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## A TRIBUTE TO SOME LEADING LIGHTS OF ADULT EDUCATION OF THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY

**ABSTRACT:** This article, written on the basis of personal memories, is about famous adult educators who have recently passed away. They were all university professors, five of them British and one German, who made a significant difference through their scientific work, through their social engagement and work for democracy in Europe and for social change in the world, and by contributing to the learning of their students and the public in general. The aim of this article is to write about them so that we do not forget them. This is particularly important for adult education as a social science discipline. Thus, it is a tribute to those who have passed away. These six scholars are: Lalage Bown, Chris Duke, John Field, Peter Jarvis, Joachim Knoll, and Teddy Thomas. In order to write this written memorial to their work, materials such as these researchers' own publications, their CVs, and the obituaries written by other colleagues in newspapers and journals (International Journal of Lifelong Education, Education, The Guardian) or online on organizational websites (e.g. DVV, UNESCO and the universities they were active at) were used. The author had the privilege of meeting all of them. The aim of this exercise was therefore first and foremost to show connections and commonalities between them. They have many characteristics in common, but one characteristic in particular is special: a confidence in underprivileged adults' potential to learn. They also notably advocated and worked for open access policies and measures for adult learning and education.

**KEYWORDS:** leading adult educationists, Lalage Bown, Chris Duke, John Field, Peter Jarvis, Joachim Knoll, Teddy Thomas.

In recent years we have lost several internationally well-known adult educationists. Professor Peter Jarvis, well known and highly respected, died in 2018. Emeritus Professor Lalage Bown, a distinguished grand lady who contributed to the promotion of literacy in many countries in Africa, died in 2021, followed by Professor Chris Duke, who passed away in 2023, a scholar highly recognized in continuing and higher education research internationally. The same year, Professor Teddy Thomas died, also a major figure in adult education nationally and internationally. All of them came from Britain. In March 2024, the German Professor Emeritus Joachim Knoll also sadly passed away. Last but not least, a dear friend and colleague, Emeritus Professor John Field, is no longer with us. He died on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

I was lucky to meet and know all of these famous scholars. What united them was their international character and outstanding individual contributions to the field of adult and continuing education. Some of them were involved in other continents as well as Europe – Africa, Australia, Asia, and America – and some of them were interested in central and Eastern Europe, including Poland. Several of them were, in fact,

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well known in Poland, and some published, too, in Polish academic journals. Above all, what connects them was their commitment and dedication to adult education research and practice.

### **Peter Jarvis (1937-2018) who contributed to the development of the theory of adult learning**

Peter Jarvis was an Emeritus Professor of Continuing Education at the University of Surrey. He died aged 81. I met Peter at various conferences, and I read and used his texts in my teaching and research. We were both involved in an international project run by Professor Ekkehard Nuißl von Rein about the competence profiles of adult education professionals. Thus, I was able to get to know Peter in a research context and informally as well. We wrote a chapter together for a book edited by Susanne Lattke and Ekkehard Nuißl in 2008: *Qualifying Adult Learning Professionals in Europe* (Lattke & Nuißl, 2008). Our article was about *Identities adult of educators: changes in professionalism* (Bron & Jarvis, 2008). However, my first encounter with Peter was, in fact, much earlier, when he kindly nominated my book *Workers and Post-Secondary Education. A Cross Polity Perspective* (Bron-Wojciechowska, 1989) for the Cyril O. Houle Award<sup>1</sup> in 1990.



Peter Jarvis

Source: <http://adulthoodeducation-contributors.pbworks.com/w/page/42258742/82%20%20Peter%20Jarvis>.

Peter Jarvis' interest in adult and continuing education was incredibly useful for younger scholars, as he contributed to the theory of adult learning from a sociological standpoint. For his experiential learning theory, he took his inspiration from John Dewey and Jean Piaget, while using the perspective of sociology. The important message in Peter's work was that learning occurs in a social context, and we adjust to our environment. However, it was the individual, according to Peter, who makes sense of the world in his/her lifelong learning project. One of his important book is *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Theory and Practice*, which first edition came in 2004 (Jarvis, 2004).

