

Let Adult Learners Thrive

That's the message that has been sent to Chancellor Gordon Brown in a letter signed by the WEA and 32 other organisations who share concerns over funding for adult learning.

The letter emphasises the benefits of learning at each stage of people's lives, and the fact that the wider benefits of learning help the government deliver many of its agendas: for example on health, independence in older age, homelessness, criminal justice and social inclusion. It warns the Chancellor that failing to fund adult learning for all,

irrelevant of age, social background or past educational attainment will have serious social and economic consequences.

A shortened version of the letter appears below and continues onto page two. The letter was compiled by a coalition of 33 organisations, with homelessness charity Crisis taking the lead role in drafting.

Anyone who would like a full copy of the letter can obtain one by emailing news@wea.org.uk

Dear Chancellor

Lord Leitch will shortly publish the final report of his review of skills. We understand that you will respond on behalf of the Government, a response that will shape the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. As key stakeholders in further, adult and community education we have joined together to voice our concerns about the effects of recent government priorities for adult learning and education and to express to you our vision for the future.

Our daily experience with adult learners shows that learning motivates and encourages; develops assets, capabilities and resilience, which in turn furthers our country's economic development, productivity and social cohesion. As the Confederation of British Industry testifies, both soft and hard skills increase employability. Outside the world of work social skills foster close relationships with family, friends and neighbours, thus helping to build strong communities and protecting people against risk. Practical skills help homeless people manage tenancies, where otherwise they will often fail. Learning for pleasure promotes independence in old age delaying or offsetting, for example, the onset of Alzheimer's.

However, on the ground we have seen funding for post-19 education fall by 3%; participation by older learners is down from 15 per cent in 1996 to just 10 per cent this year and is now falling even more rapidly; and, by the government's own figures, over half a million college places are closing and one million are under threat.

This has emerged not as a result of a considered evaluation of impact but as the consequences of a skills strategy that prioritises recent school leavers and Level Two qualifications. Without new money to support this skills strategy, colleges have been forced to redirect resources away from areas that do not deliver upon centrally set targets. Adult learning is too often funded on the basis of what is left over, not on the basis of its contribution to personal and economic development. The current skills strategy does not, and cannot, offer a comprehensive vision of all the different areas that make up adult learning and education.

It is vulnerable adults who suffer the most from these consequences. Homeless people, lone mothers, people on incapacity benefit, ex-offenders, disabled people and black and minority ethnic (BME) groups are often disadvantaged learners, many of whom are the low-skilled 'failures' of the education system. Research shows that disadvantaged people are most likely to return to learning through short, informal courses and activities in local voluntary and community settings they know and trust or through the privacy of a home based study course.

People who left compulsory education without basic school leaving qualifications have done so partly because full-time, continuous learning did not work for them in their teens. A first full Level Two entitlement based on full-time, continuous learning is, therefore, not always appropriate. Many adult learners, whether disadvantaged or not, prefer flexible, personalised and bite-sized programmes which adapt to their needs.

In response to these challenges we have produced the following set of recommendations which we urge you to support:

- A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy that builds upon, but is not limited to, skills for employment and has at its core a social inclusion agenda.
- Co-ordination of the new lifelong learning strategy with other government public policy agendas, with cross-cutting responsibility for delivery and benefiting departments contributing financially.
- An ambitious Public Service Agreement target to widen and increase participation in learning, year-on-year, across each and every age range, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups.

[letter continues on page two]

- A coherent foundation learning tier that encompasses pre-entry and entry level learning, offers bite-sized modules and accredits progression regardless of the setting.
- A ring-fenced adult learning budget that rises in line with Department for Education and Skills increases and is available to high quality providers that excel at reaching disadvantaged learners.
- The Learning and Skills Council to offer strong financial incentives for [providers] to create new partnerships with (1) High achieving local voluntary and community providers and (2) Local businesses, to help develop programmes that meet local needs.

Your response to the Leitch Review will have a huge impact upon social justice and economic prosperity in our country. Between us we carry a deep understanding of the needs and requirements of this country's most excluded learners and of our local economies which employ these learners. This is a moment both of great concern to us, but also of great opportunity. As you develop your response to the Leitch Review we invite you to draw extensively on our expertise.



