

# Learning and Guidance NEWS



Spring 2008

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## P2 Here to help



## P3 Priory visit



## P4 Step in to Learning



# Happy retirement!

By Karen Pigott, Strategic Manager for Extended Learning

There can be no doubt that Beryl Colvin and Bernard Murphy had little conception of how much they would be missed by so many colleagues.

Between them, they brought to Adult and Community Learning an enormous amount of enthusiasm, experience, knowledge and perhaps most of all 'passion' for their work.

The Service had struggled because it was underfunded and it took their driving force to make ACL excellent in Wigan, as illustrated by the outstanding Ofsted results in 2005.

Bernard and Beryl were always clear that the Service is about all of us and the various commitments and contributions

we all make. As a job share, they were a perfect match as they brought different skills, knowledge and attributes that balanced each other...our own Rigsby and Miss Jones!

*Rigsby* - ever the pessimist even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Right up until the last minute *Rigsby* was 'cautiously optimistic' about the Ofsted result!

*Miss Jones* - always glamorous, always on the ball with the ability to ask for things the rest of us daren't ask for! The ability to cross boundaries without upsetting anyone is a real gift which they both possessed.

The retirement presentation was very well attended and Beryl was given a mobile phone and Bernard received a sat. nav. We wish them a long, happy and healthy retirement. It feels like the end of an era and we will miss them very much!



Bernard and Beryl (centre) with Sheila Gallagher (left) and Karen Pigott (right)



## Can Cook, Will Cook!

Research has shown that interested parents make a huge difference to children's attainment and achievement in school.

To ensure every child fulfils their potential, Lowton High is developing its Family Learning programmes to encourage parents, grandparents, carers and children to learn together.

The key objective is to involve parents in learning, in order to improve the children's and their own skills, whilst providing time for enhancing family relationships.

Five local families have just completed a What's Cooking course at Lowton during which they received healthy eating advice from Wigan Council's Food in Schools Development Officer, Amy Dunne.

"I designed the course in such a way as to demonstrate to the families that it is possible to prepare healthy food quickly and cheaply. Each week we prepared fifteen meals which cost between £2 and £5 per head."

Jean Bingham attended the course with her daughter Nicole. Prior to the course, Jean would not allow Nicole into the kitchen when she was cooking, for fear of an accident. She had tried to introduce Nicole to different foods.

Jean said: "During the course, Nicole has prepared, cooked and eaten food that she would never have tried at home. I now have the confidence to allow her to help me in preparing meals for the whole family."

The course was free, thanks to funding from Wigan Council's ACL Service. More courses are planned in this academic year, allowing families to cook together, as well as dance courses and football and rugby coaching.

For more information on the courses this term, please contact Stephen Toole, Director of Community, on 01942 767040 (Option 4).



## On course to graduate

By David Poyntz

I became interested in Egyptology while I was visiting Egypt in the 1990s.

An Egyptology course at Abraham Guest, run by John Johnson, gave me the opportunity to learn more about the subject. I

attended several of John's courses, culminating in the Level 2 Certificate in Egyptology.

I then attended two Continuing Education courses at Liverpool University. After taking early retirement, I applied to take a full-time 3 year BA

course at Liverpool.

Last summer I graduated, having attained a 2.1 BA (Hons) in Egyptian Archaeology.

When I started at Abraham Guest, I had no idea where it would lead. John is now a good friend of mine and I am back doing one of his courses!



David is awarded his BA

## Leigh's new Skills Shop

A new Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Skills Shop has opened at Leigh Town Hall.

It aims to find jobs for local people in two of the Borough's

most exciting new developments - Leigh Sports Village and Bickershaw.

There will be many job opportunities that come from both the Leigh Sports Village and the new development on the former Bickershaw Colliery site.

Anthony Mohammed is the Assistant Head of Service, Adult Learning and Guidance. Here he explains how the Skills Shop can prepare local people for the new job opportunities.

Many of these will be in the leisure and commercial sectors and we want to make sure that local people are best placed to make the most of these opportunities. We have a team of advisors on hand who can tell people what's on offer and what steps they need to take to make

the most of these new developments.

The Leigh Skills Shop follows the winning formula of the Wigan Skills Shop which was set up to help residents of the Borough get jobs in the Grand Arcade. Scores of local people have already

embarked on exciting new careers with top companies like Debenhams and TK Maxx thanks to the Skills Shop.

