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Winning 'Star' Performance

After 22 years as Head Cook at Ruskin College's city centre site, Evelyn Shaw has deservedly won the 2008 National 'STAR Award' in the Support Role category from the *Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)*. This year has seen a record quality and number of nominations, so it is a real achievement that Evelyn has won this national accolade. Ten people were short-listed for 10 different categories in a competition that attracted over 2,500 nominations.

On Monday evening, Evelyn travelled to the awards ceremony held at Old Billingsgate, London, with College Principal, Professor Audrey Mullender - who nominated her. Professor Mullender said: 'I hope that lots more people will now come and sample Evelyn's superb meals on our short courses – recruiting all year round and including over 50 Summer School courses next July. Evelyn's fabulous cooking is a vital part of the very warm welcome Ruskin extends to all adults who want to return to learn'. See www.ruskin.ac.uk for more information.

Evelyn was presented with a glass star in a presentation box for being one of the ten finalists in her category, and as the overall winner, also received a personal cheque for £500, a heavy cut glass trophy and the chance to apply for up to £1,500 worth of equipment in her specialist area of work at the college.

Held annually, the LSIS STAR Awards recognise and reward the unsung heroes and heroines of the further education and skills sector who have made a difference to the quality of learning that millions of people across England receive every day.

Just as an army marches on its stomach, Ruskin thrives on Evelyn Shaw's food. Forget turkey twizzlers, everything Evelyn cooks is freshly prepared and the recipe for her famous savoury rice is a closely guarded secret. She has even refused to tell John Prescott her secret recipe but, even so, as a famous past student of Ruskin College, Mr Prescott sent Evelyn his personal best wishes, which were read out when she went up on stage to collect her award.

Evelyn understands that a vegetarian reading Women's Studies, will want something different from a baker on a Trade Union Studies course. Individuals with particular religious, cultural or health needs have only to confide in her and she will prepare a special dish for them - despite feeding up to 100 hungry people every mealtime. She makes a point of marking festivals and special occasions with the appropriate cuisine and decor.

But Evelyn has also made impressive efficiency savings, reducing meal costs in line with financial requirements. She sails through difficulties and developed a 'can do' attitude before the expression was invented.

Based at Ruskin since 1986, Evelyn is the first person people ask after when they come back to visit, and yet she has no idea what an important member of the team she is to Ruskin College. It is wonderful to be able to acknowledge her 22 years of dedicated service and show her that she really is a star.

Question

Which subject team at Ruskin got every first year student to join a union this year?

For answer, see page 6



Principal's Page

Let me report first on academic matters.....

The new TUC Centre has been staffed from 1st September, with Nigel Williams as Co-ordinator and Rachel Hemstock as secretary. A launch was held at lunchtime on 5th December, following the meeting of Ruskin Council that morning, with Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, kindly officiating. Already, the work of the Centre is proving most exciting. Nigel Williams has joined the local Trades Council and is making excellent links in the region. Unison has already held a course at Ruskin under the aegis of the TUC Centre and we have had visits from a number of other key unions.



Welcome to new tutors in all four of the Academic Groups. I am pleased to report that we came into the new academic year fully staffed and with cover engaged for one member of staff on sick leave.

This year's visitation will be by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), under the heading of IQER (Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review). The QAA will be here for two days in February 2009, looking at higher education provision in a further education setting. This visit is what they call a developmental engagement' (i.e. conducted jointly with us and with no judgement made on this occasion), on the topic of assessment. They will be back for further visits in 2010 – for a developmental engagement on widening participation – and a summative visit in 2011 on which judgement will be passed. Our higher education work is unusually highly developed so we hope to do well.

We have the usual full programme of revalidations this year, including the BA in Social Work and the BA in International Labour and Trade Union Studies, plus the Certificate of Higher Education in Law. We are also considering a Foundation Degree in the area of Creative Writing.

On the property side.....

The strategy at long last feels 'real' with contractors now on site repairing the crinkle crinkle wall. Until today, I had never stood next to the side of the wall that faces down onto the fields. It is simply wonderful – imposing, majestic, ancient and special. The National Trust hasn't got one but Ruskin has! Eventually, staff and students will be able to use the fields for leisure purposes, starting with a fitness trail that should be constructed early next year.

