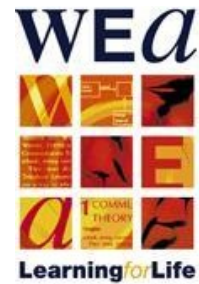


WEA SOUTH-WEST NEWS SUMMER EDITION 2005



WELCOME to the Summer Edition of WEA SW News....

From the Regional Secretary

As we move into August it is an opportunity to reflect on my first few months in post. I have now had the opportunity to travel across the South West region and meet both core staff and voluntary members in the organisation. It is clear that a lot of excellent work is being done to support the delivery of our learning programme, by people in a wide range of roles. What has also come shining through is that, despite some unsettling recent times, there is a clear commitment to moving the region forward and I am heartened by this.

Recent developments indicate that there are a number of reasons for us to feel optimistic. Financially the year end position, although still a deficit, is likely to be considerably better than was forecast some months ago. I know a lot of hard work has gone into producing a large Summer programme and I am grateful to all of you for such a positive response. The recent

brochures clearly show a potential for an exciting and varied set of courses in the new academic year and this augurs well for hitting our regional core funding target next year. Again many thanks are due to the team of people who saw this process through to its conclusion. In addition I know a number of you are working to secure contracts with other agencies, some as a result of FE institutions being unable to support this type of work, and I would encourage you to keep seeking these opportunities.

As you are all aware we are being re-inspected at the end of September with the emphasis, in our region, on Leadership and Management, Visual and Performing Arts and ICT. I feel we should look upon these visits as an opportunity to show inspectors the excellent work we do in delivering learning opportunities. Recent reports from external inspection show that the South West has particularly good classroom teaching standards and this is a tribute in part to tutors preparing lessons well and maintaining their records correctly. It is also a reflection of the hard work of all those

people, outside of the classroom, who contribute to make the delivery possible. We are performing well in this aspect and please take this next opportunity to reinforce the message!

Can you imagine a time when re- inspection concerns; financial instability and organisational changes are no longer the headline news? Well I believe that the next few months are crucial for delivering this enviable position and allowing us to be a lot more forward looking in planning. I know that the region has an excellent base for achieving all of these objectives and with the strong commitment and support of you all we can achieve it.

Steve Martin

Staff News

Arrivals

Russ Russell

Part-time development worker — "Russ" Russell joined the Region on 20th June as a part-time Development Worker - North Somerset Education & Training Consortium. He has much experience having previously run a consultancy company in Vocational and Adult Education.

Departures

Simon Dunn

Development worker in Plymouth left at the end of June after nearly 5 years.

Brenda Shakespeare

Development Worker — (Developing Lifelong Learning in UNISON) left at the end of July — One year contract.

Jenny Hoey

Admin assistant in Truro left at the end of July, having joined in Feb 04.

Sally Ware

ILT Co-ordinator— left at the end of July.



'Unfortunately for us, Sally is leaving the WEA to explore the options for her creative talents. Over the 5 years she's been with us she has taken on many roles including tutor, development worker and regional co-ordinator for ICT including her excellent work editing this Newsletter. She has gently persuaded and supported voluntary members, learners, tutors and field staff to dip into the world of ICT to discover its many possibilities. Thanks Sally for your patient and skilful help; we'll miss you.'

*Glenys Smith
Wilts Tutor Organiser*

Janet Smith

Finance Officer—retires on the 31st August after more than 10 years with WEA.

She commenced work in the Plymouth Office as a temporary part-time maternity leave cover and stayed on to become the South-West's finance stalwart. Janet is looking forward to spending more time with her partner David playing bowls and travelling, beginning with a months trip to Australia in September.

She will be greatly missed by her colleagues and all those that know her are invited to a farewell office luncheon buffet on 31st August.

