

Post-Inspection Update

It has been eight months since the WEA was inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), but few will need reminding of the disappointment of learning that ALI judged our leadership and management to be weak and three Areas of Learning to be less than satisfactory.

There were two key outcomes of our poor ALI inspection; the need to produce a post-inspection action plan (the Improvement Plan) and have this approved by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC); and the knowledge that we will be re-inspected much earlier than the four yearly cycle that accompanies a successful inspection.

We now know when we will be re-inspected and just what form the inspection will take. The Lead Inspector has decided on a much longer timeframe for re-inspection, in fact the WEA will be inspected over the twelve month period, January to December 2005.

The inspection will have three key "snapshot" periods, during which the inspection team will take up residence in three Regions, focusing on the three Areas of Learning (Foundation, Visual & Performing Arts & Media and English, Languages and Communications), which were judged to be unsatisfactory. These snapshots will take place late in January, May and late in September, during which the Inspectorate will also consider the progress the WEA has made on leadership and management. There will be a final inspection visit in December where ALI will collate their findings and draw a conclusion on how much progress we have made.

All Regions will be visited across the year and the Inspectorate may also make observations in other Areas of Learning which, whilst found to be satisfactory at the last

inspection, gave cause for concern in some Regions. Once again this inspection will principally take place through the observation of teaching and learning in the classroom.

The only way the WEA will emerge from inspection having demonstrated that we deliver a quality product, fit to receive public funding, is if we demonstrate that our quality improvement measures result in enhanced teaching and learning.

Returning to the post-inspection action plan, the WEA's Improvement Plan was approved by the LSC. We received £200k additional income from the LSC, to support the implementation of the plan, although a conservative estimate of the extra activity required to deliver the plan came to in excess of £600k. So we need to find extra capacity from within if we are to have the quality of our provision recognised – a challenge which will impact on us all, but one which we can meet. It is also important to remember that we are not alone, and the WEA has received significant support in post-inspection actions. We received generous support from the Learning and Skills Development Agency in constructing the Improvement Plan and (importantly) ensuring we had actions against all of the weaknesses identified back in March. The result was a comprehensive Improvement Plan covering all Regions, Corporate Services and all Areas of Learning.

One of our weaknesses as an organisation providing learning for adults is a lack of policies

underpinning the entitlements for learners and describing how we ensure they receive high quality services. This is one of the major challenges in implementing the Improvement Plan, and with the support of the Adult Learning Inspectorate's Provider Development Unit (PDU) we have begun the task of developing, piloting and implementing a range of policies under the banner of the "Quality Improvement Framework". The PDU's advice and guidance has been followed to produce a suite of educational policies and procedures which will have a significant impact on teaching and learning in the WEA. As our work with the PDU ends we welcome colleagues from NIACE who will provide support, guidance and become our "critical friend" as we embark on implementing specific activities in the Improvement Plan such as a new mechanism for observing (and grading) teaching and learning in the classroom; recognising and recording the achievements of learners in non-accredited programmes and establishing an effective mechanism for managing the curriculum. In all, really exciting work, at the heart of the WEA's mission to provide quality adult learning and helping the Association to demonstrate that it is a 'fit for purpose' organisation.

Further information on the Improvement Plan is available from Education Strategy Manager, **Lee Davies** on 02392 231973 or ldavies@wea.org.uk.

Looking forward to a good new year

General Secretary, Richard Bolsin describes how we can all play a part in ensuring the WEA's recovery continues into next year and beyond.

I have spent a good deal of time in the new Regions since the summer, often meeting members at Branch and county meetings, launches and Regional AGMs and occasionally joining students and tutors in classes. As usual, I've been inspired by the achievements of students, whether through Helping in Schools in Halifax, at the Women's Centre in Reading, the awards ceremony in York, the Five Arts Cities project in Liverpool (the artwork by inmates at HMP Walton was stunning), or in the classes I saw in Leicester. I am also hugely impressed by the imagination and enterprise of WEA staff in

developing some of these projects. There is much the WEA can be proud of.