Peter's model of the processes of learning was dynamic and subject to change as he revised it in each new edition of his books and other publications. These were *Adult Learning in the Social Context* (Jarvis, 1987); *Paradoxes of Learning. On Becoming an Individual in Society* (Jarvis, 1992); *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning* (Jarvis, 2005), which was the first in the three-volume series *Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society* (Jarvis, 2007); and *Learning to Be a Person in Society* (Jarvis, 2009).

<sup>1</sup> The Cyril O. Houle Award is given annually by the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) for a book published in English in the previous year that reflects universal concerns.

Hence, he was very much aware of how complex the task of understanding adult learning was. Many of Peter's books became textbooks for students in education and adult education.

He founded, together with Teddy Thomas, the *International Journal of Lifelong Education* in 1980, and he edited it for 35 years. Today, the Chief Editor of this journal is John Holford. It is interesting to look a little closer at Peter's unusual career, about which John Holford (2019) writes in his obituary. After three years in the RAF, Peter was trained to enter the Methodist ministry. He served as a Methodist minister in Norfolk, Wakefield and Sheffield, but at the same time he attended part-time studies in sociology at Sheffield University and earned a BA. However, after three years he ended his full-time ministry, and started to teach at Dudley College of Education, while he studied part-time for an MA and then a PhD, and in 1976 he took up a lectureship in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Surrey. Here, among other things, he founded a distance learning programme. For 30 years, he was also a part-time tutor for the Open University.

John Holford writes: "As a productive editor, and a keen traveller, he was one who built bridges between American and European adult education scholars in the 1980s, later doing the same in Asia and Africa" (Holford, 2019). He goes on: "A couple of years ago, when he realised he could no longer write, he donated his library – thousands of books – to Gulu University, in a part of northern Uganda that has suffered decades of military insurgency from the Lord's Resistance Army" (Holford, 2019).

Peter Jarvis was also interested in comparative studies and was an active member of the Editorial Board of *Comparative Education*. Michael Crossley (2019) of the University of Kent, writes about Peter: "While Peter was a prolific writer, he was also a gregarious personality who loved teaching, enjoyed working with people and delighted in international travel. This is reflected in his interest in comparative and international education and his wide global network of friends and colleagues" and "For many years he was an Adjunct Professor of Adult Education at the University of Georgia and he was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame<sup>2</sup> in 1997" (Crossley, 2019: 281). Crossley goes on to describe Peter as one who "always embodied genuine concern for human rights, inclusive access to education and the empowerment of those marginalised in society at home and abroad" (Crossley, 2019: 281). He shared these fundamental concerns with all the adult educationists to whom this commemoration wishes to pay tribute.

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<sup>2</sup> The International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (IACEHOF) was founded in 1996 at University of Oklahoma "to honor leaders in the fields of continuing education and adult learning and to serve as a record and inspiration for the next generation of continuing education leaders".

### **Lalage Bown (1927-2021) – a role model who inspired many adult educators and educationists**

Lalage Bown, Emeritus Professor, died in 2021, aged 94. She was born on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1927 and died on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. She was educated at Wycombe Abbey School and Cheltenham Ladies' College, before studying modern history at Somerville College, Oxford, graduating in 1949. She subsequently took an MA in adult education and economic development. All of these subjects were crucial for her involvement with adult literacy and education in Africa. Her achievements were highly valued. In 1975, she received an honorary doctorate from the Open University for services to the education of the underprivileged, and was the first woman to receive the William Pearson Tolley Medal from Syracuse University, New York, for outstanding contributions to lifelong and continuing education<sup>3</sup>.



The picture was taken on Lalage's return from Nigeria in 1980  
Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jan/10/lalage-bown-obituary>.

Lalage Bown was appointed to her first teaching position at the new University of the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1949. As a young lecturer, she was astonished that the literature she had to use was British, which contained unfamiliar material for African students and made little sense to them. She wanted to challenge her colleagues by finding African literature, which she did in only two weeks, and was able to use mimeographed copies with her students and fellow teachers. In 1973, she edited the anthology *Two Centuries of African English* (Bown, 1973) with writing from older writers and contemporary politicians, published in the Heinemann African Writers Series. It became a main textbook for adult education and other classes throughout Africa. She edited and co-edited numerous books afterwards.

