



## Disability awareness group honoured at Education 'Oscars'

You may have read about the Democracy, Disability and Society Group in the August issue of Beans?

We're now delighted to report that the group's outstanding work has been recognised by the Standard Life Edinburgh Education Awards. DDSG picked up the award at a special ceremony at The Hub in Edinburgh on 4 November. The group which is based in Craigmillar won the Be All You Can Be category for their work campaigning for the provision of better services for disabled people.

The Lord Provost Lesley Hinds, who presented the award, said: "I am delighted that this piece of work is receiving this level of recognition. It is extremely important that we all become active citizens and help to improve quality of life for all of Edinburgh's citizens."

George Riddell, one of the group members who was presented with the trophy and cheque, said: "I felt quite honoured, emotional and proud."

The Standard Life Edinburgh Education Awards were created from a partnership between Standard Life and the City of Edinburgh Council to recognise and promote the achievements of staff and groups across the Education Service.

Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken, Executive Member for Youth Strategy and Education, said:

"This is our fourth year in partnership with Standard Life for the Education Awards. I am delighted to report that we more than doubled the number of entries this year and the standard was extremely high. This made it a tough job for the adjudication panel when it came to choosing the winning entries."

[www.ddsg.org.uk](http://www.ddsg.org.uk)

**B**OTH ANNE MCCULLOCH AND MYSELF attended a full day course in Deaf Awareness Training at the Edinburgh & East of Scotland Deaf Society, Albany Street.

Recently issues regarding deaf and hard of hearing students in core literacy provision prompted an exploration of some of the problems that deaf and hard of hearing learners experience in daily life.

Deaf is a commonly used word that has many facets, e.g. deaf people who use lipreading, spoken and written English language and deaf people using British Sign Language (BSL) as their first or preferred language and identify themselves as part of the 'Deaf Community'.

From a literacies perspective, it was important to understand that by law organisations must now make reasonable adjustments to ensure deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people have the same access to services and information as hearing people.

The Edinburgh Deaf Society offer a range of courses to individuals and organisations, including BSL, Deaf Equality and Communication Tactics.

Web: [www.deafsociety.org](http://www.deafsociety.org)

### Deaf Awareness

Dougie Bishop, Community Based Adult Learning





# WEA Celebrates its Centenary

THE WORKERS EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (WEA) is currently celebrating 100 years of learning. Founded in 1903 by Albert and Frances Mansbridge, the WEA is a leading national voluntary sector provider of community and workplace based adult learning.

Albert Mansbridge was forced to halt his formal education at the age of 14 but he felt it was the right of every working man to have access to further education and it was this thinking that encouraged him to start the Association from his kitchen with 2/6d saved from the housekeeping!

**'The consumers of education must themselves take an effective part in its provision'**

In 1905 the first WEA Scotland branch was founded in Springburn. It was followed by branches in Edinburgh in 1912, Aberdeen in 1913, Glasgow in 1916 and Dundee and Ayrshire in 1917. By the 1930s branches and student groups numbered around 20-25, peaking at 42 in the wartime 1940s. In 1993, the WEA Scottish Association and local Associations were formed.

There are now more than 100 individual and affiliated organisations in membership of WEA Scotland with a responsibility for governing the work of the Association and organising and promoting WEA education programmes in Local Associations, Branches and Student groups.

## WEA and Literacies

The WEA is committed to including literacy skills within every programme area and is one of the partners of CLAN Edinburgh.

The WEA's involvement with literacies is many and varied. They range from undertaking the fieldwork for the Scottish Executive's 'Listening to Learners: Consultation with Learners about Adult Literacy in Scotland' to promoting a suite of workplace literacies publicity materials for targeting employers, trade unionists and learners.

Vickie Hobson, CLAN project worker based at the WEA in Edinburgh, has been working with employers to help them become aware of the full impact that literacy and numeracy issues have on them and their staff. Some of the issues Vickie can help with include providing free, tailored literacies tuition for staff who have few or no formal qualifications, analysing the literacy and numeracy content of particular jobs and providing advice on making workplace documentation clearer and more accessible.

## R2L

WEA, in partnership with UNISON, developed Return to Learn (R2L) to help workers become more involved in learning. R2L is designed for workers who have few or no qualifications, who have had a poor experience of the education system, or who have been away from learning for a long time. R2L has been delivered to workers in all areas of the public sector for over 10 years, in which time thousands of workers have taken part in the course.