A group of WEA tutors and staff from five different regions are pictured at the University of Bolton, where they recently attended a week long residential course to start their work towards their PGCE / Certificate in Further, Higher & Adult Education.

The WEA is supporting the candidates to achieve this qualification by developing and delivering the course jointly with the University. This forms part of the Association's initiatives to meet government targets for teaching qualifications held by tutors and educational staff working in the post-compulsory sector.

From left to right: Deborah Jansen von Rensburg (Southern), Margaret Todd (Eastern), Andrée Myers (East Midlands), Helen Yuille (Southern), Elena Vassilieva (North West), Nicky Reed (Yorkshire & Humber), Jane Trippett-Jones (Eastern), Sarah Lionheart (North West), David Heley (Southern), Emma Leavey (Southern), Julie Caley (East Midlands), Joe Whittaker (University of Bolton), Brian Chadwick (Yorkshire & Humber), Moira Hyde (Southern), Christine Walsh (Eastern), Rosely Solomon (Southern)

Southern wins Matrix kitemark

WEA Southern Region has gained the respected Matrix standard for its information and advice services to learners. The assessment covered pre-entry external services to learners and potential learners accessing information and advice on the wide range of learning opportunities in the branches and centres across the Region.

Regional Education Secretary Pearl Ryall, who co-ordinated the application to Matrix, received the good news following lengthy preparation and a three-day assessment process involving visits to the regional hub in Rochester and two learning centres in addition to nearly forty interviews with learners, partners and staff.

The assessor identified regional strengths including a robust set of policies and procedures for advice and information; a standard template for promotional documents which meets good practice guidelines on readability; the availability of information in a range of formats on the region's website, and the provision of standard handbooks and the 'Services for Learners' leaflet to tutors and field staff.

The award should help open up new opportunities to bid for funding, since Matrix is often either a requirement to bid for funds or will enhance a potential bid. It also demonstrates quality improvement and staff efficiency and teamwork - which helps in terms of the WEA's Post Inspection Action Plan in response to last year's inspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate.



Ruth Gould, the WEA's Education Strategy Manager for Information, Advice and Guidance, congratulated the region, adding, "Southern is the first WEA region to gain Matrix accreditation against the new standards and across the whole region. We hope it will be used as a pioneering model for other regions wishing to follow the same route." A 'blueprint' of how Southern region gained the accreditation has been made available to other WEA regions.

SPEAKERS'
CORNER

What are Volunteers For?

by John Hurst, Chairman of Mid-Cornwall Branch

In WEA News 9, our General Secretary, Richard Bolsin, posed several points of action for the Association following the successful re-inspection. Among these bullet points was 'renewing and revitalising membership'.

It is necessary to get things in proportion here - and it's important not to be too negative. There is real life in the voluntary movement, despite all the pressures, self-made and Government induced, of recent years. A quick glance at the Annual Review for 2004/5 demonstrates that the list of Branches and Student groups is impressive, and the account of how it can be in one Branch, Colchester, is an object lesson.

Yet questions remain. Another quick glance at the list, with a degree of inside knowledge, shows what we all know: that over the last decade or so Branches have been lost; and equally that communities which would appear to be natural centres for vigorous Branch activity do not figure. Perhaps, before we can take forward the process of reviewing the expectations of WEA membership and 'what is necessary to engage the next generation of adults', there are some serious questions to be asked. Where Branches have disappeared do we need a careful enquiry as to why? And where they have persisted and flourished over the years what are they doing right? Are the circumstances parallel? Why is the Branch structure so strong in Eastern Region and so patchy elsewhere? To take an interesting example; the four Cathedral Cities of East Anglia - Bury St Edmunds, Chelmsford, Ely and Norwich all have Branches. Of the three in the West Midlands - the celebrated Three Choirs Cities (Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester) - only Gloucester is listed as having an active Branch. This is not to imply that Cathedral Cities are a necessary and natural setting for our work - merely to provide an example of apparently similar social structures but dissimilar WEA presence. Why? Do different Regions have different priorities? Are there more vigorous alternatives presented by other providers in one community and not another? Where alternative providers offer a strong programme what is the role for the voluntary movement?