*Chris Davis
Finance Manager*

Around the Region

Bristol

Calligraphy and Flowers

Calligraphy classes are flourishing at the Sea Mills suburb of Bristol where two groups meet on a Thursday and Friday morning. In April, the Friday class exhibited a selection of their work, depicting some of their favourite childhood prose and poetry, to complement a flower festival at Thornbury Church in South Gloucestershire called "Story Time". Alongside floral

arrangements ranging from *Harry Potter* to *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* were calligraphic appreciations of treasured childhood comics, *The Eagle*, much loved poetry from school days, *Cargoes*, never to be forgotten fairytales, *Peter Pan*, and classic childhood stories such as *The Wind in the Willows*, as well as modern day favourites, *The Owl who*



was afraid of the Dark. Altogether 13 students and their tutor, Fiona Mitchell, took part in this enchanting calligraphic celebration of childhood story time.

Call Bristol 0117 9166500 if you would like to join these active groups

*Rosemary Cave
Tutor Organiser*

Gloucestershire

Community Programme

Busy learning about seeds and planting in various gardens in



Gloucestershire on Pam Bryant's Creative Gardening course.



Design, colours and identifying different plants and their uses made this course very popular with all the learners.

*Debbie Hill
Tutor Organiser*

**“Glorious
Gloucestershire
Festival”
WEA Calligraphy
Class Banners**

Seven banners were created in response to a request made to the WEA Cheltenham Calligraphy Group, to contribute to the “Glorious Gloucestershire” Festival in Gloucester Cathedral 28-31 July 2005.

The brief was to complement six floral displays by the Gloucestershire Flower Guild, incorporating the Bishops’ copes, and to use wording from Francis of Assisi’s Canticle of the Sun. The separate banners depict the 6 themes individually, and take their colour schemes from the corresponding copes, whilst the introductory banner includes repeated designs and celebrates all that is inherent in the County. Although certain design

elements were consistent across all the banners, the design process was more a matter of instinctive response. The result is a set of banners that are inextricably linked, which are spontaneous & expressive, and also demonstrate how a variety of calligraphic techniques can produce different effects for emphasis and interpretation.



The work was carried out by 14 people from the Cheltenham Calligraphy Group who have gained their lettering arts skills through ongoing workshops tutored by Josie Brown, covering a range of topics from historical research and contemporary variations of scripts; gilded and illuminated letters; embossing, stencilling / stamping; lettering on wood, glass, fabric – through to bookbinding and related paper crafts.

This is not the first group project they have undertaken, as in the past they have produced two other sets of banners, one depicting and explaining the history of writing and printing which is used by local schools, and the other has a banner for each colour of the rainbow, and finally a book of tips for calligraphers called “Scribes’ Secrets”.



The group is currently of mixed ability, but some have made their way from complete beginners through a GCSE in Design focussing on calligraphy, 15 OCN units at levels 1 & 2, and over 20 units at level 3. Some learners have gone on to successfully gain certification with the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society and two have become tutors of calligraphy themselves, one of whom is presently undertaking the society of Scribes and Illuminators’ Advanced Training Scheme. So, in terms of learning – the pen is indeed mightier than the sword!



For further information please contact WEA Gloucester office: 01452 541358, or the tutor Josie Brown at josieb53@hotmail.com

Dorset

Adult Learners Award ceremony - which took place on 25th May at the Kings Park Football Club, Bournemouth. Awards were presented by radio 2 DJ Ed Stuart ('Stewpot')

They are of Georgette Bowring and Paula Skinner. Both were successful Helping in Schools students, Georgette at Somerford near Christchurch and Paula at Littlemoor in Weymouth. Both achieved level 3 for the quality of their work. As a result of this Georgette is now working as a special needs assistant in a local school. Paula and her husband have just started their own business.



Georgette with 'Stewpot'



Paula with 'Stewpot'

*Liz Merry
Dorset Tutor Organiser*

Plymouth

Mount Wise – Making Mosaics

The WEA Community Programme in Plymouth have been working with the Parents of Mount Wise, for four years, to provide opportunities which support and encourage parents to enjoy lifelong learning. Mount Wise is an average sized community primary school in an area of Plymouth being developed as part of an urban regeneration project. Nearly all the families are facing considerable social and financial challenges. European ethnic backgrounds, including Taiwanese, Malaysian and Libyan; all have English as an additional language.