The R2L Partnership responded to the needs of learners by developing **Starting Points**. This new programme developed by WEA Scotland's Adult Literacies Co-ordinator is a 45 hour literacies learning programme for delivery in the workplace and is being piloted in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Midlothian.

CLAN Challenge Fund projects include the **Living Memory and Reminiscence Group**. This is aimed at older people who through the use of old newspapers and the internet, are encouraged to talk about and write down their memories.

**Salt of the Earth:** A Scottish Peoples' History was the final product of a history project run by WEA. Over a period of three years, 450 people in 43 different locations worked together to produce an archive of audio and video oral history recordings reflecting change in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland.

This is a small sample of the work carried out by the WEA.

The Workers' Educational Association remains unique in Scotland as the only national, democratically organised, voluntary organisation concerned exclusively with adult education. For more information go to [www.weascotland.org.uk](http://www.weascotland.org.uk)

PHOTOS: Albert and Frances Mansbridge (left) and WEA students at Newcastle Abbey College (right).

## Literacies Awareness Training

If you work with young children and young people, are interested in finding out about how you can integrate literacy into your existing programmes and would like help in starting up, improving or increasing the amount of literacy work that you do, then look no further!

On Wednesday 26 November, 1pm to 3 pm, there will be a Literacies Awareness Training course running at Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, 5 Moredunvale Place.

Another session will take place on Thursday 4 December from 5pm to 7pm at St Bride's Centre, Orwell Terrace.

If you would like further information or would like to enrol on either of these courses, please contact

Ann Breen, CLAN Project Worker  
Tel: 0131 469 3970  
Email: [ann.breen@educ.edin.gov.uk](mailto:ann.breen@educ.edin.gov.uk)

## Web Review

Ireland's National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has developed some web pages for learners at [www.literacytools.ie](http://www.literacytools.ie)

The materials are a mix of printable and online exercises and, if your computer has a sound card, the pages can run with speech. The exercises vary between short pieces with multiple choice questions, practical numeracy tasks and longer reading passages. The printable materials are divided into topics (e.g. Employment, Health, Hobbies, Memories of School) and the online topics are similar and are also categorised by skill type and level of difficulty. There is also a small selection of games.

**PROS:** There is a nice diverse mix of materials, many well laid out and illustrated with graphics. I particularly liked the (printable) materials on health.

**CONS:** The difficulty of some tasks does not seem to match the level: for example an exercise on 'Computer Speak' graded at Level 1 would be quite difficult for those unfamiliar with computers.

The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Resource Institute have developed pages apparently aimed at learners at [www.alri.org/esquare](http://www.alri.org/esquare)

The pages are a mix of advice and student writing. Topics covered include house buying, getting a job, choosing childcare and buying computers. The student writing is often in the form of 'virtual visits' with a mix of photos and text and sometimes an explanation of the planning students undertook.

**PROS:** Esquare is presented as a town square with a range of shop fronts to 'enter'. This is an attractive idea and a visual way of moving through the different topics available.

**CONS:** The links lead to an unpredictable mix of sites. Some sites are commercial information ones, such as Boston Public Library and Massachusetts Public Transport System whereas other links take the reader to student projects on health or planning a visit to a public representative. The US content can be inappropriate.

### [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise)

The BBC's Skillswise materials will be well known to experienced practitioners but worth covering here for those who have not used them so far.

The materials are divided into two groups: words and numbers. Under words you will find grammar (e.g. sentences, pronouns, tenses, apostrophes), spelling (e.g. homophones, silent letters, suffixes and prefixes), listening and reading (skimming, scanning, different types of text). The numbers materials cover the four basic operations, negative numbers and big numbers; measure, shape and space; fractions, decimals and percentages and averages. Each section offers a factsheet, online game (sometimes), multiple choice quiz and worksheets with answers.

**PROS:** The full set of material on each item is quite comprehensive and provides different ways of tackling the item. The games can be lively with good visual effects. Each section comes with Tutor's Notes outlining its content.

**CONS:** The factsheets and worksheets are only available as print outs which means the site offers limited advantages over a set of printed materials and although they are very clearly set out, they can be very basic and unattractive.



## Edinburgh goes on-line

The residents of Edinburgh are amongst the first in the world to have a dedicated, citywide Internet portal.

A portal is a website that provides all of a user's Internet needs in one location and serves as a starting point to other destinations or activities on the Web.

[www.myEdinburgh.org](http://www.myEdinburgh.org) which was launched by Cityconnect on 17 November at the Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, aims to provide the people of Edinburgh with a new, exciting gateway to the Internet. As well as providing users with a personalised myEdinburgh e-mail address, this free portal aims to filter local news and information in order to maximize access to relevant material.