At AGMs, I have been speaking about the key priorities the WEA faces over the next 2 or 3 years, now that we have a solid platform of achievement in 2003/4 on which to build. I want to share these priorities with you here, and present them in a way in which you can personally contribute to their achievement. I firmly believe that if all of us – Trustees, voluntary members, staff – are actively addressing these priorities, we have it within our capacity not only to achieve the

Association's recovery much sooner, but also to restore the WEA to its former pre-eminence nationally.

These are priorities to which I want you to contribute. They reflect the key goals in the Association Plan.

In January and throughout 2005, we shall be seeking to demonstrate to the Adult Learning Inspectorate that we have made much progress since their last visit earlier this year. I wish all of you a happy and restful holiday between now and then.

Thank-you very much for your support during 2004.

Richard Bolsin
General Secretary

1. Demonstrating improved quality

Our pre-eminence will be judged by the quality of learning.

As an organisation, how do we know it's improving? How does the work of the WEA enrich teaching and learning? As an individual, what evidence do I have that the quality of learning is improving?

2. Making better use of all our resources

Our resources are our people, our property, the information and intelligence we hold as an organisation as well as our financial resources.

As an organisation, how well are we utilising them? Does income exceed expenditure, at the level of the class, the Branch, the Region, the Association? As an individual, am I acting responsibly in the way I am using resources? Am I doing everything possible to reduce costs and secure income?

3. Rebalancing and Renewing

Our historic mission is built on widening participation and student progression.

As an organisation, how are we rebalancing our provision to meet the needs of 21st century students? How effectively are we improving access and participation through Branches, new learning technologies and new areas of learning? How do students in my class/Branch/course progress? As an individual, how can I find out more about e-learning?

4. Leading and communicating

The work of the WEA transforms people's lives every day.

As an organisation, how often are we telling these stories to others? How long can we allow the WEA to be "the best kept secret in the country"? As an individual, what story can I tell about learning in the WEA? Who can I tell it to?

5. Strengthening Governance

The WEA is in the top 0.3% of charities nationally, on size and turnover, and people from all backgrounds rally to our cause.

As an organisation, how can we strengthen governance and attract a new generation of members and trustees to the WEA nationally, in Regions and locally? As an individual, who can I persuade to become a member/Trustee of the WEA?

6. Having pride in the WEA

One of our goals is to become a learning organisation where staff and volunteers are proud to contribute to our historic mission.

How can we create an organisation where everyone is able to contribute to their full potential? As an individual, how can I help the WEA become such an organisation and benefit from the process personally?

Mediawatch: WEA in the news

The last few months of the year have seen some good coverage for the WEA in national and local press, thanks to efforts at all levels. Here is a quick review of some of the main stories seen in print over the period.



'A lifelong love affair with books', was the title of a full-page feature in the **Slough Express**, on **John Still**. John, a WEA tutor for 30 years, taught literature to students in Windsor and Maidenhead and the article was a celebration of his work as he retires from the WEA.

The **Guardian** Education section ran a second full-page feature under the headline 'Man on a tightrope', at the end of November. WEA General Secretary, **Richard Bolsin**, (the one on the tightrope) and Southern Region Tutor **Frank Evans** were interviewed for the piece which offered a commentary on the WEA's efforts to overcome some of its recent troubles.

Yorkshire and Humber Region achieved some excellent coverage after their launch event in September. Several papers followed up a press announcement released by the Region, including the **Yorkshire Evening Post** which ran a double-page spread under the headline, 'Learn to get a new life'. The piece took a look at the new Region and its work, and included interviews and photos of Regional Secretary, **Ann Walker** and WEA student **Paul Spawforth**. The paper also ran a separate piece on Paul, with the title, 'From bins to education' describing how Paul, previously a refuse collector, 'turned his back on bins' and now runs NVQ courses for others after completing a WEA Return to Learn programme. Another good piece for the Region was published by the **Scarborough Evening News** who interviewed **Paula Meads**. Paula is about to start

her first job as a teaching assistant after qualifying with the WEA. The item featured a portrait of Paula under the headline, 'Mum makes grade to get dream job'.

