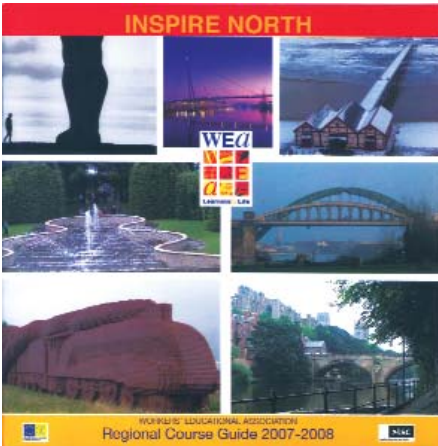


July to September 2007: Issue 15

Northern Inspiration



Lee Hall, writer of award-winning film *Billy Elliot*, launched WEA North East's colourful new course guide **Inspire North** at an event in Newcastle in August.

Lee's support for the launch reflects a shared interest with the WEA both in using education to widen horizons and in the internationally renowned Ashington group of pitmen painters, who are the subject of Lee's new play, 'The Pitmen Painters'.

The painters began as a WEA art class, and took the art world of the 1930s by storm. Within a few years of their first Art Appreciation class the miners' work was in

prestigious collections. They were friends with some of the most avant garde artists of the day and were celebrated throughout the British art world - but they still got up each morning to go to work in the pit.

The play will be the first at the newly rebuilt Live Theatre in Newcastle, and will run from 20 September to 27 October this year. It is based on William Feaver's book 'Pitmen Painters: The Ashington Group 1934 - 1984' and there will also be an exhibition of William Feaver's private collection of Ashington Group paintings from 13 September to 16 October at the theatre.



Further information

The Live Theatre: www.live.org.uk 0191 232 1232

For more on the Ashington Group and the opening of a £16m museum and gallery housing their collected works, see this 2006 *Guardian* article by Martin Wainwright: <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,1932735,00.html>

Adult learning & its effect on children's education

One of a series of WEA events on the future of adult learning and its public value

A Government Perspective
Ed Balls, Secretary of State
for Children, Schools and Families

An Adult Learning Perspective
Richard Bolsin
WEA General Secretary

A School Perspective
Gugsy Ahmed, Headteacher,
Parkinson Lane Community Primary School, Halifax

A Learner's Perspective
Tracey Martin
a WEA Tutor/Learner from Wakefield

Martin Wainwright, journalist and broadcaster
Colin Barnes, Regional Chair,
WEA Yorkshire & Humber Region

Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, Leeds, LS3 1AD
Friday 28 September 6.30 pm - 8.00 pm

Workers' Educational Association
Yorkshire & Humber Region

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, will be among the speakers at a WEA event discussing the effect adult learning can have on children's education and the value this has for society.

The Minister will be joined on the platform by Gugsy Ahmed, Headteacher of Parkinson Lane School in Halifax, where parents have benefitted from WEA family learning classes, and by Tracey Martin, who has been both a learner and tutor. Journalist and broadcaster Martin Wainwright and WEA General Secretary Richard Bolsin are the other speakers.

The evening, which is just one of a series of events organised by WEA Yorkshire and Humber Region around the public value of adult education, will be held at the Swarthmore Education Centre in Leeds on the evening of 28 September. It follows on from the success of a similar evening in April featuring David Blunkett, which focussed on the future of adult learning.

The event is free. If you would like to attend, please contact Jessica Darley in the Yorkshire and Humber regional office on 0113 245 3304 or by emailing jdarley@wea.org.uk to confirm your place.

Building on our achievements



**By Richard Bolsin,
WEA General Secretary**

My previous piece in WEA News a year ago referred to the WEA as, "more than a learning provider". As we look forward to a new academic year, I see that statement encapsulated in what lies ahead. I also see signs of the WEA stirring itself again to influence its own future direction and that of adult learning more widely.