Penoyre and Prasad have commenced their design work on the Academic Building and the refurbishment of the Rookery and have also been asked to work on the overall site which has major infrastructure and landscaping needs. ADP, a highly experienced firm based in Oxford, have been appointed as architects for the residential blocks and will also refurbish Webb, Biko, Stoke and Smith House. Both firms made presentations to this November Governing Executive meeting, to obtain approval for their ideas. They, together with the dining hall team, are obtaining the costings we will need in order to prepare the funding bid to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). We are deep in conversation with the LSC about the educational, property and financial aspects of the bid and we are working hard to communicate how we differ from mainstream FE whilst also taking their advice as to what they need to see from us.

Since the overall timetable for the project was set by the last Governing Executive in the summer, it has been possible to start thinking about business continuity over the next three years. The biggest challenge will be in 2010/11, while the Academic Building and new residential accommodation are being built. It is my view that, with some careful manoeuvring, some temporary changes or combinations of use for particular spaces within the College, and some second and third years living out for that year, we should be able to remain in operation within our own space, thus avoiding paying revenue charges for overflow space elsewhere or for hire of portable buildings. I will continue to work on the detail of these proposals and take them to relevant teams and committees since students starting degree courses this year will be affected in their third year of study with us and both they and staff need to be fully consulted on what is proposed.

More leisure news.....

Ruskin has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Oxford City Football Club which includes two hours per week use of OCFC's sporting facilities in term-time by Ruskin students and publicity for Ruskin's courses.

In conclusion.....

It is exciting to see the capital project and curriculum strategy leading us through to having a college fit for the twenty-first century. It is this that will do most of all to attract new students and new partnerships to Ruskin and I am delighted to be staying on, to play my part in it. With this in mind, we are starting a series of conversations with major trade unions and other organisations, to ask them what they want to see Ruskin offering in three years time and how we can work together most effectively. Let me know if you would like your union or organisation to be at the top of this list.



A few words from the new Fellowship President

Introduction

I attended Ruskin College 1997-1998 studying Sociology and politics. I then went on to get a degree at Sussex university in Sociology. I have lived in Brighton for ten years and still love the city. I am a civil servant for the Ministry of Justice.

Fellowship

The Fellowship 2008 reunion was one of the best in recent years. Hazel Blears MP came and gave a speech. There was lots of food & drink. It is always nice to catch up with old friends. I had some great debates over the weekend.

The Fellowship really needs new blood. We need to look at how the Fellowship can attract individuals below the age of 30 to play a role. I hope to have a positive effect on the next reunion to make it more of a cross section of ages.

Ruskin's future

This is such a delicate subject and always will be. No one wants to lose the Walton Street site. But we don't want to lose the college! I look forward to better accommodation on the Headington site. Students/conference delegates now demand ensuite facilities. Gone are the days when students/conference delegates were prepared to rough it. I, like many, am concerned about funding of the new projects. We are now entering into a recession and a General Election will happen within two years. What would a Cameron government mean to the LSC? Will there be a public spending freeze? When I applied to go to Ruskin College I didn't care where it was I cared about what it was!

A big thanks

The Fellowship was lucky to have individuals like John Hurlston who was a very approachable President. I think everyone wishes him well for the future. Bob Matthews has stepped down as Membership Sec. He was a valuable source of information over the years. I hope he will still be available to give advice over the next few years. We all send him thanks and good luck for the future. And a big thanks to all those who continue to steer the Fellowship.

George Scott
President of the Ruskin Fellowship



Radical pasts: radical futures

We are delighted to report that Kynan Gentry, formerly an historian employed in the New Zealand government within the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, will be a Political Research Fellow at the College for the next year. The Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust has funded Kynan to work on the History Workshop Movement papers and related material within the collection of the late Raphael Samuel held in the College library.

Kynan will be researching the papers and exploring the traditions of history-making developed within the Movement. He will also be considering the implications of those ideas today within adult education.

