

ASSOCIATES NEWS

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Join us at the annual friends
reunion in Leeds

See page 10

Contact

Associates News, the magazine for associate members of the Association of School and College Leaders, is published three times a year and is also available online:

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ASCL Weekly Email

If you would like to sign up to receive the ASCL e-newsletter then please contact membership@ascl.org.uk stating your preferred email address, full name and membership number. You will receive the email every Tuesday during term time. To view previous issues please go to the ASCL website, News and Views, Newsletters. If you need login details for the website please email website@ascl.org.uk

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Why professional camaraderie counts

ASCL General Secretary Geoff Barton highlights how, in uncertain times, ASCL is continuing to connect leaders in their communities and around the country



Welcome to the latest edition of Associates News.

I am writing this in the run-up to our annual conference. As you know, this is one of the biggest events of the education year, and since 2017 when we moved to Birmingham's magnificent International Convention Centre, it has gone from strength to strength.

Ever since I became an ASCL council member, I quickly understood that while our association is here to keep members informed and try to influence policy on their behalf, there's also an essential strand of professional camaraderie. In the demanding world of school and college leadership, it is important to feel a sense of connection, of belonging. Council provides that, and conference does too, with its opportunities for conversations with new and old friends.

And in these strange political times, with pressures on leaders particularly stark, we know members value a sense of connected leadership.

Feelings of isolation

Last year, we set out to find out more about our members and initiated an extensive membership survey. This was an opportunity to find out what our current members like about ASCL and what they feel we could do better, but also explore the feelings of potential new members, currently in middle leadership, or assistant heads who haven't yet changed their trade union affiliation.

What struck me when I read their comments is how isolated many leaders in our schools and colleges feel. It's a reminder that the fragmented nature of the

education system and increasing sense of competition between institutions has left too many feeling there's no one to turn to in challenging moments of leadership.

That's one reason we are building ASCL's support mechanism, developing a new website that provides quicker access to information, and allows members to connect with us beyond the hotline.

We are also planning a conference for new headteachers so that colleagues taking their first step into running a school or college immediately feel part of a national mission, supported by a network of senior leaders. It's what ASCL does best.

I hope you'll have seen the ways our organisation continues to frame the education debate in a principled and authoritative way. My time visiting colleagues in different parts of the UK has reminded me how divergent our education systems are becoming, with radical changes taking place in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and England.

With members in the UK and overseas, ASCL is uniquely placed to share insights into these reforms, and to help members – and ministers! – learn from policy developments. We're shaping a new agenda on accountability: what would a system look like that has as its starting point, the performance of our most vulnerable children? We're supporting the broad direction of Ofsted's changes because we think a focus on the quality of education is what parents want to see from inspectors.

The 'forgotten third'

And we're developing new ideas around 'the forgotten third', the 190,000 young people in England who each year, after 12 years of primary and secondary education, fail to gain what is termed a standard pass grade in English or maths. As an association that 'speaks on behalf of members and acts on behalf of children and young people', here's an area where we feel we should act, exploring ways in which we could help every young person have the dignity of a meaningful qualification.

There is much going on at ASCL, and we are gratified

that at a time when union membership generally is in decline, we continue to see the number of new members, and our profile, increasing.

None of this happens by accident. It's testament to great work by the ASCL team, but also what our current members say about us, spreading the word that here's an association you'd want to be part of.

I hope you'll find much in this edition of Associates News to inform and entertain you. And I hope you know how much we appreciate the support you give us, for the work of ASCL, and our mission and values.

Geoff Barton

ASCL General Secretary

Write for Associates News

Associates News is looking for more contributors.

If you have an experience about retirement life to share, if you're active in an organisation or advisory body, if you're fundraising for a good cause or if you are making a splash in a new career field, we'd like to hear about it.

Send your contributions, with pictures if possible, to:
associatesnews@ascl.org.uk

Associates News is published three times a year in March, July and November, but contributions are welcome at any time. (We reserve the right to edit copy for length.)

Death of Florence Kirkby



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Florence Kirkby MBE, the Editor of *Associates News* since it began.

Florence, 96, who had only recently relinquished the post, had remained active and engaged in education right up until the end of her life.

She was on the headmistresses' equivalent of ASCL Council from 1967, was President of the Secondary Heads Association (ASCL's previous incarnation) in 1984-5, and an extremely active member of ASCL otherwise, including being pensions consultant well into her 70s. We all benefited from the advice she frequently gave

in these pages about our pensions and other financial matters, as well as from her down-to-earth good sense.

ASCL General Secretary, Geoff Barton, said: "We owe a great deal of thanks and gratitude to Florence for her continuous commitment and dedication to the Association and to the profession. She will be greatly missed by everyone who ever knew or met her."