At the end of October the WEA is running a national conference jointly with NIACE and supported by the Work Foundation and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership. Its subject is 'Public Value in Adult Learning: Who Benefits?'. If you haven't already booked your place it's too late now, so popular has the event proved to be. This is the first occasion for some years that the WEA has raised its profile quite so visibly on an issue of such national importance. What is the public value of adult learning? It clearly extends well beyond learning and skills. How do we (learners and organisations alike) measure the public value of our learning, in the benefits it offers to health and well-being, community regeneration and sustainability, and a society able to celebrate its diversity and live peaceably together? These are all important, topical questions to which speakers and case studies (many of them from the WEA) will attempt to provide answers. They also reach to the heart of the current dilemmas about funding.

On the day after that event, the WEA holds its own biennial conference. This year there will be competitions for the election of both the President and one Deputy President (the first such while I've been General Secretary). There's an important motion on membership of the WEA which follows a year of hard work and research led by a member group. And a glance at other motions suggests there will be thought provoking debate on several issues of real importance to students, members, branches and the Association as a whole, reflecting concern ranging over Government and WEA policy regarding age-related concessions and the effect of regulation on branches and tutors. I'm very pleased that issues as important as these will be debated at Conference this year.

It's not too late to book your place for the WEA 2007 Conference in Coventry, and further details

on how to enrol can be found on page six of this newsletter.

There will also be an opportunity at Conference to find out more about WEA Enterprises Ltd, the company established this year to develop income streams for the Association through commercial activity. We welcome Bob Tarbuck as our Director of Commercial Services, and pages four and five in this edition of WEA News outline his plans for WEA Enterprises.

Last year the WEA met Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education. As a result of that meeting and our subsequent, active work in Learning and Skills Council (LSC) planning groups the WEA, as one of the Specialist Designated Institutions (SDIs), was recognised in a paragraph in 'Raising our Game', a publication setting out the Government's funding priorities for this year. That led to a welcome increase in our funding of 2.1% for 2007/8. I have recently reminded Bill Rammell ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review of the need for similar flexibility next year, too. We'll see what comes of that, but there's no doubt that the profile of the WEA and its fellow SDI organisations is higher now than it has been with Ministers for some time. It was also nice to hear Prime Minister Gordon Brown refer to his first job - as a trade union tutor for the WEA - in his speech to the TUC on 10 September.

But there is no room for complacency. We have made very successful strides in recent years to improve our financial position and the quality of the education we provide. We have moved from being weak to satisfactory on both fronts, and still have a long way to go to achieve the excellence which our learners deserve, to which as an Association we aspire and which is so firmly embedded in our historic mission. Trustees will be considering over the next four months how best the WEA can reach those goals. They are likely to involve tough decisions which will impact across the Association as a whole. There will be more about that in future editions.

So my message at the start of a new academic year is to take heart from the increasing influence and voice the WEA is beginning to exercise and be brave and bold about the decisions needed to turn the improvements of the last three years into real excellence on all fronts - level 3s to level 2s, level 2s to level 1s, success rates rivalling the best and financial reserves to match. But most of all I wish everyone associated with the WEA a very successful and enjoyable year ahead.

WEA Leeds Branch organised a five day study tour of historic houses and gardens in North Yorkshire in July, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

The group stayed at Cober Hill near Scarborough and visited a different country house and garden each day. Lectures each evening highlighted different architectural styles and the key features of each property. Branch Secretary Enid Wilson points out the benefits of the trip: "Everyone enjoyed the tour and made friends. New students were made aware of the different WEA activities and the Branch gained some valuable volunteers." She adds, "I think the trip showed in the best possible way the WEA commitment to friendship and learning."



The tour included trips to grand country houses Duncombe Park (pictured) and Burton Agnes; more intimate Georgian dwellings Scampston and Sledmire, and the Georgian Old Town of Bridlington.

London Trade Union events

London Region was visited by Lameck Kashiwa and Florence Lishika from the Alliance of Zambian Informal Economy Associations in July. The Alliance works closely with WEA Zambia, and both speakers have a long history of activity in the trade union movement, particularly in the mining industry and informal economy of Zambia. The visit was one of a number of UK events the duo spoke at about their experiences of organising informal economy workers.

The region also hosted a summer school on 'Organising in a Global Economy' on 13 and 14 September. The event was run in partnership with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and was aimed at unions representing rail workers. Speakers included John McDonnell MP, a leading spokesman in Parliament representing trade unions;

Sangam Tripathy, active for many years with the rail-unions in India; Kim Moody of the Centre for Research in Employment Studies, plus several others from the ITF, RMT and ASLEF.

