

January to March 2009: Issue 20

Campaigning for adult learning

More than 400 supporters of the Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning (CALL), including many from the WEA, went to Westminster to lobby Parliament on the importance of adult education on 25 February.

Supporters questioned their local MPs about the issues affecting adult learning and also took part in a question and answer session with John Denham, Secretary of State for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills.

They attended the Lobby to protest at the loss of 1.4 million adult education places in the UK over recent years, which is essentially due to a governmental shift of priorities towards vocational and workplace learning.

John Denham opened by emphasising the common ground between CALL and the government's position, and stated that the informal adult learning white paper would be published by April. He listed what the government had achieved for adult education including "a 53% increase in further education funding and 2.5 million people helped with their basic skills." However, Denham did not win over everyone in the audience - *The Guardian* newspaper described the question and answer session as a 'bumpy ride' for the Secretary of State.

Former Education Secretary David Blunkett MP read out the foreword to *The Learning Age* white paper from 1997, when he was Education Secretary: "As well as securing our academic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship". Conservative Shadow Skills Secretary David Willetts MP and Liberal Democrat Shadow Skills Secretary Stephen Williams MP also attended and the audience was able to question them about their parties' policies on adult education.

Members, students and staff from all over the country made up the substantial WEA contingent of lobbyists. Richard Bolsin, WEA General Secretary, was pleased with the turn out. "It was really encouraging to see so many people from such diverse organisations turning up to support the campaign for lifelong learning," he said.

"This is the first time we have been involved in a campaign on this scale for some time, and we have touched a nerve



Photograph: Jane Atkins, UCU

Some of the lobbyists who assembled at the House of Commons to get their point across about adult learning

that people feel strongly all over the country. We are reinforcing the WEA's position as a leading provider and campaigner for adult learning," added Bolsin.

Throughout the afternoon a series of speakers from around the sector made the case for adult education with evidence of how it has changed people's lives in their locations and organisations. Gordon Marsden MP, who proposed the House of Commons Early Day Motion (EDM) in favour of CALL - which 166 MPs have so far signed - also spoke eloquently.

The WEA is one of the founders of the CALL campaign, along with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), the National Union of Students (NUS), the University and College Union (UCU) and UNISON.

- Read Peter Kingston's *Guardian* article on the lobby, entitled 'Hasta la vista, Denham', at: <http://tinyurl.com/guardiancall>
- The CALL page on the WEA website includes links to the main CALL website and to the Parliament page where you can see which MPs have signed the EDM so far. It can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/weacall>

“An Excellent Assessment”

Mel Lenehan on WEA East Midlands’ experience of assessment for matrix. The matrix standard is the national quality standard for any organisation that delivers information, advice and guidance on learning and work

It was with some trepidation that the East Midlands Region welcomed a matrix assessor in December 2008.

In 2007, we undertook an assessment in Leicestershire, the idea being that we would then roll out the processes and framework across the rest of the region over the following year. However, it turned out to be a fairly negative experience and we did not fully gain the accreditation in Leicestershire until December 2007.

This time around was very different. During the three days of the assessment, our assessor spoke to regional staff, volunteers, tutors, learners and partners and visited a number of centres across the region.

The feedback we received was very positive and we were asked to consider applying for the **matrix** excellence award. The WEA’s ethos and culture of placing the learner at the centre of our work was assessed as being ‘outstanding practice’. The level of information available for learners and potential learners were seen as ‘admirable’, with staff being “truly committed to ensuring the learner finds the right course for them”. The influence that learners have within the organisation was seen as a particular strength - allowing the relationship between learners and staff to be clear and meaningful.

The extremely positive feedback from partners was particularly good to hear. The WEA is recognised as

a supportive partner who is responsive to the needs of individuals and



communities. Partners described the benefits of clear expectations identified in partnership agreements and regular formal and informal review meetings. One partner said: “The relationship with the WEA is a model for a good partnership”.

The assessment report states that: “The culture of learning that is inherent in all the WEA is also reflected in the approach of managing and developing staff.” Support in terms of training and the development of guidance packs for all staff was recognised as an important and integral part of developing the information and advice service that we offer our learners. Our assessor commented that WEA staff have a vocation, not just a job.