Four members of the Associates committee attended her funeral in Newcastle and a full obituary will be published in the next edition.

Having said a 'Goodbye', we also say a 'Hello' to Julie Nightingale, who is joining us as the editor of *Associates News*. Julie is a journalist with many years' experience in the education sector and is also the author of education textbook *Meet the Parents*, published this year by Routledge.

We wish her well in this post and are confident that Florence's legacy is in safe hands.

Committee report

Update from the Associates' Committee meeting at ASCL headquarters in Leicester in October 2018.

There was a bulging agenda for the meeting and a truncated session.

Before business proper was under way, the committee agreed a letter and card were to be dispatched to Lisa Oldham, currently on maternity leave, congratulating her on the safe arrival of her baby boy, Dexter, and her eight years' service on headquarters staff.

Chair Ann Mullins introduced Peter Crowe, a former Leicester City headteacher, who would attend the next two Associates' Committee meetings, and then would put his name forward for election in his own right. It follows the resignation of Marsha Carey-Elms and the results of the 2018 election.

Other business included:

- Robert Godber reminded us of the entitlement to free membership after 15 years of Associate membership.
- There are 1,986 Associates. It was generally agreed that more could be done to encourage ASCL members to become associates when they retire.
- Chair of ASCL Benevolent Fund Tony Richardson said that the video recently produced on the work of both the fund and the Associates could usefully be shown at ASCL Regional Information Conferences for serving heads to help raise our profile.
- ASCL staff gave briefings on the importance of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).
- Robert Godber outlined plans for the Associates Reunion in Leeds in May 2019.

The meeting finished on the positive note that the ASCL Benevolent Fund new governance scheme would be tabled at the upcoming benevolent fund trustees' meeting, a process later completed.

A combined report for the February and May 2019 meetings will be published in the next *Associates News*.

Policy update

ASCL policy specialist Julie McCulloch highlights ASCL's contribution to policy development in key areas including funding, curriculum and teachers' pay



Funding specialist Julia Harnden has been working with a group of experts to set out our minimum expectations for the quality of education to which children and young people in the UK are entitled, and what this costs. The group has published a hard-hitting report that highlights the gap between what this minimum entitlement costs, and the current schools budget.

We are part of a group working, with the DfE on the Teachers' Pension Scheme. This group is focused on the proposed distribution methodology for the increase in employer contributions. We have made it clear that schools need to have confidence in the mechanism that will determine the level of funding they receive in 2019-20 to meet these additional costs, and we will continue to push for reassurance that the funding agreed for 2019-20 will be continued in the future.

General Secretary Geoff Barton and Curriculum and Inspection Specialist Stephen Rollett engaged closely with Ofsted over the draft revised inspection framework. We're broadly positive about the direction of travel, and particularly the fact that Ofsted will be taking a longer-term, phased approach, to give schools time to properly consider their curriculum expertise, rather than rushing into any changes.

Deputy Director of Policy Duncan Baldwin has been working with the DfE on proposed changes to how schools are identified for support and intervention. The department is currently consulting on these changes, with a set of proposals which include the removal of the floor and coasting standards; that an Ofsted Requires Improvement judgement should become the sole trigger for support; and that what is offered should be genuinely supportive rather than punitive.

JCQ has produced a set of FAQs giving more clarification around conflicts of interest and declarations in relation to the design, delivery and assessment of examinations for centres (<http://tinyurl.com/y2ranyr7>). It is an issue on which many members contact the ASCL Hotline, and we have been urgently calling for this clarification.

The DfE published its long-awaited Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, along with information on the proposed new early career framework, in January. Deputy Director of Conditions and Employment Sara Ford has been working closely with the department on the strategy, and we are pleased to see many of our suggestions included.

Sara also responded, on behalf of members, to the School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB's) proposed 2019 pay award. We used our response and a joint submission with other unions to highlight again our dismay that the STRB's previous recommendations had been ignored by government, to call on them to recommend that an annual uplift of 5% should be applied to all pay points, and that this pay award must be fully funded by government.

We held an extremely successful summit on ethical leadership in January, to formally launch the outputs of our Ethical Leadership Commission. More than 200 school and college leaders joined us to mark the launch of a new Framework for Ethical Leadership, a set of resources for governing boards to audit their ethical practices, and a new ethics forum under the auspices of the Chartered College of Teaching.

Parliamentary and Inclusion Specialist Anna Cole is part of a new Nasen expert reference group. This group will discuss how to support all schools to be inclusive and to have excellent SEND at the heart of all they do.

Anna is also engaging with the lead on the government's new commission on countering extremism, Sara Khan, to ensure schools and colleges play a full role in the commission's work.