No-one can question that there has been an immense change in the profile of adult education over the last three decades. The opportunities to study a wide range of subjects in a variety of modes has developed beyond imagining. Despite the progressive withdrawal of Universities from the field the spectrum of activity is impressive: from the availability of qualifications by face-to-face or distance learning to the vigour of informal education of the type offered through the U3A - an impressive and instructive example of voluntary commitment. Where does the WEA figure in this spectrum? And where it does figure what role have volunteers played? And what role might they go on to play?

The role of Government - and Government agencies such as the LSC - has been crucial in encouraging, as well as controlling, many of these developments. It would be churlish not to recognise the constructive effect of Government in our own development, for instance in pointing us towards aspects of our work which are entirely appropriate to our essential nature and purposes, and funding them accordingly (if not always adequately). The Skills for Life agenda is an obvious example. Yet this has not been without cost. The Government's commitment to the 14-25 agenda has gone forward to the disadvantage of the educational needs - equal though different - of older students. And there is now a real threat that funding patterns may destroy much of the dynamism and diversity that has been achieved.

We are an autonomous body. Of course our partnership with Government must remain central to our activity and the mainstay of it, both for funding and philosophical reasons. It is a privilege to be a partner of Government and the long concordat

established in the era of Mansbridge and Temple must remain the bedrock of the Association's life and practice. However as an autonomous body we have a right, one might even say a duty, to elaborate a vision of our educational purposes that is not necessarily confined by current and particular Government priorities and the restrictive template of 'good practice' defined by ALI - and as the terms of the concordat change so too must our understanding change.

There are, however, obvious difficulties. The energies of the Association are heavily eaten up by the ever present need to keep up with and satisfy Governmentally defined targets and demands. Our staff, in particular, bear the weight of these ever pressing demands on which the financial stability of the Association depends. The question, therefore, arises: can the volunteer movement be empowered and enabled, and inspired, to take forward that part of the Association's vision which does not sit readily with the structures of Government? It is a big question and to begin to answer it would require major adjustments to the Association's current ways of working. It would be necessary, for instance, to give Branches positive encouragement to raise funds to support activity that lies outside LSC funding (such as the intensive, high quality one-day events that currently fall outside the nine-hour rule). It might be necessary to encourage a slate of tutors willing to engage in this type of activity on an expenses only basis. This is a basic aspect of the activity of the U3A. Questions of quality control might arise but any tutor sufficiently motivated to engage in activity of this type is hardly likely to need the sword of Damocles of inspection. Such tutors could be vital in the re-invigoration of the voluntary movement.

To return to the opening question: why has the voluntary movement lost impetus? Perhaps we need to ask our volunteers. Should we ask our members - present and from the recent past - 'what sort of WEA do you want?', the answer might be interesting - and challenging. [See page 5 for details of the current branch survey about membership - ed.]

We know fairly clearly what we ask of members. What do we offer them? The educational equivalent of 'blood, sweat and tears' (committee meetings and financial regulations). And, of course, the ever increasing cost of attending classes. It is here that the range of alternatives in the mushrooming programmes of informal adult education offered by bodies such as the National Trust and Local Conservation Organisations has to be seen as part of the equation. Many organisations such as Theatre Support Clubs and Friends of Museums offer their members, in return for a modest subscription, various forms of concession - a percentage of the cost of the theatre tickets, Private Views etc. As we move to develop our Trading arm are there considerations here which might be taken into account? If we were to move to a paying membership should we offer members a percentage off class fees? And should we return to the quest for legacies? To do so would require a new realism about decentralised funds. People will give money for a purpose in which they believe and in terms in which they believe. They will not leave money to disappear into an anonymous central pot. Should we be making clear the sort of legacy which can be effectively used to improve opportunities in particular places or in particular categories of activity?

Two final questions. Do volunteers have a role, in partnership with staff, of course, in developing new Branches or reviving old ones? And where new Branches are being formed - and they are - what conditions and directions are most favourable to Branch formation?

The major questions remain. What are volunteers for? What do we want them of them? And what can we offer them?

West Midlands project funding successes

WEA West Midlands region has continued to make progress in identifying funding streams outside the LSC contract. Such funding is likely to be increasingly crucial to securing the future of WEA provision all over the country as LSC funding becomes more focused on vocational skills for young adults.

