



This is the July 2008 E-Bulletin from FACE (Forum for Access and Continuing Education), offered to practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and others with an interest in access, widening participation and lifelong learning. This message is sent to colleagues in the sector, members and non-members alike. This FACE e-bulletin will be sent to you each month. If you would prefer not to receive it please contact Jim Tate at James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk and your details will be removed immediately.

This Month's Contents

- ➔ Next year's conference title and venue announced
- ➔ FACE 2008 - another highly successful conference!
- ➔ Our Newsletter "FACE to FACE" has been re-launched
- ➔ "Speakers Corner" – Paul Grainger on fears for the future of FE
- ➔ What's in the News? – other sources of education news online

FACE

on the Internet

www.f-a-c-e.org.uk

Previous issues of the E-bulletin are available from the FACE website

Next year's conference announced - FACE 2009 in Staffs



We are very happy to announce that the 2009 FACE conference will be hosted by Staffordshire University, an institution with a considerable reputation for work in the field of access and widening participation.

The university is conveniently situated directly opposite the railway station in Stoke, in the historical Midlands of England.

The title for the conference is to be "Towards a New Agenda for Lifelong Learning: Access, Diversity and Participation".

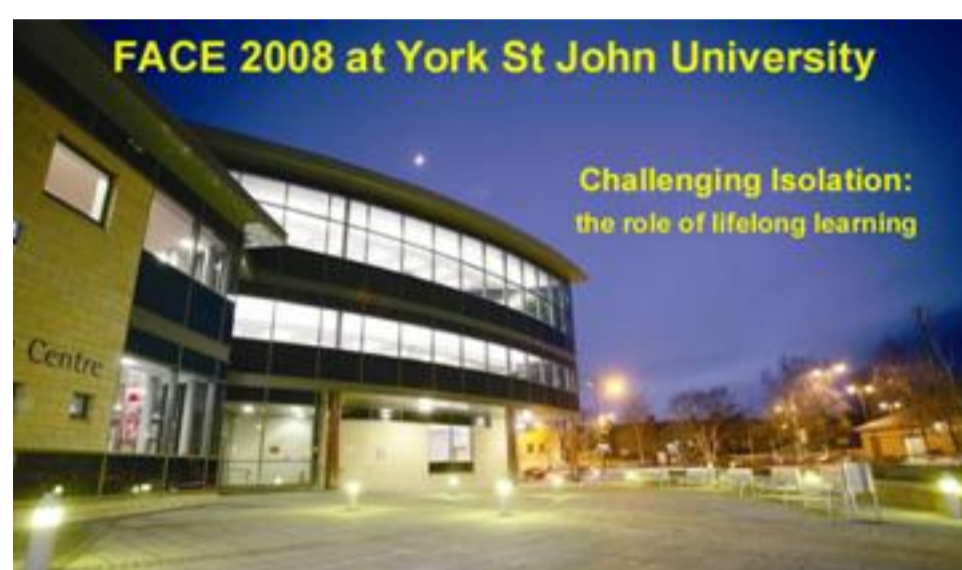
The dates are 1st - 3rd July 2009. Make a note of it in your diary!

FACE 2008 . . . another highly successful conference!

Did you miss any of the presentations you wanted to attend at conference?

You can catch up on some of what you missed by viewing the powerpoint slides for the keynote and workshop presentations that are now available on the FACE website.

[Go to FACE 2008 Online Conference Presentations](#)



"The workshop sessions I went to were all of a really high standard and one of the overseas colleagues, I think from Sweden said how mature and developed the work around access and WP seemed to him. I was struck by this comment, as I think sometimes UK colleagues don't realise this. I guess this is just one of the benefits of having international delegates at the conference which you don't get in many UK conferences".

Conference Delegate

With delegates from every part of the UK and beyond, York St John University proved a fantastic host for this year's annual conference. Both new and regular conference attendees agreed this was a really memorable FACE conference. We would like to thank again the Vice Chancellor and the York conference team for all their work in organising the conference.

The opening keynote session comprised of an excellent presentation from York St John Vice Chancellor Professor Dianne Willcocks during which she not only warmly welcomed delegates but also provided a detailed overview of the university and its mission in the context of York and nationally.

The FACE Chair Professor John Storan followed and he briefly outlined the broader context for FACE members and their institutions noting the progress report from the UK AGAINST the Lisbon objectives and also making reference to the recommendations and conclusions from the recent NAO report on WP and the implications these might have for HE access and participation. More information on the Lisbon report can be found in John's [Chair's report to members](#) on the website.



Professor Claire Callender of Birbeck, University of London, gave a powerfully challenging keynote on "Student Bursaries: the winners and losers" on the first day which really got the delegates talking. The following day it was the turn of Professor Robert Cormack to stimulate discussion with "Overcoming the Tyranny of Geography: HE provision in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland". Indeed, the role played by geography was an issue which was also raised in more than one of the workshops.