We can learn about Lalage's life and her contribution to education from the obituary that Lyn Innes wrote in 2022 (Innes, 2022). During her three decades' stay in Africa, Lalage was able to establish a network of adult education institutions and organisations in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Thus, she started her work in Africa in the British colonies, and experienced decolonisation and the establishment

<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, many women have received this medal, which is awarded each year. The first medal ever was awarded in 1966 to Cyril O. Houle, University of Chicago.

of African states. Her main engagement and energy focused on literacy in these countries, with a special interest in women. She always cooperated with her other African colleagues and together with them established extramural programmes in Zambia, for example, involving the media of radio and television. She was the founding Secretary of the African Adult Education Association. On her permanent return home from Nigeria to Britain in 1980, her engagement and dedication was focused on widening access to adult education throughout the UK. Nevertheless, her main work remained in literacy programmes for African women and she continued to be involved in this work through UNESCO.

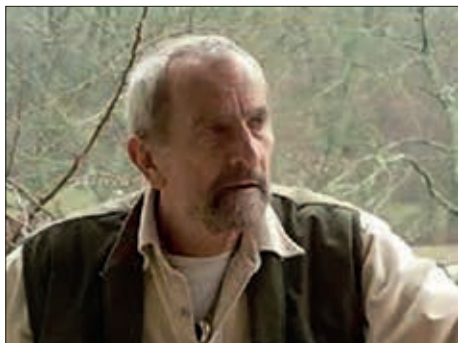
In 1981, she was appointed director and titular Professor in the University of Glasgow's Department of Adult and Continuing Education. Under her leadership the department offered the widest range of subjects of all continuing education departments in the UK. Her contribution to the field was enormous.

I met Lalage for the first time at a conference in St. Andrews in 1983 which was about literacy and basic adult education. We came there with our five-year-old son, and Lalage was playing with him and said to us that he was the only illiterate person in the whole gathering. I met Lalage after that several times, but every time I attended international adult education conferences in Oxford that had their venue at Lalage's former college, Somerville College, I thought about her. The last time I saw her was when she invited me to visit her in her home in Shrewsbury in 1994. She will always remain in my memory as a Grand Lady of Adult Education.

After her retirement in 1992, Lalage Bown remained an active member not only of her local Rotary Club in Shrewsbury but also of numerous international societies and boards. She became a fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland as well as of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1991, and was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2009. Professor Maria Slowey was appointed to her Chair in Glasgow. Lalage was extremely happy with this choice, as a dedicated and scholarly woman took over from her. It is naturally very sad that Lalage Bown passed away, but her work and her function as a role model will continue to inspire adult educationists.

**Chris Duke (1938-2023). A great inspiration to many adult and continuing education researchers, decision makers, and students in Britain and internationally**

Chris Duke, Emeritus Professor at the University of Warwick and the Australian National University, contributed enormously to the field of adult and continuing education. Chris died on 22 June 2023 in Australia, after a period of illness. Some of us, his 'old-mates' as Professor Maria Slowey called us, on her initiative, using the old tradition of the study circle, got together before Chris passed away, and were able to dedicate our tribute to him. As Chris started PIMA (Promoting, Interrogation, mobilizing for



Chris Duke

Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/z8rKF7Hkmy-Ut7Hj68>.

Adult Learning and Education) in 2015 and served as Editor of the PIMA Bulletin, there could have been no better celebration and thank-you to him than the Special Issue which was produced honouring his contributions locally and globally (PIMA Bulletin, 2023).

Chris was a British historian and sociologist, born October 4, 1938. His career began in adult higher education as a lecturer at the University of Leeds. At the end of his career he was Honorary Professor at Glasgow, Scotland and RMIT, University of

Australia. He worked for 50 years in universities in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand as a scholar and manager, with shorter turns as a teacher or consultant with universities and higher education systems in Canada, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Southern Africa, the Sudan, Spain and Croatia. His impact has been global, disseminated via more than 300 publications in monographs, academic journals, and practice-oriented journals. He founded and edited for 25 years the *International Journal of University Adult Education*, and he continued to serve on several international editorial boards.