In post-16 education, the T levels funding consultation closed in February. The proposals for funding now include elements that were argued for at the T

levels stakeholder group meetings, at which ASCL is represented by Post-16 and Colleges Specialist Kevin Gilmartin. One significant 'win' is that proposed funding for 18 year-olds taking T levels, will be at the full 100% rate, not at the present vocational rate of 82.5%.

Consultation responses

ASCL's consultation responses are all available on the ASCL website at www.ascl.org.uk/policy/consultation-responses

Julie McCulloch

ASCL Director of Policy



Kevin Gilmartin
ASCL Post-16 and Colleges
Specialist



Julia Harnden
ASCL Funding Specialist



Sara Ford
ASCL Deputy Director of Policy:
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Duncan Baldwin
ASCL Deputy Director of Policy



Stephen Rollett
ASCL Inspections and
Accountability Specialist



Anna Cole
ASCL Parliamentary Specialist



Carry on, governor

Retirement doesn't have to entail former school leaders losing all contact with education. School governance offers you the chance to use your skills, experience and insight and continue to make a difference for pupils, staff and the school community, says Judith Hicks, a new service makes connecting easier than ever

Volunteers with educational experience and expertise can make a vital contribution to school governing boards. By becoming a governor (in a maintained school), trustee (in a single or multi-academy trust) or a member of an academy committee, recently-retired headteachers can continue to play an important role in the school system, adding value to the discussions and decisions of school governance.

Having worked with a governing board – and, in many cases, being a governor of the school, too – you should understand what governance is about; the skills needed to do it well, where to draw the line between strategic and operational and how to support and challenge effectively. Of course, volunteering itself brings many benefits – from making new social connections to enhancing your wellbeing – while making a positive impact for others.

An external perspective

Our research with governing boards tells us that education expertise is one of the top three skills they look for in potential new governors/ trustees. Without an external perspective of education, a governing board

will largely rely on the senior leadership team to ensure their understanding of pupil performance, and therefore is limited in its ability to effectively challenge and substantiate what it is being told.

Governing boards could benefit from your expertise in the following ways:

- Your experience and understanding of education – the pace of change, the way the sector works, the challenges schools are facing
- Your knowledge of safeguarding best practice
- Your ability to understand and interpret pupil performance data, including the performance of different cohorts
- Sharing your insight and learnings from a different phase or type of school
- Understanding the experience of being headteacher and how to usefully support and challenge them

There are already more than a quarter of a million school governance volunteers, but we estimate that one in every ten positions remains vacant. People choose to volunteer for different reasons, but most tell us that they want to make a valuable contribution to education and their community.

Here are seven qualities governing boards need from their volunteers:

- A willingness to challenge the information and data they receive, and to challenge the status quo to improve things.
- Commitment of time and energy to the role, and to achieving the best outcomes for young people.
- The confidence to contribute to courageous conversations and express their independent opinion.
- Curiosity and an analytical nature that will lead them to ask meaningful questions.
- An ability to collaborate and build strong relationships within the governing board and the school community.
- Creativity in problem solving and in taking new approaches
- An understanding of the value of critical friendship in providing both challenge and support to the school.

As a school governor or trustee, you will provide strategic leadership and accountability in a school. Formally speaking, a governing board's core functions are to ensure the organisation has a clear vision and strategy, to hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring its money is well spent. Think of it as being eyes-on, hands-off.

Attending regular meetings, carrying out termly monitoring visits at the school, reading papers and keeping informed about developments in education will be common to all governor/ trustee roles, but some boards may ask for additional commitments like being a link governor or sitting on a committee depending on how they operate and their strategic priorities.

School governance policy and practice is continually evolving, so there is plenty of support and training available during the induction process and on an ongoing basis to keep up-to-date and develop your governance knowledge and skills.

Connecting is easy

If you want to commit to becoming a school governor or trustee, and would like to connect with schools or trusts that could benefit from your experience, it is easier than ever to do so. Inspiring Governance is a new service where you can register your interest and make contact with governing boards that are looking for new volunteers.

Once you sign up, local schools will be able to view your profile and you will be able to see vacancies near you. If a school wants to find out more about what you can offer or if you want to find out more about an opportunity, contact can be made through the platform. Sometimes timing means that there will be no vacancies available on Inspiring Governance when you look – always check back as new vacancies appear every day – and you can also contact your local authority's governor services or directly approach schools to enquire about opportunities.

Judith Hicks is head of Inspiring Governance, National Governance Association

Inspiring Governance: www.inspiringgovernance.org



Let's meet again!

Join us at the Splendid Leeds Art Gallery for this year's Annual Reunion on May 22

Associate members, their partners and friends are warmly invited to the 2019 Annual Reunion, which will be at Leeds Art Gallery and the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds on Wednesday May 22 2019.

