



Newsletter

Editor: Stuart Maidment contact: smaidment@ruskin.ac.uk

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Phase 1 underway

It is very exciting to see the contractors at work on the Headington site, refurbishing the Smith and Beatrice Webb Buildings. They will move onto the Biko and Bowen blocks over the summer months and all four buildings will re-open in time for next term. Webb will have 28 en suite rooms. Along with the 12 en suite rooms in Stoke House, these will all be available for trade unions and other organisations to book for courses and events. Bookings can be made through Beryl Stewart at: shortcourses@ruskin.ac.uk



1. Finance

The dying act of the former Learning and Skills Council was to impose a new and sneakier kind of cut, inviting us to reduce our own funding claim by a modest amount or have them cut it far more. We took a 3 per cent cut in our further education provision – in the current funding year – which was far less than many colleges have suffered. It brings us into line with the amount of work we believe we can guarantee to deliver this year. We have now been transferred to the Skills Funding Agency, the joke in the sector being that most institutions have heard SFA from the SFA.



2. Curriculum and Quality

The MA in International Labour and Trade Union Studies was successfully revalidated under its new Co-ordinator, Ian Manborde, and recruitment is going well. Ian is particularly interested in increasing overseas admissions and would welcome discussions with anyone who can help.

In the further education sector, the switch to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), and to priority areas of funding even within that, is causing havoc. The TUC has fallen foul of the change with some courses not fundable at all and others considered to be at duplicate levels (e.g. if one person wants to do two reps courses) and hence not eligible for funding. Work is going on nationally to rectify this situation. Other trade union partners are still considering how best to respond to the QCF. As to the rest of our short course provision, from Christmas we no longer expect to be able to run the Ruskin Learning Project, Ransackers, Independent Studies, residential short courses or the Summer School in its current form. We are devising a new 'full level 2' course called Certificate in Lifelong Learning for Work and Study which can be taken over a period of 4 to 10 weeks. This can be used as a re-invented form of the Ransacker Project, as well as to help people get back into work or to progress to higher level courses at Ruskin. Watch this space as work on this new qualification progresses.

3. Property Strategy

The contractor for Phase 1 has been on site since late March. This phase involves refurbishing four existing buildings – three residential blocks and the Smith Building which will house offices and one teaching room. The second phase will move across the site to construct the new Academic Building, incorporating the new library, and to undertake associated works in the grounds. The funding package is now fully in place and, though we are living with practical issues associated with decanting and co-existing with a building site, all is now going forward.

4. Recruitment

Summer School is recruiting well. We still have places on long courses for this autumn and would particularly welcome help with spreading the word about the Certificate of Higher Education. This gives students a free first year of university-level education and can lead to a degree at Ruskin. It should be very popular at a time when there are not enough university places to go round. Sincere thanks to the Fellowship Executive and to the Student Ambassadors who are all giving sterling help with recruitment, as are many other staff and students. Ruskin has had more presence at union conferences this year and this is leading to firm enquiries about courses.

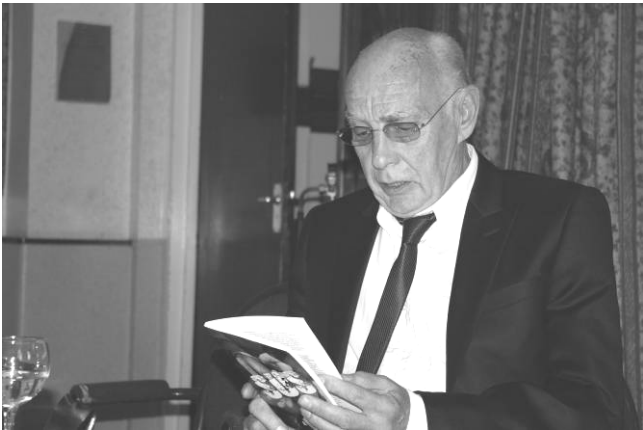
5. Conclusion

It has been an uphill journey to get where we are but it will all be worthwhile when the new and refurbished College is launched in autumn 2012. For a taster of what is to come, do consider booking courses and events into Stoke House and the Beatrice Webb Building from October. There will be a total of 40 en suite rooms and four very nice classrooms. Hope to see you there.