In terms of areas for development, our assessor wanted to know why more people don’t know about the WEA and why we don’t celebrate who we are and what we do more. Suggestions of how we might develop this further included adding case studies and information on the levels of support learners receive on our publicity and to promote more of what we do outside of the centres and places that we currently work. They were keen for us to encourage learners to make more suggestions for improvements and to also demonstrate to learners that changes do take place because of their suggestions.

At the end of the feedback to us, our assessor called it “an excellent assessment.” We couldn’t agree more.

Mel Lenehan is Regional Education Manager of the WEA East Midlands region.

The WEA is aiming for all its English Regions, and the Association nationally, to be **matrix accredited by Spring 2010. Several regions have already become accredited.**

New Trustees Appointed

The WEA is delighted to confirm the appointments of two new trustees, Foizul Islam and Rosemary Mayes. Foizal and Rosemary have replaced Baroness Shephard and Stephan Twigg, who last year became patrons of the WEA, as two of the four external trustees - who sit on the trustee board along with eight trustees from within the WEA.

Foizul has a recent sociology degree from London Metropolitan University. He has subsequently gained wide experience in the education sector including community youth services, primary schools and more recently adult education. Foizul has taken part in government consultations on policy reforms, developed and led a range of projects and played an active role in helping people have access to education, training and employment opportunities. He is currently a senior employment advisor managing a team of advisors for the Cranstoun Drug Services Skills for Life service.

After graduating from The Open University, Rosemary has spent the whole of her professional career in the field of education – with a major emphasis on adult education. She has gained wide management and strategic planning experience through her role as Regional Director of The Open University in London.

WEA 'Pitmen Painters' meet Lee Hall

A group of students from former mining communities in South Yorkshire had the trip of a lifetime in February as they saw an acclaimed play about a WEA course and even got the chance to meet the playwright.

The students, who live in Thurnscoe and Goldthorpe, all attend a WEA art course and went to London to watch *The Pitmen Painters* at the National Theatre and meet Lee Hall.

The Pitmen Painters is based on the true story of a group of miners in the 1930's who attended a WEA arts appreciation course in Ashington, Northumberland. After they developed a passion and skill for painting their work became sought after by prestigious collectors and was exhibited in London and Beijing.

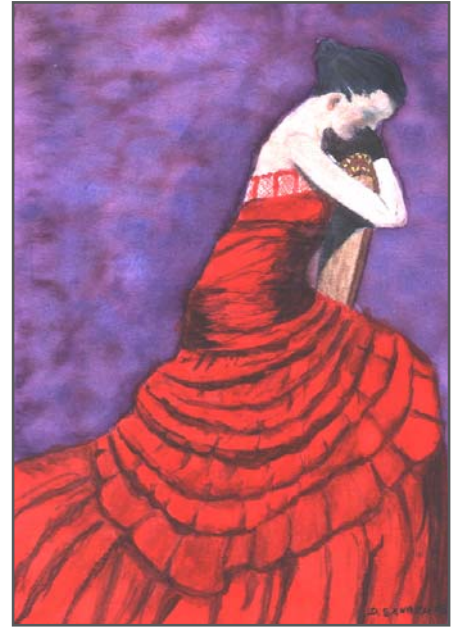
Lee Hall chatted with the students at the theatre's exhibition of paintings by the original Pitmen Painters. Several of the students brought in photos of their own artwork and Lee was happy to look at them and pleased to see how talented the students are.

Lee, who is also known for his play *Billy Elliot*, said: "The WEA is vital and unique in providing a place where people can extend themselves as well as extending the culture at the same time. We are all poorer for a culture where knowledge, education and creativity are reserved for only those that can afford it." Lee is a long-time supporter of the WEA and added: "The right to an education, to access to the arts, to cultivating oneself beyond the immediate requirements for survival or the most basic diversions from this hard work, were won as a result of enormous struggle."

Before the play the students were taken on a backstage tour of the National Theatre and got to stand on the Pitmen Painters stage – where the actors would be performing later that evening. Their lives have been influenced by the mining industry and they found they had a strong emotional connection to the play, which they greatly enjoyed. The group also toured the nearby Tate Modern Gallery, where they saw some of the most influential paintings of our time. It was a first trip to London for one student, former miner Mervyn Shepherd, who said that going down the tube escalators "made me dizzy and reminded me of going down the pits"

After their trip the students described the experience as "out of this world" with the high point meeting Lee Hall. Learner Hazel Follows described Lee as "very friendly and down-to-earth." "I felt that he really listened to us, and took a real interest in what we had to say," she added. Lee also praised the group saying that they were "delightful," and that he was very touched and proud to have been part of the event.