North East Region students also found themselves a subject of local press interest, after the Region's launch conference, with a full-page feature on **Theresa McLoughlin** and **Brian Arrowsmith** in **The Sunderland Echo**. Theresa now a WEA Tutor in History, was previously a WEA student and Brian, who is currently Treasurer of Sunderland and Washington Branch, worked his way up to a part-time degree course in Philosophy after joining a Return to Learn course whilst working for the local council. The pair were pictured, under the headline, 'More choice for adult learners'.

South West Region's approach to education made an interesting story for the **Times Educational Supplement** who photographed and interviewed area coordinator **George Sobol** about a course in Permaculture. The course combines online study and face-to-face teaching, and is a successful example of how IT can be used to support educational programmes for students living across a wide geographical area. The feature was published under the headline 'In touch with nature.'

At the other end of the country, field staff from the **Scottish Association** have been making a journalistic impact in local press and journals with articles published on the work of the Association. **Liz Beevers**, authored a feature, 'Moving Forward in Scotland' for the Lancaster University journal, **Workplace Basic Skills Network**. The piece looks at workplace literacy and the major role played by the

WEA in supporting programmes across Scotland. **Action**, the Scottish Executive's community regeneration magazine, interviewed Programme Organiser, **Christine Mackenzie** and Community Learning Manager, **Hilary Lawson** about the literacies-based work of the Association in the Highlands of Scotland. The piece describes how the WEA's distinctive approach helps create educational openings to students who often lack the confidence to enter mainstream adult education.

Well done to everyone whose hard work was successful in gaining profile for the Association, helping to give lie to the popular WEA statement that the WEA is the nation's best kept secret. Cuttings and notice of press coverage are gratefully received at Corporate Services (address on back page of *WEA News*, attention of Maria Flemmer), where they are listed, copied and sent to the WEA Archive on an annual basis. If you would like a copy of any of the items listed above please let us know.

ALW 2005

Nomination forms are now available for Adult Learners Week in May next year. There are awards for individuals, groups and families, and for projects that, in the judges view, open doors to learners. Winners receive a certificate and will be invited to a national award ceremony during Adult Learners' Week. WEA learners and tutors have been winning awards since the NIACE-run campaign first started and we hope this year will be no different. Application forms are available online at www.niace.org.uk, or direct from NIACE on 0116 204 4200. The closing date for applications is 21 January 2005. Good luck!

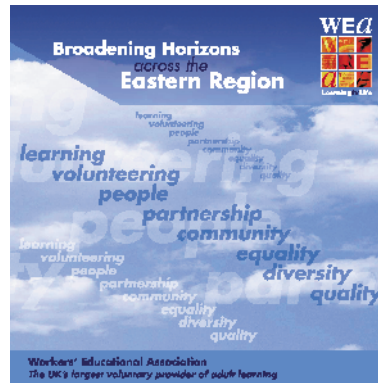
Active Citizenship in Sheffield

Last month the WEA's new Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) Hub opened its doors to Sheffield's local communities. The new centre was set up after **Ted Hartley**, WEA's Director of Development and Special Projects, made a bid to the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit under the government's ALAC programme.

The WEA hub is one of nine across England, and part of a government scheme to develop a national programme of citizenship education. The hubs are part of a pilot scheme to help inform future work between government and voluntary organisations around education and citizenship as a means of helping adults to become more involved within their local communities. The ALAC programme was first introduced by Home Secretary, David Blunkett in June 2003 in his speech, 'Active Citizens, Strong Communities'. Six of the nine hubs are now open in England, with the WEA's Centre opening on 19th November.

The WEA centre offers citizenship-related education alongside literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes. There are free computer facilities and a range of books, resources and other educational tools. The centre is based in Scotia Works, the famous local cutlery works (now refurbished), in the heart of Sheffield, and is staffed by **Amanda Bancroft** and **Graham Birkin** whose posts are funded within the ALAC grant. Alongside the £70,000 ALAC grant, Ted has also secured a further £50,000 from the Home Office Refugee Integration Challenge Fund, to develop a programme that will offer voluntary opportunities within the WEA to refugees. A programme of work is currently underway for the Refugee Challenge funded project, which runs in tandem with

the ALAC project and is overseen by an ALAC Steering Committee. The committee is based in Sheffield, and is made up of WEA staff and members of partner organisations and agencies with a common interest. Further information on both projects will be available on the WEA website next year.