2010 Ruskin Writing Competition

The 2010 Ruskin Writing Competition, in honour of the late Alistair Wisker (a former Creative Writing tutor at Ruskin), had three worthy winners. The poetry category was won by Sue Rose-Wray and the winning piece of prose was by Desmond Logan. A third category, for a sonnet, saw Zoe Ansell winning a prize donated by Brian Abbott who himself won the first ever poetry prize, five years ago. This year's judges were Barrie Keeffe, Gina Wisker, Helen Kidd, Steve Attridge (all pictured 1st picture, bottom row) and Audrey Mullender. Also pictured are the prize winners, Zoe, Sue and Desmond (1st picture back row). Barrie Keeffe, who wrote the film script 'The Long Good Friday', is pictured (bottom picture) reading from his play 'Sus, which has just been revived and also made into a film.



Winning entries:

PARTY ANIMALS by Sue Rose Wray

David Attenborough is coming to dinner.

His jacket jingles with jungles,
an ocean deep in each pocket,
a smile full of diffident wolves.

Time-lapsed

brush-combed clouds

scud-scudder

around his head.

He brings a frozen desert dessert,

Incan chilli-chocolates

and a bunch of wild flowers

trailing

hummingbirds;

neptuning their wings.

His boots,

the seven league pair,

stand by the front door.

No treading steppes into my carpet.

For he's as poised as a porpoise

schooled in conduct

sociably sonar scanning.

Entirely natural

and seldom solitary.

Sipping spring water he'll say,

"there's nothing common
about the common dolphin.

Leaping for joy

clicking cowboy

of the sea, corralling



up spates of sardines
glittering like tins.
Bait balls
in splintering whorls.”
Unanimous small fry swarm,
unsafe in the shallows,
as doll-eyed, dull-eyed, dead-eyed
silent sharks,
radiator gilled,
cruise the sidewalks,
stalk seafood,
belch a bit
and pick their teeth
with Pilot fish.

Over our Moules Marinieres,
once mussels; wrenched,
clenched, desperate as limpets,
prised
from mossy glossy rocks,
I’m baleened, beluga’d,
blown off course
by the whale in his wineglass
erupting wild whalesong
by plankton lantern light.

David looks up.
His gaze scrambles
a feathered battalion;
Egyptian eye-linered gannets.
Max Factored apricot and cream,
painted and mated for life;
Pharaohs freed from papyrus tombs.

“Watch them wheeling.”

By candlelight

they spread-eagle,
deltoid to diver.
Hiss their fire-arrows
into the sea.

Lean mean fishing machines,
vapour trailed
by cloudbursts
of champagne bubbles.
Oh, David!

Down where the sun has no warmth,
peaked perma-frosted
water-ice caverns —
More sorbet, David?

We turn hard to port,
walnuts crack like bone.
Fair-tradewinds coffee mistrals
his sundowned brow.

His eyes now drowsy
as dormant volcanoes.
Stay David,
melt the frozen wastes
of my white bed,
my aeon-rippled ice-floe sheets.
Sleep David,
go deep.
Skipper your green glacier galleon.
Odyssey east, voyage west,
head north, search south
find me the place
where the blue whale mates.



Stars that fall by Zoe Ansell

This sonnet is about a necklace my grandmother brought for me. She had put it into an envelope with my name on the front, but died before she could give it to me. It was found in one of her desks and given to me some time later, and I treasure it greatly. The necklace is beautiful; a burnt orange star on a chain and a smaller one next to it, and I have always loved stars. It makes me sad that I never got to say thank you to her, so I like to think me attempting a sonnet about it would have been some kind of thank you.

Crisp white envelope, slashed with one straight fold
halved the size to squeeze in the drawer with mink
and pressed campsite flowers of summer's gold.
Ribbon handwriting in once new, blue ink
fluttered across the front and chose my name,
my hand curls curiously. My heart beats fear.

Time's fingerprinted seal, is this a game
of yesterdays I wish to meet? A tear
lost in regrets smudges the ribbon trail,
and I pull out the stars that fell to me,
she must have caught and chained during the
gale.

The necklace spins and suddenly I see,
though she is gone, it's never for that long.
I wear the star she sent me with time's song.