Chris Ford, a Trade Union studies tutor in London, has written a new introduction to *Borot'bism* (pictured) by Ivan Maistrenko, which concerns the Borot'bisty party during the 1917-1920 Revolution in Ukraine. Maistrenko was the sole survivor of the party, which was decimated by Stalinist terror in Ukraine, and the book is a unique account which has been out of print for over fifty years. It is published by ibidem.



Office move for Eastern

WEA Eastern Region will be moving offices on 1 October. The region will be leaving Botolph House, an elegant Georgian Grade II Listed (and listing!) building which has been occupied by the WEA since May 1966, and shall be taking up residence on most of the top floor of Cintra House (pictured), a brand new open-plan office which WEA will share with the Open University.



The new address from 1 October will be:

WEA Eastern Region
Cintra House
12 Hills Road
CAMBRIDGE
CB2 1JP

The main telephone number (01223 350978) is expected to remain the same, although individual extensions will change.

Training online

From 1 October 2007 WEA staff and volunteers will be able to access a WEA Development and Training Virtual Learning Environment, which has been informally named WEAVLE.

Once there, they will be able to access a variety of courses, materials, resources and training documents.

Keep an eye out for further details on how to access the site.

WEA Enterprises goes live

The WEA is delighted to announce that a new commercial company, WEA Enterprises Ltd., has been formed in order to generate additional income for the Association. The company will undertake business activities in line with the ethos of the WEA, and profits will be gift-aided, tax free, to the WEA. This is made possible by WEA's Incorporation, approved at Conference 2005. The company will be the 'trading arm' of the WEA described in the proposals approved at that time.

The company's website is at www.weaenterprises.co.uk

WEA Enterprises will take ideas and seek to turn them into viable profit-making businesses. The activities undertaken will produce both direct (financial) benefits to the WEA and indirect (social) benefits to communities.

Who are WEA Enterprises?

The company is wholly owned by the WEA. The person with overall responsibility for the day to day operations of the company is Bob Tarbuck (pictured), who has recently joined the WEA to lead this initiative. Bob's 'CV in a minute' is on the company's website, along with those of the other Board members.

Bob says, "The WEA is unique among the 190,000+ UK charities. So many people have been helped by the WEA in its history and many more continue to benefit from WEA courses that help them to reach their potential. By taking ideas and turning them into business opportunities, we can directly support the WEA in its vital mission. To have an enterprise arm to serve all Regions gives us a real chance to help fund the future of the WEA."

The other members of the company Board are WEA Trustee Anne King as Chair, General Secretary Richard Bolsin, President David Lanch and South West Regional Director Steve Martin.



Where will the ideas come from?

From all of the people who make up the WEA - staff, tutors, voluntary members and trustees. Also, from our partners - those we work with now and those we hope to work with in the future. On the website is an easy mechanism for anyone to suggest their ideas, or you can just phone or text Bob on 07747 766459 or email him at ideas@weaenterprises.co.uk

What kind of ideas is the company looking for?

Anything you think may make a viable business. Ideas that the company is already looking at include energy-saving electrical devices; importing tea from the Himalayas; ways to realise an income by recycling office waste; individual water filters for making dirty water drinkable; propagating and selling orchids; specialist business training; running high-value seminars; high-tech video-conferencing; producing innovative kayaks that will suit both disabled and non-disabled people, and investing in sustainable housing units.

The most important support needed is ideas - no matter how large or small. The WEA Enterprises website explains how it all works (WISE Ideas Scheme). Bob will also be at WEA Conference from the Friday afternoon onwards and will be pleased to discuss progress to date and listen to any ideas or suggestions.

As Bob says, "This new company is an opportunity for us to find new and original ways to support the mission of the WEA. Our success will be the result of a team effort ... the WEA team"

The Enterprise Register

WEA Enterprises is seeking to generate an income for the WEA by offering consultancy expertise. The staff, tutors, voluntary members and trustees represent a highly skilled group, and there are potential consultancy opportunities working through the new trading arm.

