



Ministerial Speech: *The Environment as an Informal Adult Learning Issue*, is a huge success

The ECA's latest conference, entitled *The Environment as an Informal Adult Learning Issue*, was held on Tuesday May 6th, at Central Hall, Westminster. The conference was held as a part of the ECA's response to the DIUS Consultation: *Informal Adult Learning: Shaping the Way Ahead*. Attendance at the event was varied with a good cross section of people representing the targeted audiences; education, environment and media.



The keynote speaker at the event was **David Lammy**, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills. Lammy opened his speech with a Chinese proverb that "*If you want one year of prosperity, plant corn. If you*

want ten years of prosperity, plant trees. If you want one hundred years of prosperity, educate people." This immediately linked the 2 key themes of education and the environment firmly together, and provided an excellent hook for the rest of the conference to hang on.

To view a full report of the conference please visit the relevant section of our website at: <http://www.e-c-a.ac.uk/conference-the-environment-as-an-informal-adult-learning-issue/>

Attendees Feedback

"The whole conference was really creative and inspirational"

"A good opportunity to discuss and formulate consultation responses"

"A very thought provoking event"

"It was great to listen and reflect on the issues and to hear other people's concerns"

"Food and event were excellent- Thank you!"

"Well organised- a good range of short presentations with plenty of time given for discussion and networking"

Fantastic Speakers contribute Vision, Passion and Action

The ECA would like to thank the speakers at the conference, who were from a wide range of different organisations, each giving an interesting, and slightly different, point of view on their reason for seeing the environment as an informal adult learning issue.

The event was impressively chaired by **Professor Bob Fryer** CBE, Chief Learning Advisor to the Department of Health, and speakers were **Sophie Duncan**, Learning Executive at the BBC, **Professor Shirley Ali Khan**, a leading thinker in the field of sustainable development education, **Mark Walton**, Head of Every Action Counts, **Alan Tuckett** OBE, Director of NIACE, **Peter Templeton**, Director of Education, Quality & Strategy for the Workers' Educational Association. **Joy Greasley**, the National Federation of Women's Institutes Vice-Chair and Chair of the Training Committee, was the final speaker of the day.

Ms Greasley referred to the WI's attitude to Adult Education as being one of "vision, passion and action" This struck a particular chord, as we believe that it encapsulates the ECA's attitude to its role concerning the Environment in Informal Adult Learning: we have the vision to see its importance, the passion to do something about it, and in holding this important conference we took action to ensure it is an issue that remains in the limelight.

Further Ministerial Endorsement for ECA Conference

Joan Ruddock, Minister for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Waste welcomed the ECA's initiative to hold a conference on the Environment and Informal Adult Learning saying: "40% of the CO₂ emissions in Britain are the direct result of actions and decisions that we, as individuals make, each and every day. I warmly welcome this initiative which brings together a distinguished panel to help draw out the key messages which the Government, funders and learning providers need to address." She continued to say that: "If the environmental challenges which face us are to be met, it is imperative that we unlock the talents and potential of people in every community to help make a difference. I fully support the Educational Centres Association's objective of promoting the informal learning needed to help people understand 'greener living'."



DIUS Consultation: *Informal Adult Learning- Shaping the Way Ahead.* The ECA Responds



"The Association is deeply concerned that despite the warm words of John Denham regarding the consultation on the future of Informal Adult Learning, repeated in my presence at the launch event for Adult Learners' Week, the reality will be a continuing decline in adult learning. Against a background of global recession, Treasury

intransigence, the Lisbon strategy and the Leitch report, it seems there is no space or grace for publically funded learning that is not instrumental in nature. The upshot of this could be the fragmentation of provision, a breakdown of the mechanisms that both the 1920 and 1944 Education Acts recognised as means of supporting social cohesion and a learning culture. We fear that despite the good intentions there will be a continuing stratification on the basis of age and social status that is inimical to good governance and social justice. We must hope that sectional interests will not prevail with Government, and that an open and coherent structure will emerge from the deliberations that will necessarily follow the consultation exercise."

Bernard Godding, ECA Chair

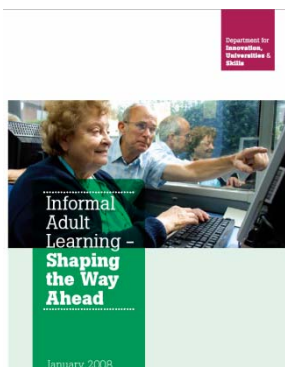


"As the title of our latest conference demonstrates, it is a great concern that a huge issue such as the environment is only touched upon briefly in the consultation document. The dynamics of society at present are such that the protection of 'the environment' is being presented as our most important responsibility. Yet isn't the

Informal Adult Learning arena a good place for education about this issue to be introduced? This seems to me a clear oversight, and one that needs to be addressed."

