

# ECA News

Summer 2004

## Wider Benefits of Learning – evidence begins to take shape

*Alan Skinner reports on a dissemination conference*

The Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning have been engaged on this vital and exacting task since the autumn of 1999. The Birkbeck / Institute of Education team investigated the benefits that learning in adult life brings to individuals and society as a whole. They have analysed benefits for individuals, families, communities and nations using data from longitudinal studies, including the National Child Development Study of 1958, followed up at ages 7, 11, 16, 23, 33 and 42.

Evidenced judgements are available on issues such as:

*If adults participate in learning, does their health improve and do they become more socially integrated?* YES!

*Can we be confident that adult learning does have effects?* YES – because adult learning contributes to positive cycles of progression in many aspects of life  
*How big are the effects?* SMALL – but significant – because emotional states, attitudes and behaviours are quite stable in adulthood.

*Do different types of learning have positive effects?*  
*Non-accredited, employer-provided, academic accredited* YES, definitely

*Vocational accredited:* YES, but to a lesser extent

*For men and women:* YES

*For people with low qualification levels to start with:* YES  
*Does adult learning benefit economic capital?* This is already widely acknowledged and is the basis of much of the Government's thinking in post-school learning

*Does learning benefit social capital?* YES! – greater educational and skills inequality = lower social cohesion  
*But can learning have some negative effects?* YES, some negative effects have been identified by research.

All intriguing stuff. Presentations from the Centre are to be recommended – another is planned for September -not because they tell us anything particularly new that we didn't already feel was the case, but because we have waited a long time to have long-held popular beliefs proven scientifically and backed by academic rigour.

*Details of research reports, papers and a September conference from:*

[www.learningbenefits.net](http://www.learningbenefits.net)

020 7612 6291

cmh@cls.ioe.ac.uk

**Goodbye to all this?**

See inside ... ..



## Regional Conference East of England Adult Learning in Local Communities – Towards a positive future

*Hazel Dunn's collation of delegates' responses tells the story*

Delegates heard presentations on Basic Skills, Voluntary Organisations, Widening Participation, Partnerships and an LSC view of The Future of ACL. Bassingbourn Governor Prof Brian Johnson's address on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the College's Henry Morris-style Community Education was well received: "*proudly presented – and rightly so*"; "*Inspiring speaker spoke from the heart*"; "*Very informative – and real!*" being some delegates' reactions. "Bassingbourn showed what true community education should be like"; "As soon as you walked in there was a wonderful atmosphere"; and "**ECA events always make me reaffirm my commitment to ACL provision**" reflected the event.

### Reunited in Cams via the ECA

*Prof. Brian Broombridge (left) and David Holbrook with Barbara Isherwood at the conference.*

**Brian is president of the ECA. David, author and literary commentator, now Emeritus Fellow at Jesus College, was Bassingbourn's first Community Tutor. Barbara, present Community Tutor, is a member of ECA's Regional Committee.**



## New members for the ECA

A warm welcome to new members and returnees after a gap  
**Individual members:** Christianne Wakeham, Herefordshire; Debbie Heath, Cambridge; Lesley Sluman, Market Harborough; Jane Inman, North Yorks; Graham Eldridge, Ipswich; Rose Horspool, East Yorks; John Payne, Somerset; Carol Smith, Ledbury; Judith Robinson, Henlow; John Spawton, Wilmslow; Chris Minter, Brighton. **Corporate members:** Witchford Village College, Cambridgeshire; South Wye Learning Centre, Hereford; Enfield College; NEARIS, Manchester; Family First, Norwich; Coventry Adult Education Service.

### CHAIRMAN NOMINATED FOR NATIONWIDE AWARD

The Nationwide Awards for Voluntary Endeavour have informed Bernard Godding of his nomination under one of their four categories – for his individual contribution to the sustainability and development of ECA regionally and nationally

# Goodbye Wansfell



Wansfell Adult College recently celebrated 50 years of adult learning on the edge of Epping Forest. However, in a review of premises, Essex County Council has decided to offer the college to other council services, putting it on the market if there are no takers.



**"Adult Residential Colleges have made a significant contribution .... I expect the Council to ensure that there are appropriate funding arrangements for these colleges which recognise their unique contribution"**

**DAVD BLUNKETT**  
"Remit Letter" to the LSC Nov 2000

In the Independent earlier this year, the Executive Director of LSC Essex, Alison Webster, said ... ..