New Horizons

The 'WEA Annual Review' season is upon us, and for Eastern Region this year sees a departure from the norm, with a new approach to their Annual Review. Field staff across the Region have been putting pen to paper, after Regional Secretary **Carolyn Daines** requested written 'snapshots' of projects and work they wanted other people to know about, across all areas of provision. The result is *Broadening Horizons across the Eastern Region*, and a fresh look at the work of the Region. Regional Chair, Sheila Bond says the new approach is intended to give a flavour of what really goes on in the Region, and hopes that readers will get a new picture of the strengths of Eastern, when compared to the standard approach of reporting activities by area.

The guide to the Region is intended for use throughout the year and will give students, funders and partners an insight into the wide-ranging nature of Eastern's work. So far, so good for the 'new look' Review which has attracted letters of praise from local voluntary members, describing the articles as 'fascinating' and 'uplifting', as well as

a pleasure to read, thanks to the layout and design. Administrative Officer, **Lynda Wick** created the eye-catching new design for the publication, and copies of the Review are available from Lynda on 01223 350978 or by e-mail at: lwick@wea.org.uk.

WEA deity school

WEA archaeology students were in for a treat when London Region organised a day school to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the Temple of Mithras in the City of London near Bank tube station. The day school, in October, was co-hosted with the Corporation of London's Education Department who provided the prestigious City Marketing suite at the Guildhall free of charge as well as the refreshments.

Almost sixty students heard WEA tutor **Allan Wilson** and archaeologists **Catherine Johns**, **Eberhard Sauer** and **John Shepherd** cover a range of topics under the title 'Mithraism and other Oriental Cult Religions of the Roman Empire'. Mithras was a Romano-Persian deity at the centre of an all male cult which appealed mainly to soldiers and merchants in the second and third centuries AD. "The discovery of the temple together with superb marble heads of Mithras and other associated deities sparked a post-war interest in archaeology which put the BBC's 'Time Team' to shame", says **Mike Howgate** subject officer for Science for London Region. "On the first day the site was opened to the public in September 1954, over 10,000 Londoners filed past the dig and police had to be brought in some evenings to disperse the crowds at closing time!" Such was the impact of the Region's event, that **Christine Poutney** of Ilford Branch, felt inspired to write to Richard Bolsin expressing her pleasure at the day, and her appreciation of all those involved.

New chapter for Womens' centre

The WEA's Multicultural Learning Centre for Women first opened in Reading in 1999, with a goal of creating a friendly and safe place for women from minority communities who wanted to take their education further, but who may have had difficulty joining in mainstream adult education because of cultural, religious, health or language issues. Since it first opened, over 1,000 women have attended courses at the Centre, and it has developed something of a reputation, thanks to friendly staff and a level of support available to local women who might not ordinarily attend an educational class or group.

In summer this year the Centre was re-located from Waylen Street in the Oxford Road area of Reading to its current location in Eaton Place, and from the moment of arrival, the Centre's staff and learners started painting and decorating in readiness for a formal opening on 27 October. The relocation signals a new lease of life for the WEA Centre, which runs with help from a range of funders including Reading Borough Council and Berkshire Learning and Skills



Shanaz Umer teaches Mehendi (henna hand-painting) at the opening of the WEA's Women's Multicultural Learning Centre in Reading. Here she shows off her art to the camera.

Council. The courses on offer at the Centre are as varied as the requests made by the Centre's students, and include subjects like Community Interpreting, English and Computing, as well as traditional crafts such as Dholki, (Asian Drumming) and Gup Shup, which is a reminiscence course for older Asian women. Some courses are taught bi-lingually and many of the women at the Centre are working towards, or have achieved a certificate in their chosen subject. There are regular social events and celebrations, where students, friends and guests can meet and get to know one another. The fact that the Centre has a permanent crèche has also made a huge difference in helping women with children to attend courses.