Howard Croft, the region's Projects Co-ordinator, reports that in recent months the following funding has been secured:

- £63,000 from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund through Stoke City Council. This funding will help develop and deliver Skills for Life and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) courses in North and South Meir - an example of 'first steps' learning for educationally disadvantaged adults in deprived communities.
- £18,000 from the Arts Council to design and develop courses around Telford's industrial heritage.
- £10,000 from Lloyds TSB Foundation towards the cost of an outreach worker in North Coventry, who will work to engage people from minority ethnic communities in educational programmes.
- £10,000 from the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) to develop a greater capacity for e-learning amongst the region's staff and tutors - including means to support tutors who wish to use information and communications technology (ICT) in their learning programmes.

Paul Vogel (on the left of the photo) retired as Regional Chair of South West Region at the regional AGM on 18 November, having served on the regional committee since 1987. Paul is pictured with Regional Director Steve Martin and Muriel Williams, who stepped down from her post as Regional Treasurer but will continue to serve on the regional committee.

Paul's replacement as Regional Chair is Frank Colls, whilst Richard Crisp will take over as Treasurer.



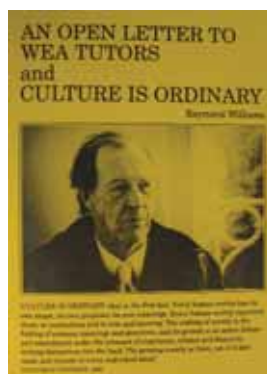
Funding Rules

The Association Management Team has approved a new approach to allocating the funds received from the government's Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

This rules-based allocation of funding will allow the WEA greater flexibility to define the types of provision and quality measures it wants to encourage and then divide LSC funding amongst regions accordingly. The formula will not come into action until the year 2007/08, with the precise 'rules' yet to be discussed and agreed.

The plans were noted by the Association Committee at its recent meeting in Edinburgh.

Raymond Williams Society



The WEA has been informed of a new newsletter and website set up by the Raymond Williams Society, which exists to develop intellectual and political projects in areas connected with Williams' work.

Many readers will already be aware of Raymond Williams and his influential work as a novelist and in particular as a cultural theorist and socialist thinker. He also worked as a WEA tutor between 1946 and 1961, during which time he wrote the Open Letter to WEA Tutors and essay Culture is Ordinary pictured here. Though written over forty years ago, the Open Letter still includes much of relevance today, and was referred to recently during the writing of the WEA's Association Plan.

Anyone interested in joining the Raymond Williams society (£10 per year, £5 unwaged) should visit its website at www.raymond-williamssociety.org, email membership@raymondwilliamssociety.org or write to Steve Woodhams, 103 Coopers Lane, London, E10 5DG.

Branch miscellany



Richard Crisp on: membership consultation - course recruitment - Branch Committee demographics - attracting new volunteers.

Richard is Treasurer of South West Region and sits on the Renewing Membership Group.

The 'Consultation on Membership' papers were recently mailed to the 550 or so Branch Secretaries. Please spend time in committee or otherwise formulating your replies, remembering the 12th January deadline. As I suggested in Issue 10, Membership may not be high on your Branch agenda but please at least respond with your views. At the time of writing this, there have been a couple of dozen replies so far. So try to do so before you become embroiled in Christmas festivities so that future work is based on well-founded data.

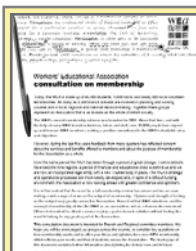
How have your courses recruited since September? In my area there has been large drop with letters putting the steep rise in course fees as the reason. So for us the targeted program will need to fill the gap. Call me old-fashioned, but I still think of this as community provision, distinct from the typical Branch programme in terms of how it is organised in the main and with its lack of student representation on Branch. By the way, have you heard our main funder's new name and acronym for Branch education? Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)! The LSC is increasing the Assumed Fee Element each year for those who do not qualify for fee remission. The percentage of the estimated cost of a course that they expect providers to recover from students will be 37.5% in 2007/08, and will rise eventually to 50%. This means in practice that fee rises for most branch learners are likely to continue. Plenty of issues to be tackled through our heightened campaigning role, of which we will be hearing more in the future.