Six WEA membership competition winners also won tickets to the play. First prize winner Liz Milway thanked the WEA for a "wonderful experience." She found the play both "moving and amusing." and said that the icing on the cake was meeting the inspiring art students.



(left to right) Mervyn Shepherd, Doreen Seward, Lee Hall, Hazel Follows, Maureen Gill, Ruth Waterworth (tutor) and Ann Singleton

Above: paintings by students Doreen Seward (top), Hazel Follows (middle) and Maureen Gill (bottom)

Learning to live together



A two-year WEA project to involve one thousand parents and children in learning together is nearing its halfway stage. The *Family Learning for Social Cohesion* project won £500,000 funding from the Big Lottery Fund in 2007, following six months of research with parents as to their needs, and the development of 23 agreements for joint working with schools and other partners. Over 250 parents participated in focus groups or completed questionnaires as part of the planning for the project bid.

The project engages families, including men and grandparents, from disadvantaged communities in learning together to help parents become more able to support their children in learning, and more able to develop their own skills. Family learning can help parents interact positively with their children, and help them find relevant information and advice when they need it.



The Slough activities have included this visit to Dorney Lake, which will host rowing events at the 2012 Olympics



A mum with her two teenagers on a trip to the RSPB Dearne Valley Wetland Centre near Barnsley

Another aim is to improve social cohesion by giving families increased awareness of, and contact with, the cultures of other communities. This includes links between black and minority ethnic families and white families, and between different project areas. In some areas project workers have found that people from another estate (or even another part of the same estate) may be seen as 'other', so learning together for children and adults alike can help to break down these barriers.

Provision began in May 2008 in five areas: Scarborough, Barnsley, Slough, Great Yarmouth, and Plymouth. The lottery funding allows the WEA to employ development workers in each location and try out innovative and fun family learning activities for hard to reach families, which is difficult to do through mainstream funding.

Evaluating the impact of family learning, and the effectiveness of different ways of measuring this, is a key part of the project. A National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) family learning officer will be working with the WEA on evaluating the outcomes of the project, and the WEA will be producing an electronic pack of teaching and learning resources. The project links to wider agendas and has representatives from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and NIACE on its steering group. This will help the outcomes of *Family Learning for Social Cohesion* benefit other similar work – within the WEA and elsewhere – once the project itself has finished.

Three additional areas will join the project in May for its second year: Basildon; St Anns and Dales wards (Nottingham), and Windmill Hill City Farm and Redcliffe area (Bristol).

A full version of this article including a summary of some activities learners have participated in at each project location can be found online at:

www.wea.org.uk/weanews/familylearning.htm

“I’ve had 6 days of good behaviour from my son”

Comment from a parent with a child who has ADHD, after attending a Saturday family learning activity.

“My children will remember this day for the rest of their lives”

A single dad, following the paint splatting activity in Dalby Forest – Scarborough area

“It’s great to see everyone down here communicating, working and eating together.”

Manager, Coppice Court (St John’s Housing Trust) – Great Yarmouth area

“This is the first day out I’ve had with my boys in one and a half years since my marriage broke up and I’ve really enjoyed it”

Comment from a learner on the trip to RSPB Dearne Valley Wetland Centre – Barnsley area

“I want to try and get into a rowing team and possibly the 2012 Olympics!”

One of the children who took part in the rowing taster day on Dorney Lake near Slough

Funding explained

A national training day was held in February to help WEA management and staff members learn how best to navigate the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) new funding model, which kicked off in the Autumn term this year. The great majority of WEA courses in England are funded, either partly or fully, by the LSC.

The event was held in Birmingham and attended by fifty members of staff. All WEA Regional Directors took part, as did managers from both Regions and Association Services involved in our main management information system (otherwise known as WEAMIS). Finance Managers also attended.

The importance of all key staff in Association Services and Regions in understanding the new methodology cannot be overstated. It is based on a complex set of parameters, including the learning outcomes of a course, the number of guided learning hours and the demographic details of students on each course. These parameters are weighted according to the government's own targets including

those around skills and training and disadvantaged learners, and are combined with LSC attendance and eligibility rules.