Leeds Art Gallery is one of the most important public buildings in Yorkshire. It was built between 1886 and 1888 in honour of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. This Grade 2 listed building is a monument to high Victorian taste and now houses a collection of British 20th Century Art. Next door is the Henry Moore Institute, established by Moore in 1977 to encourage appreciation of the visual arts, especially sculpture.

Admission to both the gallery and the institute is free but we have arranged a guided tour of both as part of the reunion programme. The cost is £25 and it includes:

10.45am-11.30am: Coffee and biscuits in a reserved section of the Tiled Hall Café

11.30am-1pm: Talk and guided tour of the Art Gallery by one of the curators

1pm-2pm: Buffet lunch in the reserved section of the Tiled Hall Café

2.15pm: Short guided tour of the Henry Moore Institute and free time to visit both galleries.

Leeds has much to offer besides the Gallery: it is a vibrant city with a vigorous cultural life, and is home to the Leeds Grand (home of Opera North), Northern Ballet, Royal Armouries and the West Yorkshire Playhouse. It is also a self-confessed 'shopping mecca' with the amazing glass-roofed Trinity Shopping centre, the Victorian Quarter and, of course, Harvey Nichols!

Leeds City Station is only a ten-minute walk or a short taxi ride from Leeds Art Gallery.

The following hotels are in the city centre:

- Crowne Plaza
- DoubleTree by Hilton
- Leeds Marriott Hotel
- Queens Hotel
- Radisson Blu

To reserve places, please return your completed booking form to Varsha Chawda at ASCL, 130 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7PG by **Friday 26 April 2019**. Varsha is dealing with the reunion administration and her other contact details are: Varsha.Chawda@ascl.org.uk, 0116 299 1122

Robert Godber and **Philip Johnston**
ASCL Associates Committee



What to see and do in Leeds

The bustling city is also a cultural hotspot

- Visit the Royal Armouries Museum in its iconic building at Leeds Dock. All the arms, armour and military history you need in one hit from the people behind the Tower of London. Alongside five floors of exhibits, there are also displays recording tales of –among many other things – medieval jousting and more contemporary gun crime.
- Just outside the city, Harewood House is the 18th century masterpiece by architects John Carr and Robert Adam and master gardener Capability Brown. The estate is now a star on the small and big screens – ITV's Victoria is filmed there as were scenes for the forthcoming Downton Abbey film – and a popular location for massive outdoor concerts,
- Get in touch with your inner Seth Armstrong with a visit to the Emmerdale Studio Experience in which you can have a go at lighting exact set reconstructions, talk to crew members about its plotlines and plane crashes and pull a pint in the Woolpack.
- The Thackray Medical Museum – next to St James's University Hospital – is based on one man's collection of medical equipment and has displays that are not for the squeamish. A Victorian street recreates the sights, sounds, smells and ailments of the time and Hannah Dyson's Ordeal is a video reconstruction of 1842 surgery, before anaesthetics were in use.
- Furniture fans should head for Temple Newsam House, a magnificent 40-room Tudor-Jacobean mansion in a 900-acre park on the city's outskirts. It's the birthplace of Lord Darnley – the husband of Mary Queen of Scots – and contains tables and chairs by Thomas Chippendale and collections of Leeds creamware and silver.

Booking form: Leeds Art Gallery and the Henry Moore Institute

Wednesday 22 May 2019

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

I shall be accompanied by: _____

Special dietary/disability requirements: _____

Talk and Guided Walk £25 per person (please indicate number of people attending)

I enclose a cheque (payable to ASCL) for the total amount of £

For associates wishing to pay by BACS: Natwest, 7 Hinckley Road, Leicester LE3 0TQ

Sort Code: 60-60-06 Account Number: 46216383 For reference please quote: "Associates – (Your Name)"

Tick here if you are paying by BACS

Please return your completed form with payment by **Friday 25 April 2019** to: Varsha Chawda, ASCL, 130 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7PG

