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THE MUSEUM HAS ENTERED THE CHAT: Exploring the possibility of social media

Joe Vaughan: Social Media Manager, [The Museum of English Rural Life](#)

In recent years, museums, libraries and galleries have blossomed on social media, creating and curating content that's resonated with audiences ranging up into the millions. Often, the nature of this social media curation seems to radically depart from traditional museum contexts: posts regularly feel silly, strange, breathless, and move into spaces that seem to be startlingly off-topic from the subjects and themes of collections themselves. This paper will advocate for the opportunities inherent to this strangeness, exploring how social media—even at its most experimental—can reflect and complement the work of museums, libraries, and galleries themselves, using examples from across the UK and The MERL's historic work. Ultimately, it wishes to speak seriously of silliness.

Biography

Joe Vaughan is Social Media Manager of The Museum of English Rural Life (@TheMERL, Twitter). A graduate of The University of Sheffield's Creative Writing MA, Joe is a practising creative writer with a love of using words thoughtfully and imaginatively, taking care to tell each story in the way that suits it best. He is also an experienced digital strategist who, prior to working for the MERL, was a consultant for an award-winning independent agency, working with a range of nationally known organisations across a variety of sectors. At heart Joe is a storyteller, and happiest providing social media management or copywriting.