Has your Branch Committee membership changed much in the last ten years? Has there been a healthy turn-over bringing new ideas, experience and contacts? In my experience, lack of recruitment is leading to Branch closures. It seems that a new way of engaging volunteers is required as an alternative to, not a replacement of, the current Committee system. What is different?

Well, it is not difficult to understand, surely? If we consider a group of people from whom one might expect volunteers to come from, namely members of the post-war baby boom, now aged 60, they have had very different work and leisure experiences from those of a decade or more before. Whilst both will have had computer experience, the latter are much more likely to be confident of extracting maximum benefit from independent domestic computing with the ever-increasing amount of information freely available from the internet. Current lifestyles are much less routine than they were, with cut-price air travel making a mockery of the cost of other forms of travel, allowing freedom to explore the world, its culture and history through travel and the media. One of the joys of retirement, if one can arrange it, is to be free from the commitment of routine, to respond spontaneously to situations and opportunities. However there is still a huge benefit from the sharing and exchange of ideas in the classroom interaction with people you have not met before. This may ever be so, although in time, we will become more accustomed to chatting or interacting online much more effortlessly than we do now; just observe our teenagers using their mobile phones! It is a current objective of the Association to reduce its resources devoted to travelling by teleconferencing and so forth.

In the new Governing Documents of our Association, membership of Regions includes the term 'other local groups...' as well as Branches. It is up to us Branch activists, to put forward proposals for these that will be more appealing to the prospective new breed of governance volunteers. After all, with new communication methods, communicating with the public, students, tutors and members will be much easier.

Please contact me for input on Branch issues in future editions of WEA News by email to rcrisp@wea.org.uk or via the postal address on page eight.



Any branch that has not received the consultation document referred to above can obtain one by emailing news@wea.org.uk, phoning 020 7426 3450 or by post to the address in the box on page 8.

The next stage of consultation on membership will involve research amongst individuals to ensure that different groups involved in the WEA are represented. Anyone wishing to be added to the list to be involved in this stage of the research can do so - please contact as above.

Computers: we have the technology

by John Nixon, Director of Business Services

In the early 19th Century, the generation of mathematical tables such as logarithms was handled manually by large teams of people; as their task was solely to compute tables these people became known as "computers", a job description that remained until the 1940s.

Charles Babbage is credited as the inventor of the first mechanical computer. With a government grant of £1,500 in 1823, he eventually ran out of money having spent £17,000. This was not just the beginning of computers but seems to have set the future trend for government IT projects.

I suppose modern day computing goes back to 1975 when Bill Gates founded a small company called Microsoft and then IBM launched their PC in 1981 - many pundits at the time predicted that it would never catch on.

When I joined the WEA in March 2005, I think we may still have been using some of those original IBMs, but I'm pleased to say that 2006 has seen a considerable investment in new technology.

Over £½m has been spent renewing obsolete central servers, providing fast computers, networks and software for administration and finance users, equipping home-based field staff with up to date facilities and acquiring new classroom technology for learners.

This of course is good news, but in reality it is how

Branch Memories

The WEA Wolverhampton Branch has produced and published this 85 page booklet of the memories of lecturers and class members, some of whose involvement with the branch dates back as far as the 1940s. Copies are available for £4 including p&p - contact Branch Secretary John Murden on 01922 701385.



Regional Directors

The job title of the most senior staff member in each region has been changed from Regional Secretary to Regional Director following the WEA's recent Grading and Salary Project.

General Secretary Richard Bolsin explained that the move will enable better understanding of the role by external agencies, conveying comparability with Regional Directors of other organisations such as the LSC, and that it also reflects the parity of roles and responsibilities with the other four WEA Directors.

There are no plans to change the job titles of the General Secretary or Scottish Secretary.

we use these new resources that makes us perform better, both as individuals and as an Association. IT plays a key role in every part of our ever-changing and challenging lives today, so maybe just being IT literate is no longer good enough. Neither can we rely on a central IT Function to come up with all the answers; everyone has a mandate to question the status quo, seek simplification of long winded processes, increase their own skills and adopt new ways of making education exciting and administration low cost and efficient.

