



The Ruskin Fellowship

Membership Secretary's Report to the AGM – September 2010

1. **Current membership levels:** The current membership stands at 600 'live' members. There are 3,590 names on the database but data is not accurate in many cases. This is a significant administrative problem that may be helped with the development of the Alumni Database (please see below). At the AGM last year it was agreed that a fellowship member would develop a data base, unfortunately this has not been undertaken. There are problems caused by not having our own data base, for example access can only be gained through one member of staff, if he is away, no access.

2. **The Alumni Database:** The Fellowship is working with the College to develop the Alumni Database and to improve the Fellowship's membership records. Gathering information on such a large scale is a significant operation and it is in the best interests of the College and the Fellowship to work closely together on this project.

3. **Individual membership issues**
 - Mr Signorelli – resigned from membership during 2010
 - George Scott – resigned from membership during 2010
 - There is an on-going issue: students currently studying are applying to join the Fellowship, it appears that the words student rate on the application is taken to mean that current students can join. As an alumni Association it is for past students. Current students being represented by the Ruskin Student union.
 - There is no clear policy on who should decide on membership application acceptance or rejection – a clear policy is needed on this. I have either brought or sent names and details e.g. course, year s at Ruskin to the Executive meetings for their to be a decision by the Executive, it has never felt appropriate for the membership Secretary to make the decision. Many other organisations and Alumni Associations take applications at their exec meetings.

4. **Absent Friends:** We regret that we have to report the death of the following Fellowship members over the year:

Mike Convery (1994/95), Myrtle Risborough (1947/49), Hugh Gallagher (1963/65), Bob Matthews (1966/68)

5. **Recruiting new members from Ruskin leavers in summer 2010:** The Fellowship will have a presence at the Ruskin 'Congregation' on 16 October. The College has asked us to attend the meeting and to address those students who will be receiving their certificates on the benefits of being a member of the Fellowship. I have attended the award ceremonies and have given a short talk on the Fellowship and have circulated the application forms at the ceremonies.

The letter below will be sent to all students leaving Ruskin at the end of term.

Dear Colleague

Membership of the Ruskin Fellowship

Congratulations on completing your studies at the College. We hope that you have enjoyed your time at Ruskin. We are sure that you have developed new knowledge and skills and have benefitted in all sorts of ways from “the Ruskin experience.”

The Ruskin Fellowship enables ex-Ruskin students to keep contact with the College. It brings together former Ruskin students from very different generations whose “Ruskin experience” has been set against very different contexts.

The Fellowship organises an Annual Re-union and AGM. It elects an Executive Committee that manages the business of the Fellowship through the year and, in its own small way, it seeks to aid the College in practical ways, including providing members for the College Council.

Over the last year the Fellowship has set up a sub-committee to consider developments in adult learning, has developed a training pack for members of the Fellowship Executive Committee, has helped to circulate Ruskin publicity to libraries and colleges and has helped develop a working agreement with the College.

However, it is very important that new members join the Fellowship as they leave the College. Only with the addition of new members can the Fellowship hope to keep up to date with the changing “Ruskin Experience” and also ensure the continuity of the Fellowship itself. If you would like more information on the work of the Fellowship, please contact me at the email address below.

We have also enclosed an Application Form for membership of the Fellowship. **We would welcome your application for membership** and hope that you are able to participate in our activities.

Whether you decide to join or not, may we in the Fellowship offer you our best wishes for the future. If we were to offer you any advice we would say: ‘Put your education at Ruskin to work and the world will be a better place. That is the real legacy of Ruskin College.’

Thanks

6. Recruitment during the year: During the year a trickle of applications have again come in. A number of names and contact details have been passed to me by the College following events at which the College has had a stall, for example the Durham Miners Gala, Tolpuddle, sadly although applications forms were sent out none have yet been returned I have been informed by email that one person will be returning their form.

It is worth saying that it seems likely that current rate of membership applications will not support Fellowship activities into the future. Executive meeting expenses, mail outs and any entertainment or additional meals (those not paid for) at the Reunion are currently covered from the monies raised through membership, there is no other real income. I do not include this as a proposal to raise the membership fee but to ensure everyone is aware. A life membership means one payment and we Ruskinites seem to live long and so £25 life membership is quite a good deal, for me it has been less than £1 a year given I have been a member 27 years!

Being Membership secretary is not an arduous Executive post, it does require periodic detail work and sending details to the college as well as monies, responding to membership enquiries and members emails.

I am not standing for election to this position, thank you to everyone who has supported me for the last two years.

Carole Orgell-Rosen (Outgoing membership Secretary)