

Voilas!

Voice of Informed Learners Across Scotland

Issue 6 January 07



Expanding vocabulary at 100 Language Learners' Voices

James Grant,
Chair of the National Learners' Forum Organising Group

Welcome to issue 6 of the VOILAs magazine. Remember this is your magazine so let us hear your stories!

The word "Forum" itself can sum up what the National Adult Learners' Forum is all about.

Forum *n.pl. -rums or -ra.* "An assembly or meeting for open discussion of subjects of public interest". In this case informed learning throughout Scotland.

The National Learners' Forum has been working hard to give Learners the opportunity to voice their opinions and express themselves. This is why we organised a series of specifically tailored Learners' Voices events.

164 learners registered for the 100 Arts Learners' Voices and another event is to be arranged due to demand for places. As a result of this event we have started up a new group called "CAN", Creative and Cultural Arts Network bringing together of learners who are interested in creative and cultural activities.

The 100 International Language learners event was also successful and they will be coming together in the future to start up another new group.

The profile of Informed Learning was raised at the Edinburgh Book Festival with two events. 'My Inspiration' a poetry competition where by winning learners had the chance to read out their poems and soak up the atmosphere of the Festival. There was also the "Emergent Readers event" at the book festival. 100 learners from across Scotland came to hear readings from two well known authors - we have more planned for 2007.

So if you are passionate about learning, why not get involved? It could make such a difference to you and others around you. Everyone has something to offer. Take the first step! Then get in touch with us on 0131 220 5567.

Express Yourself!

Chris Fairgrieve & Deborah Bowie,
Editors

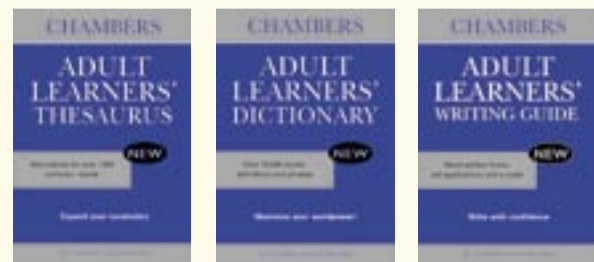
Voilas has survived the re-launch and received a lot of pleasing feedback. This issue features updates from recent events, both those held for learners, and those run by learners.

We want Voilas to be about you and this edition sees the welcome contributions from learners across Scotland. We'd love to hear from you about your learning journey. Even if it's your first time writing, don't feel shy.

We hope you enjoy this edition and have a safe and prosperous new year.

Every letter printed will receive an adult learners' publication. Agnes McGeough and Sheila Young are already enjoying their Chambers books. You could be next.

So go on, give us your best - we'll do the rest.



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European Network Updates

Chris Fairgrieve

Since telling you about the European Learners' Network

proposal in the last edition of *Voilas*, there have been a number of follow up activities and achievements. Regular chat room meetings have been held between colleagues at SALP and partners in Europe.

Other European News

A new website has just been published about Adult Learners' Week in Europe, the culmination of a three year project supported by the Socrates-Gruntvig Programme of the European Commission. The website describes how learning festivals around Europe can act as powerful mobilisation strategies for lifelong learning. Current and future organisers of learning festivals are encouraged to make use of the support tools when trying to establish their own festival or to improve a current one. I was personally involved in some of the editing and content for the website and feel it acts as a very useful resource.

The website address is:

www.unesco.org/education/uie/InternationalALW/IntALWinE

Introducing The Discovery Award

Laurie Young

I have sympathy for anyone who has had to deal with discrimination and believe that older people suffer considerably from this negative treatment. This is one of the main reasons why in 1987 the 'Discovery Award' was born.

An achievement award for people in the 50 plus age-range it is very similar to the *Duke of Edinburgh's* award for young people, in its concept. It allows participants to sample new activities, develop their existing skills, and meet new people. Above all – learners can relish the sense of achievement and joy that one experiences as a result of becoming a 'Discoverer'.

As the founder for this award, I know from experience that people come to this award for all sorts of reasons and get from the involvement a whole host of benefits.