Blue White and Pure – Desmond Logan

The long walk and three flights of stairs left
Izráel weak and tremulous. Like a worried child
holding close to a favourite toy for comfort, he
placed his right hand on his head and
thoughtfully adjusted his black silk yarmulke.
He took a clean white handkerchief from his
overcoat pocket, shook it open and slowly
mopped his withered face, white beard and
wispy side curls. Relics of troubled times and
hardship were etched in deep seams around his
eyes, reflections of the straggle of black clad
villagers, small traders and artisans, trundling
their few belongings westward as they fled from
yet another pogrom in Russia. Often in his
dreams he would see the mocking smile of the
youngest of a group of soldiers lounging by the
roadside, as he spat into the plate of beans,
before reaching it down to the outstretched
hands of the begging child, who took it to his
starving parents huddled in the rain. The little
family shared the beans gratefully and gave

thanks to God. 'Hunger is a stern master,' he
thought, 'and now the nightmare starts again.
Hitler will surely reach for Poland, and in doing so
will plant his jackboot on Czechoslovakia. So
little time left.'

The pendulum clock on the peeling blue
wall made the only sound in the dingy office. The
fat man stared unblinkingly across the table at
Izráel's bony white hands, his skinny, wasted
frame, listened to the rasping breath.

'Have you decided how many?' he said, his
flat white-moon face furnished with a monstrous
moustache and black eyes completely devoid of
emotion.

'Three,' said Izráel.

The fat man leaned forward, the stench of
his putrid breath hanging between them. 'In this,
timing is everything,' he whispered. 'It won't be
easy and no one will wait for stragglers. Are they
fit for the journey, the hardship?'

'Don't worry about it, they're young and
healthy; I won't be with them.' Izráel's voice
shook slightly as he counted on his fingers. 'My
daughter Rachel, her husband Moise Grunhut,
and their son Leo; he's only fifteen, but he's a
good boy, strong. Thank God, he has a good
heart.'

He attempted to wipe a furtive tear from his
hollowed cheeks surreptitiously, so as not to
show weakness, but the fat man's piggy eyes
missed nothing. Izráel was well aware that he
wasn't interested in sentiment, only the integrity
of his operation, which in these perilous times
was very profitable.

'You know the price; can you make it?'

'We agreed the price already,' Izráel said,
his voice low and secretive, eyes scarcely visible
beneath the wrinkled brow. 'But as I told you, I
have no money. Sadly therefore, I am forced to
pay you more than double, maybe three times.'

He adjusted the fringes of the prayer shawl
around his waist, fumbled inside the waistband of
his trousers and drew out a small black leather
pouch, from which he took a single folded paper,
three inches by two inches. He placed it between
them on the table.

The fat man took a white linen cloth from
the desk drawer and carefully spread it like a
napkin across his lap. Slowly he unfolded the
paper and with podgy fingers smoothed it flat.
The eyes betrayed little of his excited avarice as
he looked at the single brilliant cut diamond.



With his right hand he extracted a small loupe from the recesses of the waistcoat straining over the bulk of his enormous belly. Holding the loupe close to his left eye and using a pair of long tweezers in his left hand, he grasped the diamond expertly at the girdle and raised it until the little finger of his right hand rested gently on his left thumb. In this steady position, he swivelled his chair towards the window to get the full benefit of the north light. There was a long silence as he studied the gemstone, occasionally adjusting his hands to rotate it gently in the tweezers with the ring finger of his right hand so that he could examine it from every angle of its facets and at every level of its depth.

‘Nice colour,’ he whispered, almost inaudibly.

‘White, blue white,’ said Israel, ‘just a kiss of natural boron. This is rare and very desirable.’

‘I see no inclusions,’ said the fat man.

‘It’s a clean stone; blue white and pure. A couple of points under eleven carats,’ said Izraél.

The fat man sighed, sucked audibly on his yellowed teeth, and carefully replaced the diamond in its paper folder. The silence seemed interminable as he sat staring at the tiny packet on the green leather of the desktop, his fingers like ugly white slugs crawling slowly through the damp undergrowth of his heavy Polack moustache. He had underestimated this old Jew. Maybe he should have asked for more. Finally he looked up at Izraél.

‘Consider it done. Within four weeks they will be out of here on their way to England.’

‘You know the value of the goods,’ said Izraél, with more hope than conviction, recognising that he was in no position to bargain. ‘Maybe you could help me; maybe consider a small cash adjustment?’

‘My friend, things are very bad now, everybody selling, nobody buying. Trust me to get your family out. Really that is something beyond a price.’

As they shook hands, the diamond deftly disappeared into one of the numerous pockets of the fat man’s waistcoat.

‘*Shabbat shalom,*’ said Izraél, placing his mink hat over the yarmulke on his head.

‘Yeah, *shalom,*’ said the fat man.

