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John Hayes, Skills Minister, presents Quality Award

The unionlearn Quality Award is awarded to providers in the learning world who are committed to working with trade unions and are providing inclusive, innovative programmes representing good practice and providing top quality information and advice.

Audrey Mullender, Ruskin Principal, and Nigel Williams, TUC centre co-ordinator, accepted the award at unionlearn's annual conference in London on July 12 2010.

Professor Audrey Mullender said: "Everyone at Ruskin is absolutely delighted that the TUC Centre here has won this award and we heartily congratulate all those involved and thank them for their tremendous efforts in coming so far in such a short time. We greatly prize the quality of the experience we offer to learners at Ruskin and it is a privilege to be in partnership with the TUC in undertaking such important work. Ruskin College has probably the widest span of trade union courses in the country, ranging from short courses right up to a BA and an MA in International Labour and Trade Union Studies, as befits our origins in the labour and trade union movement. We can guarantee a quality learning environment to all those who come to study with us and we urge readers of this newsletter to spread the word on our behalf."



Principal's Page

1. Introduction

Phase 1 of the capital project was completed on time and below budget. Students moved into the refurbished residential blocks in October and we also have three teams of Ruskin staff now based in the Smith Building. There have been teething problems - for example with key cards, lighting and drains - but most of the final snagging work was completed over the Christmas break. The decor looks great and we now have 40 en suite rooms as well as two further blocks with improved facilities.



2. Finance

Lord Browne's review of higher education funding and student finance has recommended taking the cap off student fees and removing public subsidy from virtually all of the subjects we teach. These higher education (HE) changes will not take place until 2012/13 whereas cumulative cuts in further education (FE) funding, totalling 25% over four years, begin with a 4.3% cut in 2011/12.

3. Curriculum and Quality

We have revalidations this year of the MAs in Public History and Women's Studies and of the BA English Studies: Creative Writing and Critical Practice. We also propose to seek validation for a potential new CertHE Activism and Campaigning that would focus on empowerment and social change, complementing our work on transformative leadership.

On the FE side, we have succeeded in getting into the unit funding trials that will allow us to continue offering something resembling short courses and not just full qualifications under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). We can also still use our old course codes for a while longer so we are planning to run two more cohorts of Ransackers and Independent Studies in spring and summer 2011 plus an Easter School with short courses designed for progression to degree-level programmes later on. Send your friends and family on these popular courses now – this may well be their last chance to study in ways we have tried and tested over a number of years before it is 'all change'. On the trade union side, the TUC Centre and the Organising Academy can also continue with their current offer until summer 2011 but then may have to make major changes, again to fit in with the QCF.

4. Property Strategy

The Phase 2 contractors will be starting their preparations onsite in the next few weeks, to commence the new Academic Building on schedule. All five short-listed bids are under budget. In addition, we were successful in attracting £225,000 from the Skills Funding Agency for the walled garden project which must be on stream by September 2011 to satisfy the funding criteria. This cash influx has helped to delay much of the loan funding until next academic year which means, in turn, that we can have one last push on fund-raising. We have a fund-raiser coming on a month's internship in May who will look at smaller donors and possibly also our American roots.

The Barton Area Action Plan has put the spotlight on Ruskin Fields which lie directly across the by-pass from a proposed 800 to 1000 new homes. In order to try and have our land considered for development, we will present the City Council with a 'Master' plan for a further housing development on our fields. There are many obstacles, notably local opposition and the land's Conservation Area status, but it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity at least to try while the transport infrastructure, land use in this area and local spread of community facilities are all up for consideration.



5. Conclusion

We have recruited well to long courses this year, can see real progress with the capital project and are in fighting spirit. We know there will be cuts and confrontations ahead, but we are determined to survive.

Professor Audrey Mullender.



(Actually it was 'break')

The Fellowship Re-union and AGM – 17/18/19 September 2010

The Fellowship Re-union and AGM weekend was very successful this year. Members present were treated to very informative discussions with

Jeremy Corbyn, the MP for Islington North, who addressed international and national issues and Tom Schuller, the Director of Longview, who talked about the future of adult education particularly in the light of The Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, of which Tom was Director. Members were also briefed about developments at the College by the Principal, Audrey Mullender. Each speaker, in their own way, stimulated interest and discussion and our sincere thanks go to each of them for contributing to our re-union.