We are hoping to repeat this success in Leigh but you don't have to live in Leigh to take advantage of it because it is for

everyone. We have set up shop in the Town Hall but, eventually, we hope to have our very own premises in Leigh for people to walk in, meet an advisor and have a chat.

For more information on the Leigh Skills Shop call IAG on 01942 404456.

# Learning and Guidance

## Here to help

**Marsh Green Library provides everything you'd expect from a good community library: a lending service, reference facilities, computer access - and a bit more as well.**

From their small office, advisors Jim Moseley and Lorraine Proffitt have helped hundreds of people from the local community to take those first steps towards finding work, training or further education opportunities. Jim and Lorraine are members of Wigan Council's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team.

Jim's 30-year engineering career ended in redundancy and, thanks to the right advice and training, he found a new path and now helps others in a

similar situation. He's one of the small team of Adult Advisors based at the library.

"It's a relaxed atmosphere and people can walk in off the street to receive free help and advice. Some need help to improve their confidence or to brush up on reading, writing and maths. Others may need to be pointed in the right direction," says Jim.

The advisors provide information on small, community-based taster sessions designed to improve social skills and confidence, through to further education and college courses leading to qualifications.

They can help with CVs and resources are available, such as computers and the internet, to look

for jobs and courses.

Lorraine works with people who have mental health issues or a learning disability. "We help people with their self-confidence and self-esteem and break down some of the barriers and stigma surrounding these issues," says Lorraine. "It may not be about finding work but about providing the help they need to make the changes to their life."

Whatever people need, all they have to do is walk through the door at Marsh Green Library. The team is there to help.

The office at Marsh Green Library is open Monday and Tuesday 9.30-4.30 Friday 9.30-4.00. Closed for lunch 1.00-1.30



Lorraine and Jim at Marsh Green Library

For more information please call Jim Moseley or Lorraine Proffitt on 01942 221881.

Wigan Council's Information and Guidance Service currently works with more than 3,000 people each year in the Borough.

IAG also runs services at the following locations: Ince Library; Connexions Wigan; Leigh SV Skills Shop. For your nearest venue ring 01942 776793

## LEARNING and GUIDANCE CENTRES

Central Offices  
Anthony Mohammed,  
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Orrell Community Education Centre  
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Shevington High School  
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Tyldesley Community  
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Westleigh High School  
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Wigan and Leigh College  
01942 760218  
Gill Mitchell  
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Working Wonders (Education) Ltd  
Joyce Hanlon  
01942 498600  
[joyce@hanlon.co.uk](mailto:joyce@hanlon.co.uk)

## Culture class

By Learners from Working Wonders

Recently, a small group of Working Wonders Literacy learners, who meet at Bedford High School, paid a visit to the Whitworth Art Gallery.

Having done some work on the British abolition of the slave trade, we went to see the exhibition called Trade and Empire, Remembering Slavery. We were shown round the exhibition by Andrew Vaughan, the Learning and Interpretation Manager (right of picture). He explained the background to the exhibits and made the whole thing come alive. We were particularly struck by



the political cartoons by Hogarth and the interesting textiles.

After lunch, we went to Manchester University Museum in which we all found something of interest. The Egyptian section was fascinating, as were the birds and animals.

The trip would not have been possible without the Working Wonders minibus and driver. Thank you - the great day out was enjoyed by all.

## Janet wins jackpot

Last September, over 400 adults attended the enrolment evening for Lowton High School's adult education programme.

Every adult that attended was asked to complete a short questionnaire with the chance of winning a £50 jackpot.

It was won by Janet Burkhill who had enrolled on an introductory ten week course in floral art. She said: "I've never won anything before, I can't believe it! The course has been fantastic and the prize is just the icing on the cake."

The questionnaire was designed to gain a greater understanding of:  
\* What motivates adults to enrol upon adult education courses.  
\* Why people had decided to enrol upon a course at Lowton High School.

\* The effectiveness of the school's marketing.  
\* The level of demand for a varied menu of additional support services relating to training and finding employment.  
\* The types of course that people would like to see made available at the school in the future.

If you would like to discover what courses are available at the school this term please contact Stephen Toole, Director of Community on 01942 767040 (Option 4).



## New ACL Centre

In addition to the Adult Skills for Life Development and Assessment Centre, managed by Working Wonders, Bedford High School has become an ACL Centre in its own right.