Learners Leading the Way: A Manifesto for Adult Education

Kay Muir

With next May's Scottish Parliament and local authority elections in mind, the Adult Learners' Forum in Edinburgh (ALFiE) held a seminar on 25th October 2006, to enable people to:

- Share ideas about adult education
- Hear about the state of adult education in Edinburgh and Scotland
- Find out about and respond to political parties' plans for adult education

ALFiE committee members presented their manifesto for adult education drawn from ALFiE's Bill of Rights for Adult Learners, which had been developed from learners' views, and also from the results of research undertaken by and commissioned by ALFiE.

Invited MSPs Richard Baker (Labour), Robin Harper (Green), Fiona Hyslop (SNP) and Councillor Jim Lowrie (Lib Dems) spoke about their support for adult education and generally welcomed ALFiE's manifesto, although they each had comments and suggestions about it.

Following the speakers and responses from the political party representatives the manifesto was discussed in small groups. The manifesto which was presented to the seminar as a work in progress has now been revised taking into account the views and comments from the seminar. If you would like a copy of the manifesto please get in touch:

by email: alfieforum@hotmail.com

by telephone: 07768 638 859

on the web: www.alfieforum.edin.org



The four main components of the award invite participants to:

- Offer their SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY
- Venture upon a JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY
- Exercise gently with a RECREATIONAL PURSUIT
- Relax and learn with an absorbing HOBBY OR INTEREST

Recognise strengths and skills as yet untapped.

Active interests can keep you young at heart.

Do it now, take up the challenge and go for it!

DON'T THINK OLD - THINK BOLD.

If you would like more information about this award please contact SALP for Laurie's details. (see back page)

Poetry Competition 2006

The 2006 poetry competition invited learners to tell us about an inspiration in their lives. A panel selected the winners, who received books and membership for the Poetry library at an award ceremony. The poets themselves were clearly inspired and we hope you will be too.

Jim McGinty

Scottish Adult Learning Partnership Poetry competition for 2006 took on a new format this year with the introduction of a workshop for the benefit of 10 selected prizewinners. It was an unqualified success story. Those entrants who were successful were asked to attend SALP's Hill Street Headquarters in Edinburgh for 2 afternoon sessions, which were held over a two-week period.

The competition winners were introduced to a professional poet, who, along with SALP staff, gave them much appreciated advice and helpful tips in delivery and presentation of their own work. This groundbreaking venture culminated with the winners appearing at the International book festival in Charlotte Square gardens where they read their poems to an invited audience.

It was a most enjoyable evening, and one that the participants will not forget for the rest of their lives.



Rab Young and Mark Thompson prepare for recital

Learning Corner

Learning Corner lets you have your say about the impact of learning on your life.

Val Duthie

I retired in 1994. I remember sitting on the sofa thinking what on earth was I going to do now? The family had fled the nest. I was on my own. So, hey, I could do anything.

I signed up for a beginners' writers course, a memoirs group, a politics discussion class, and various literature groups where we studied three books a term by a variety of authors. These courses were run by the University of the Third Age (U3A) at Stirling University, which unfortunately discontinued due to lack of funding.

Where to go now?

Undaunted I signed up to do a Scotvec course in creative writing, which I passed. I then obtained a certificate in Counselling skills, run by Falkirk College.

Learning new tricks!



On a roll, I found out about ACE, a community based Adult Learning Centre.

I studied computing and joined ACE Writers group. Stirling University have run taster courses at ACE: Sociology, Criminology, Child Psychology and Philosophy. I have attended all of these. These are now being discontinued due to lack of interest in the area.

I attended the 100 Learners' Voices event at Stirling University's MacRobert Centre, which has led to various other events. They have all been very interesting and informative.

I have learnt a great deal during my retirement years and they say you can't teach an old dog new tricks...

Don't you believe it!

Inspiration

Rosalie Nish

Stark staring through slats of slatted fence
 Hark, the intertwining of chimes and delicate melody
 Filtering through warm golden rays and me-
 Capturing me
 Into a haunting mesmerizing field of awe
 Rose-water, soothing, moving
 Lullaby awaiting
 The echo's of preludes
 Sweeping sonatas
 Striking those chords
 Like there were no tomorrow
 Lantern laid the open window
 For me to see
 Inside
 Inside was a silent comic
 Cinematic pianist
 Curtain raiser, moving picture
 Survivor of the blitz

House ached with emptiness like the tundra
 All but the piano stool polished
 There were no trinkets
 And no treasure
 But to me
 It brimmed with chandeliers
 And feasts of fun

Inside was a silent comic
 Chopin and Listz
 Sugar plum fairy

Outside was a crashing tragedy
 House is dead
 But still, I hear those chimes.