On the Homepage of the University of Oklahoma IACE Hall of Fame we can read: “After 27 years in influential positions at the Australian National University and Warwick, he became President of the University of Western Sydney Nepean. Here his visionary and innovative work in the deprived western Sydney region led Nepean out of a life-threatening crisis to national prominence as an engaged wider access university” (Hall of Fame, 2024).

“Professor Chris Duke had a founding Chair in Adult and Continuing Education at the Australian National University in Canberra when he took over the role as Secretary General of ASPBAE and established cooperation with DVV International in 1977. Alongside he was Associate Secretary General of the ICAE, and served as rapporteur for CONFINTEA. Within his outstanding career he rose to the positions of Vice Chancellor and University President. He was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2014” (DVV, 2023). This tribute to Chris Duke can be found on the DVV homepage.

I met Chris for the first time in 1973 in Paris, when he and his wife Liz visited her father at UNESCO. After that, we became close friends and colleagues. I visited Chris several times in Leamington Spa when he had a Chair in Continuing Education at Warwick University. I was fortunate to have had Chris as mentor and colleague and



to have worked under his leadership in several European projects. His friendly support made a significant impact on my academic career in Sweden after 1983. From 1994 Chris started holding regular meetings with colleagues from Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Ireland and UK on Policies and Practices in regard to non-traditional students in higher education, which resulted in the TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) four-year project from 1998 financed by the EU On University Adult Access Policies and Practices across the European Union and their consequences for participation of non-traditional adults (TSER Final Report, 2001).

Professionally, I recall numerous talks with Chris on democracy and active citizenship, on higher education policy, and non-traditional students, *etc.* Those discussions resulted in several publications in Chris's *International Journal of University Adult Education* from the late 1980s. When the political regime in Eastern Europe collapsed, Chris showed interest in understanding how new democracies were developing, and when in 1990 Professor Mieczysław Malewski invited us to Poland, Chris came with John Field to discuss democratic movements and adult education, and to help adult educators in meeting new challenges, using his knowledge and experience. Soon enough, we all (all four of us) became engaged as founding members in establishing ESREA and helping Barry Hake in the first interim board. While John and I carried forward the work on the Active Citizenship Network, Chris launched with Barbara Merrill the Access Research Network in 1996.

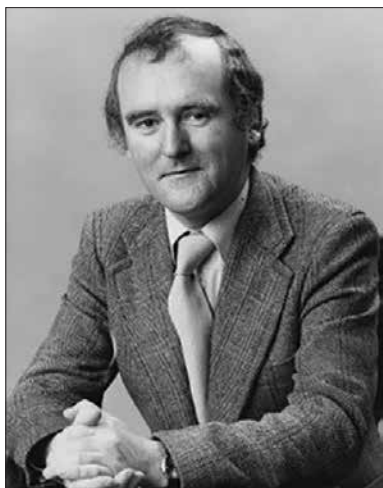
Knowing as I did Chris and his wife Liz over a long time, I came to know the family more closely. Our families often met in Leamington Spa, when we attended conferences, meetings, and later on, when I was involved in research projects under Chris's leadership. Our sons, Alex and Micke, of the same age, visited and revisited each other as teenagers, and were able to experience their respective schools in Uppsala and Leamington Spa. Unfortunately, the younger son Paul passed away in his early twenties, a tragedy for the whole family. In 1994, I spent six weeks on teaching and research leave from Stockholm University at Warwick University, and while I replaced Malcolm Tough, he substituted me in my teaching in Stockholm. While I had Chris as my boss at the Department, I often visited his family.

Although Chris's own family had had financial difficulties, he received an excellent education at Cambridge University, eventually becoming a Professor at one of the prestige universities in Britain, *i.e.* at Warwick, and he served there also as University Pro-Vice-Chancellor. In Australia, too, he occupied high administrative positions of leadership. However, Chris was always keen to create opportunities for non-traditional students to be able to get into higher education. This became a main topic of his research, his writings and engagement in the policy of higher education both in Britain and Australia. Some of Chris Duke's most important publications are Duke (1992;

2002; 2004; 2013) and together with his colleagues (Duke *et al.*, 1999; Duke, Osborne & Wilson, 2013).

