal*, 12 May 2025, <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/05/trump-2-0-precarious-future-for-american-museums-amid-censorship-and-federal-cuts/#msdyntrtid=G4wL4oLxuPisHbzWMSTf7VpMWRmGGguDq9D5AG8xO0s>.

¹⁷ Gus Casely-Hayford “We in the cultural sector must stand up to Trump’s attacks – if not now, when?” [“Opinion” column], *The Guardian*, 4 Jun 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/04/smithsonian-institution-donald-trump-cultural-sector>.

broaden audiences and to catalyse national conversations. I would have thought that seeking to give value back to a greater number of the population is uncontroversial. Institutions this important, mostly sponsored by the public, must simply, continually, work to be ever more universal, inclusive and open. Left or right, that has value. In times like these, when we are, as citizens of western democracies, so riven and divided, the arts have a job to do of being a space for inclusive debate.

But the truth is that DEI isn't some new-fangled indulgence. That drive to be inclusive is what good museums were created to deliver."

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DEI = diversity, equity/equality and inclusion

LoC = Library of Congress

MA = Museums Association

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