Stretch your Mind Word Search

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y | M | E | N | W | I | T | H | P | E | N | S |
| T | N | R | J | X | R | L | E | V | U | E | I |
| M | E | D | V | P | O | E | T | R | Y | T | M |
| B | E | R | I | K | Y | C | V | S | R | W | H |
| J | W | E | B | S | B | Z | L | A | A | O | Z |
| S | D | F | T | F | C | D | S | L | H | R | N |
| F | K | O | E | I | G | O | A | P | C | K | H |
| T | D | R | K | G | N | W | V | M | G | J | A |
| C | Y | U | L | X | Q | G | A | E | T | B | I |
| I | S | M | O | A | R | T | S | C | R | D | C |
| P | L | A | N | G | U | A | G | E | Q | Y | H |
| Q | E | F | P | Z | X | J | U | B | I | O | M |

WEB
 MEETINGS
 POETRY
 DISCOVERY
 MEN WITH PENS

LANGUAGE
 FORUM
 ARTS
 NETWORK
 SALP

Recent Events

100 Arts Learners' Voices

The Edinburgh College of Art provided the perfect environment for creative juices to flow, and plenty of stairs to get learners physically moving as well!

The dynamic combination enabled poetry, visual art, dramatic and film productions of a high standard to be presented to a panel of decision makers from the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Arts Council and HMIE.

The need for Culture in learning, and the point that learning is not only for employment, was highlighted. Messages which, the panel and the participants heard loud and clear.



Book Festival

On the final day of the Edinburgh Festival was the 'Emergent Readers' event. For many it was their first time at the International Book Festival so, to prevent any fears of the unknown, mini book festivals were run across the country, in conjunction with local authorities.

Learners received free tickets to the main event in the Imagination Lab, Charlotte Square, where they were able to listen to short stories, and get their books signed, by the authors.

Special thanks go to the authors, Lin Anderson and Des Dillon, as well as those authors who attended the various workshops.

The day was a good icebreaker for learners who do not normally attend such events, and stimulated a real interest in local literature. If you would like details of the "quick reads" books, made for emergent readers, contact SALP.

100 International Language Learners' Voices

The European day of language was celebrated by learners at the Whisky Heritage Centre. Discussions were so illuminating that they provided competition with the spectacular glass windows.

People felt most strongly about the need for: Standard training for language tutors (specific for adults), Learning in Gaelic, English classes for immigrants, Qualifications (not driven by funding), and Support networks.

Participant interest in the language learners' forum was such that 12 new learners signed up. Long live learner-led life!



What's On?

New and coming up

25 January 2007

100 Literacy Learners' Voices Glasgow

An opportunity to make your point visually and put your questions to the panel.

25th February 2007

100 NUS Learners' Voices

tbc

Bring your opinions for a heated debate.

How to get involved

Check our website or contact SALP for details of how to sign up. We will confirm your place by post.

Contact SALP

If you wish to write for us, sign up for an event or have any questions, please get in touch. Call Deborah at the

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Edinburgh EH2 3JZ

Tel: 0131 220 5567

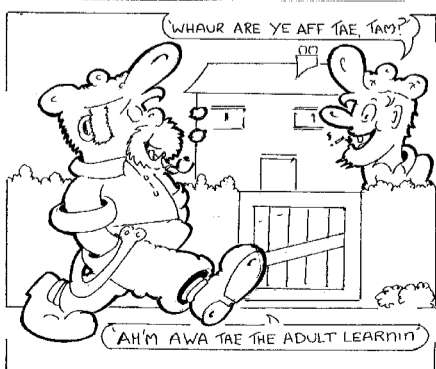
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TAM AND JOE ON ADULT LEARNING

SCRIPT BY REG THOMPSON DRAWN BY IAIN JOHNSTON



Reg Thompson and Iain Johnston are members of "Men With Pens"