Centre Manager, Pauline Birchall, said: "I am delighted we have become an ACL Centre as it will enable us to provide a wider variety of courses, such as Introduction to Card Making and Introduction to Pilates."

New courses have been planned for the start of this term including: Computers for Beginners, Introduction to the Internet, Family Tree Research and Introduction to Holistic Therapy. The Centre no longer provides LearnDirect courses.

Potential new learners are welcome to visit the Centre to view the excellent facilities. We aim to provide a relaxed, informal and friendly learning experience and Pauline can be contacted on 01942 760264.



## Computers for all

Tyldesley Community Education Centre offers a beginners' course with excellent progression routes to a fully recognised IT qualification at Level 2.

This course is designed to progress to the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence). The aim is to teach new skills, improve confidence, work towards a qualification and improve chances of gaining employment or promotion.

Funding from Wigan Council's ACL provision allows us to offer the 10 week Introduction to Computers courses for new learners and/or beginners

We can then offer a further 10 weeks due to grant funding from Douglas Valley Community Ltd. This enables learners to progress on to the Next Step/intermediate Computer course, available in the daytime or evening.



On completion of this further block of 10 weeks, progression can be made on to the ECDL, a qualification sought by many employers as it covers all the applications on Microsoft Office.

The Centre provides a warm, friendly learning environment, convenient for local transport, and has the advantage of plenty of free parking in the surrounding area. We currently have two computer suites with up to date facilities, including laptops, projectors and interactive smart boards.  
**Anyone interested in these courses can contact the Centre on 01942 797951.**

# Learning and Guidance

## Sure Start stories

### Jane Mulqueoney

Jane first joined Sue and Dionne, Family Learning Tutors, on a Foundation Literacy and Numeracy course, in the Sure Start house, in September 2002. This was with her eldest child, James.

The course fostered a keen interest in how children learn and develop through play. She subsequently enrolled on a degree in Humanities with English Language. When her second child, Rebecca, was born she attended the very first Early Start course, for parents/carers of babies from 0-12 months, at the then new Hindley Children's Centre.

Currently, Jane is attending Family Literacy in school with Rebecca and Early Start with her third daughter, Kate. She hopes to graduate shortly and become a teacher. She says the courses have been a positive experience personally and professionally and have given her children a very good start in life.

### Lindsey Lord

Lindsey first came on a Language and Play course at Hindley Children's Centre, with her eldest son Noah, where they enjoyed learning and playing together. The following term, she moved onto the Foundation Literacy and Numeracy course with Noah, which extended his learning.

Lindsey also joined the Early Start course with her second son Cole, followed by the Language and Play course. She says these courses have given her ideas about how children develop and learn.

The free gifts, given at the end of each session, have helped to continue the learning at home. She now provides varied activities for the children at home and finds that they share much better and can concentrate for longer periods.

Lindsey has also noticed how her children's personalities have developed. Sue and Dionne think she enjoyed the course so much she was inspired to have a third baby, Hayden. Lindsey agreed but said no more!



Jane and Kate



Lindsey and Hayden

## Visiting The Priory

By tutor, Ann Hirst

Two groups of Working Wonders learners, who meet at Bedford High School, have visited Norton Priory near Runcorn.



The sun shone and everyone found different things to enjoy at the site. Some enjoyed looking round the ruined abbey, trying to piece together what it must have looked like centuries ago. Others found the restored walled garden, full of fruit, vegetables and flowers, a fascinating spot to explore.

The indoor exhibition space, which explained nearly 1000

years of history, was brilliantly presented and was, for one learner, the first museum they had ever visited.

Everyone agreed that the whole site, situated beside the Bridgewater Canal, was wonderfully peaceful. Conversation on the way home, in the Working Wonders minibus, ranged from discussion about the history of the site, to swapping recipes for the damsons purchased in the garden.

## Ready Steady Westleigh!

Westleigh High School ACL Team decided it was about time all the ACL tutors and staff had a Christmas meal together.

ACL classes tend only to be 2 hours long so it is not often that tutors meet each up with each other.

Westleigh ACL administrator, Jackie Latu, worked extremely hard behind the scenes to organise a full 3 course Christmas meal for all the tutors in the new Westleigh Community Centre.

Westleigh High School's catering company, Ready Steady Westleigh, made up of pupils at the school, set up the room and prepared and served all the food which was delicious!

Afterwards, there was a friendly team quiz which became a very competitive affair! The meal was a great opportunity for all the ACL tutors to network and to be thanked for all their hard work.