If you think you may have the expertise and suitable availability and wish to be considered for relevant commercial opportunities, please pass your details to Bob, who will seek to match your skills with opportunities. Again, the website has details of this. In his previous role with a university, Bob helped grow this type of activity to a business with a turnover exceeding £1 million per annum with significant sums being gift-aided to the university. He says, "Many of us have skills and expertise that are in demand. By offering a professional service, we can support this type of activity for all those interested"

How is this different from volunteering or registering to be a WEA tutor?

This is about skills you have that you think there is a commercial demand for; these can be offered as part of a professional business package, allowing commercial market rates to be earned. Some skills may be those you utilise for the WEA, but you can also consider selling other skills. You may be an experienced expert witness, or an expert educational psychologist, or have evaluation experience, or be a horticulturalist, or have manufacturing experience, or have been an importer/exporter, or be a herbalist ... let Bob know!

Once a good picture of the skills available in the WEA has been formed, WEA Enterprises will seek opportunities for you. You may also have some leads already. The company intends both to respond to demand and also to make markets aware of what WEA tutors, volunteers and staff can offer.



WEA Enterprises is establishing a WEA presence on eBay. Anyone who sells anything on eBay will soon have the option to donate some or all of the sale-price to the WEA. As this is a donation, the WEA also receives an extra bit of money: the gift-aid element. This should be in place during September 2007.

The company website will have details shortly: www.weaenterprises.co.uk



Did you know that, at no cost, anyone will soon be able to donate to the WEA while making their amazon.co.uk purchases in the usual way? By following a special link to Amazon from the WEA Enterprises site (www.weaenterprises.co.uk) whenever you make a purchase, you will still get the same amazon.co.uk prices, discounts and specials while a percentage of the purchase price will go to the WEA. Anyone who shops with amazon.co.uk will be able to ensure that the WEA benefits, at no cost to themselves. The website link is expected to be in place during September 2007.

Recycling while fund-raising

WEA Enterprises is setting up a WEA recycling project for all regions that also generates an income for the WEA. We can now recycle many of our laser and inkjet printer cartridges, and mobile phones. Regions will soon be receiving reply-paid envelopes (for ink cartridges and mobiles), collection-point boxes, dispenser boxes (handy for reception desks, shop counters etc) and large sacks if needed.

For eligible used items, we generate an income for the WEA and promote recycling and hence reduce waste. We all win.

The reply-paid envelopes are being switched from plastic to paper - even greener. We are hoping to get WEA logos on these new envelopes. If you get a plastic envelope do use it - the paper ones are due in a few weeks.

Bob Tarbuck describes the new scheme as, "A great way we can lead by example, while giving our supporters another way to support our mission".

See the WEA Enterprises website for details shortly: www.weaenterprises.co.uk



Students pictured at the end of their Level 1 Understanding Community Interpreting course, run by the WEA in partnership with the South Humber Race Equality Council. The learners work as bilingual volunteers with Somali, Polish, Bengali, Portuguese and Lithuanian asylum seekers and migrant workers in the Scunthorpe area. The course prepared them to work with community organisations which interface with public services and gave a comprehensive grounding in issues relating to accessing public services for their clients.

Natasha Eve (left) taught the course and recently left the WEA in August when the National Community Interpreting Project came to an end, while tutor organiser Karen Delucchi and Audrey Stringwell of the Clare House Centre helped organise the course.

WEA Conference

Places are still available for the WEA's biennial conference on Saturday 27 October, although the joint conference with NIACE on Public Value in Adult Education on the previous day is now full.

Representatives of WEA branches and regions who attend Conference will be able to vote in elections for the WEA's President (between incumbent David Lanch and Colin Barnes of Yorkshire and Humber Region) and for one of the two Deputy President positions (between Lynne Smith of Southern Region and Cyril Snell of Yorkshire and Humber Region).

There will also be votes on whether to pass 18 motions on issues including the future of WEA membership; campaigning for adult education funding; revitalising volunteering in the WEA; environmental sustainability; fee concessions for learners over 60; the Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL) scheme; bureaucracy within the WEA, and WEA promotion/profile.

Branches should have received three mailings about Conference, including booking forms and the preliminary agenda. Anyone who has not received these or needs extra copies should contact Conference Secretary Angela Clark (aclark@wea.org.uk or 020 7426 3450).