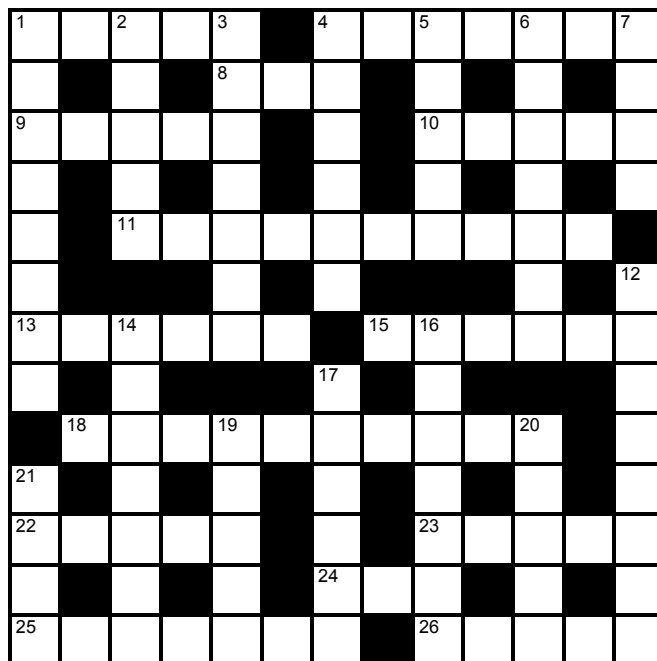
Signed: _____ Date: _____

Across

- 1 Confusion, disarray (5)
- 4 Violent storm (7)
- 8 Of a female (3)
- 9 Group of singers (5)
- 10 Aromatic edible bulb (5)
- 11 Person employed to take care of wildlife on an estate (10)
- 13 Slip away (6)
- 15 Powdered type of sugar (6)
- 18 Arranged into categories (10)
- 22 Lay out in a line (5)
- 23 Dodge (5)
- 24 Golf peg (3)
- 25 Timidity (7)
- 26 Passed out playing cards (5)

Down

- 1 Young rooster (8)
- 2 In line with a length or direction (5)
- 3 Small edible crustaceans (7)
- 4 Awkward (6)
- 5 North American elk (5)
- 6 Noted, distinguished (7)
- 7 Pitch of the voice (4)
- 12 Likelihood, possibility (8)
- 14 Hypersensitive reaction (7)
- 16 Liquorice-flavoured herb (7)
- 17 Rectifies, redresses (6)
- 19 Fashion (5)
- 20 Plays, theatre (5)
- 21 Heating elements in an electric fire (4)



- ◇ BEAKER
- ◇ BOWL
- ◇ BOX
- ◇ BUCKET
- ◇ DEMIJOHN
- ◇ GLASS
- ◇ HAVERSACK
- ◇ JUG
- ◇ KEG

- ◇ KETTLE
- ◇ LADLE
- ◇ LOCKER
- ◇ PERCOLATOR
- ◇ RECEPTACLE
- ◇ TEA CHEST
- ◇ TRAY
- ◇ TROUGH
- ◇ VAULT

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Place a number (from 1 to 9 inclusive) into each square in such a way that every digit appears once in each horizontal row, each vertical column and each box of nine squares.

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		5		2			8	6
		4	7			8	9	
	6		5	1				4
3	8	7			9			

'Today, we have a visitor...'

Do first impressions of a school reveal their true character? Robert Godber assesses the truth of the old adage

As a head, I often heard visitors to the school say that you could learn a lot about the place within minutes of walking in. I was always sceptical of this but when I retired I was able to check it out from the other side as a visitor myself.

Just as I stepped out from behind the big desk, I became involved in the campaign for a children's hospice in South Yorkshire. I usually got the 'schools brief', responding to requests from schools and colleges to talk to assemblies or classes about our project.

I enjoyed the continued contact with young people and talking to large groups in school halls was a skill I wanted to retain. I quickly discovered how easy it was to revert to type in spite of one's changed status – eyeballing a lapse in attention, glancing in disapproval at late arrivals, including staff, and moving about to command the room's attention. (To be fair, attention and response were almost always high, especially when the term 'life-limiting conditions' was understood.)

Perceived uniform infringement

More than once I dealt with a perceived uniform infringement, even before I knew what the correct uniform was. On another occasion, my first act on arrival was to stop a fight. Often, an inner voice said 'remember you are a visitor, no longer running the place.'

The truth about first impressions soon became apparent. Visiting a school to receive a cheque from children who had been raising money for us, and to thank them in a special assembly, I was struck by its dullness. Plonked alone in a monochrome staffroom with brown curtains, brown chairs and a brown noticeboard, I was ignored by unsmiling staff who came and went.

Finally ushered into a colourless hall, I found a gathering of lovely children who proudly told me about how they had raised the money. Sadly, this little moment was not witnessed by any of their teachers, other than the

head, who were exercising their negotiated right to miss assembly. Those kids deserved better.

A few days later, I was at a school nearby where the whole place was ablaze with colour and vitality. Their charismatic caretaker was running the London Marathon to support the hospice, and the whole school was enthusiastically behind him. I guess they were enthusiastic about everything else too!

Most schools were warmly welcoming: a cup of coffee offered, contact with staff member on hand, and smiling youngsters to help with the fathomless technology, keen to talk and an absolute whizz with a memory stick.