In addition to researching and writing, Kynan will be working with Dr Hilda Kean, Tutor in History, organising the 9th Public History conference at the College on September 19th 2009. The conference will be looking at what we mean by radical history-making today and will draw on Kynan's research. Further details will be available in the new year and can be obtained by joining the Public History mailing list by emailing Eamonn Deeley at: edeeley@ruskin.ac.uk

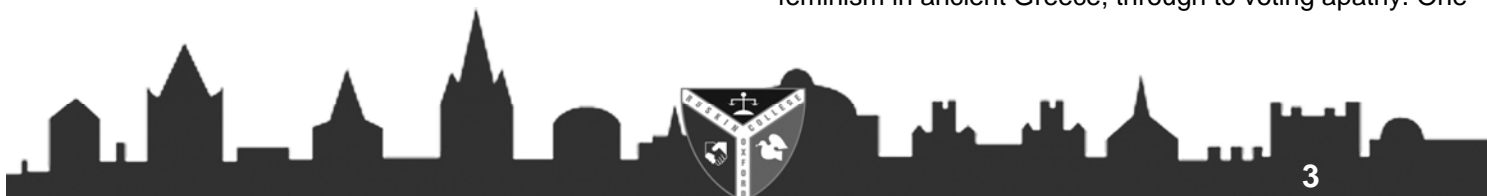
Hilda Kean

Shining Beacons

Ruskin is delighted to announce that it shortlisted up for a prestigious Association of Colleges Beacon Award, in the category of Life Long Learning. This is particularly pleasing as apparently 50 colleges applied for this award. We are even more proud to have reached this stage with what was our first ever application, apparently no mean feat.

The scheme for which we were short-listed was the Ruskin Independent Study Scheme (IS), a new initiative that has built upon the best practice of the Ransackers Scheme. The IS scheme has been developed in response to a growing demand from older learners for the opportunity to progress their educational achievements. Successful Ransackers return to the College for a further term, to undertake an extended study that builds on the skills, knowledge and experience that they have gained from experiencing residential education for the first time.

Projects which IS students have completed are diverse, ranging from conflict between Islam and Christianity, feminism in ancient Greece, through to voting apathy. One



of the striking aspects of the scheme has been the ways that students engage with praxis; for example, they have undertaken projects on aspects of society or social policy that have affected their lives, such as whether the increase in home tuition by parents reflects a growing concern at the levels of bullying occurring at school.

Though it marvellous to have been short-listed for a national award, perhaps the most rewarding aspect of IS has been witnessing the personal growth that students have experienced. To quote one beneficiary:

'the new found confidence Ruskin gave me opened a door through which further educational adventures could be pursued'.

Penny Halliday and Anne Norville

Georgia, Russia and Ukraine connect at Stoke House

Twice this year Stoke House has been the site of strategic connection between near neighbours. In March, and again in June 2008, the Webb Institute at Ruskin welcomed civil society activists from former Soviet states around the Black Sea for its second 'Leadership in Democracy' programme.

Shared purpose

"The energy and optimism is inspiring" says Jenny Barrett, Development Officer of the Webb Institute. Just a few days in Oxford can make a substantial difference, as young leaders get to meet, eat and study with others committed, like them, to human rights and social justice in the region.

"The group was very diverse, but united by the same interest in changing the ways their organisations worked."

"It was very interesting to work with NGO representatives since, in my country, contact is rare."

Discovering interests in common on neutral ground opens the way to a more hopeful future and unlocks the potential of individuals' talent and expertise. Here, too, Ruskin is enabling experts in their field to analyse, express and develop what they already know and aspire to.

"I discovered how to apply my knowledge."

"I was able to see just how a strong organisation can be developed."

Tools for the job

Funded by the Webb Memorial Trust, this timely initiative meets a pressing need.

"The programme is very important for our trade union, as democracy, equality and, most of all, leadership are the symbols of progress and modernisation for our organisation, considering the new challenges and threats now facing our workers."

New skills and ways of thinking and working are taught in creative, interactive ways that really stick. During an additional, women-only, week, Webb Institute Co-ordinator Joanna Cain helps participants to identify gender equality issues in their workplace and devise techniques and strategies to tackle them.

"Working in small groups, solving practical and theoretical problems was useful and dynamic".



Partnership for success

Follow up project work is assigned and submitted via the Moodle-based Institute website, which also serves as gateway to the wider community of former Ruskin students in the region of Eastern Europe beyond the EU. So the process of debate and discovery can continue and broaden.



"It leaves you wanting more – to learn new ideas and to meet new and interesting people."