Westleigh students prepared and served the meal.



The students set up the room.



ACL staff enjoy a first class meal.

## Shevington's successful students

Shevington Adult Education Centre has produced hundreds of successful students and Jean Muldoon's story is typical.

Following early retirement, Jean enrolled on various courses at Shevington during the day and evening. After attending a basic computer course for ten weeks, she progressed to IT Key Skills Level 1 and achieved a high pass.

Jean also enjoys painting and drawing for pleasure with tutor Tina Martin. She has learned how to use various techniques and mediums and has produced a variety of artwork during her two academic years attending the centre.



Jean with IT tutor Christine Williams



Spanish courses are back at the Shevington Centre

## Information, Advice and Guidance

The Information, Advice and Guidance Service is free and, with five different projects on the go, there's sure to be something for everyone. This includes CVs, help with forms, careers advice etc.

Here's what's on offer:

- Next Step - this is aimed at anyone in the Borough aged 20 or over who wants job training, advice and guidance.
- Skills Coaching - again for the 20s and over but more intensive. Advisors help people look deeper into their own skills and ambitions and how they can be achieved.
- Sure Start Tyldesley/Shakerley - advice and guidance on jobs, training and further education for parents and guardians of children living in these two areas.
- Community Mental Health - a range of services targeting people with mental health issues or learning disabilities.
- Skills Shop - this hugely successful project offers advice and guidance for local people wanting to enter the world of retailing and sales.

For more information about what IAG can offer you, call 01942 776793.

## Virtual Learning Environment

Over the past year, Wigan Local Authority has developed a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

This is a website which displays all the Borough Providers and their contact details as well as the courses they offer. The VLE also allows tutors and curriculum team leaders to access information and documentation relevant to their jobs. The main advantages of the VLE are that it can act as:

- A marketing/advertising tool for all courses throughout the Borough.

- An online lesson where notes/course details can be accessed.

- An area where ACL Management, curriculum team leaders and the e-learning champion can disseminate information.

Anyone is able to access the VLE by typing in [www.wigancommunitylearning.com](http://www.wigancommunitylearning.com) whereupon a home page will be displayed.

If anyone needs any further information/training or wishes to place notes on the VLE, please contact Sue Stockley on 419ss@abrahamguest.wigan.sch.uk

# Learning and Guidance

## Our theatre trip

By Elaine Hilton-Waite, Literacy Class member

**The Working Wonders' Literacy Class, which meets at Fourways on Tuesday evenings, organised a visit to the theatre.**

I have not been to the theatre for a long time and did not have any expectations. The Octagon was more compact than I expected and there wasn't a bad seat in the house.

The performance was brilliantly executed, giving a very strong life message in a humorous way. The topics they covered included our overcareful use of politically

correct language. I looked around the audience when they used words intended to shock. To my amazement, no one looked bothered.

The actors were multicultural and very talented, playing lots of different musical instruments. The only props they had on the tiny stage were about eight cardboard boxes, a gantry that displayed the company's name, a football and some very large replicas of men's sexual organs! The whole play was written in rhyme and was really witty.

I will now go and see other plays at the Octagon. The parking was easy and close to the theatre and you could also get a concession on parking when visiting the theatre. The atmosphere was warm and

inviting and you could have something to eat in the café and a drink from the bar, prior to the performance.

I really enjoyed my visit and could not stop talking about it. It was a very good night out and I can't wait for the next time!



## Skills for Life



**Skills for Life tutor Kath Paterson with learners. Tyldesley Community Education Centre has successfully offered, over the last 6 years, Skills for Life courses in both Literacy and Numeracy from Entry Level to Level 2.**

The courses are offered, through various classroom sessions, in the morning, afternoon or evening. We welcome students of all levels

and offer extra help with support from the inclusive learning officers for disabled students.

The sessions are informal and friendly, helping to build up our learners' confidence and make learning easier. The sessions are offered through our partnership with Wigan and Leigh College.

We also offer Skills for Life courses through our Learndirect provision which is run with Abraham Guest High School. Learndirect is flexible online learning allowing students to learn at home, in the centre or wherever there is an internet connection. These resources are offered free.

With the introduction of the initial

assessment in all our ACL funded courses, there has been an increase in the number of learners. People who have sat the assessment have realised they need to improve or update their numeracy and literacy skills. These learners have been offered courses or flexible online learning.