By contrast, in one or two, once beyond the security perimeter and key-pad doors, one was whisked away to an austere waiting room decorated only by pictures of smiling students meeting a benign headteacher.

Unwelcome truths

Primary schools required a different approach. Speakers from the hospice agreed to avoid references to death and 'Forget me not' suites with Year 6 and below, but occasionally a child would raise the issue and we would go with it. A brisk and forceful child once punctuated my careful references to 'very poorly' babies with the loud assertion that "They might die!" I quickly learned that some schools encourage even small children to confront unwelcome truths. Then, and more recently as a primary school governor, I developed a deep admiration for what is achieved in Early Years.

A Year 1 and reception class assembly offers its own challenges. I always adopt a Q&A approach to encourage an understanding of what children's hospices do. Once, a hand shot up in the front row, apparently in response to my question about having a very poorly brother or sister. "I want to wee-wee," said the child urgently. An older staff member, who should have known better, hissed, "Well you can't." Fearing a puddle on the parquet floor, I asked that the little chap be taken to the lavatory.

On another occasion, one of my former pupils invited me into her school to talk about the hospice, and after I had sat precariously on a tiny chair in an empty hall for a moment or two, a little troupe from reception gathered

round me and confidently engaged me in conversation. Absorbed in an earnest dialogue about the tooth fairy, I had not noticed the hall fill up until a polite cough from my former pupil told me the headteacher was ready. I had again become a disruptive influence!

We have had our hospice for more than ten years now. Schools across the region have played a significant part in creating it and continue to support it. I still go into schools and enjoy the privilege of a visitor's eye-view of the transformative work that goes on in them. Moreover, as I hear the words 'Today, we have a visitor' I still get that rush of adrenaline as the assembly hall falls silent to hear what the visitor has to say . . .

Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice serves South Yorkshire and parts of North Notts and North Derbys. Find out more at www.bluebellwood.org

Robert Godber

ASCL Associates Committee

'Can you work the washing machine after I'm gone?'

Tony Richardson reflects on how preparing for his wife's death has helped him to cope with life after it

In his 2018 book of reflections on life and death, *Waiting for the Last Bus*, Richard Holloway makes a good argument for thinking about, talking about, and preparing for the end of our lives.

Rebecca, my wife, died in July 2018 and this recollection is an attempt to record some of our experience of that event in a way that might prompt the kind of reflection Holloway recommends. Death is universal and inevitable but at the same time unique to each of us.

Until February 2018, Rebecca was apparently fit and well. She had been active all of her life, working as a teacher, youth worker, FE lecturer and in the final years of her career as assistant principal of a large FE college. In her early seventies, she was still cycling, walking, dancing, swimming. I am a couple of years older and neither of us thought of ourselves as old; we had plans for new adventures and had just bought a new campervan.

It was against that background that Rebecca saw her GP to talk about a change in her bowel habits. There were no other worrying symptoms, such as loss of weight or tiredness, but the GP wisely referred her for investigation. Within days, and before the investigation could take place, she became seriously ill and was admitted to hospital for emergency surgery.

Towards the end of March, after recovering from the operation, she had an appointment with a consultant who – with that combination of clarity and kindness that we learned to value so highly – explained that the operation had revealed widespread secondary cancer, though the primary was unknown.

It was not curable but terminal, he said, and any treatment could only be palliative.

Pausing to check that Rebecca had understood and had taken on board what he had said, he was surprised, as was I, to hear her say: "I don't think I am going to be troubled with dementia, am I?" He certainly knew she understood!

Don't waste time and energy

The shorthand for how long she had was the cryptic 'months rather than years', which later became weeks rather than months, days rather than weeks and finally, hours rather than days.

So Rebecca was faced with decisions about her remaining life and her death. Not everyone has the opportunity, which is why Holloway says we should do our thinking in advance, something we had not done until then.

She was very clear about some matters. She didn't want to prolong her life at the expense of its quality or to talk about fighting her illness. She wanted to concentrate on doing things she wanted to do in the time left and not waste time and energy being angry. She had no time for the view that somehow it wasn't 'fair'; she had seen enough of life to see that fairness was not a reasonable expectation.

She wanted to die at home rather than in hospital or in a hospice. And she did want to explore the search for her primary cancer which could in theory have made palliative treatment possible

Such pain as she had was well managed but she became increasingly tired and eating was difficult.

She was however well enough for long enough to plan how she wanted to be remembered and together we planned a non-religious cremation service. She wanted it to be simple and dignified and for a small number of people. She was clear about the kind of coffin she wanted – willow or wicker.