Marketing courses to today's generation of adults has to embrace the internet. Learners increasingly need to be engaged through Virtual Learning Environments, whilst deploying electronic whiteboards and laptops in the classroom is now the standard, not the exception.

So we may have some of the technology but more importantly we rely on the determination, vision and skills of people to make it work for us. Only then do we meet learners' expectations, deliver our goals and secure the future.

Participation is key to successful change, so please don't keep your opinions or good ideas to yourself. Fill up my in-box instead: I'd be delighted to hear from you.

jnixon@wea.org.uk

WEA Diaries

WEA diaries for 2007 are still available and orders will be posted out from 6th December onwards.

Diaries are priced at £4.75 each (including postage to UK addresses). Please order your diary(ies) by sending a cheque payable to Workers' Educational Association to Diary Orders, WEA, 3rd Floor, 70 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4HB.

The diaries include a gold-blocked cover, week-to-view layout, world and UK maps and four pages containing WEA regional contact details and other information.



Conference date announced

The 2007 WEA Conference will take place at the Britannia Hotel in Coventry on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th October 2007.

In a departure from recent Conferences, the first day of Conference is intended to attract a mix of policymakers, WEA delegates and others working in the further education sector to an event held in partnership with the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE). It will aim to demonstrate the value that adult education gives to individuals, communities and government departments. The motions and other formal business of conference will take place on the Saturday.

Corporate Services Move

WEA Corporate Services has moved out of Quick House and rented offices on the other side of the same street. The new address, which is now also the WEA's registered address, is 70 Clifton Street, London, EC2A 4HB.

The move will enable the Association to save in the order of £120,000 on property costs over the next three years, not least since in addition to office space for former Quick House staff on the third floor, the WEA also occupies the ground floor of the new building - which will be used primarily for teaching by the London Region (thus saving on hiring other venues for the courses concerned). Outside term-time, the ground floor will also be available for WEA committee and other meetings.

Telephone numbers of former Quick House staff are unchanged, as is the main telephone number (020 7426 3450).

From the Archives

The recent Remembrance Day commemorations seemed an appropriate moment to dust off the WEA's Education Year Book from 1918, which included this letter from author H.G. Wells. His best-known work, 'War of the Worlds', was written in 1898 and may have been partly inspired by the militarization of European powers then taking place prior to World War One.

The editors of the Year Book, made up of key WEA figures including G.D.H. Cole, R.H. Tawney and William Temple, invited Wells and others (including playwright George Bernard Shaw) to contribute, giving them "entire freedom to say what they pleased." Wells' response is reproduced as it was printed in 1918.

THE WAR AND THE WORKERS.

BY H. G. WELLS.

Mr. Wells has written us a letter from which we make the following extracts:—

"You ask me to write what I think the effects of the war will be on the workingman-soldier. Well, I don't know. The workingman is a perplexing person, and the army tradition is a remarkable influence, but my hope is that the workingman-soldier will come back a revolutionary, resolved to end for ever the dominion of the game-preserving, horse-riding, park-owning army people who have stuck like leeches to the staff and higher positions of the British Army throughout this war, who have used the censorship chiefly to save their faces, and whose incapacity and class-conceit are responsible for the disasters of 1915, of July, 1916, and of 1917 (at Monchy), and for the wasting of countless thousands of British lives. These are the same people who plotted the Gough treason that broke our faith with Ireland, and who are the curse of India. All my life I have been an active Socialist and a promoter of social reconstruction, but this war has convinced me that a political spring-cleaning is a necessary preliminary to any hopeful economic readjustment. We must clear out the 'Anglicans' before we can have a free England. . . . Will the workingman-soldier come back a clear-minded republican, resolved to end the established church with its fatal grip upon our higher education, and to break up the tacit class conspiracy that makes our political life futile? Or will he just come back to get drunk and earn a poor week's wages for a poor week's work and vote for his 'betters' in the good old style?"



The national WEA Archive is held as part of the TUC Collection at London Metropolitan University. To see the catalogue or for information about visiting the archive visit the following webpage: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/services/sas/library-services/tuc/geninfo.cfm#archive>

London Region Phone Change

The phone number of WEA London Region's Luke Street office changed in mid-November.

The new phone number is 020 7426 1950, whilst the fax number remains unchanged on 020 7383 5668.