For more information about the Webb Institute and its programmes, visit our website:
www.webbatruskin.org



Ruskin Expert Talks about Bevan

Dr Paul Martin, Public History Tutor at Ruskin, will feature in a documentary on the life of Anuerin Bevan, architect of the NHS. The programme - to be called: 'Greg Dyke on Nye Bevan' - will be screened on BBC 4 and repeated on BBC2 at a later date. In it, Dr Martin will talk about the Vermin Club, formed by middle class Tory voters to heckle Bevan following a remark he made in a 1948 speech about the Tories being lower than vermin. Dr Martin published an article on the subject 11 years ago, and apparently no-one else has written about it since.

Andrew Leonard Jackson

The College recently received this letter:

I was very happy to learn that you were able to locate Andrew Jackson's (my father's) academic records while enrolled as a student at Ruskin College. I received this news the day after the thirty-ninth anniversary of his passing. These records represent another piece of the puzzle that my sisters and I are trying to reassemble in an effort to document our father's life, particularly as it relates to his service to the people of Guyana and the world at large.

My father's death, at 63 years of age on October 28, 1969, was sudden and, therefore, very traumatic for our family. However, during his lifetime our lives were so morally and spiritually enriched that we were able to build upon this foundation in facing life without him.

Dad served the people of Guyana faithfully. Upon his return to Guyana, after serving in World War II and obtaining his diploma from Ruskin College, he was immediately elected President of the Post Office Workers' Union (later Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Union). He held this position each year until his death. He was also instrumental in forming the Federation of Union of Government Employees and served on occasion as Vice President of the Trades Union Council. During 1957 to 1961, he was a member of the Legislative Council of British Guyana.

My father was very forthright in his approach and spoke up ceaselessly against practices and policies that he perceived to be wrong. Not surprisingly, he earned himself the nickname of "Stonewall" for his unwavering adherence to his convictions. He has been described as the "Father of Responsibility and Guardian of Liberty" in Guyana. I believe that Ruskin College, which played a part in shaping his views, would be proud of his legacy.

There is still a lot of work to be done in the task, we, his surviving children, have set ourselves in documenting his life. Our commitment, however, will make the task easier.

Once again, on behalf of my sisters and the rest of my family, I would like to thank you very much for your prompt response to my request.

Ingrid Jackson

The new Trade Union Education Centre

The TUC, in partnership with Ruskin College have opened a new Trade Union Education Centre, located in Ruskin's city centre site on Walton Street. The centre will offer a full range of TUC courses for Union Reps, Health and Safety Reps and Union Learning Reps. We will also be delivering courses organised for TUC affiliated unions such as Unison who have requested courses for their reps covering subjects as diverse as negotiating skills and equal pay.

A Risk Assessment course will be taking place on the 23rd of October and reps will be attending from the Department of Work and Pensions, Ministry of Defence and the Local Authority.

The centre will be officially opened in December by TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber.

Commented regional education officer Rob Hancock: *"Having TUC Education provision at Ruskin is great news for union reps in Oxfordshire. If the enthusiasm of all Ruskin staff to support this work is anything to go by, it should be a fantastic success."*

Nigel Williams is the TUC programme co-ordinator for Ruskin College and is responsible for liaising with trade union branch officials and reps from TUC affiliated unions throughout Oxfordshire. He delivers courses to trade union reps, health and safety reps and union learning reps.



A former Civil and Public Services' Association activist, he was a student at Ruskin in 1997-1998 and then attended the University of Wales, Aberystwyth where he studied International Politics.

Upon graduation, he worked for the TUC's Learning Services team in the North West, where he helped to recruit union learning representatives and establish a number of workplace learning centres. Nigel was then asked by the TUC to set up a Trade Union Learning Centre at Stockport College as part of the TUC's Digital Divide project which delivered training for trade union officials and literacy, numeracy and IT courses for their members.

Nigel said *"I feel honoured and a little bit humbled to be offered the chance to come back to Ruskin to set up the new TUC Education Unit. Denis Gregory was my personal tutor when I was a student here and he is now my line manager, although he prefers the term 'lateral work colleague'! There is a tremendous amount of goodwill*



towards the College from those within the Trade Union movement. I've already lost count of the number of reps and full time officials who I have contacted about the courses who have said "I was at Ruskin in the 70's/80's/90's/00's...what can I do to help?" At the moment, we're simply letting people know that from January we will be offering the full range of TUC courses for Union Reps, Health and Safety Reps and Union Learning Reps. We're keen to work with all unions to help to make sure that their reps get the training they need to represent their members at work."