She was also very clear that she wanted me to plan a celebration of her life as a separate event; so that people could deal with the sadness at her death but be happy about her life. For that reason, she asked me to plan a celebration of her life as a separate event some time after the cremation

She had been actively involved in a wide range of social activities and civic life, and was greatly respected and loved by many people. She wanted the celebration to be in the village where we had lived for 30 years.

Simple and practical

We held it in September in the village school and 160 people came. We had a display of photographs, which Rebecca had helped choose. Our daughter spoke about her Mum and I spoke about my wife of 53 years. It was a happy occasion with much laughter.

Rebecca told the palliative care consultant that her greatest worry was not about dying but about what would happen to me and she set about making sure that I was in as good a position as possible to cope.

Some of what she did was simple and practical. She made sure I could operate the washing machine, that I knew where the money was and how to access it, and that I could make soup! Some of it was a matter of advice and even instruction: she told me for example that I must accept all invitations, whether I wanted to or not, that otherwise I would be on my own. I have done what she told me and I am the better for it.

Rebecca helped me prepare for life without her. Eight months on, I am in a better place because she did.

Tony Richardson

ASCL Associates Committee

Advice from AgeUK on how to have sensible discussions about death

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/relations

Dying Matters - a group of specialist organisations offering insights on facing up to death, dying and bereavement

www.dyingmatters.org/page/TalkingAboutDeathDying

Cruse – support for people who have been bereaved

www.cruse.org.uk/

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

C	H	A	O	S	T	E	M	P	E	S	T
O	L	H	E	R	O	M	O				
C	H	O	I	R	I	O	N	I	O	N	
K	N	I	G	S	N	E					
E	G	A	M	E	K	E	E	P	E	R	
R		P	Y		N	P					
E	L	A	P	S	E	C	A	S	T	E	R
L	L		R	N		O					
	C	L	A	S	S	I	F	I	E	D	S
B	E	T	G	S	R	P					
A	R	R	A	Y	H	E	V	A	D	E	
R	G	L	T	E	E	M	C				
S	H	Y	N	E	S	S	D	E	A	L	T

SUDOKU

6	3	1	8	9	7	4	2	5
2	5	8	1	6	4	9	3	7
4	7	9	3	5	2	1	6	8
7	4	6	9	8	5	2	1	3
8	2	3	6	7	1	5	4	9
1	9	5	4	2	3	7	8	6
5	1	4	7	3	6	8	9	2
9	6	2	5	1	8	3	7	4
3	8	7	2	4	9	6	5	1

WORDSEARCH

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

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Fighter for justice

John Fitzgerald investigated some of the worst cases of abuse in his career in childcare, challenged prime ministers, and campaigned on a variety of causes. His memoir is a fascinating chronicle, says Maureen Cruickshank

John Fitzgerald begins his memoir with a painful description of being abused aged three by a woman keeping house while his mother was in hospital. She beat him with a leather belt daily "screaming that if I cried she would hit me harder. I learnt not to cry," he writes. It continued for months until one day his father came home early from work and sacked the woman on the spot.

Thereafter, although he had reading difficulties, failed the 11-plus and left school at 15, it seemed inevitable that he would be drawn into childcare.

At 28, after a variety of jobs and following a spell with the Children's Society, he began a two-year professional social work training course. He moved into adoption work in London, becoming Director of the Adoption Resource Exchange and leading to other roles, including a fundraising slot on BBC Radio 4 and an invitation to speak at a conference in the USA. There is a comical account of his being summoned to see one Prime Minister at Number 10 and being sacked as a chair of one committee. As he left he said, "Of course I shall be issuing a press release." Later that day, the Secretary of State for Health phoned to say he had been "unsacked".

'Think the unthinkable'

In the final 20 years of his career he worked on inquiries and investigations into the deaths of children through abuse, including high profile cases such as the murders committed by Fred and Rosemary West. He emphasises that "professionals must see and listen to children, suspend disbelief and develop an ability to think the unthinkable." In his report on the West case John commended police and social services for the action taken but, as he says, good news is not as attractive to the media as bad.

From 1987 onwards John worked in Australia, Estonia, Kosovo and elsewhere, serving as President of the European Union of Child Welfare and was awarded an OBE for his work in childcare.

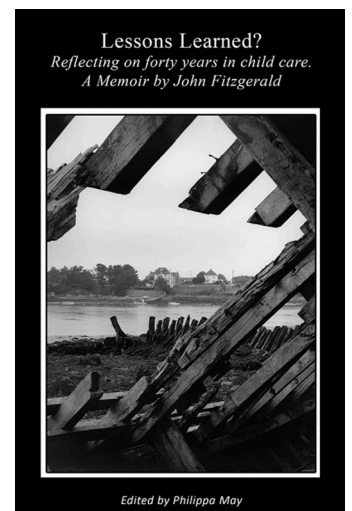
At stressful times, he found solace in the visual and performing arts and in canal boats, leading him to set up the charity Glasbury Arts in the early 2000s in Glasbury, a Welsh village four miles from Hay-on-Wye. Activities include an annual visual arts exhibition and performances by such artists as internationally renowned violinist Rachel Podger, jazz diva Jacqui Dankworth and celebrated harpist Catrin Finch. Glasbury Arts runs an annual Harp Summer School every August over four days when up to 40 students of all ages from the UK and abroad come to learn with tutors and to celebrate playing. This summer school is now partnered with the Birmingham Conservatoire.