The training was conducted by specialist consultant Beej Kaczmarczyk, who has over 20 years' experience of 'de-mystifying' funding changes. The training programme was compiled by Sally Burke, who is responsible for briefing both Association and Regional staff in key LSC funding rules and for managing the supply of detailed data to secure the £19 million in our annual contract with the LSC.

Participants are working on the best ways of cascading the training to others across the WEA.

Regional learning managers and WEAMIS staff will also be working hard to ensure that the organisation of courses, and the related activities of data collection and processing, are performed in accordance with the new rules. On the surface, WEA learners should not notice many changes from the usual procedure of class enrolment.

Membership reaches 20,000

The WEA's new membership scheme is continuing to recruit members by the thousand - with over 20,000 people having joined since its launch in September 2008. This is a tremendous response which we feel shows how important the WEA is to many people.

The scheme aims to increase and improve communications with those who support our charitable aims and work. A members' only area on the WEA website, updated information from around the WEA and a chance to win prizes in our members' only competitions are amongst the early benefits for members.

To join the scheme you can apply fill in a membership form (available from regions), tick the box on the enrolment form when starting on a course or apply online at www.wea.org.uk/membership.

Europe: opportunities for staff

Tutors and other staff involved in the design or delivery of education may be interested in applying for one of the study visit and training opportunities offered by the European Commission through their UK national agency ECOTEC.

They offer learning professionals the opportunity to spend a week in another European country finding out about their education systems and practices, exchanging expertise and networking.

Usually the programme is organised for you, and there is European funding available to help with costs. WEA's Development and Diversity Manager Liz Cumberbatch says: "I would encourage all managers and individuals to identify these as staff

development opportunities - and they could help inform our organisational development too. If staff attend such visits or training courses during work time (after discussion and agreement with their line manager and Director) we would expect feedback and dissemination of the outcomes of the visits to be arranged within the region and if appropriate at national level."

The next deadline for applications is for the Transversal Study Visits - deadline 9 April 2009.

To find out more visit www.transversal.org.uk, email studyvisits@ecotec.com or call ECOTEC on 0845 199 3939 for informal advice on the various programmes offered - which include some aimed at volunteers.

New WEA Websites

The WEA North West and South West Regions have refurbished their regional websites and now boast a more modern look.

The North West site provides information on the three educational strands of the WEA and the different curriculum areas which make up the WEA's course provision. It shows learners how to get involved and how potential tutors can apply. The website also offers a login area for staff, tutors and students. The site can be found at: www.nw.wea.org.uk

The South West site contains information on the regional structure and the location of branches, as well as details of the WEA's work in local areas within the region and explanations of Skills for Life and workplace learning. It is also the first time that the region's annual programme of Residential Schools has been available online. To find out more visit www.wea-sw.org.uk.

Is branch democratic activism dying?



Richard Crisp, a voluntary member of the South West region, urges WEA branches to attend conference

In the last issue WEA General Secretary Richard Bolsin asked the question 'How

would our founders invent the WEA if doing so today?' If they were founding the WEA today, there would be no past inspection reports and reshaping of the WEA would not be on the agenda. How is the WEA of today coping with a dramatically changing society?

The good news is, our current Mission, Aims and Values are still perfectly in tune with those of our founders over one hundred years ago and the needs of our core customers remain the same. Of course compared with the original tutorial system, the style of courses has changed as has their academic rigour. But what is different is almost everything else - in particular, branches. A hundred years ago, the number of branches was increasing rapidly whilst more recently the numbers have been in steady decline for years – 450 at the last count, a 25% drop since this statistic was quoted in the 2004/5 annual report. Clearly if this trend continues, and I gather it is, the question must arise as to whether branches can remain as the natural domain of collective member volunteer activity in the future.

But what of the majority of WEA learners of today and of the future, who do not have or will not have access to branches? Whilst branches originally reflected the centres of WEA activity, that is not necessarily the case today. A majority of our provision falls outside the 'cultural studies' strand within which most branch courses are currently delivered. So how can the financial benefits and efficiencies that branches have brought to the Association in the past be maintained?

A first step in this quest for efficiency (but not in financial terms - yet) was the Internal Audit Report by Mazars entitled WEA Branch Review completed in 2008. This was in effect a pilot run of what will no doubt become an ongoing process of audit and review and as such involved interviews with just seven branches. Unsurprisingly, the results reinforce the message of branches in decline.