Cityconnect, a community computing project which is part of Edinburgh's Lifelong Learning Partnership, hopes that myEdinburgh will break down barriers associated with computer technology and allow more people in Edinburgh to access important information and opportunities through the Internet.

Andrew Unsworth, Head of E-Government, The City of Edinburgh Council, said:

*"myEdinburgh and the associated Cityconnect Community ICT training programme will play a central role in supporting digitally excluded communities and providing web based resources focused specifically on the needs of citizens and community groups."*

## My features

Some key features of myEdinburgh are:

- free web based email that can be accessed from any location with Internet access
- latest local news and information on what's happening in your area
- design and personalise your own homepage
- discussion forums on subjects that interest you
- a website which is fully W3C compliant<sup>†</sup> and meets all requirements for access for people with disabilities including speech browser accessibility for visually impaired users.

For further information phone Cityconnect at 0131 557 9051.

## My footnote

<sup>†</sup> World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international association of companies involved with the Internet and the Web. It's aim is to develop open standards so that the Web evolves in a single direction rather than being splintered among competing factions. For further information go to their website at [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org)

## Student Focus

More than 160 students with many triumphs to celebrate took the walk of pride at the Jewel & Esk Valley College 2003 Graduation Ceremony at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre last month.

Amongst those students was Jimmy McGarry who was presented with the CLAN award for learning achievement.

Jimmy is representative of many people who have taken the difficult step back into education to build up their skills in order to overcome the barrier that a limited education may have.



Jimmy left school at 15 after passing two 'O' grades and decided to train as a butcher on the YTS programme. He also attended evening school to obtain a qualification in English which he had failed at school.

On completion of the YTS programme he started work as a full-time butcher but after fifteen years he was aware of the lack of stimulation in the work and felt he could do more. The turning point came as a result of a combination of personal circumstances which eventually left him unemployed and he took this as an opportunity to return to education.

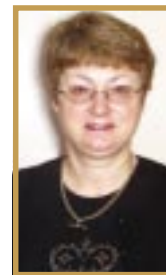
A friend who was attending Jewel & Esk Valley College gave Jimmy a College leaflet which brought to his attention the Entry to Further Education course. He applied and was accepted. He was nervous and apprehensive about becoming a student but once he discovered that there were people the same age as him and older he felt more comfortable.

Study Skills provided by the CLAN initiative were part of the timetable. This was optional which for some students meant a green light to leave but Jimmy felt that he would benefit from this sort of support and knuckled down to grammar, structure, numeracy and writing skills.

As Jimmy says:

*"I went from being an untidy writer to doing structured essays. The CLAN support workers Eleanor and Kate have been really supportive and I would advise anyone in the same position to take any extra help that is available. I am now on an Access to University course and would eventually like to get into teaching, something that two years ago I would not have thought possible".*

## Bean @ Keycomm



I am the citywide Inclusion Worker for Community Based Adult Learning, based at South Bridge Resource Centre, covering maternity leave for Jacqui Bain until Christmas.

I am in the post to give advice to tutors, students and volunteers on inclusion issues and have been out and about gathering information for these groups.

I recently visited Keycomm at Broomhouse and was impressed with the service they offer. Keycomm exists to help people with communication impairments make use of a range of technologies and strategies to enhance their communication ability.

They recommend appropriate technology and support for our students who may have communication problems.

Keycomm have provided many of our students in their day-to-day life with communication boards such as a Bliss Board, which they use to communicate in their literacy and numeracy classes.

Tutors can request an overlay for their students existing boards, with symbols and text that pertain to the work done in each class. This is a free service.

If you would like more information on this or a request form, then contact Maria McCathie at South Bridge on 0131 558 8222. Email: maria.mccathie@educ.edin.gov.uk

## Numeracy Drop-In

Sessions on Thursday afternoons, 1.30pm to 3.30pm at Leith Community Education Centre (Persevere Room), New Kirkgate, Leith. This is an opportunity for adults who live in City Centre and Leith to improve their everyday number skills.

For more information please phone (or fax) Tania or Liz on 0131 668 4787. Email: tania.dignan@educ.edin.gov.uk or elizabeth.mceachern@educ.edin.gov.uk

Web: [www.numbershop.edin.org](http://www.numbershop.edin.org)

## More Bytes

Contributions for the next issue of 'Beans' should reach the Editor's desk by Monday 1 December 2003.

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