Susie White, ECA Environmental Projects Officer

HAVE YOUR SAY!



Do you have something to say about the DIUS consultation, *Informal Adult Learning-Shaping the Way Ahead*? The deadline for responses to the consultation has been extended to 12th June, so there's still time.

To make your response to the consultation simply visit:
www.adultlearningconsultation.org.uk

Also inside this Issue of the ECA News:

- * Adult Learners' Week
- * The launch of our new Green Family Project
- * "Plant a Tree in '73"- Thirty five years on

ECA in the Press

Have you or your organisation had any attention from the local press? If yes, then the ECA would like to hear from you! The ECA is intent on encouraging the widest possible debate about Adult Education within its limited resources. Already this year:

- Bernard Godding has advanced the ECA's agenda with letters (which have been printed) to The Guardian, and Adults Learning.
- The ECA's conference was featured alongside an article by Bernard in Adults Learning.
- The ECA has featured twice in the Every Action Count's newsletter
- More than 15 important agencies ran advertisements for the ECA's latest Conference on their websites.

To let us know about your media successes contact us at:
info@e-c-a.ac.uk

Adult Learners' Week

This year's Adult Learners' week was held from 17th-23rd May. Adult Learners' Week is all about celebrating and raising awareness of the fact that we all learn everyday often without realising it. ECA Chair Bernard Godding attended the launch of the week at the QEII Centre in London's Westminster. Here he reports:

"It seems hard to imagine that back in the summer of 1991 when I was on the NIACE Executive we were discussing the bid for funding something innovative called Adult Learners' Week. At the same meeting there was consideration of work with learners who are deaf or hearing impaired. Thus when I sat in the QE2 Centre this year and witnessed three government ministers offering congratulations to 27 individuals and groups I recognised not only what their achievements had been but also those of hundreds who have been similarly recognised since the first such event in 1992. Not only those learners but the teams behind each and every one of them that provide practical and moral support to make their learning journeys special. Those same teams contribute immeasurably to the lives of their communities through the hundreds of thousands of other successful learners every year of which the award winners are the glowing icons. Amongst the latter it was a great delight to see so many with disabilities and in particular hearing impairments finding their place in the spotlight."

To read more about Deaf learning turn to page 4

"Plant a tree in '73" – 35 Years On



In 1973 a project was launched by the then Minister of the Environment aimed at encouraging people to go out into their own localities and actively engage with the environment by

planting trees. The "Plant a Tree in '73" project was a government lead initiative that involved large numbers of people up and down the country. Whilst not all of the trees planted were maintained and survived, those planted by ECA Chair, Bernard Godding have done.

In his role as parish councillor Bernard encouraged the community to plant trees in the grounds of the same school where he had started his career as a teacher (pictured above). 35 years later these trees have flourished, and are providing shelter in the school playground for children the same age as his grandchildren are now.

Bernard says; "I was just starting out as an adult education Centre Head and I offered a linked course '*Landscape with Trees*' to explore the links between art and environment"

Did you plant a tree in '73 and want to tell your story? Then write to us at info@e-c-a.ac.uk and let us know. We believe reminiscence from those involved with environmental agendas is an important legacy for future generations.

ECA's Archive Explored

Mark Freeman, an Academic Researcher from the University of Glasgow, will begin research work on the ECA archive in the New Year. Freeman has published widely on modern British social history, and his current work is focused on the history of Educational Centres and Settlements. We are excited for his exploration of our significant archive to begin, as we know from the late Konrad Elsdon's work that it includes the period leading to the 1944 Education Act. (Elsdon KT, *Crisis of Opportunity*, NIACE, 2003)

Do you have any ECA archive material? Are any records from your organisation being explored? If so then we want to hear from you. Just drop us a line at: info@e-c-a.ac.uk

New Members

Welcome to the new members that have joined the ECA since our last newsletter went to print:

- Northern College
- John Burgess

Welcome back to Barton Peveril College.

ECA Launches New Green Family Project



for sustainable, healthy living

During Adult Learners' Week the ECA launched its latest project entitled *Green Family: Shared Engagement in Environmental Learning*. This project will have a family learning focus whilst still incorporating the ECA's eco concerns.

The project aims to research and pilot strategies to explore environmental issues through family learning, and to develop and deliver family learning workshops and short courses which bring together children and their parents to learn together in very practical ways, about caring for and sustaining the environment, healthy life choices and why these are important.

The ECA is planning to launch the project in three areas: Norfolk, Leicester and Herefordshire. With this in mind the project aims to have three active partners - current providers of family learning in three local authority areas who will host Green Family Project staff. The project aims to support families from disadvantaged communities, in rural and urban multi-cultural areas; families for whom a greener family lifestyle will bring distinct benefits in terms of health, family finances and quality of life.