Something very interesting happened during our speaker sessions. One of our speakers was delayed and we agreed to have an informal

discussion about a range of things that interested the members, to enable us to use the time constructively. This short session, where members could talk to each other without the constraints of a formal meeting, worked as a very effective 'ice-breaker' and the sub-committee that has been established to organise next year's re-union is considering building this activity in as an organised part of the weekend. 'Necessity is the mother of invention' as the saying goes.

The evening social was very successful. We were fortunate to be able to book Dan and Rob, two brilliant musicians who kept us entertained with some excellent folk music. Thanks must go to Art Wright for organising, once again, one of his 'unique' quizzes. Thanks also to College staff for providing some lovely food for an early autumn evening and to Kieron Winters for setting out the rooms over the weekend which helped our overall organisation a great deal.

The AGM, held as usual on the Sunday morning, was extremely busy and covered a great deal of business. Written reports were made available to all members present from the President and Secretary, the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary. A written report was also received from one of our College Council representatives. All of these reports are available on the Fellowship page of the College website.

Officers elected for the year 2010/2011 are:

Debbie Hollingsworth – President
John Hurlston – Deputy President
Alan Shepherd – Secretary
Elcena Jeffers – Membership Secretary
Art Wright – Newsletter Co-Editor
Bob Anderton – Internal Auditor

Sally Courtney remains our Treasurer and many thanks go to Sally for helping us to develop and manage our financial management systems.

Fellowship College Council Representatives for the year are:

Debbie Hollingsworthm, Bob Anderton, Pauline Hamilton

Our next re-union will be in September 2011. We would like to extend a warm invitation to all members to join us for either all or part of the weekend.



The Ruskin Fellowship – what work will we be doing in 2010 / 2011?

The new Executive Committee met for the first time on Saturday 13 November. The Annual General Meeting had identified many tasks for us to complete over the year and we list below some of the main activities in which we will be involved:

1. To establish two standing sub-committees.

One will deal with the allocation of a Student Fund, which is one of our constitutional duties. The second sub-committee will start to organise next year's re-union and AGM.

2. Organising local Fellowship / College groups:

We are in the process of organising groups in Oxford and the East Midlands. At the Executive meeting on 13 November we agreed to try to establish groups in the West Midlands and in London. We would welcome help from any Fellowship member to get these groups 'off the ground'. It is highly likely that we will want to establish more local groups in the future and would be interested to hear from anyone who could help set one up in their own area.

3. Drafting an amended Constitution for the consideration of next year's AGM:

Over the last two years we have tried to re-write our Constitution, but with no success. Our objective is to present to next year's AGM a proposed new Constitution that will find favour with members.

4. Fund raising for the College and supporting the College to circulate publicity in local areas:

These are two very important ways in which we can support the College in its work. They have to be Fellowship priorities.

5. Fellowship Recruitment Activities:

Without attracting new members on a regular basis the Fellowship has no future. We will be working with the Ruskin Students Union and the College to encourage Ruskin leavers to become Fellowship members.

6. Setting up a Fellowship Archive:

We would like to chart the history of the Fellowship and to do this we need to establish an archive. We will be working with the College library and some Fellowship members to do this. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch.

**Debbie Hollingsworth (President),
Alan Shepherd (Secretary),
Art Wright (Newsletter Co-Editor)**

Good News stories:

Tony Cousins.

Tony was a Big Issue seller when he started short courses at Ruskin. He graduated with a top quality First. His MA is a highly prestigious Creative Writing Master's from Goldsmith's.

Here is an email Tony sent to course tutors Helen Kidd and Tom Sherry.

"Just thought that I'd share some good news. I passed my MA with Merit. I owe you both a tremendous amount for starting me on my way. Many, many thanks. I shall drop by the next time I am in Oxford, whenever that may be, and we can share a celebratory glass or two of vino.



I am teaching literacy skills to unruly delinquents between the ages of nine and seventeen for a school just outside of Port of Spain. Thoroughly adorable badasses. Some are now writing their own stories. Also collaborating with an award winning local director on a screen play for a feature that will go into production in January”.

Martha Zenfell

I came to Ruskin in the spring of 2010 for a 10-week course called Ransackers. I never thought I would be accepted, as my confidence was at an all-time low. A series of harsh set-backs, both personally and professionally, had made me reluctant to try anything new, much less anything out of my usual sphere. When I was accepted, I was over the moon. The coursework for Ransackers involved doing a 5–8,000-word project, on a topic of my choosing. I chose ‘Women in History Who Reinvented Themselves.’ Not only was it a fascinating and challenging subject to research, but it was important to me, personally; I definitely needed to reinvent myself.