"The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has not "abandoned adult residential colleges" ("Save our college", Education letters 26 February). It does not fund Wansfell College and never has. The college curriculum is not one that is covered by our funding remit.

While it is true that the LSC makes a grant to the Local Education Authority (LEA) to support adult learning, that grant is administered by the LEA alone. We can confirm that there has been no reduction in LSC funding for adult and community learning in Essex.

The responsible LEA, Essex County Council, is reviewing its adult community learning programme and its capital assets, and any decision on the future of Wansfell College is for the Council. But both organisations are continuing to work closely together to ensure a comprehensive learning service for adults across the county.

The LSC is indeed responsible for safeguarding adult learning of all types, and does so daily in nearly 400 further education colleges across England. It is currently examining at a national level the best way of making sure that non-qualification-bearing courses are protected and enabled to flourish in the future."

The County Council Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Libraries, Cllr Elizabeth Hart, said in the June edition of Adults Learning (NIACE) ... ..

" I was extremely disappointed by your article in the May edition of your magazine regarding the closure of

Wansfell College. You quote some of the college's lifelong learners who state it is important for people to have the opportunity to learn in a secure environment and to make social contact. Surely you would not argue with my intention to widen that opportunity?

You do not mention that by closing Wansfell College, we will be able to make 3,000 extra places available for people across the county, including the over-65s, who make up a quarter of those who take our courses. It would be absurd of me to ignore the fact that Wansfell is underused, when there is such a need elsewhere. My prime concern is to provide high quality adult learning services for all our residents and to encourage lifelong learning among older people and vulnerable groups. That is what I intend to do."

## Beneficial Partnerships with Residential Colleges

*Chris Minter reports on a success story*

At the ECA conference in Autumn 2002 at Northampton, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea ACL staff were inspired by a presentation by Janet Dann, representing the Adult Residential Colleges Association (ARCA).

They engaged a consultant to explore possibilities of taking a group of adult learners from the Borough to a residential college for a different experience from their normal adult learning courses. A group of adults, recruited through a housing association, subsequently attended a specially designed arts course at Urchfont Manor in Wiltshire.

This was extended to family learning as part of a Borough strategy to increase participation of Asian women and their families in adult learning. It was so popular that two courses had to be run in parallel – families from north Kensington travelling to Pendrall Hall in Staffordshire (combining practical pottery sessions with a visit to Wedgewood); families from the Worlds End estate in Chelsea travelled to Wye Valley Arts Centre.

The benefits experienced were those that Janet outlined:

- The intensity and total immersion in the subject meant that learners were reluctant to leave their classes for food or to go to bed!
- The fellowship and shared experience made it feel like one great big family group
- Ambiance and atmosphere encouraged concentration on learning and the good food and comfort made people more relaxed and made a big change to busy city life.

Many of these are echoed in the 2002 DfES report into **'Widening Participation in Learning through Adult Residential Provision: An Evaluation'** which is well worth reading - available on the DfES website.

It is with sadness that we read of centres disappearing when they offer so much to groups of learners as well as individuals. Our family learning trips cost approximately the same as a literacy / numeracy course and involved roughly the same hours of learning.

I would urge all of you to try the residential experience of adult learning and not to let a valuable piece of our adult educational heritage disappear.

## Changes at the top of LSC

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in England, excluding universities. Established in April 2001, the Council operates through 47 local offices and a national office in Coventry.

As part of a restructuring programme "aimed at reducing costs and increasing efficiencies", the LSC is now organised nationally around two groups reflecting its core purposes. Caroline Neville previously Principal of Norwich City College leads the "Learning" Group. David Way leads the "Skills" group. There are also new 'regional' groupings of the local LSCs under Regional Directors:

North East – Chris Roberts

North West – John Korzeniewski

West Midlands – David Cragg MBE

Yorkshire and Humberside – Margaret Coleman

East Midlands – David Hughes

East of England – Mary Conneely

South East – Henry Ball

South West Malcolm Gillespie

London – Jacqui Henderson CBE and Verity Bullough

### New Local LSC Executives

- David Ansell for LSC Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. David was Principal of Henley College;
- Mick Brown for LSC Nottinghamshire. Mick was Principal of South East Derbyshire College;
- Philippa Langton for LSC London North. Philippa was Director of Strategic Development and Quality at London East LSC;
- Fiona Blacke for LSC S.Yorkshire. Fiona was Chief Executive of Tees Valley Connexions;
- Mike Bell for LSC Coventry/Warwickshire. Mike was Chief Executive of Birmingham/Solihull Connexions;
- Martin Lamb for LSC Berkshire. Martin was Director of Young People's Learning at National Office;
- Vivien Cutler for the LSC London East. Vivien was Assistant Director of Education, Curriculum and Community Services within Camden Education Department;
- Richard Greenwood for the LSC Northamptonshire. Richard was Managing Director of Scouting 2007

### FROM THE ARCHIVES – publication extract

PHOENIX No. 8 **March 1955** - The Folk House, Bristol. K.T. Elsdon: "Brian Groombridge's problem over the selection and training of tutors must surely affect most of us. The ECA might make an important contribution here. If the necessary funds could be extracted from the Ministry of Education there would surely be few more varied training grounds for future tutors than our centres. This applies equally to "Liberal Adult" and "Further" education."

### Could Konrad's aspirations yet be met?

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the ECA attended the London consultation event arranged by the projected "Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council". As the lead officer from the DfES for this staff development initiative told Bernard Godding, "You were in at the start". This allusion by Jonathan Mackey to the timely and influential ECA conference in March 2003 confirms ECA's effectiveness in addressing major issues through its networking and consultative activities – especially as Mike Hosking, a member of the SSC Shadow Board was a speaker at the ECA's Bassingbourn Conference in March.

VIEW AS EXPRESSED OR INTERPRETED ARE THOSE OF CONTRIBUTORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT VIEWS OF THE ECA

## A brief dream –

A member centre based in a listed building on an historic site received a telephone message – "Could someone call back regarding use of the building for filming in the Summer?".

Cue for dreams of a £250K+ payout, hobnobbing with stars, legions of publicity ... until the marketing person called back for the details. "Many thanks, it's a student of ours who wants to film a 45-second drug-related scene in a public toilet – and can you give access to a power supply, please?"

Oh well, dream on!

*Feed-back from the Spring edition:*

### Highway Robbery? - Happy ending

The three member centres whose travelling classroom was taken into county council ownership under 'best value' asset re-arrangement have gained a happy outcome to their predicament. Their lease charges have been 'paid' by an increase in budget to the same amount from central funds. Simple wasn't it? What goes around, comes around! Who says bureaucracy doesn't work?

### Bury Arts to get new Home

We promised to bring you up to date over arrangements for a new home for the Bury Arts & Crafts courses. Bernard Godding has spoken to Lynda Walker who understands that the contract for the former Halifax Building Society offices has been signed but the move of classes has been put back and is unlikely until the end of October. The subsequent relocation of the Lancashire Fusiliers Museum into the present Arts & Crafts building will take place sometime later. The ECA's Committee in the North-west is in consultation with the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council and a strong partnership has developed between the Association, community and college based adult education workers and museum learning specialists in Greater Manchester. This has led to a decision that this autumn's ECA conference and AGM should take place in the City.

### 2004 ECA Annual Conference connection

**Dates for your diary are 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October** for the whole conference, with the AGM taking place on 20<sup>th</sup>. The venue is the Manchester Museum. This is also the day when there will be a **special private viewing** for our delegates of the British Museum's prestigious travelling exhibition '**Buried Treasure**'.

**Call 0870 161 0302** [conferences@e-c-a.ac.uk](mailto:conferences@e-c-a.ac.uk)

### National Conference March 2004 Birmingham Treasure Houses for Adult Learning Linking museums & heritage sites with centres / colleges

This was certainly a 'feel good' conference judging by the comments from delegates. The tone was set by the first presentation – from David Anderson from the V&A. 'Lots of ideas', 'passionate', 'inspirational' said the evaluations. Presentations on ICT, working together, touching the past, plus a host of workshops made for a refreshingly interactive conference, judged as 'fascinating', 'very useful' and 'varied, interesting and relevant'. 56% of responses gave the conference an 'excellent' or 'very good' grade.