So what is the plan? The trustees still have faith in

branches according to the reshaping headlines, so we continue trying whilst enabling alternative strategies in the background. But from what I hear from the regions, projects to revitalise branches have not yet borne much success. The South West region has with lottery money initiated a small project which may or may not recruit a volunteer or two in the targeted areas, but there is no great expectation of replacing lost branches. Why? Well, I think we all understand the reasons.

So what might the WEA branch situation look like in 25 years time? Gone will be the generation of members that avoid computers and proclaim the virtues of reading text from paper rather than from a screen. Gone too will be the awkwardness with tele- and video-conferencing, which I think will negate the current preference for physical classroom-based interaction. The good news is that distance will no longer constrain the assemblage of tutor and learners even for a 'live' interactive course. Thus I expect a diversification of subject matter available to a world-wide catchment area of learners. Interactive tutored courses will occur via the internet and so forth. Luddites may hold sway now, but the mobile-phone and video-games generation of today will by then embrace internet-based capabilities as the norm. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) February newssheet *Chips with Everything* points the way. I believe branches as we know them today, with their committee-meeting focussed working style, may simply become unnecessary. Will we lose something? Only if you confuse the reason for holding a committee meeting with the universal human need for social gatherings.

If the WEA were being invented today, it would be done with a much more focussed business plan. The 21st century Mansbridge and Tawney would need to be less the academic thinker and social reformer and more of the entrepreneur with managerial skills for the Association to succeed. A commercial outlook, without losing focus on our mission, would rely on a business model that relied on profits from one division to pay to subsidise educational provision for the traditional WEA learner.

Is branch democratic activism dying? Go on, prove me wrong – let's have at least 50% of all branches represented at Conference, with challenging motions for debate!

WEA Conference 2009

Conference 2009 will be held on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd October at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow (pictured). Conference is held every two years, and gives members representing WEA branches and regions their chance to vote on key national decisions and elect the WEA's national Officers. All WEA branches and regions have the opportunity to propose and vote on motions for potential implementation.

The Friday of the 2009 Conference will be held jointly with the Open University on the theme of Skills for Social Justice, while the WEA's formal business and voting will be held on the Saturday.

All WEA branches will be receiving an initial mailing giving them notice of conference and the opportunity to propose motions shortly, and a further mailing with booking forms to attend in April.

Contact us using the details on page 8 if you would like to be added to the list to receive further details about conference.



Supporting our tutors

Engaging with and supporting tutors is a key strategic priority for the WEA's future – which is why we want to get as many tutors as possible into the WEA Tutor Network.

In recent years the Association has had to work hard to restructure, meet its funding targets and succeed in inspection. However, in some respects, that has been at the expense of engaging and sharing views with WEA tutors across the country. Over 2,500 tutors across England in hundreds of venues and teaching dozens of subjects are the key to continuing the reputation and work of the WEA. Their commitment to their subject, their students and the WEA's mission means their relationship with the WEA is very often much more than just contractual.

The Tutor Network has been building slowly over the last year and currently has over 180 members, with an aim to have 250 by July this year. The network aims to open up communication links with and between tutors, share ideas and concerns and help them shape the WEA's work.

The network aims to learn from and reinforce the relationship between tutors and their WEA region and local staff. It provides email information, the opportunity for tutors to join teleconferences on particular issues and the chance to make comments or offer information on any problems. We hope it will develop projects that can be shared across the country. Later this year we

will extend our use of 'Moodle' (the widely recognised software for online learning communities) to make it accessible to all WEA tutors and we are investing in ways to reduce first session paperwork tasks within the class room by developing admissions processes.

At the outset of the Tutor Network a WEA education web blog was established for tutors, staff and volunteers. It is written by Peter Templeton, Director of Education and Strategy, and has been running since November 2007. The blog includes current information on educational issues in the WEA and adult education more generally, and gives readers the chance to post their own comments. You can visit the WEA Education Blog at <http://weaeducation.typepad.co.uk>

We are planning an Education and Strategy Conference for May and we hope to involve members of the Tutor Network in that event. For example, the conference may include sessions on ways to integrate issues of climate change and sustainability into the curriculum and to share ways that tutors today use - to paraphrase Raymond Williams - to meet students as equals.