Those 10 weeks at Ruskin changed the course of my life. Since I was residing in College and living like a student, I decided to actually *be* a student. By that I mean I left all my clothes and possessions behind, packing only one pair of jeans, one pair of shoes, and one piece of jewellery (I’m normally a bit of a clothes horse, with at least 30 pairs of shoes at home). I furnished my student room with ‘treasures’ found in charity shops and Oxford markets. A new life, a new image. Perfect. I then set out to change my old ways of thinking, and my normal response to events. Ruskin was the perfect place for this – far enough away from my old life, but with a warm and supportive atmosphere that allowed me the security to experiment.

My project was a success. A producer on BBC’s Radio 4 programme ‘Woman’s Hour’ invited me to London to be part of a panel discussion on Midlife Relaunch. I believe my role in that show was useful, as I was the only person who made

a radical life switch because of a series of set-backs, rather than voluntarily. I hope I was able to persuade listeners that if I could do this, anybody could.

My new life has been a success, too. I am now in my first term of a three-year course at Ruskin, working towards a BA in English. A year ago I would never have imagined I would be living this life. Thank you, Ruskin.

I think I might celebrate and buy myself another pair of jeans.

Tom Bruce

Tom was a Ruskin history student 2007/2008. Here is a recent email Tom sent to tutor, Dr John Walker:

“Just to let you know that I graduated with a First Class Honors and I won the Braudel prize for the best undergraduate History dissertation of 2010. The title of my dissertation was: ‘*Committed detachment or detached commitment? The Ambiguities of Anglo-South Vietnamese Relations, 1967-1975*’. As the title suggests it was on the full diplomatic relations which existed between UK and South Vietnam in its last period, that of American disengagement. This latter period from UK point of view has not been researched before. I used FCO documents at Kew. In a nutshell, I argued that UK while not a military backer was definitely a partisan diplomatic backer and that this was not only because of the Trans-Atlantic relationship but based on their own earlier autonomous interests in the region, although domestic opposition, amongst other things, led to a deliberately obscured policy being presented publicly. This is not exactly new, but the period covered and the evidence was and, unlike other studies, it focused solely on the Anglo-South Vietnamese relationship itself. I also tested and expanded existing conclusions (Mark Curtis for example). I am really delighted with that result and it now stands me in good stead for an MA at SOAS.



Although Brookes is a 'new university' and does modular degrees, I managed to get the best possible outcome so it balanced any possible perceived drawbacks of going to such a university. I know he won't mind me saying but Mark Oster also graduated with a First. I am not sure how Moaz did but I know he did

graduate so all the Ruskinites got through. The History team at Ruskin were pivotal, certainly in my case, in getting this result. Mark and I were often reminding ourselves of and discussing the important tips and techniques that you had taught us during our year at Ruskin. For this I am really very grateful to you. I also want to thank Dr. Paul Martin for his tuition and Dr. Hilda Kean for generating an atmosphere of serious and purposeful history. Thanks of course also to the Principal, Audrey Mullender. I don't have their contact addresses so I hope you will be able to convey my appreciation. I hope to get round to joining the Ruskin Fellowship one of these days and keep in regular touch with Ruskin College. Maybe I will see you around in London next year.

With my best wishes and enormous gratitude”.

Carol Cripps

A quick note from History student Carol Cripps to History tutor Dr Hilda Kean about a volunteer attachment she has been offered:

“We went to the Pitt Rivers for our induction today - absolutely brilliant. Had a tour behind the scenes - we were shown the conservation room, library etc. H & S (Health and Safety) induction and issue of swipe cards on Monday and then we are off!

Thank you for organising - what an amazing opportunity”.

Dr Rhys Pritchard

An email sent from ex student Rhys Pritchard to Principal, Professor Audrey Mullender.

“I attended Ruskin in the 1990s where I had an excellent education and preparation for my future life. I have recently passed my PhD viva in Cognitive Neuro Psychology and I believe I would not have been able to achieve this goal without attending Ruskin. I have also gained a BSc (Hons) in Psychology and an MSc (Dist) in Psychological Research Methods since leaving. This is just a big thank you and to say if there is anything I can do to promote Ruskin College in the future, then please do not hesitate to ask, as I would be delighted to do so. Yours sincerely, Rhys Pritchard.

A thank you to Ruskin College from Dr Rhys Pritchard”.

Since then, Rhys has organised an East Midlands reunion and plans another.