The ECA conference programme is grant-funded by  
department for

**education and skills**

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

## ECA in Wales

### Cymdeithas Canolfannau Addysgol

The Welsh Committee has reconvened. Jimmy James, Vaughan Williams (both former Wardens of Oxford House, Risca) and Roger Haughton (ex-Warden of the Settlement, Pontypool) have set the wheels in motion. They would love to hear from old and new supporters – contact Vaughan on

**01495 750974**

**ebw@parkcottage.freeserve.co.uk**

## Alf Peacock

*Based on an obituary by Martin Wainwright March 2004 The Guardian*

Alf Peacock, who has died aged 74, played an essential part in making York's streets among the safest in the country - and was a tireless promoter of lifelong education as warden of the York Educational Settlement.

Alf was born in Impington, Cambridge, to parents who worked in the local jam factory. He left school for an apprenticeship as an electrician, regular work in the difficult postwar period. He got his second chance for education through his trade union. Officials encouraged him to apply for a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford. He then took a first degree at Southampton and an MA at the London School of Economics.

His gratitude for the wide world of knowledge belatedly opened to him decided him to work to achieve the same for others. In 1960, he began almost 30 years in charge of the York Settlement which was founded by Quaker Arnold Rowntree in the "hungry '30s" to create the sort of opportunities from which he had benefited.

He established a regime based on warmth and welcome, using extra-mural classes from Hull university and the Workers' Educational Association. His delight in learning came with a sense of fellowship and sharing, which prefigured his later work on the licensing bench.

Alf also published books on radicalism among fenland workers, a biography of the York "railway king" George Hudson, and lively pamphlets on local issues. He took a doctorate at York and led annual tours of the first world war battlefields, proof reading volume 59 of his specialist magazine on the subject, Gunfire, during his final illness.

He was secretary of York Educational Trust, a charity set up after reduction in the settlement's numbers led to its closure in 1987. He remained a familiar figure, working an allotment and writing a jazz column in the local paper.

**• Alfred James Peacock, educationalist and magistrate, born May 30 1929; died Jan 24 2004**

## Remember E-Day

In the June edition of "Adults Learning" (NIACE), our Chairman, Bernard Godding, proposes that in commemorating D-Day, we shouldn't forget another, almost synchronous anniversary – the passing of the 1944 Education Act. His article describes how newly discovered papers in our archive throw some fresh light on this remarkable wartime achievement.



The screenshot shows the ECA website interface. At the top left is the ECA logo and the text 'Educational Centres Association'. To the right is a photograph of a conference. Below the logo is a vertical navigation menu with links: Home, Mission Statement, Contact Us, Conferences, Publications, International Work, and Links. A banner at the top right reads 'Partners in Lifelong Learning'. The main content area features a large heading 'DfES Sponsors ECA Website' and a text box stating: 'ECA information, news and publications will soon be on the internet. The website is currently being built with Government sponsorship. [www.e-c-a.ac.uk](http://www.e-c-a.ac.uk)'

## ECA WEST MIDLANDS – Hereford Conference Feb 2004

A packed day on rural adult learning included presentations on perspectives, LSC issues and partnerships, plus 8 workshops. An excellent attendance despite the poor weather, with 83% judging the various elements of the conference to have been good or better, with networking opportunities valued.

## ECA helping to "TEACH"

A successful joint bid for EC funding with organisations in 5 countries will result in ECA supporting an e-learning project on citizenship. This is a perfect example of ECA values in action – from classroom to national and international arenas.

## The ECA is ...

- **an inclusive organisation** which values the widest participation from all involved in adult learning in pursuit of a dynamic partnership
- **open to all who are actively involved in the education of adults** whether as learners, professional educators, voluntary workers or supporters
- **a registered charity devoted to all aspects of adult learning**, supporting the pursuit of quality, continuity, reliability, clarity and coherence across the curriculum, at all levels of study, in all sectors and across all ages and abilities
- **an active organisation** with a lively programme of national conferences, local seminars, publications and a track record of robust campaigning in support of adult learning opportunities
- **a democratic body** with a national structure supporting the formation of regional bodies
- **funded by** membership fees, donations and grant aid from bodies such as the DfES
- **open for membership** as an Individual Member, a Corporate Member (centre, college, or voluntary organisation joining on behalf of its members) or as an Associate
- **ready to respond to your interest** - you can contact the UK Office ... ..

**0870 161 0302**

**eca@e-c-a.ac.uk**

**ECA, 21 Ebbisham Drive,  
Norwich NR4 6HQ**