One of the courses we have recently completed is Making Mosaics, many of the parents, discovered what a wonderful art form this is, and were pleased to have the opportunity to learn how to do it. These photographs are of a Group of Parents at the Mount Wise School making a sign for the School Family Centre, which was opened in 2004.

*Lesley Morton
Plymouth Tutor Organiser*

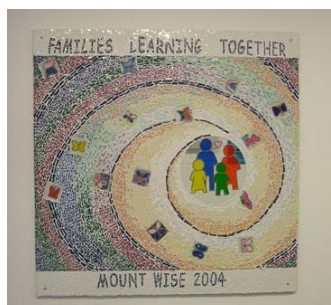


Mosaic Group
Mount Wise
in Progress

Parents with the
completed
Mosaic



Complete Mosaic



TrEACL AND CACL

This summer we submitted another two successful bids to NIACE [National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education].

TrEACL [Technology to Enhance Adult and Community Learning] funding of £35,000 has been awarded for an action research project which rejoices in the title

'VIPs in Cornwall – a blended learning training programme for the visually impaired - Talking Tactiles and the audio / haptic learning experience'*

The 'Talking Tactiles' are an ingenious new hardware/software package being developed by Royal National College for the Blind (RNC). The hardware consists of an A3-size tablet that connects to a PC/laptop. The tablet can hold a variety of tactile diagrams that have been produced using 'swell paper'. The learner can navigate around the diagram with the help of voice prompts. By pressing on a particular point or area on the diagram they can then access up to ten levels of information or other sound files. WEA South West Region is the lead organisation working in partnership with RNC in Hereford and Cornwall Blind Association in Truro.

RNC's role in the project will be the development of new learning programmes in consultation with WEA learners and tutors at the VIP project hosted by the Cornwall Blind Association in Truro. The WEA's role will be to assist in the development of these materials, their trialing and evaluation. As lead partner the WEA will co-ordinate the project and produce interim and final reports. One of the exciting aspects of this project is that learners can also create their own materials - so we may be looking at a first tentative step towards creating a VIP's guide to Cornwall!

The second successful bid was for CACL [Content for Adult and Community Learning] funding. £2,000 has been awarded to develop additional materials for a blended learning [part face to face and part online] version of the full Permaculture Design course. Previous support has helped develop materials for the Introduction to Permaculture course which was piloted successfully last year and is now part of this year's programme.

* VIP - Visually Impaired Person

*George Sabol
August 2005*

Heritage Education For All HEFA—Update

A project report has recently been released for the award-winning Heritage Education for All (HEFA) Project. The WEA South West Region joined forces with the National Trust Wessex Region to run the project, which was funded over three years by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

HEFA succeeded in attracting over 500 learners to a range of courses held at 14 National Trust properties in the South West, and in its explicit aim to develop and deliver inclusive heritage courses for

both disabled and non-disabled people.

The response from students who went on HEFA courses has been overwhelmingly positive, with 91% of students who returned an evaluation form saying they enjoyed their course 'very much', and 93% of those who had not previously visited the property of their course promising to return as an independent visitor.

There have also been a number of positive developments for both the WEA and the National Trust as a result of the project. These include:

- WEA South West has developed expertise in running inclusive heritage courses, and nine courses have been continued from HEFA into mainstream WEA education provision. This expertise and contacts developed with organisations in the field have already led to an increase in the number of disabled people attending WEA courses across the Region.
- An inclusive learning pack and Course Access Requirement Questionnaire have been developed to help WEA tutors and staff identify, plan for and respond to support needs before and during courses.
- National Trust staff and volunteers received training in inclusive teaching methods and disability equality issues, which have helped change attitudes and create awareness of the needs of disabled people at National Trust sites. WEA Tutors have also benefited from this training.

A bid for further funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to continue and expand this work was turned down. However, WEA are looking at resubmitting another bid in Spring 2006. Both WEA and NT are keen to develop and continue the partnership.