Latest achievements of former History students

History students at Ruskin are certainly a creative – and hard-working — bunch! We are delighted to report that Tim Phillipson and Melanie Reynolds, who were students on the Certificate in Higher Education in History at the turn of this century and are still regular attendees at Public History events at the College, have both recently successfully completed their PhDs at Oxford Brookes University. Tim’s work analysed the sick poor and the quest for medical relief in Oxfordshire from about 1750 to 1914. He looked at ways in which the sick poor navigated the complex relief process and how this provides unique insights into the ‘English way of welfare’.

Melanie’s thesis concentrated on working class women in the north of England – a topic she first looked at in her CertHE project on striking women and men in Yorkshire for which she won the G D H Cole History prize. For her PhD, Melanie analysed the extent to which northern working class women were to blame for a high infant mortality rate. She takes issue with both contemporary reformers and subsequent historians.

Nigel Carter, who recently completed his MA in Public History with an oral history dissertation on aspects of the lives of African-Caribbean elders in Oxford, is continuing his studies by embarking upon a PhD in the Working Lives Institute of London Metropolitan University. John Siblon, some of whose work for his Public History MA has already been published in the *History Workshop Journal* and in the edited collection *People and their Pasts: Public History Today*, is also starting a PhD. John will be working with Professor Joanna Bourke at Birkbeck College of the University of London on ‘Memory, the British Empire and Remembrance after War’. He will be analysing the way in which the contribution of colonial forces in the two World Wars of the 20th century are remembered. This study of commemoration flows from both his MA work and his activity in the Black and Asian Studies Association, together with related research and campaigning.

Bill Whitehead, a former CertHE History student and union activist, now lecturing at the University of Derby, recently completed his PhD on adult education. While at Ruskin, Bill wrote a wonderful, prize-winning, oral history dissertation on nurses’ campaigns against the poll tax. Nursing is a continued theme in his PhD thesis, part of which is being published by *Nursing Times* as ‘Is nursing an oppressed profession?’



David Douglass, NUM activist and History student with Raphael Samuel in the 1970s, recently launched his latest book, *Ghost Dancers*, on the 1984-5 miners' strike. David has explained, 'The book sets the record straight. Uniquely it looks at the post-strike period and provides a hands-on view of the last generation of miners and their union.' The title was inspired by the last stand of the native Americans in their efforts to retain their culture and dignity: the book records the last stand of the last generation of pitmen and their communities.

Other former students are also recently in print. Liz Leicester, a recent MA graduate has had aspects of her dissertation on new ways of looking at the Leeds clothing workers strike of 1970 published in the *Scottish Labour History Journal*. Indranee de Silva has won the cup for the best original poem at the Bath and Mid-Somerset Festival and also the trophy for the highest marks in all the senior classes with her poetry, all of which, she says, 'is centred in some way on memory in the ways we considered it in Public History'. Former MA student, Anna Robinson, is running creative writing workshops in Wandsworth on how to write poetry and short stories using material in archives. Her own first edited collection of poetry, *The Finders of London*, is published this month by Enitharmon Press.

Last, but not least, Sally Morgan, one of the graduates of the first cohort of the MA in Public History, recently emailed to say 'Something amazing just happened'. Several of her MA assessments had been published previously, including one on Braveheart. But Sally was emailing from New Zealand, where she is now Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Massey University, to say that this piece was being re-published by Sage in a definitive compilation entitled *Popular Culture*. Sally's piece will take its place alongside re-printed essays from Theodor Adorno and Stuart Hall! As Sally said, 'Excellent result for an essay I wrote as a Ruskin student... a testimony to the teaching and the quality of the course'.

Dr Hilda Kean
Tutor in History and Dean

President's Page

What does the future hold for us?

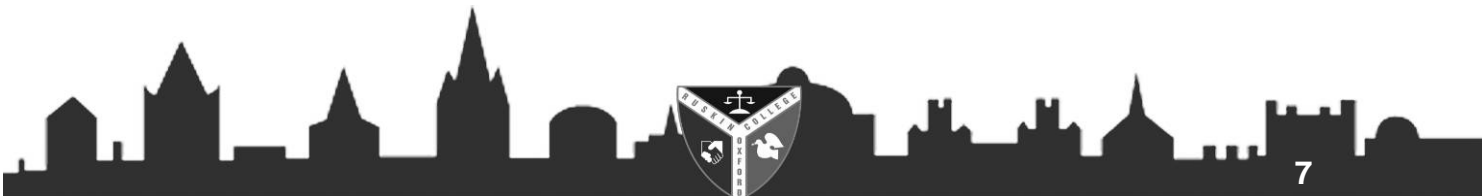
The general election is over and the political system in the United Kingdom faces an unprecedented outcome with the strange alliance of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats into a Coalition government. Ruskin College, like all public sector organisations, will come under scrutiny. However the College may be faced with two issues that cause concern. Firstly, the need to reduce financial deficits may impact on funding for the College. Ruskin draws funding from both the further and the higher education budgets so is threatened on both fronts. The College is currently labouring under a 3 per cent cut and there could be worse to come.