"Best conference I have been to for as long as I can remember. I understand next year's conference is at Staffordshire University and on the evidence of this year I will be booking as soon as possible . . ."

The keynote on the closing day was one of the most popular of the entire event when Professor Stuart Billingham, Pro-Vice Chancellor of York St. John University, spoke on "Challenging Rural Isolation: building partnerships for lifelong learning".

The Gala Dinner this year was a particularly impressive one because of the splendid surroundings of the [Merchant Adventurers Hall](#) in York, the Medieval hall of the company of Merchant Adventurers, built between 1357 and 1361, [which is said to be](#) the finest building of its date and type in Europe.

"A really memorable conference. Excellent keynotes, impressive and wide ranging workshop sessions and a social programme which included dinner in a historic building . . ."



"FACE to FACE" re-launched in a new format

Issue 30 of "FACE to FACE", our newsletter, was published in its new format as a PDF at the end of June. If you are a FACE member you should already have received your copy. If, by any chance, you have not, please contact the Editor Pete Jones at pete.jones@staffs.ac.uk.

Pete is receiving a good deal of praise for the new format, so make sure that you receive your copy. In this issue there are featured articles on:

An American Perspective: Where is the Invisible Hand? FACE to FACE regular, Brian Spittle discuss how colleges and universities in the USA confront wider societal issues that impact on accessing higher education.

Old Dogs and New Tricks: Skills, Lifelong Learning and Higher Education. Stuart Billingham, Pro Vice Chancellor at York St John University shares his thoughts on the role of HE and widened participation in shaping all our economic and social futures, a meaningful definition of skills and the fate of West Bromwich Albion football club.

Widening Participation and Leadership of Place: What Can be the Role of a University? Gill Howland Pro Vice Chancellor at Staffordshire University offers some personal reflections on the role of the university as an agent of transformation in areas of economic and social need.

To Infinity and Beyond! Family Learning: Raising Aspirations and Creating a Learning Culture. Juliette Collier of the Family Learning Network shares her thoughts on the wider benefits of Family Learning and discusses current developments in this area.



Speakers Corner



As a member-oriented organisation FACE would like to invite individual colleagues to have their say on any issue of concern in UK education policy and practice. This is a purely personal point of view and should not be thought to represent any institution, organisation, or official body. To have your say, email James.Tate@uwe.ac.uk

This month's contribution is from **Paul Grainger**, who **fears for the future of further education. Here's why.**



"I've spent my professional life trying to dodge the messes spilt from the unintended consequences of policy.

Now I fear for the future of Further Education: the sector concerned with access, training and the second chance. FE is a mite beset. Strategic responsibility for 14-19 is passing to Local Authorities with their knee jerk favouring of sixth forms. Decent 'License to Practice' courses are being diluted into bland vocationalism. The work force is being sanitised. This concerns me most.

FE Colleges are coherent entities: they do not fall into teen and adult portions. The weakening of one is a threat to the other. A great strength of FE has been its talented, varied workforce, bringing a passion for skills and craft, developed later in life, equally to teenagers and adult returners. These lecturers often have a rich past, a successful first career behind them, and a new desire to bring their skills to learners. When I wanted to employ a catering lecturer, I didn't go to a teacher training college, I went to a restaurant. Many of these inspiring lecturers had a negative experience at school, and found new life chances through interacting with, and developing, their professional skills. They could look a disaffected teenager, or an apprehensive return to learning adult, in the eye and say, 'Where you are now, so once was I'.

Now we have Lifelong Learning, UKs which bibliographies on an apparatus of professional qualifications to be obtained within a strict timescale and peppered with the essays, tests and bibliographies that were a turn off at school. We have viciously probing CRB checks dredging up embarrassing and irrelevant details from the distant past. We have an imposed (not professional) body, the Institute for Learning, membership of which is compulsory for FE lecturers. This body proposes to require confession to all driving offences, including parking tickets.

Now it is just possible that the rich and colourful pasts I have valued may embrace having parked on a double yellow line. Faced with such barriers and potential embarrassment, many of those whose lives have been transformed by a rich love of their trade may respond with a colourful phrase at the thought of going into teaching. Which is our loss.

I'm not looking for full deregulation: just the preservation of a culture which tolerates and promotes a second chance. I fear a sanitised future: empty college corridors smelling of dettol."

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What's in the News?

The Guardian <http://education.guardian.co.uk>

The Independent <http://news.independent.co.uk/education>

The BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/default.stm

The Times http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education

The Times Higher Education <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>

DCSF News Centre <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/newslst.cgi>

DIUS Press Releases <http://www.dius.gov.uk/pressreleases.html>

LSC News <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/News>