For more details of the project or a full copy of the Project Report, please contact Elissa Hamilton, Vanessa Glasgow or Julie Cable-Searle. They can all be contacted at the Bristol Office on 0117 9166500

Report from the Voluntary Members

The regional committee has been very busy this summer in discussions with Steve Martin on the re-organisation of the region. Re-organisation is a necessity in order to address the financial deficit; something we have had since regionalisation. The committee has given Steve its full backing, but unfortunately it will mean a slight reduction in staff numbers, however we remain positive about the future.

One of the many visits I have made this summer was to the presentations for students in Adult Learners week for the South West at Bournemouth. I was invited to represent the WEA. There were many students presented with certificates for their outstanding contribution in their learning from all over the South West and nominated by many Educational Institutions over the seven counties. I was however rather disappointed that the only students nominated by the WEA came from Dorset. Congratulations to Dorset, but let us by next year have a wider spread of learners from across the region.

For the region to flourish there needs to be representatives from each county on the regional committee. I am hoping that at the AGM in November we can widen the representation from across the region. Travel expenses are paid and a sandwich lunch usually provided.

The National Conference will be held at Manchester in October and on the agenda will be Incorporation. This is most important for the future of the WEA.

*Based on a contribution by Paul Vogel
Chair of Regional Committee*

WEA News at National & Regional levels

Branches with adequate finances should be considering sending a delegate to the National Conference at Manchester 14/16 October. Clearly the motion to move to Incorporation looms large for the organisation, but for me, it is simply a question of voting yes, and moving on to other matters although I gather some have doubts. Much more important for those staff and active volunteers at Regional and Branch levels is to discuss face to face the implications of the new curriculum structure and how that will impact on Branch activity. The way things are going, it seems that the traditional role of Branch Committees maybe about to change and whether you like it or not, National Conference is an excellent opportunity to test your views, hear those of others from other Regions and to lobby NEC members.

*Richard Crisp
Volunteer/Exeter Branch Secretary*

Re-inspection Monitoring Visit

As part of the ALI inspection process, the WEA nationally is being monitored to assess progress on the Association's actions following the main inspection findings of 2004. In the south-west, we have already been re-inspected for Humanities and Foundation and the results were encouraging as there was no unsatisfactory teaching in the classes visited. At the end of September and early October, we will again be visited to look at Leadership and Management issues and at the Visual and Performing Arts & Media curriculum area.

It is important that we do well in this visit as we are keen to continue teaching these subjects. Of particular importance is the continued application and development of the RARPA system being applied to all adult education providers which is a development of the old WEA learning outcomes system. Inspectors will also be keenly interested in the observation of teaching and learning which internally checks on the quality of our provision. In the south-west, we applied the RARPA system last November and tutors and learners should be familiar with the process but, of course, the system still needs fully embedding. Tutors should have received details of training events to be held soon and we would urge you to attend one of them.

Once through the re-inspection, hopefully successfully, we can then wholly concentrate on what we are all in this for, which is the provision of good quality education across the whole of the curriculum which the WEA currently offers.

Mick Atkinson

Curriculum Conference—2005

Sobol Tours Strike Again!



Pictured at the WEA Curriculum Conference at Kenilworth – George Sobol (driver and navigator), Kath Bainbridge and Lesley Linsley. Highlight of the two day visit was an evening expedition to the local pub, The King's Arms, where Sir Walter Scott wrote his novel, *Kenilworth*. Unfortunately, the pub was about to be demolished and History guru Mick Atkinson, was disgusted to find that Sir Walter's bed, Kenilworth's only cultural icon, had disappeared some years before (rumour had it as part of an insurance scam).

John Kirkaldy

Next Issue is due at the end of the autumn term. We have a new editor—Rachel Bastola who is the region's Communications Officer. Please continue to send in your contributions. Email rbastola@wea.org.uk or phone Rachel on 01392 474400.

Thanks to everyone for support in helping me get the newsletter up and running for academic year 2004/2005. I have thoroughly enjoyed producing it. Good luck to Rachel for the next and future editions!

Sally Ware