Due to the amount of students accessing our resources, we successfully applied to OCR and we are now an accredited centre in Skills for Life.

This means our students studying on a Learndirect programme are able to sit their exams online in the centre. We also offer, for a small fee, exam facilities for students studying on Skills for Life programmes outside the centre.

## Language and Play

**Family Learning tutors are delivering a Language and Play course for parents and children at Westfield Children's Centre in Pemberton**

These are some comments from the learners:

Lisa said: "We both get something out of it. Michael (pictured) has interacted with other children of different ages and loves coming to play with the toys. Most useful are the handouts of songs and games to do. I've shown my mum mine and Mike's work. I am more confident about my parenting skills. I can share time with Mike now and enjoy reading with him."

Rebecca, another learner, said: "Leah is more confident now."

Lorraine added: "This course has been a learning process for me and my daughter Alyssa. I came for Alyssa to be able to socialise and mix with other children of her own age. She has really enjoyed the play and the singing together."

Sam said: "Since coming on the course, Kimberley seems to be saying a few more things clearer. We enjoy singing and Kimberley seems to like socialising."



Michael



Kimberley, Leah and mum Rebecca and Alyssa

*Joyce Gillespie attends one of Working Wonders' Literacy classes which are run at The Conference Centre at Bedford High School. With the encouragement of her tutor, Joyce wrote this story, clearly illustrating how life has changed in the last 60 years.*

## Childhood memories

By Joyce Gillespie, Literacy Class member

**When I was seven, we were all invited to my aunt's house for Christmas lunch.**

Two hours later, we all went to our house. It was mum and dad's turn to provide the tea. At 9.30 it was decided that our visitors would stay overnight. It must have been about ten o'clock, on that Christmas night of 1943, when I went to sleep.

I woke up to hear the song 'Michael, Row the Boat Ashore' on the radio but it wasn't Boxing Day 1943; it was the third week in February 1944.

I had diphtheria and I had been unconscious for eight weeks. On Boxing Day, mum had not been able to wake me up, recognised the smell of diphtheria and sent for an ambulance.

I was taken to the Isolation hospital, with the bell ringing all the way. I must have subconsciously registered the sound because, to this day, the sound of an alarm bell affects me. It guarantees that I can never oversleep.

I was not allowed any visitors. Mum had to go to the Town Hall every day to look at the hospital lists to see if I was still on the Danger List. When my name did not appear, Mum knew I was

getting better, but I was not allowed any visitors.

Grandad used to come to the hospital every Saturday and look at me through the window. No one tried to stop him. It could have been his height of six foot two inches. It could have been the half dozen eggs he handed in without fail. I do remember having a boiled egg with my name on it, twice a week.

One night, the sirens went whilst I was still in Isolation. Through the windows I could see the searchlights swinging across the sky and hear guns going off and bombs dropping.

When I graduated to the main ward, I had to learn to walk again. Before I could go home I had to prove that I could walk properly. I had to walk up to and twice around, the giant weeping willow tree in the gardens.

One day, when I was allowed to walk by myself, I took Sexton Blake with me and sat under the tree reading, losing all track of time. Eventually, a nurse found me. Apparently they had been looking everywhere for me for an hour! The doctor gave me the All Clear and I left hospital on 21st March 1944, the first day of spring, twelve weeks after I had entered it.

*Joyce submitted her story to Skillswise 'Your Stories'. She was awarded a prize and it was subsequently published on the Skillswise website.*

## Step in to Learning



Step candidates who attended the course at Ince.

By Doreen Ellison

**Step in to Learning is an award-winning project in Wigan and is an excellent example of partnership working.**

Delivered by Doreen Ellison from Adult and Community Learning and Ann Boothroyd from Wigan and Leigh College, the project is financed by Sure Start and Extended Schools.

The one day course is open to all, paid or voluntary, who work with children or families. Candidates are trained to recognise and signpost either parents, carers, colleagues or themselves, who may wish to improve their maths and English skills, in order to better support their children or to improve their own life chances.

In the last year, over 100 colleagues or themselves, who from children's centres, schools, the health service and other projects have completed Step training, with many of them going on to achieve accreditation in supporting adults as well as gaining qualifications in maths and English if needed.

Most importantly, they are now out in the community talking to people who would like to improve their own skills, giving up to date contact details for those who could be helped.

**More courses are being run this term and anyone who would like further information should contact Doreen on 01942 828910.**