Clovelly Centre

The Clovelly Centre in Southampton re-opened on 17 November following a rebuild and refurbishment.

The centre is used to provide WEA courses in partnership with Southampton City Council - primarily for targeted learners from the inner city.

These and other WEA activities will now be able to take place in bright, modern surroundings.



Arrivals, departures and exchanges

June Fisher

June Fisher, who died in November, was a one-off character who made an immense contribution to the WEA, having been connected to the Association for over 40 years. She was the District Secretary for Southern District for nine years from 1967 and subsequently worked tirelessly as a voluntary member for over 30 years. Latterly June was the Secretary of the WEA's biggest branch, Sheffield Central. She was also a key member of the Regional Executive Committee that oversaw the merger of the Yorkshire South and Yorkshire North Districts.



June was truly passionate and bold about her views on the WEA and those who knew and worked with her often experienced the full force of her determined personality, coupled with a great capacity for personal kindness. Her voluntary workload for Sheffield Central Branch was massive and her devotion to the WEA was uncompromising. She often cancelled holidays so that she could attend meetings. Even on her final journey to hospital she asked for a detour via Sheffield Learning Centre to take care of some WEA business.

June leaves an enormous gap and will be missed. Our sympathies are extended to her husband, Ray, who is also a former District Secretary, and to her family as well as to everyone involved in the Sheffield Central Branch.

June's funeral, which took place on 20 November, was attended by many staff and volunteers, past and present, from the region as well as the President and the General Secretary, who represented the Association nationally.

Eastern Region

The region welcomes four new members of staff: **Eva Fernandez** (Payroll and HR), **Rita Davis** (Hertfordshire Organiser: Targeted Programme), **Christine Walsh** (Hertfordshire Course Programme Worker) and **Gorete Downey** (Norfolk Course Programme Worker).

Farewell to **Gail Cambery** (Regional Education Manager), who will be leaving at the end of the year to take up a post with the Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux.

London Region

Sad news has reached us of the death of former London District Secretary **Eric Wallis**, who worked for the WEA in virtually every capacity possible short of becoming General Secretary. The WEA and what it stood for was Eric's life - from his time as a Branch Secretary in York through a spell with South Eastern District as a Development Officer and Tutor Organiser until he finally became District Secretary in London. After his retirement he went on to serve as Treasurer of Medway Branch for many years and was an

active member of the South Eastern District Committee. A kind, erudite man who will be missed.

Southern Region

This autumn some particularly valued and experienced members have retired as branch officers in Southern Region; all will be sorely missed. They include:

Dennis Rudd, who is retiring as Branch Chair of Horley branch in November. In addition to his branch work, Dennis served on the London District Committee for many years and was Vice Chair of the District. He then became Vice Chair of the new Southern Region where his wisdom, experience and kindness have been greatly appreciated.

Ken May, who has long been a distinguished member of the WEA and is particularly well known in the old South Eastern district. Over the years Ken has been Chair, Vice Chair, representative to the old National Executive committee and District Committee member. Enjoy your retirement Ken.

Bent Weber of Wokingham branch, who has retired after about 30 years

of service to the WEA. He has held all three branch officer positions. At one time he was also Treasurer of Thames and Solent District.

South West Region

Paul Vogel, Muriel Williams, Frank Colls and Richard Crisp: see picture and caption on page 4.

Angela Jones, Tutor Organiser in Swindon, started work on 6 November. Angela has joined the WEA from Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network and replaces **Glenis Curtis** who has decided to retire after two years with the Association. We thank Glenis for her contribution and wish her all the best.

Sally-Ann Parker has started as a part-time Development Worker in Truro to assist Andrea Stevens. She has tutored for the WEA for a number of years.

Corporate Services

Two staff have left the finance department: PA to the Director of Finance **Sarah Hatton** and Financial Accountant **Alka Heer**.

About WEA News

WEA News is produced for WEA staff, tutors and voluntary members. Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition, including:

John-Paul Wares (of Crisis),
Pearl Ryall, Steve Martin and
Ann Walker.

If you have an item for inclusion or would like to comment on the newsletter please let us know. It is not always possible to include all items submitted but every effort will be made to do so.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

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