John is an inveterate campaigner, playing a major role in averting a threatened closure of the very successful local secondary school and challenging Powys County Council about the inequality of some schools keeping within budget while others were being allowed to run up a large deficit.

His memoir is well worth a read by people like us who have worked with children and care deeply for their wellbeing.

Lessons learned? Reflecting on 40 years in child care. A Memoir by John Fitzgerald is published by Rowanvale books, £8, and available as an ebook from Amazon, £2.39

Maureen Cruickshank
ASCL Associates Committee



Election call

It's election time for the Associates' Committee and there are five vacancies for the term September 2019-22.

Four members of the Committee are retiring at the end of their term. They are:

- Di Beddow
- Christine Shellard
- Paul Baker
- Pat Sales

Serving committee members are eligible for re-election. ASCL will deal with elections by a single transferable vote.

This form can be used by any member wishing to stand for the first time and for those who are seeking re-election.

Nominations should be accompanied by a very brief statement of no more than 90 words, written in capital letters. Please note that you can nominate yourself.

Please give this matter your urgent attention.

To nominate please fill in the form below, using the space given for your 90-word statement.

Name of nominee: _____

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Former school/college: _____

Any national or branch offices, responsibilities held: _____

Please return completed nomination forms by **Friday 19 April 2019** for the attention of

Denise Hodgson, Executive Assistant to the General Secretary and Presidential Trio

ASCL 130 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7PG or email to **corporateadmin@ascl.org.uk**

Election call: 90-word statement

Are you caught in the inheritance tax trap?

You may not realise that there is still time to reduce or even eliminate IHT by using legitimate strategies.

It may come as a surprise to know that even if you have a relatively modest family home and a few investments you may leave your family with an inheritance tax bill to pay when you pass away. Any amount above the threshold is taxed at 40%. What you may not realise is that by taking action now, you may be able to reduce or even eliminate the amount payable, without losing control of your money.

We are ASCL's Premier Partner for financial advice, including inheritance tax planning. We can suggest ways of reducing inheritance tax, which may involve some or all of the following:

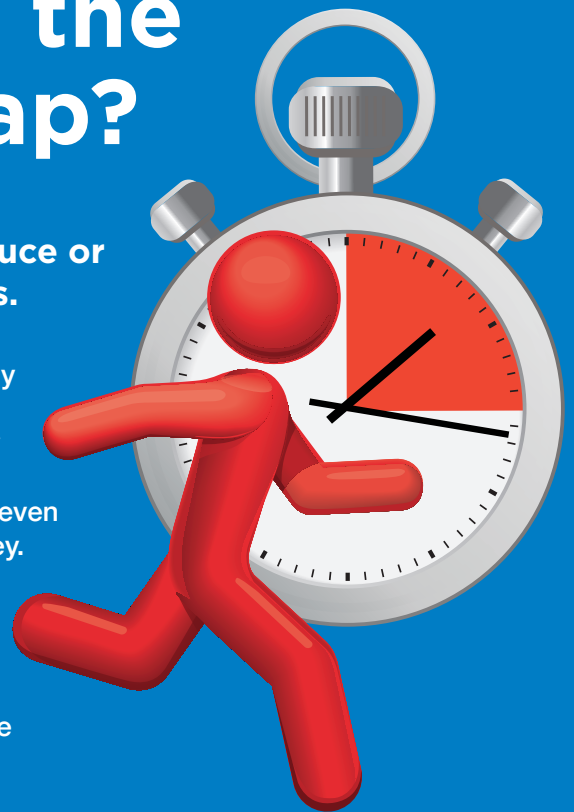
- making the most of the various allowances that allow you to give away certain amounts tax-free
- reducing your capital while maintaining your income
- taking out insurance to pay for inheritance tax
- using trusts to remove money from your estate
- structuring pension funds so that they can be passed down the generations
- making investments that are exempt from inheritance tax
- giving away surplus income
- leaving money to charities.

Call **08000 85 85 90** or email appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk now and book a **complimentary, no obligation initial consultation** with one of our advisers.

The value of your investments can go down as well as up, so you could get back less than you invested. Tax advice which contains no investment element is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

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