This exciting project is currently in the planning stages with funding bids in progress. More information will follow in the next newsletter or keep checking the news section of our website at: www.e-c-a.ac.uk/news

NEC members support Every Action Counts (EAC)



The Association is delighted to announce that two thirds of the ECA National Executive Committee had committed to become Every Action

Counts Community Champions, before recruitment ended on 31st May. In the latest EAC newsletter the ECA were applauded as one of the most committed and environmentally sustainable organisations. Environmental Projects Officer Susie White says "I'm delighted with the success of the project, and hope everyone involved continues to make their Every Action Count."

Although the ECA is no longer receiving funding for Every Action Counts work, the project is continuing until 2009. If you would like to find out more about Every Action Counts visit: www.e-c-a.ac.uk/every-action-counts

Focus On: Judith Robinson



The Alban Neve Deaf Association (ANDA) is a relatively new member of the ECA. The aims of ANDA are to provide support for people with a hearing loss and provide a range of services that will help with empowerment and social inclusion. They also aim to provide representation and advocacy services that will enable deaf people to challenge issues concerning equality and discrimination, and to

address issues of access to services in Luton, Bedfordshire and surrounding areas. Judith Robinson is heavily involved with the Association. We caught up with Judith and asked her 5 important questions about her role:

How did you become involved in Adult Education?

This centre started with ESF projects to improve the quality of British Sign Language (BSL) with hearing people, as well as to train Deaf people to become part time adult education teachers. When Luton Borough Council asked the Deaf Association to "go out on its own" the trustees formed a training and education department to the new Charity, the Alban Neve Deaf Association, which is gradually developing.

What is the most interesting part of your present job?

Me personally? Learning about Deaf culture, and seeking ways to make adult education real to a group of people who are not used to being offered learning in their own language.

Could you tell us something about the range of learners that use your centre?

The training department focuses on links with the Hearing world, and learning for Deaf adults (Deaf with a capital D means that they use British Sign Language as their preferred language.) We probably have more Hearing people on our books at this moment. They come to us for BSL workshops and exam re-sits, for Deaf Awareness courses, and for higher level NVQs in BSL. In the autumn we will start our second cohort of Deaf tutor trainees, using the new PTLLS curriculum.

Could you tell us something about the learning programme you offer?

We offer BSL brush up courses, Deaf Awareness courses, high level BSL NVQ and are soon to introduce informal learning courses in BSL. If funding for a European project is successful, we will also be looking at citizenship materials for Deaf adults.

They say you learn something new everyday. What new thing have you learnt today?

How to operate my video camera so that I can make a tape of the TRUE story of the 3 little pigs in BSL!

Want to know more?

To find out more about this and other member centres, visit the centres section of the website at: www.e-c-a.ac.uk/centres
If you or your organisation would like to be "Focused On" in our next newsletter then contact us at: info@e-c-a.ac.uk

LeicestHERday Goes Green

The annual LeicestHERday event was held on 7th March, and this year it had an eco theme. Highlights of the day included a huge range of stalls and exhibitions, interactive workshops and free eco giveaways. The keynote speaker for the event was Penney Poyzer; Penney is a renowned author and broadcaster on Green issues. The ECA's Environmental Projects Officer, Susie White, attended the event to run an Every Action Counts stall and spoke to attendees about how making small lifestyle changes really can have a huge impact.

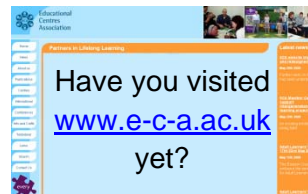
Off the back of this successful event the LeicestHERday Trust launched a "Suffra Green" blog and website to further promote their green campaign, where they have continued to support their Every Action Counts pledge and the ECA. To find out more visit: www.suffragreens.org.uk

Farewell to Rob Eschle



It was with great sadness that we learnt that former S&E Regional Chair Rob Eschle had passed away in April 2008. Rob Eschle was a member of the Governors at Harlow Adult Community College and a leading member of his local community which he had represented both on the District and County Councils. Through his good offices we came to know Lifelong Learning Minister Bill Rammell who, thanks to Rob, spoke at an ECA conference held in his constituency. The ECA's Chair & Treasurer, together with the former regional treasurer, attended his funeral. Our condolences go to Rob's family.

ECA Website continues going from strength to strength



The ECA website has continued to grow since its re-launch in December 2007. Site statistics show that the number of visitors to the site has increased dramatically; as has the number of pages each visitor is

staying on the site to view. Improvements are being made constantly to the layout and usability of the site. If you have any additional suggestions for improvements or comments to make about the website please contact us at: info@e-c-a.ac.uk

Stay in touch with the ECA

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NEWS AND VIEWS FOR THIS

NEWSLETTER: Send your comments to ECA NEWS

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