Lottery awards

Belated congratulations to the **Tandrusti project** in the West Midlands, which was awarded nearly £350,000 over five years from the BIG Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme in May. For further information on the project, including a link to a press release with details of the funding award, visit:

<http://www.westmidlands.wea.org.uk/tandrusti>

Congratulations also to North East region, who will be taking on a capacity building role within a VCS consortium to deliver an innovative curriculum for support mental health service users and carers. The **Moving On Up** project has been awarded £85,000 from the BIG Lottery Fund's Well Being programme. For more information contact Regional Projects Manager Yvonne Ritchie (yritchie@wea.org.uk or 0191 212 6103).

Dyslexia and older people

The Older and Bolder team at the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is seeking to raise awareness of the impact of dyslexia on older people's lives now and in the past - including other people's attitudes to their difficulties.

NIACE give the example of Tom, who was labelled as stupid and illiterate at school. Only once he was fifty, and with encouragement from his daughter, did Tom attempt to do anything about his difficulties with letters and words. Since being diagnosed with dyslexia, Tom's life has changed as with the right support he can now read and write. He now travels on trains by himself as he can read the signs and timetables, has written poetry about his experiences and campaigns on behalf of others with dyslexia.

Anyone who wishes to share their experiences with the Older and Bolder team, whether or not they wish to remain anonymous, can fill in an online survey at:

www.niace.org.uk/survey/TakeSurvey.asp?SurveyID=71J55313252KG or write to: **Lois Gladdish, Older and Bolder, NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE.**

Bright future for ski slope thanks to WEA

Good luck to WEA JobRotation East Ayrshire, which has won a place in the finals of the National Training Awards 2007, after its training for staff at a dry sky slope run as a social enterprise transformed the prospects of the business.

Before the training, the Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex (NSASC) had only one trained dry slope ski instructor and was not able to meet the demand for snowboard instruction, particularly from children.

The training provided covered mentoring, marketing, first aid, sign language and instructor training. NSASC now has five qualified ski instructors, four snowboard instructors, five adaptive ski instructors for disabled people and six mountain board instructors. The number of customers has increased from 566 to 846, and activities for special needs schools have been introduced. Project worker Lorraine Belsey adds that, "There is now much more community and local youth involvement, and schools locally and from other parts of Ayrshire benefit from the ski slope."

Can you solve the Riddle?

Do you have a connection with Riddle's Court?

We're producing an exciting new publication on **'The Life & Times of Riddle's Court'**. We'd love to hear from people of ALL walks of life with any connection to Riddle's Court to become part of our Publication.

Come to our **OPEN DAY**
Saturday 16 June 2007, 10am - 3pm
Riddle's Court, 322 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh.

For more information:
Tel. Alicia Bruce on 0131 225 2580 or Email. a.bruce@weascotland.org.uk

The National Lottery logo and WEA SCOTLAND logo are also present.

A WEA-led project is underway to research, record and bring to life the story of Riddle's Court - one of Edinburgh's most notable sixteenth century buildings and home to the headquarters of WEA Scotland.

The Life and Times of Riddle's Court project has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and City of Edinburgh Council. A special open day was held in June to reunite people from all walks of life with a connection with the Royal Mile landmark, and a team of 30

volunteers and tutors is working to create a publication interpreting 400 years in the life of the building.

Riddle's Court has a long association with liberal education, having been the home of philosopher David Hume, the venue of the first University Summer School in Europe (organised by Sir Patrick Geddes in 1887) and the home of the Edinburgh Mechanics subscription library from 1825 (prior to the opening of Edinburgh's first public library). More recently it hosted the offices of the Edinburgh Corporation Department of Education from 1946 until the 1960s, as well as being the base for both WEA Scotland and Edinburgh Council Adult Education from the 1970s to the present day. It has also served as an Edinburgh Fringe venue, with performers including the cast of Monty Python.

Vivendo Discimus is etched into the stonework at Riddle's Court, as shown in this photo by the Riddle's Court Photography Group. It translates to "By living we learn", a favourite motto of Sir Patrick Geddes. It can also be translated as "By leaves we live" which may be connected to a Geddes' quote, from the nineteenth century: "This is a green world, with animals comparatively few and small, and all dependent on the leaves. By leaves we live." More on Geddes can be found at: www.ballaterscotland.com/geddes/



From Beyond to Therefore was an exhibition held at the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle during August. All the artwork was produced by students attending WEA courses at The Studio, part of St. Nicholas' Hospital, Gosforth, which provides fully equipped art facilities for mental health service users from across Northumberland and Tyne & Wear.