An exciting development to have

come out of the Centre is the arrival of a new WEA Community Branch, which is managed and run by the women using the Centre, and governed by a volunteer Steering Group of students, staff and supporters. The group is responsible for deciding policy and future direction of the Centre, and a small team of paid professional staff and a larger team of part-time tutors work alongside the volunteers. In keeping with the 'all welcome' approach of the Centre, members of staff are pleased to receive enquiries from potential students, friends and supporters, who are also welcome to call in and visit the Centre.

More information on the Centre is available from Jean Jeffcoate on 0118 959 1390, or by e-mail on: jjeffcoate@wea.org.uk.

WEA diaries & Christmas cards

We have received many enquiries at Quick House regarding WEA Diaries for 2005 including, when will they be available, how much are they and can I have a blue one? Sadly, the answer is that there are no WEA diaries for next year. It was a difficult decision to make but many economies have had to be made this year. In view of the season, however, WEA Christmas Cards are available, and this year it is the work of a WEA student which graces the front of the card.

The photograph is a beautiful landscape of Ben Nevis taken by Bert Reason, a WEA volunteer and student from Merseyside.

Bert is a member of Kirkby's Community Walking Group and his story has recently been told on the WEA website. The Christmas cards can be ordered from Corporate Services (020 7375 3092) and an order form is currently posted on the website. If you think the landscape (pictured) is not quite festive enough, additional cards were produced with no message, suitable for use at any time of year. The cost of the either version of the cards is £4.95 for a pack of 10, including postage and packing.



What about the Branches?

Requests were received after the last edition of *WEA News* for more content for and from Branches. We aim to reflect this in future editions, so contributions, letters and comments from Branches are very welcome. Correspondence, photographs and e-mails should be sent to *WEA News*, contact details listed on back page.

Feedback

Feedback about *WEA News* is now beginning to come in regularly by post and by e-mail. Comments vary and include: frustrations at not being aware of the newsletter until sometime after publication; requests for greater distribution in hard copy and not just via the WEA website; a desire for it to become a monthly publication and an all-round welcome for the effort to try and keep people 'in the loop' in times of change.

The current intention is to stick to electronic production and distribution via e-mail and website for reasons of economy, but WEA Regions and Corporate Services do also distribute the newsletter in hard copy to colleagues and Branches as part of existing business mailings. An e-mail distribution list is being set up for those who have requested to

receive the newsletter by e-mail, but are not on the WEA's internal e-mail system First Class. If you would like to add your name to the list please email: news@wea.org.uk.

Branches @ WEA

Since publication of the last edition of *WEA News* some of the most constructive feedback has come from activists within WEA Branches, many of whom are on e-mail and some of whom have a web presence in their own right. The WEA is shortly to employ a dedicated web developer to help create a WEA website that reflects and promotes the nature and scale of the WEA's work.

This is a real step forward as by funding the post, the Association has shown recognition of the potential of the Internet as a communications platform.

Once appointed, the web developer (who will be based in Corporate Services) will work with staff across the Association in planning the new site. If you have a Branch website or web page, and would like to be listed on the WEA's national website, or if you have a suggestion regarding representation of WEA Branches on the new site then please get in touch. Calls or e-mails to Maria Flemmer on 020 7375 3156 or mflammer@wea.org.uk.

New banking facility available

The WEA has come to an arrangement with Unity Trust Bank plc for the provision of WEA Branch bank accounts. Unity specialises in banking services for charities, voluntary organisations, trade unions and social enterprises. Under the terms of the new agreement, Unity is offering all Branches a special 'WEA Banking Facility' which will have no commission charges for standard services and under which, Branches will receive credit interest on their account balance.

A range of other benefits are available to Branches wishing to join the scheme, which has been agreed by WEA Director of Finance, Linda Acquaye. Further information is available direct from Linda in the Corporate Services finance office on 020 8983 2617, or by e-mail on: lacquaye@wea.org.uk.

In brief...

Members of WEA Bletchley Branch have voted for a change of name to, WEA Milton Keynes Branch. The Branch meets at Bletchley and Stony Stratford and it is hoped the move will help to encourage students from further afield.

Welcome to new Branch, WEA Petersfield who formally arrived on the scene in August, under the stewardship of Branch Secretary, Derek Fowler. The Branch wasted no time in making a start, running an event on Petersfield's Market Square on 24 November, to make contact with potential students and members. Good wishes for the success of the new Branch.