Simon Benyon

“You will be pleased to know that I successfully graduated from the University of Keele and was awarded a Master of Arts in Environmental Politics with Distinction. In addition I am a joint Outstanding Dissertation prize winner, having been awarded £50 by the School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy (SPIRE). Please find the attached photograph taken in a snowy Keele on Graduation Day. I couldn't have achieved any of this without my time at Ruskin which has enriched my life beyond measure. People sometimes ask me whether I ever miss Ruskin to which I reply that I never left. Ruskin will be carried forever in my heart wherever I may be and that's the truth. I hope that my achievements to date have done the college proud.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Benyon”





Simon Benyon at his Keele graduation

Ruskin change my life!

Congratulations to June Duckworth and Michael Albert Kenny in their engagement. They met while on short courses at Ruskin.

“Dear Audrey

Evelyn, your chef at Ruskin College, suggested I write and tell you I was on 2 courses at Ruskin College from 12th to 16th July 2010 and on the last day I met Michael Albert Kenny who had been on a course all week too. From that meeting we exchanged numbers, met and have kept meeting often since. We very soon realised we love each other so I want to thank you and Ruskin College for bringing us together. My husband of 49 years died 4 years ago so I will forever be grateful to your College for bringing this wonderful kind loving man into my life.

I have just done 2 more courses and enjoyed every one of the 4 I've done there. The food and accommodation are just fabulous and your tutors Penny Halliday and Susie Lee are excellent tutors they have the most wonderful and approachable assets that most teachers lack.

I thank you once again. Ruskin has changed my life and Michael's forever and its wonderful.

Most Sincerely
June Anne”

Ruskin student nominated

Van Coulter, who graduated with First Class Honours from the BA ILTUS (International Labour and Trade Union Studies) last summer and who is now a student on the MA ILTUS, is an elected member of Oxford City Council. Van has just heard that he is one of five people shortlisted by LGiU, the Local Government Information Unit, for the prestigious award of New Councillor of the Year. The Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) is an award-winning think tank and membership organisation. Its mission is to strengthen local democracy to put citizens in control of their own lives, communities and local services. Its team of policy experts provides practical policy advice, learning and development programmes, events and conferences, consultancy and other resources to its members and other organisations.

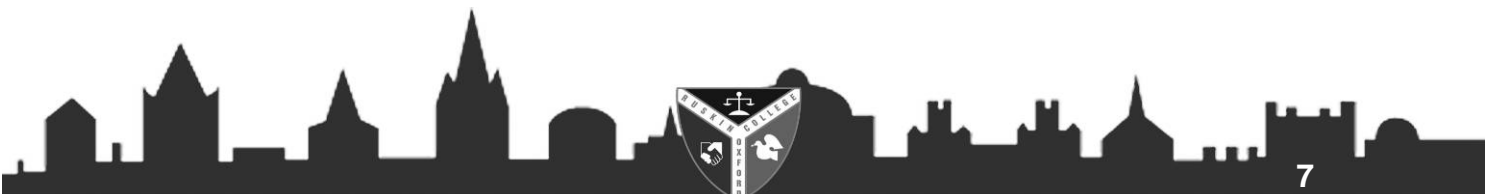
The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony on 8th February 2011. Van generously states that he learnt to make a difference at Ruskin. We wish Van every success and will be rooting for him next month.

A new lease of life for pensioner after catching the education bug

(Excerpts from Ashbourne News Telegraph 11th August 2010)

Elaine Whitcroft, 67, who left school at 15, has received her BA Honours in History with Social Sciences, from Ruskin College.

Mrs Whitcroft said for nearly 50 years all she had written was an occasional letter. She said: “I married and had a family but did not gain any qualifications through my working years, as they were not considered as necessary as they are today. After my children left home, I suffered from empty nest syndrome and was struggling to find a new role for myself. Then I heard about a course held at Ruskin College called ‘Ransackers’ being discussed on BBC Radio 4. It was described as an opportunity for mature people, just like me, to engage with and experience university life. I applied and was



accepted on what turned out to be a life-changing experience. It was a 10-week residential course during which I received tuition to research and write a project of my choice along with other like-minded adults.”

Mrs Whitcroft is now considering taking an MA. Her success and enjoyment have already inspired her daughter to return to full-time .” education at Ruskin.