For further details about courses please look on the website www.ruskin.ac.uk or contact Nigel Williams at: nwilliams@ruskin.ac.uk or telephone: 01865 517810.

unionlearn
with the Southern and Eastern Region TUC

DLitt Awarded

The Principal of Ruskin, Professor Audrey Mullender, has practised what she preaches about lifelong learning and submitted work for a further degree. Based on some of her published work, she has just heard that the University of Warwick will make her a Doctor of Letters (DLitt) at a graduation ceremony in January 2009. The DLitt is a higher doctorate, at a level above a PhD. Whereas the PhD demonstrates that the candidate knows a great deal about a subject, the DLitt shows that they have gone on to write a great deal about it. Professor Mullender's academic discipline is Social Work and the work she selected for submission included a major study of the relatives of adult adopted people.

Congratulations

Philip Davidson has been awarded a Helena Kennedy Foundation award to continue his studies after completing a CertHE in Law. He has now gone on to Staffordshire University.

Phil Davison receiving his award from Baroness Helena Kennedy at the House of Lords



Hearty congratulations from all at Ruskin.

Ransackers Reunion at Ruskin a Roaring Success

Ransackers, taken from the Gaelic word for researchers, is a nationwide scheme aimed at older learners, giving them the opportunity to live in a residential college for a term and complete an independent research project. The inspiration for the scheme came from an ex- Ruskin tutor, Vi Hughes, sponsorship for the Ransackers scheme has come from Better Government for Older People and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Ruskin is the only surviving pilot site for the Ransackers project, and since its inception four years ago; over 200 Ransackers have passed through its doors. The projects that Ruskin Ransackers have completed are diverse, ranging from innovative ways of coping with mental health distress to the place of theatre in contemporary society. One of the hallmarks of the scheme is the ways in which Ransackers have progressed. One of the first Ruskin Ransackers has just successfully completed her BA Degree in English Studies at Ruskin; others have used their project to lobby government and one Ransacker has gone on to deliver workshops on how to deal with stress. All agree that the experience has,

'Taught us so many things, most of all that it is never too late to learn'

Ruskin is proud to have been chosen to host the recent Ransackers Reunion, attended by 35 ex-Ransackers. Run as a three-day short course, the themes of the Reunion were: raising awareness of Ransackers, dissemination of projects, including the best use of IT to do that, as well as media literacy. Delegates also had a lot to say on the topic of funding for adult education, galvanised into action by rousing presentations from the College Principal, Audrey Mullender and June Kathchild, the Ransackers Development Officer. Government beware...

Such was the success of the course that we will be hosting a similar three-day event at Easter 2009, the theme of which will be climate change.

If you would like to know more about Ransackers, please get in touch with the Short Course Team at Ruskin on: 01865 517807 or email shortcourses@ruskin.ac.uk.

Penny Halliday

Answer to front page question:

'Social Work, by inviting the local Unison rep to a meeting during Induction Week. Well done!'



John Rollo Appleyard

We are very sad to pass on the news that John Appleyard, Chair of the Ransackers Association, died suddenly in November.

John was in the first pilot cohort of the Ransacker Programme at Ruskin in 2004 and became Chair of the Ransacker Association on its formation in 2006. He was a tireless campaigner for educational opportunities for older people and will be much missed.

Obituary

Pat Utechin 1928—2008

Having served on a Voluntary Aid Detachment in the Second World War, Pat came to Ruskin.

In 1947, she began working for the economist John Hicks, at Nuffield College, before being poached by Max Beloff, then Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration at All Souls.

In 1962, she became personal assistant to the philosopher Isaiah Berlin and his wife Aline, from their home in Old Headington.

After a break of seven years in Glasgow, she returned to Oxford and continued to work with Berlin until his death in 1997.

Berlin had insisted that, if she returned to Oxford, she would have to work for him again - and only employed temps in her absence.

From the mid-1980s she began volunteering her time at the Gatehouse drop-in centre in St Michael's Street.

In 1951, she married Sergei Utechin, a Russian academic and wartime refugee and, during the 1960s, worked with him on three books.

She also researched and wrote three well-received books of her own: *Epitaphs from Oxfordshire*, *The Trumpets Sounded*, and *Sons Of This Place*. She worked for many years with Henry Hardy from Wolfson College, until shortly before her death.

She passed away at St Luke's Hospital in Latimer Road on June 18 2008.

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.

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