

E Brief August 2018

Introduction

This latest edition of the monthly ebriefs by WEA Scotland is tinged with some degree of sadness. The bulk of this ebrief is rightly focussed on the sad passing of Ron Milne from the North East Local Association. Ron was a long standing member of the WEA having joined the organisation in the late 1940's. He served on the Local Association as treasurer and remained actively involved with the WEA throughout his life. Regrettably I only met Ron once shortly after I joined the WEA in July 2016 and even that brief meeting gave me some insight as to why he will be sadly missed by all his colleagues and friends at the WEAA much more fulsome and appropriate tribute was written by Charlie Lynch and appears in the paragraphs below.

Tribute to Ron Milne by Charlie Lynch

"I was sorry to hear about Ron's death. He was a lovely man with a warm egalitarian nature. Without people like him Society would be the poorer, as would we without his kindness over the years, and his dedication to the simple premise that given the chance people will rise and flourish. There are few of his generation left in the WEA, a dwindling reminder of our connectedness to a working class who argued for change and helped create the institutions that, though threatened, we still hold dear.

I will always remember him for his critical sense and disappointment at the failure to deliver of those representing us. In terms of local democracy and how our city is run, though a shy man, he was never reluctant to express a view. I also remember his modesty and how overcome he was on receiving the WEA Scotland's service award at our centenary event in 2013. As long-serving treasurer of the North East Local Association, his diffident approach could sometimes be accompanied by mild disquiet if our bank balance fell dangerously low. Which it rarely did, though we were never rich.

Ron was a true Aberdonian, who loved his city and like any lover felt let down when he saw it falling short of what he believed was its generous and inclusive nature. Trained as a master carpenter he had a fine aesthetic sense for materials, their use and their context. He was repelled by the ugliness of some recent developments in the city.

Over the 30 years I have been associated with the WEA, those who joined classes expectantly as students and remained as voluntary members are the ones most alive in my memory. They give hinterland to the Association and connectedness to what we once were and at our best what we still are. Ron certainly encapsulated this.

His wife, Jessie, graduated as a mature student at Aberdeen University and taught English at Bankhead Academy. Their first exposure to the WEA were the public

lectures in Marischal College after the war and they remained dedicated self-improvers through education to the end. Both were exemplars of where adult education can take us.

I knew Ron was seriously ill, but he always seemed so present, so permanent. I'm sorry therefore that it has taken his death to put into words what he meant to me and I'm sure many within the Local Association".

Successes and News Features from Education Programmes

Syrian Refugees and North Ayrshire Council Partnership

Previous editions of this ebrief have rightly highlighted the excellent work being done by the WEA for Syrian Refugees in partnership with North Ayrshire Council. This partnership was recognised by the WEA at its Awards Ceremony last year when it was awarded Regional Partner of the Year across the whole of the UK. A number of local authorities across Scotland are looking at this partnership as a benchmark model for helping refugees settle in Scotland. It's really great to see that the work of Stewart Fraser and Aileen Pollacchi is now being recognised in the media. Links to articles in the Irvine Times and Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald are attached to this note.



Ardrossan & Saltcoats
Herald - 4th July.pdf



Irvine Times - 3rd
July .pdf

Falkirk Job Clubs Achievements

Ross Murray leads the Falkirk Job Clubs in partnership with Falkirk Council. These Job Clubs provide an invaluable service and source of support to their learners. Many of the attendees may have been out of work for some time or face incredibly challenging circumstances that has previously mitigated against them finding employment.

Ross works with the candidates on both a 1:1 and group basis looking to progress each learner closer to the point where they can achieve sustainable employment. This is sometimes a challenging and lengthy process but as the figures and quotes from learners below illustrate, Ross is making a transformational difference to both the individual learners and to the wider community

Number of Learners 86

Job Outcomes 32

Volunteering Opportunities Achieved 12

Progression to Further Learning 20

Achievement of Accredited Learning Qualifications 5

As ever, beyond the statistics are real people with real life experiences. Some of their comments on the Job Clubs are outlined below:-

“It was a relaxed atmosphere with no pressure, friendly and helpful. My computing skills have improved and it helped me find a job.”

Ronald – Grangemouth

“Thanks for all your help at the job club. I’m starting a job at McDonalds on Wednesday – it’s full time! I learned more at the club than anywhere else. I would definitely recommend you to people seeking work.”

Donna – Grangemouth

“Before I came to the job club my computing skills were very poor but now I can write CVs and apply for jobs by myself. I had worked for 35 years and was made redundant. Everyone has been very welcoming and helpful and I would have been lost without them. I have now found a job. This may not have been the result without the help I have received from the staff at the club. It was a very comfortable environment to learn. Thank you for everything.

Ronald – Falkirk

WEA in Work Learning in Glasgow

As well as helping get people into work via programmes like the Job Clubs, the WEA is also active in helping those who are in work enhance their skills and capabilities. Craig Finnie has provided two links below which outlines the impacts and differences these in work programmes make. The first is a link to Scottish Union Learning Annual Report which features a case study of a digital union course the WEA delivered in which workers with disabilities at the Royal Society of Blindcraft Industries acquired new digital skills through a film making class

<https://www.scottishunionlearning.com/resources/Annual-Report-Final.pdf>

The second link takes you to stories submitted by WEA Learners on creative writing courses to the Scottish Book Trusts 2018 National Campaign

<http://scottishbooktrust.com/writing/rebel/public/browse-by-title/all/>

WEA Women in the Highland Conference

Finally in this edition there is a link below to the video of the Annual Conference for the Women in the Highlands Project. This is the biggest of a large number of events organised across the Highlands by Andrea Johnson and Larissa MacDonald. Around 40 delegates attended the Conference to participate in a varied range of workshops and seminars and to hear the keynote address delivered by MSP Maree Todd

[WEA WITH CONFERENCE 2018-1080p-200MB-final.mp4](#)