She said: “My plans are to continue researching and writing as well as travelling, also to get to know my husband again. I may even tackle the MA once I get my breath back



Veterans Aid graduates study in Oxford

Two organisations dedicated to opening doors for people trying to start a new life have joined forces. Veterans Aid and Ruskin College are committed to providing opportunities for men and women who need a second chance. Both are registered charities with a proven track record in making dreams come true.

Dr Hugh Milroy, CEO of Veterans Aid, said: “I approached Ruskin to discuss a relationship because I knew of its unique reputation in giving disadvantaged adults a crack at higher education - men and women just like our clients.”

London-based Veterans Aid sent its first student – a former homeless ex-soldier – to the Oxford-based College in October. The IT course he has now successfully completed has put him on the first rung of the ladder towards a new career and a brighter future.

Jonathan Fullan said “Completing this course gave me confidence again. I can’t explain how good it felt to be learning something positive in a friendly and supportive environment. I was nervous about it, but excited as well. It’s been brilliant.”

Jonathan will hopefully be the first of many VA ‘Ruskin students’. Former submariner Nigel Naesmith hopes to start a degree course in 2011. He said “I was homeless for 30 years after leaving the Royal Navy. I suffered from depression and, latterly, Parkinson’s Disease. I would have died in the winter of 2009 if it had not been for Veterans Aid. They enabled me to stabilise my health and find a safe home. Now, through their association with Ruskin College, I have the opportunity to study for a degree next year. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine graduating from a park bench in Italy to a classroom in Oxford.”



The VA/Ruskin partnership is underpinned by a shared understanding that education is an important survival tool. Dr Hugh Milroy added "People come to VA in crisis and we address their immediate needs. But recovery is only the beginning; they need the means to sustain themselves and often education is the key."

Ruskin College Principal Professor Audrey Mullender said "For over 100 years Ruskin has been opening doors to learning for men and women who lack life's advantages.

"We are delighted to be joining with Veterans Aid to offer people fresh chances. Ruskin's progression pathways mean that there's something here for anyone who never finished their education, be they like Jonathan taking a one-week course, or like Nigel who is hoping to take a full degree."

Ruskin College offers free taster courses to lead to higher education

(Article from Crisis, 19th October 2010)

Ruskin College in Oxford is providing free weekend 'taster' courses in a variety of subjects referred by Crisis that aim to allow students to access potentially free degree and MA courses.

The college is providing free classes for people on income-based benefits and 'Short Courses' (3-5 days) are being given on a wide variety of subjects including Developmental Psychology, Creative Writing and Digital Photography. Ruskin College states that a large number of short course students progress onto longer courses and many leave with a degree.

Crisis member Faye Miller was one of the first students to attend the new educational

scheme, which sees applicants staying on campus and attending intensive courses from Friday to Sunday evening.

"I had started a psychology course at University before I was forced to stop due to an unforeseen accident. As a volunteer of 2 years at Crisis Learning Zone classes, I have very close contact with people and it helps me personally to know how and why

people behave. The class was excellent at showing me how to see things differently."

It is the first time Crisis has worked with Ruskin College and Crisis members will be learning alongside councillors, social workers and carers amongst other students.

Honors award for students

Ruskin History students were recently nominated for an award on the iPM programme on Radio 4.

Public History tutor, Dr Hilda Kean and student, Jill Watts were interviewed and included in the edition of the iPM programme which goes out after the main PM programme, on Saturday 1st January 2011.

Not only did this plug the unique position of Ruskin but also emphasised the Government's attacks on the Humanities!

Obituaries

David Kitson **(1919-2010)**

David Kitson was married to Norma Kitson (née Cranko, deceased) and was the father of 2 children, Stephen (deceased) and Amandla who survives him.

David qualified as an engineer at Natal University after WW2, during which he served as a sapper (combat engineer) in Italy. He came to England in 1947 and joined the British Communist Party. He stayed in Britain for 12 years, and spent two years from 1952 to 1954 studying at Ruskin College, funded by a scholarship from his union TASS. Whilst at



Ruskin he decided that, rather than study for a diploma like the majority of Ruskin students at the time, he would independently study Politics, Economics and Russian. Norma Kitson wrote about Ruskin, “he had loved his two years there...it was a very special time for him.” (Kitson, 1986)

David returned to South Africa in 1959. This return was not without its difficulties as the South African government refused to issue a passport for his return due to his anti-apartheid campaigning, and he had to travel on an affidavit from his aunt.

He was committed to the idea of a ‘free’ South Africa and became a member of SACP. He joined the MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe) in the early 1960’s and, after the arrest of prominent members of the group at Lilliesleaf in 1963, David became one of the four-man National High Command of MK.