Secondly, the adult education at Ruskin, as we all know, is liberal adult education. It is not driven in an instrumental way by employers, but is aimed at developing the individual to have the knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to play a part in their own transformation and to support the development of their communities, wherever and whatever these communities made be made up of. However the values underpinning education at Ruskin are those of the left of the political spectrum – which these days are more likely to be called 'progressive' values.

Over the coming months we will see how the Coalition deals with the public sector in general, and progressive institutions in particular. Watch out for speeches from David Willetts MP who is Minister of State for Universities and Science and John Hayes MP who is Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning.

From the Fellowship's perspective we need to be asking questions around how we can support the College in the future. One very positive way is to help the College to increase the number of people applying for places at Ruskin. A strong demand for Ruskin places makes arguing the case for funding and resources so much easier. The Fellowship is currently forming arrangements with local libraries and colleges around the country to help the College publicise its courses and to support, in a small way, the recruitment of students.

In addition, over the past year the Fellowship has produced three Briefing Papers on Adult Learning, a Training Pack for members of the Fellowship's Executive Committee and is currently debating, in a typically lively Ruskin way, proposals for changing the Fellowship's Constitution.



Having said all of that, we too in the Fellowship have to ask some fundamental questions about our role in the future, if we are fulfilling needs identified by the College and students, both current and past, and what we can do to improve and develop our organisation. We would invite you to come and join us in this project.

Debbie Hollingsworth (President, Ruskin Fellowship)

Alan Shepherd (Acting Secretary)

Student prizes

Ruskin College awards eight academic prizes annually (see the table below). They are endowed by a variety of people, in each case either by the individual themselves, or in their honour or memory. Many of the prizes have been offered to Ruskin students for a number of years and, over time, the full nature of the reason behind the prize and the individual's association with the College may not always be fully remembered. In this and future issues of the Newsletter, we will from time to time feature particular prizes or their winners.

We begin with the Robert Addy Hopkinson Trust award. Robert Addy Hopkinson was a wealthy Yorkshire industrialist, whose will directed that this legacy be used for 'the education of the people of this country in socialist principles'. The educational trust that bears his name promotes adult education, grants scholarships, provides assistance to students to attend courses or undertake research work, and promotes discussion groups to encourage study by adults on a range of subjects of an educational nature. The Trust may give grants to individuals undertaking training of a non-vocational nature and to adults whose educational opportunities have been limited by social or economic circumstances. In the past, assistance has been provided to students attending Ruskin College in Oxford and Coleg Harlech in Wales and the Trust has regularly supported Ruskin College's Hardship Fund.

If you would like to tell others more about one of the Ruskin prizes or your experience of winning one, please contact either:

Guy Langton: glangton@ruskin.ac.uk
or

Stuart Maidment: smaidment@ruskin.ac.uk

Mark Young Prize	Awarded to four students for work in the Labour Studies or trade union-related area
GDH Cole Prize	Awarded for the best piece of work in the field of Labour History
Henry Smith Prize	To be awarded on the basis of: a) an appraisal of the quality of the applicant's work in Economics, and b) an essay on some aspect of economic development or international Economics
Margaret Marsh Memorial Prize	Awarded to: a) a woman student, and b) a student from overseas who has contributed most to College life
Bill Sargent Book Award	Awarded to a student in Labour Studies, preferably from Swindon or Wiltshire, for the purchase of books
Robert Addy Hopkinson Educational Trust Award	Awarded to a student who has displayed outstanding achievement
Carole Fraser Prize	Awarded to a Social Work student for the best piece of work in the subject
Lynn Allen Prize	Awarded to a student who has displayed a) outstanding achievement b) distance travelled



Ruskin College Council in 2010

As most of those involved with Ruskin will know, our College Council brings together a large number of knowledgeable and influential people who offer us the benefit of their advice and experience. Unlike the Governing Executive, whose members are elected from the Council, it does not make strategic decisions or become involved in financial or policy-related matters, but gives the College a gentle steer.