Arrivals, departures and exchanges

Eastern Region

Chris Pugh will be retiring at the end of September; we wish her well for the future. Her Bedfordshire Organiser post will be taken over by **Jenny Green** on 1 October, and **Gorete Downey** will also take over as Skills for Life Co-ordinator on that day.



See page three for details on the region's imminent office move, after 41 years at **Botolph House** (pictured)

East Midlands Region

The region welcomes **Susan Hatch**, who has been appointed as Course Organiser for Mid-Lincolnshire.

Good luck to **Samantha Ruth**, who has left the WEA. Samantha worked in the Queen's Hall office, Derby.

West Midlands Region

Sheila Farrell has been appointed as part-time Course Organiser for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. She says, "I have worked as a tutor for the last few years but I have not entirely hung up my teaching shoes and still intend to have fun with Art for the Terrified along with my other duties."

Yorkshire and Humber Region

Sandra Gill has retired from her post as WEA Organiser for Calderdale & Kirklees and **Amanda Morgan** has left the Skills for Life team, having found a full time job. Both colleagues worked closely with learners, supporting and encouraging them to take up and make the most of educational opportunities. They are popular and respected by other staff and by partner organisations, and will be much missed.

The Region welcomes **Jessica Darley** to the General Admin Team. Jessica joined at the start of August to replace Claire Illingworth (see below).

Corporate Services

Finance Director **Linda Acquaye** will be leaving the WEA on 30 September, while Senior

Joan Oldman

Members will be very sad to learn of the death of Joan Oldman. Joan was a longstanding member of the WEA, who was engaged in every aspect of the organisation; an active member and tutor as well as a conscientious and committed leader at local, Scottish and national level.

A member in the North of Scotland District and a chairperson who was committed to a learner focus in everything the District did, she played a part in the development of women's education in the North of Scotland, which still influences adult educator training today. Latterly, she contributed her skills and knowledge as a tutor in counselling.

She represented the North of Scotland District in the negotiations and processes relating to the merger of the three Scottish Districts to create the WEA Scottish Association. Once the decision on the merger was taken, Joan, a true democrat, served on the Interim Executive Committee to make the transition work. She was also a member of the NEC at the time of the creation of the unified WEA charity for Scotland and England.

Connie Hadden, a current member of the Scottish Committee, remembers Joan being particularly helpful and supportive when she first took up a place on the District Committee having come into the WEA as a student on a women's studies course.

Our centenary event in Edinburgh in 2003 would have been the last time Joan met her friends and colleagues from the NEC, and I know from the warm greeting she received then that it is not just the Scottish members who will be saddened by news of Joan's death.

Joyce Cannon, Scottish Secretary

Management Accountant **Tunde Adebayo** left in August to join Essex County Council as a Finance Manager. In an email to all staff, General Secretary Richard Bolsin paid tribute to the contributions Linda and Tunde have made over the last four years to the financial health of the WEA. He wrote, "Having both joined at a time of financial crisis, they leave with outstanding borrowings redeemed and WEA's financial health restored officially to satisfactory again. They have also both successfully led the process of re-establishing policy, procedures and financial discipline within the WEA, and the task for all of us is to continue to build on the firm foundations Linda and Tunde have laid."

Claire Illingworth was appointed to the WEA's HR team from 1 August as HR Officer for the Regions and WEA Scotland. Claire, who previously worked in a Region Admin role for Yorkshire and Humber Region, will remain based in the Leeds Regional Office.

Congratulations to **Venera Krsteva**, Finance Assistant, on the recent arrival of a bouncing baby boy.

About WEA News

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

Nigel Todd, Alicia Bruce, Bob Tarbuck, Chris Ford, Enid Wilson, David Pittaway and Ann Hayes.

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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c/o WEA, 3rd Floor,
70 Clifton Street,
London EC2A 4HB

or emailed to news@wea.org.uk

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the WEA.

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