On 22/06/1964 he was arrested by the South African security police and detained under the 90 day law. Exactly one month after this, Norma was arrested and detained.

Both David and Norma were interrogated, and beaten. Norma was released after 28 days.

In the December of 1964, David came to trial, charged with sabotage and being a member of the High Command of MK. He was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years. He was told that, when he was released, he would be given a Union-funded job as a tutor at Ruskin, and to this end studied for a number of degrees whilst detained. During his time in jail, Norma was exiled to England where she campaigned tirelessly for his release; she organised a constant picket of South Africa House in Trafalgar Square to highlight the struggle against apartheid and the plight of political prisoners in South Africa. During this time, Norma was a key figure of the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, which was bitterly opposed by the ANC/SA Communist Party establishment in London.

David was released in 1984, and joined Norma and their children in London. Upon his release the ANC suspended both him and Norma. He was told he would be reinstated and allowed to take up his union-funded position at Ruskin only if he publicly denounced his wife and the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group. He regarded this as political blackmail and refused. As a result, the SACP leaned on his union to withhold its funding and he found himself without a job or source of income.

Rather than return to South Africa, David and Norma set up home in Zimbabwe and, after Norma’s death in 2002, David returned to South Africa, and died in Johannesburg on the 9th November 2010, aged 91. David Kitson was an Honorary Fellow of Ruskin College and the Kitson Block at Walton Street is named after him.

Bibliography:

Kitson, Norma (1986) ‘Where Sixpence Lives’ London: Chatto and Windus

Grundy, Trevor (2010) ‘OBITUARY : David Kitson’ From ‘The Zimbabwean’ www.thezimbabwean.co.uk

Barron, Chris (2010) ‘Obituary: David Kitson: SACP member, MK commissar’ from ‘times live’ www.timeslive.co.za

Photograph:
Robert Tshabalala and © Avusa



Roy Jackson

We are sad to report that Roy Jackson died on 11th December 2010.

Roy, previously a postal worker and active in his union and Labour League of Youth, was a Ruskin student from 1952-4, earning a Distinction in the University's Diploma in Economics and Political Science. He next took PPE at Oxford through Worcester College (the then Provost of which was Asa Briggs). From there he was employed by the TUC, eventually becoming Head of its Education Department, and then, finally, Assistant General Secretary to General Secretaries, Norman Willis (also an ex-Ruskin student of course) and John Monks. Throughout that time, he was also continuously active, in offices and on doorsteps, in his local Labour Party (in Hatfield New Town). During my 14 year stint at Ruskin, I got to know many fine

students - able, thoughtful, well-motivated and dedicated to whatever seemed to them to be worthwhile causes. In all those respects Roy was tops in my book, and it was a great pleasure for me and my (now late) wife to have been good friends with him and his wife, Lily, over the years. Roy wasn't ambitious for himself and his achievements may not have been for record books. But he was a model of what an ethical socialist (I believe he would have used that label for his political outlook) should be like.

Jay Blumler

Jack Eames

It is with sadness that we report that Jack Eames, Economics tutor for many years at Ruskin, has died. Jack had lived in Chalgrove on the outskirts of Oxford since 1973 and had been a regular figure around the village as he always enjoyed a daily walk with his wife Joan, stopping often to chat with the local residents. Sadly, Joan died at the end of 1992 and Jack lived alone after that.

Jack was a Ruskin student, 1954 – 1956, followed by PPE at Jesus College, taking his finals in 1958. He came back to Ruskin as Economics Tutor in 1970 and taught the Oxford Diploma students. Those studying for the Labour Studies Diploma could also attend his Economic Principles lectures. Jack was a very diligent and caring tutor for his students - always willing to respond to those who were prepared to work hard at the subject, whatever their ability. On the other hand he never really wanted to get involved in the Friday afternoon staff meetings; he described these as 'acrimonious' and left as soon as he could to get home to Joan. Jack, I believe everyone would agree, was a real character with a devilish wit and always at his best when being indiscreet. His first night introduction speech was hilarious.

John Fray

Member of Ruskin College Governing Executive

William Persaud

We are sad to report that William Persaud, of Agincourt, Ontario, Canada, passed away in July 2010. We have been asked to let his friends know. Do get in touch if you knew William and would like to record your memories of him at Ruskin.