*Students and members from WEA London Branches gather at the City Marketing Suite at London's Guildhall for the day school on Mithraism. The event was arranged with the help of London Region's Mike Howgate, who can be seen 2nd from right, with the tie! The group were able to enter into the spirit of things thanks to the presence of two Roman re-enactors. Read more about the day on page 4 of *WEA News*.*

What's in a name?

Readers of the first edition of WEA News will have read about the opening competition to suggest a name for the newsletter, rather than the working title of 'WEA News'. Twelve entries were received by the given deadline and were duly taken to the NEC last month. After some debate the NEC decided that the deadline should be extended to encourage more entries, as many people had not set eyes on WEA News prior to the closing date. Here, as a source of inspiration and for those of you who think you can do better are some of the suggestions received to date: **Mobius, Roundabout, Superhighway, The Sparrow, The Weasel, The Weaver, WEA Buzz, WEA World, WEAwithal.**

Award for 'most amusing' goes to 'WEAyaee News' from a nameless Branch Secretary remembering times in Newcastle, and now located in WEA South West. Serious suggestions please to *WEA News* (address on back page) or to news@wea.org.uk, marked 'News Competition', by the new closing date of 31st January 2005. All entries will be judged at the subsequent NEC meeting and since inflation remains low, the winner still receives a £50 book token (and a bottle of champagne). Please include your name and address.

IT on the 'farm'

Anyone present at September's Yorkshire and Humber Regional launch will have heard about the Region's 'mobile' IT courses, where, for the past few years farmers and farm-workers have been able to learn about computers and IT in local settings, thanks to the commitment of roving WEA tutors with the necessary IT equipment.

A new take on the subject of farming and IT is a recent innovation allowing organisations to store their



North East Regional Secretary, Lesley Gillespie, is pictured here at a dinner to mark her retirement from the Association. With Lesley, (left to right) are Michael Crilly (Regional Chair); Michael Standen (Northern District Secretary for 18 years until 1995); Nigel Todd (Regional Committee member and forthcoming Regional Secretary, pending formalities).

central computers on a 'server farm'. The WEA has to date housed its main business computers (or servers), in the basement at Temple House, but last year's summer rain caused floods in Bethnal Green and the WEA's entire network was inches away from catastrophe as the flood waters approached. Another potential flood, lack of good security and conditions of extreme heat in summer coupled with inadequate ventilation in the Temple House basement, all forecast possible meltdown for the Association's main computer systems, so last month the WEA's central servers were moved to a new residence, a 'server farm', in London's Docklands.

The move happened over a weekend in order to keep disruption to a minimum and staff worked through Saturday and Sunday night to ensure that Monday morning saw the usual services resumed. The WEA's servers help manage the flow of data between Regions and Corporate Services, protect the WEA's network from security threats and support the Association's payroll and course administration systems, as well as supply access to e-mail and the Internet. Some small hitches were experienced in the first week but the WEA can rest at ease in the

knowledge that its main computer systems are now located at a secure, air-conditioned residence which is definitely 'fit-for-purpose'.

Health & Safety

David Webber, Director of Resources has recently taken on management responsibility for Health and Safety at the WEA. As a result plans are afoot to review and improve the approach taken to Health and Safety, with the NEC having signed of a new Health and Safety policy in October this year. The new policy is published on First Class within the Employment Zone.

Further work is underway to review important safety areas and developing appropriate procedures accordingly. New Regional Health and Safety coordinators are to be appointed, and a WEA Health and Safety Policy Statement has been approved by the WEA's President and General Secretary, signed copies of which will be displayed in main WEA locations.

Alongside this progress it might be remembered that people are also responsible for their own Health and Safety and that of those around them, and for acting accordingly.



Arrivals, departures and exchanges

Regions

London: **Simon Beer** has been appointed as interim Regional Secretary for London Region with effect from 1st December 2004 until the end of the academic year. The permanent post of Regional Secretary will be advertised later in the new year. **John Williams** continues as Director of Education Services for the two Regions, with the substantive position of Regional Secretary for the Southern Region.