The WEA wants to get as many tutors involved and shaping its work as possible. If you would like to register for the WEA Tutor Network, just email tutornetwork@wea.org.uk or contact Peter Templeton on 0117 9166504.

Evidence-based working

Mary Curran on plans for using data to help the WEA

Concerns about future public funding for adult learning mean that we need to be able to provide stronger evidence of the need for it, and its impact on learners and communities - beyond anecdotal evidence.

This will help us put the case for adult learning to government departments, show the contribution we make to their targets, and support pressure to change policies. It will also provide valuable evidence for funding bids to help us diversify our sources of income. This evidence will include needs analysis for funding bids, rigorous project evaluations, and surveys of past learners to find out what they have gone on to do.

Over the last two years the WEA has increased capacity and experience in evidence-based working, and has prioritised further development. Nationally, we have made a successful £500k family learning bid to the Big Lottery Fund (see page four), and undertaken Learner Satisfaction, Early Leavers, and Progression surveys. We carried out detailed needs analysis research for the lottery bid, and I have evaluated the Merseyside *Get into Reading* project and made presentations on the needs analysis and progression research at external adult education conferences.

At regional level, West Midlands has appointed a Project Researcher, Iram Naz, whose *Our Health, Our Action* Research Report will help support future funding bids. Other Regions also have project workers who are linking together and with the WEA's national Education Strategy Unit to develop collaborative approaches to enhance evidence for funding bids. The WEA has also purchased hardware and software for speedy input of questionnaire data, and specialist SPSS software to analyse the data.

What still needs to be done? At a meeting with the WEA and the other Specialist Designated Institutions this January, UK Skills Commissioner Chris Humphries, when asked what SDIs could do to ensure routes for engaging adults in learning are protected as government policy changes, said we should "give more evidence on who is losing out...don't just tell me these things – publish something, create a story, put it in the public domain." The WEA will be well placed to do so through development of research expertise, greater collaboration in research projects within and beyond the WEA, and dissemination of findings in published documents and at conferences.

Mary Curran is a WEA Education Strategy Manager, specialising in priority learners, inclusion and diversity. She recently completed a Masters degree, with distinction, in Applied Research and Consultancy.



Arrivals, departures and exchanges

Education Committee

We are pleased to announce that **Moyra Riseborough** will become an externally co-opted member of the Education and Strategy Committee, and of the Association Committee. Moyra has a wide range of business and governance experience, including chairing a Housing Association and working as a Professor at Birmingham University. She is also on the Policy Committee of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Eastern Region

The region welcomes **Stuart Nichols** as the new Cambridgeshire Organiser and **Susan Honeyford** as the new Cambridgeshire Course Programme Worker. We wish **Sue Young**, the former Cambridgeshire Organiser, all the best for the future.

London Region

Anthony Samaroo and **Carl Linkson** who were sessional tutors for the TUC programme took on Consolidated Tutor roles in January. **Richard Bell** and **Ellen Couch**, both sessional tutors for the foundation programme, also took on Consolidated Tutor roles in January.

Farewell to **Lois Carew-Doyley**, Family Learning Organiser who left in December to have her second child; **Cilla Appleton**, ESOL Fund Transition Administrator, whose contract came to an end in mid-January - although she will continue to work for the WEA as a tutor; and **Michael Holland**, Literacy and Numeracy Tutor, who left in mid-February for pastures new. We wish them all good luck for the future.

North East Region

The North East Region welcomes **Neil Gardiner** (pictured), who has taken up the full time post of Coordinator for the **Without Boundaries voluntary membership development project**. The project is funded by The Co-operative Fund and will run until June 2010. It aims to help revitalise WEA membership in the region, opening up new volunteering opportunities and linking closely with member participation initiatives in the Co-operative Movement.



Neil has a background in community development and adult learning in various parts of the country, most recently for Gateshead MIND. Neil says: 'Having worked in a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations, I am aware of the huge value of volunteers and members, and am keen to play an active role in supporting and developing this within the WEA. I am confident that through co-operation we can make a real difference.'

Welcome to **Michelle Graham**, who has been appointed Course Organiser for County Durham, bringing with her considerable experience in adult learning in the County, and good luck to **Michelle Scott** (former Course Organiser, County Durham) who has left to take up an economic development post.