Derrick Metcalf

I am sorry to have to inform you that my husband Derrick Metcalf Holmes sadly died on 15th July 2008. Derrick was a student at Ruskin College from 1954 to 1956.

Youngest of 12 children, Derrick was born in Skellow, a small Yorkshire mining village near Doncaster. All his brothers had followed their father down the mine but Derrick became an apprentice brick layer and attended evening classes run by the Workers Educational Association and the Sheffield University Extramural Department. Derrick's brother Bill had been at Ruskin so the family did have a foot hold



on the academic ladder and Derrick succeeded in gaining a place there too. In his memoirs Derrick writes at length about 'The Ruskin Years' and I include a few lines from it:

'I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Ruskin. Apprehensive at first, since it was my first time away from home, apart from holidays, I soon liked the town, wandering about the colleges and especially the debates in the Oxford Union. The Oxford Union President when I joined was Anthony Howard, who has become a well-known political writer and television pundit. I was 22 when I went to Ruskin and one of the youngest. The students ran their own affairs and I was made the social secretary. No one else wanted the job but it was the best job of all. All the invitations from the other colleges and from the various nursing schools came to the social secretary. I became well sort after. I after all had the invitation tickets for the various "do's". Anyone who wanted to go had to ask me for a ticket. It was nice to have a bit of power. The other advantage of the job was that it also carried the responsibility of giving permission to use the college punt on the river. Punting on the river in Oxford was then, as it probably is now, a very sought after recreation. I liked it and had ample use of the punt. Having regular access to a punt, was a very good status symbol, which seemed to be attractive to local girls. I had not had a lot of experience with girls (unless you count the rough and ready advice dispensed by work mates on the building site), the time at Ruskin filled in a few gaps in my education in this direction. The job had a mundane side, but it was experience for organising. I have never understood people who join things or take part in activities without ever taking up one of the jobs of responsibility. I have managed to be secretary, treasurer, captain and chairman of umpteen organisations and it has always seemed better to me to be involved positively, rather than passively. It is not usually difficult to get these jobs. Usually no one else wants them.'

Derrick did manage to do enough work to get his University Diploma in Politics Philosophy and Economics and also an offer of a place at Southampton University to read Economics. Once there he was soon President of a very lively Socialist Society. In the late 50s senior politicians regularly attended universities; there was no local television for them to speak on and not a lot of political slots on national TV. A student audience of three or four hundred was worthwhile; amongst the speakers attracted were Harold Wilson, Tom Driberg and Shirley Williams. Shirley Williams visited a number of times as she was standing as the Labour candidate for the Test constituency in Southampton and Soc. Soc. Supported her in her electioneering. Derrick was the only one with transport- his Lambretta scooter and him used to collect Shirley from the station and ferry her around town to her meetings!

Derrick worked in a variety of jobs from Publicity and Education Officer with the Co-op to Deputy Superintendent of a remand home before beginning a long career in adult education in Somerset. He made a significant and lasting contribution to it and retired as a Senior Education Officer, The family lived in Congresbury North Somerset where Derrick was involved in many aspects of village life becoming a parish councillor and chairman. He was a member of the local History Group and wrote two books about Congresbury in wartime

Derrick died unexpectedly on 15th July 2008 after a routine operation to repair a leaky heart valve; the operation went well but his recovery did not and he died two weeks later. He will be fondly remembered by his wife, three sons and their wives and four grandsons.

Marlene Holmes



Philip Charlesworth writes

Ruskin is never far from my thoughts. Perhaps the best years of my life (apart from those with my wife and family) were the four I spent in Oxford: two at Ruskin on a TUC Educational Trust scholarship followed by two at St Peter's (then St Peter's Hall) on one of the new State Scholarships introduced by the Labour Government.

Since I came up in 1946 at the age of 30 it is very unlikely that any Ruskin men or women are still alive except John Fallaise with whom I am in touch. My oldest close friend at Ruskin was the late Alan Fox who later taught at Ruskin and in the University.

I knew about Ruskin from the WEA and when a printing apprentice had taken a Ruskin correspondence course in English Composition and Grammar (I think it was called). Apart from that, your reference to 'word of mouth' reminds me that when I cycled from North London where I was then living, I called on a family in Brentford who had been very kind to me when first I came to London just before the war. They'd never heard of Ruskin, but a year later both Bill Cowderoy and his sister soon followed me to Ruskin. Bill didn't take to the academic life and after a term or two, went off to become a teacher. Joan stayed on, won a State Scholarship and as well as getting pregnant went on to Cambridge taking an English degree there.