In addition to staff and students, the Council is made up of representatives from a broad range of organisations who share Ruskin's ideals - trade unions, equal opportunities charities, environmental institutions, other educational establishments, City and County Councils, research organisations – and two Members of Parliament. Meetings are held twice a year and we are very appreciative of those who take the time to come along and offer us their support.

There have been a number of interesting nominations to our College Council over the past couple of years, taking the total membership to 80. New relationships have been forged with Stonewall, the Institute of Fundraising, COIN, Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council, Popularis, the Institute for Public Policy Research, the Citizens Advice Bureau and The Smith Institute.

Historical associations, too, remain vital to the College. The long-standing affiliations with the trade union movement have gone from strength to strength, with the opening of the TUC Centre and move of the Organising Academy here to Ruskin, and the representation of 18 trade unions, alongside the Webb Memorial and Robert Addy Hopkinson Trusts, on our Council. Sharing experiences with those from other further and higher education providers and those in the local and national political arena continues to be invaluable, as is the input of former students who remain actively involved in the Council through the Ruskin Fellowship.

We will continue to draw upon the wealth of expertise and support that Council provides as we face the challenges of the next few years – the redevelopment of the College and relocation to the Ruskin Hall site, meeting the requirements of the forthcoming Equality Act and assuring the future of the College in the context of a changing funding regime and political climate.

In future issues of the Newsletter, we hope to bring you news of individual Council members when they do or achieve interesting things.

Rebecca Cox
Clerk to the Governing Executive and
Council

Redevelopment update

We are delighted to report that a number of things required for the capital project to proceed have fallen smoothly into place. The signing with Exeter College for the sale of Walton Street took place and Ruskin now has a £1.14m deposit in the bank. The contract with the Phase 1 builders has been signed and the residential block refurbishments have begun with the Webb Building. Learning and Skills Council approval is through, both for the project overall and for all the contracts with builders. A loan has been arranged from the Co-op Bank to complete the funding package. The final stage of planning permission is expected later in June. Architectural designs will then proceed in more detail with the project still on track for completion in 2012. Finally, we won our appeal against the planners' dislike of our car parking scheme. Our neighbours lobbied hard but we had the law on our side.



Good news

WLM@40 (email to the Principal)

I just wanted to thank you for allowing the [WLM@40](#) conference to be held at Ruskin College in March and for your very interesting, informative and amusing 'Welcome' speech which really got the two-day event off to a good start.

I have already emailed Louise Livesey and her team to thank her and them for all the work they put in, both in organising and in running the event with such efficiency, good humour and patience. I really hope they get lots of other 'thank you' emails and letters. Everyone involved deserves them and I hope they will add an 'extra something' to the record of the event.

I was really inspired by ALL the keynote speeches, I enjoyed the cabaret very much and I appreciated all the sessions/ workshops/papers, etc, that I went to.

I have also already emailed Helen Kidd to thank her for her really amazing, innovative and creative workshop, one of the best I've ever attended.

I picked up various pamphlets about Ruskin short courses whilst I was at the conference and—as it's ME time now that I've retired as a lecturer myself—I'm now thinking of doing either an Art or a Creative Writing short course (or both) in the Ruskin Summer Term and/or Summer School .

Thank you again and kind regards,
Dr Angela M. Brunt

Helen Williams becomes our new Academic Group Administrator for Health and Social Sciences

This year, it was sad to see the much loved Liz Bird leave her role as Academic Group Administrator for Humanities and Social Sciences, but for me this was an exciting opportunity to take on a more senior role at Ruskin.

I started working for Ruskin back in 2003, when I joined the Social Work department as their secretary.

I was working with a great team and, once I got my head around everything put in front of me, I was able to create new systems, find easier ways of working, take on additional work and be proactive.

In my new role as Academic Group Administrator, whilst I am still at Ruskin working with familiar faces, I feel a little bit like the new kid on the block as I find my feet and learn how the processes differ from my previous role. I am enjoying getting to know a new team. I am well aware that I have a lot more to learn - but then Ruskin is all about giving people learning opportunities and I am pleased that I have been given this opportunity to expand my skills and knowledge.

I look forward to working with everyone for many years to come.

Helen Williams

Contacts

The 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 Secretary, WEA
Phone: 0191 4618100
Email: ntodd@wea.rg.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



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