Welcome also to **Shazia Shahid** and **Joy Nancarrow** who have joined the staff team of the Bridges to Learning Project, working with the OU and UNISON in the health and social care sector, as Learning Support Worker and Course Organiser respectively. Both have substantial voluntary sector backgrounds in adult education and Joy has also been a WEA tutor for several years. Welcome, too, to **Rajwinder Kaur**, who

Molly Morgan

Tragic news from London Region of the untimely death of Molly Morgan, who was attacked on her way to help out at a WEA class at Kenton Library in January. A robber dragged Molly to the ground, leaving her with injuries she would later die from.

Molly dedicated over 30 years to WEA Stanmore Branch as Class Secretary, Committee Member and Chair. Her enthusiasm and energy helped to enlarge the branch to become Stanmore & Kenton. As Publicity Officer she designed and distributed attractive leaflets for each course and organised fund raising events. She introduced new subject areas to the programme – Lace Making, Opera and Film courses. Molly's passion for liberal adult education and life long learning remained undiminished on her final evening as she went to open a new class when her attackers struck.

She served for many years on the London Regional Council/Committee and Executive/Regional Committee, bringing her sharp mind and practical experience to current educational problems. She was loved and respected by her WEA friends and colleagues and is sadly missed. Everyone at local, regional and national levels offer their deepest sympathy to her daughter Hilary – formerly a university and WEA art tutor, continuing her mother's commitment to adult learning.

Regional Director Soraya Patrick said, "I found Molly to be an incredible individual. Inspiring and totally supportive, she fought to keep what is good and great about the WEA yet embraced and welcomed change, especially when it meant giving the work of WEA a higher public profile throughout London and the UK. Molly and her remarkable strengths will long be remembered by London Region WEA"

previously helped with Northumbria Holidays and is now a temporary administration assistant.

Best wishes to **Rebecca Storey**, Assistant Administrator for three years, who has left to take up a new post in the health sector.

Suzy Hall is working for the *Move on Up* mental health awareness training project. Suzy joins the WEA from a background in youth and community work.

Well done to **Christine Foster**, Regional Operations Manager, who has been awarded a Diploma in Management by the Open University, and **Yvonne Ritchie**, Regional Projects Manager, who has successfully completed a management training course. Congratulations also to **Donna Utterson**, Course Organiser, and **Susan Heptinstall**, Education Administrator and Course Organiser, who have both gained NVQ Level 4 certificates in Information, Advice and Guidance and to **Angie Campbell**, Course Organiser, who has gained an NVQ L4 in Management.

Congratulations to active WEA learner **Dorothy Bell** who has been awarded an MBE for services to the Bellingham Heritage Centre in Northumberland, and to **Minna Ireland**, former Regional Treasurer, who has been appointed as Chair of the North East Empowerment Partnership. Special congratulations to **Alan Oates** of the Whickham WEA who has been made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Sunderland for services to lifelong learning.

Southern Region

The Scouts Project, based across Oxfordshire, South Bucks and Berkshire, has successfully recruited two part-time Development Workers who will both take up posts in early March. They are **Eugene Winter** and **Emma Carnery**.

Congratulations to **Emma Leavey**, ESOL Organiser for Sussex on the arrival of a baby boy in late January.

South West Region

Farewell and best wishes to **Mick Atkinson**, who is retiring from his Somerset Organiser post after 25 years. He will be sorely missed by staff, tutors and branch members. We have not completely said goodbye however, as he will continue to teach for the WEA. We are pleased to welcome

Liz Green, who joining the Region to cover the Somerset area on 2 March.

Glenys Smith is also retiring as Wiltshire Organiser after 16 years in April and again will also be sorely missed. She built up a strong network of branches and volunteers which have benefitted the Wiltshire area.

Also retiring are **Angela Jones** (Organiser) and **Celia Ford** (Admin. Assistant) from the Swindon office. This small team have worked hard for many years and will be missed.

Yorkshire and Humber Region

Welcome to **Matt Livingstone**, who joined in January as Educational Projects Co-ordinator to help the region diversify its funding. He previously worked for the Academy for Community Leadership in South Yorkshire.

About WEA News

If you have an item for inclusion or would like to comment on the newsletter please get in touch.

It is not always possible to include all items submitted.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

WEA NEWS, 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. The WEA is non-party in politics.

© Workers' Educational Association 2009.

We are the largest voluntary sector provider of adult education in Britain and provide learning opportunities for over 80,000 people each year.