Though very happy at 'Pot Hall' we Ruskin men by now in other colleges, kept in close touch, meeting in one another's homes (except the sporty ones) most afternoons.

You will find an article of mine in 'New Epoch' on my time in gaol and a short piece about Yugoslavia. Any writing I have done since has been on the local history of this part of the West Riding where I was born and brought up, chiefly in the local history magazine 'Old West Riding'.

May I wish you, your tutor colleagues and student every success. Ernest Bevin said he'd gathered his education from the hedgerows of experience. So did all who came to Ruskin and we've been gathering ever since.

I have remembered Ruskin modestly in my will.

Yours most sincerely
Philip Charlesworth.

Headington building work:

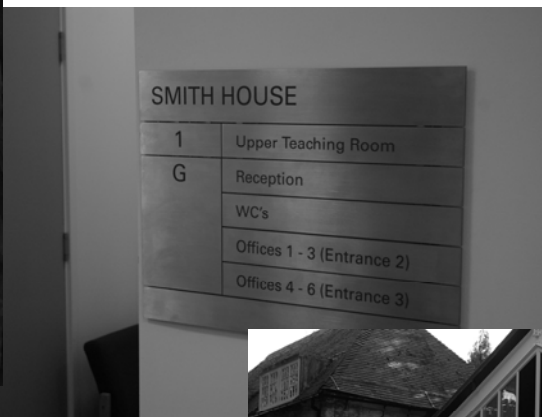
Phase 1 complete

The first phase of the renovation work at Ruskin Hall is now complete.

Smith House has been renovated into office and classroom space and now houses the Short Courses and Youth and Community Work offices.



Along with the Biko and Bowen blocks, Beatrice Webb House has also been renovated with all of the student accommodation updated and refurbished.



The second phase of building work will begin in early 2011 when the main Rookery building will be renovated and a new Academic Building constructed alongside it.

Keep checking the website for more news and pictures as the work progresses.

Exciting times are ahead!

Contacts

The Ruskin Fellowship has a number of local contacts and we hope to develop more. If you live near one of the areas below and would like to make contact and find out what goes on, email or phone for more information.

North East England

Nigel Todd (67-69)

Former student and Regional Director, WEA

Phone: 0191 212 6100

Email: ntodd@wea.org.uk

London

Alan Shepherd

(Acting Secretary)

Email: shepherdalan23@yahoo.co.uk

Oxford

Jan Smith

Phone: 01869 369095 or

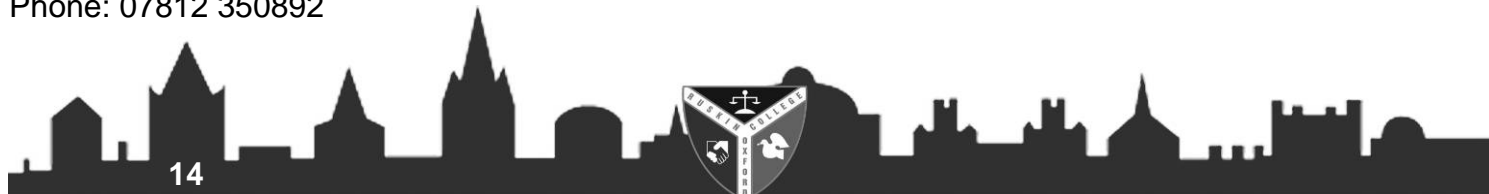
Email: jansmith103@hotmail.com

Other Fellowship contacts to note are:

Debbie Hollingsworth

Fellowship President

Phone: 07812 350892





Ruskin will survive the cuts!

Help to promote working class education and put bums on seats at Ruskin!

We are currently budgeting for the furniture to go into the new Academic Building at Headington, due to open in September 2012. If you would like to help, you can sponsor a chair for £50, or multiples as indicated below.

I enclose a cheque for :	£50	1 chair
	£100	2 chairs
	£150	3 chairs
	£200	4 chairs
	£250	6 chairs - buy 5 and get one free!

Please send your cheque to Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal, Ruskin College, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HE

Name.....

Email address.....

Gift Aid Declaration

I am a UK taxpayer and want Ruskin College to treat all donations I make as Gift Aid donations.

- You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 given).
- Please notify us if you change your name and/or address while the declaration is still in force.
- If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

Signed _____

Date _____

A Happy New Year from all at
Ruskin

ruskincollege
learning to make a difference

2011

www.ruskin.ac.uk