North East: Regional Secretary, **Lesley Gillespie** retires from the Association on 17 December. Lesley has been with the WEA for 23 years. She was District Officer for Northern District from 1987 to 1995, prior to becoming District Secretary in September 1995. Following interviews last month, and subject to the usual formalities, **Nigel Todd** has been appointed as the next Regional Secretary for the Region. Nigel is currently Chief Executive of the North East Open College Network. He has a long association with the WEA, currently as a member of the Regional Committee, and also in the past as a tutor. Nigel is likely to be taking up his position in the new year.

South West: Following **Liz Weightman's** retirement at the end of September, an appointment has been made for the next Regional Secretary of South West Region. **Steven Martin** is currently Partnership Development Manager at Redborne Community College in Bedfordshire and prior to that was Community Education Manager for the Mid-Beds Adult Education Consortium. Steven will be taking up his position with the WEA in the new year, pending references. Liz enjoyed a fond farewell from friends and colleagues at a gathering in the Exeter office.

Branches

Horncastle Branch: Congratulations to **Helen Newey** who was this year elected as Chair of Horncastle Branch. Helen has been a student with the WEA for five years

years and has enjoyed WEA Philosophy and History Courses.

Exeter Branch: Branch Secretary **Richard Crisp** has joined the WEA's Voluntary Member Training Initiative working group, who are continuing to develop the original 'Passion for Learning' training programme, for the Association's voluntary members.

Corporate Services

Equality and Diversity Manager, **Liz Cumberbatch** will be doing full time hours until end of March 2005 due to a DTI funded project relating to diversity. **Amanda Bancroft** started in October, as a fixed term Citizenship Development Worker working in special projects reporting to Ted Hartley. Joining Amanda is **Graham Birkin** who will be working as part-time Development Worker until Christmas. Both Graham and Amanda are funded through the government's Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) fund, and are based in the new ALAC Hub in Sheffield.

David Webber has been appointed as Director of Resources with effect from 8 November 2004. The Resources directorate encompasses HR, Training, Property and Marketing. With effect from 7 December, **Valerie Best** will take up the post of part-time Education Strategy Administrator in Leeds, reporting to Colin Thorne.

Causes for celebration

Congratulations are due to **Colin Barnes** and **Mabel Whittaker** on their marriage at Scarborough Registry Office last month. A long-standing voluntary-member of the WEA, Colin is Vice President of the Association and Chair of Yorkshire and Humber Region. Colin's first experience of the WEA was as a student on a course on Existential Philosophy in Brighton in 1964, and his first voluntary post was that of Treasurer for Southwark/Lambeth Branch in the 1980's. Many WEA friends and colleagues joined the newly weds to celebrate on the day. We send best wishes to Mabel and

Colin, who look set to enjoy a happy and enduring marriage on the basis of a twenty-four year courtship.

Another cause for celebration in the Region is the recent marriage of **Emma Copley**, vice-chair of the new Region, in August this year. Congratulations also to the new Mrs Snell and her husband.

Farewell to friends

Sad news for colleagues in the West Midlands, at the death of **Mary Harrold**. Mary worked at the District from 1966, until her retirement in 2001, and was fondly regarded by all in the District. During her time with the WEA she worked with current Regional Secretary, **Peter Caldwell** as well as Peter's predecessor, **Richard Copley**. Friends and colleagues attended Mary's funeral in early November.

News of **Joe Cooper's** recent death has also been received. Many will remember Joe as NEC representative for Northern Ireland, at the time when the WEA was a national (UK) organisation.

Our best wishes go to Mary's and Joe's families.

About WEA News

WEA News is produced by WEA Corporate Services for WEA staff, tutors and voluntary members. Contributions to this edition from: Bridget Agyei, Richard Bolsin, Angela Clark, Lee Davies, June Diegan, Mike Howgate, Claire Gray, Jean Jeffcoate, Dave Webber, Lynda Wick. If you have an item for inclusion or would like to comment on the newsletter please let us know. Items of interest and any comments can be emailed to: news@wea.org.uk. It is not always possible to include all items submitted but every effort will be made to do so. Correspondence should be addressed to: WEA News, c/o WEA Corporate Services, Quick House, 65 Clifton Street, London, EC2A 4JE.