It is extremely sad that Chris, a brilliant scholar who inspired so many adult educationists and students, is no longer with us. He will be missed by many, both in Britain and Australia, but also internationally in numerous countries and international institutions.

**Teddy Thomas (1933-2023) – a major figure in adult education nationally and internationally who made research in adult and lifelong education his priority**



James Edward (Teddy) Thomas  
Source: published on line by Holford (2023).

Professor James Edward (Teddy) Thomas, born in 1933, passed away on 11 of July 2023, aged 89. Holford writes: “He was a major figure in adult education nationally and internationally, he served as Reader and later Robert Peers Professor of Adult Education at the University of Nottingham, as well as Deputy Head and Head of the Department of Adult Education. He was also a leading figure in the university more broadly: both Dean of the Faculty of Education and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university from 1990 to 1994. As an excellent scholar – he was awarded a higher doctorate (D.Litt.) by the University of Nottingham – he had sixteen books and many articles and chapters to his name” (Holford, 2023: 515).

Research in adult and lifelong education was his top priority, which he championed with dedica-

tion for SCUTREA (the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults). He chaired SCUTREA during the early 1980s, and together with Peter Jarvis he co-founded *the International Journal of Lifelong Education*, editing it together with Peter for its first seventeen years. As a matter of interest, it was Michael Stephens who originally advocated creating the journal and taking Peter Jarvis on board. Michael Stephens (1937-1994), was “the youthful Robert Peers Professor and Head of Department, was a strong advocate of research, a pioneer in the teaching of adult education as an academic discipline, and a founder (in 1969) and continuing champion of SCUTREA, contributing ‘significantly’ to adult education research” (Holford, 2023: 517). Teddy’s interest in adult education was its radical character that he developed in his book from 1982 (Thomas, 1982).

Holford’s resumé of J.E. Thomas’s academic vita adds: “Teddy’s attitude to research made his appointment as Reader and Deputy Head in the Nottingham Adult



Education Department exceptionally welcome. He campaigned energetically for university adult education, not only in the East Midlands but nationally, as a member of the Universities Council for Adult Education. In particular, the university's Department of Adult Education became a leading publisher in the field. Teddy was key to this, as one of a triumvirate of editors (with Michael Stephens and Kenneth Lawson) of the book series, *Nottingham Studies in the Theory and Practice of the Education of Adults*" (Holford, 2023: 517).

Teddy was very much appreciated by many adult educationists in Britain. Many saw him as a central figure, as he represented everything which made up social engagement. His commitment was seen as important and politically right, and he was decidedly on the Left. As a colleague, I recall him playing a key role in the early development of the utopian and short-lived International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education (ILSCAE). At a founding event in 1984 he was truly charmed by the aspirations of this movement, which had a mission "To encourage all those involved in adult education to foster participation in dialogue on the critical social issues confronting humankind today, such as class inequality, environmental concerns, peace, racism, sexism and ageism, and 'to encourage all those involved in adult education to identify and act to overcome the social, political and economic forces which perpetuate the existence of poverty, oppression and political powerlessness. Teddy attended the second event in Sweden along with radical and liberal scholars and activists from North America, Europe and South Africa, as well as Chilean refugee and PLO educators" (Holford, 2023: 518). As a matter of fact, I also was there, but did not attend ILSCAE's third event at Nottingham, which Teddy co-planned and hosted. I was no longer interested in this organization, as it was involved in politics I did not appreciate.

John Holford in his long obituary for Teddy in *the International Journal of Lifelong Education* writes: "Teddy was always an advocate of developing 'theory' in adult education, but he was not by disposition a 'theorist'. His research interests, though reflective and [...] informed by theory, were strongly historical. In the early 1980s he embarked on an International Biography of Adult Education (Thomas & Elsey, 1985); later in the decade he published another book on the history of prisons and their inmates (Thomas, 1988). He developed an interest in Japan: initially he focused on education for democracy (Thomas, 1985), but the interest in its society and culture broadened and flourished in later works (Thomas, 1993; 1996); he was elected a Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science" (Holford, 2023: 518). Teddy was also interested in history of Britain and especially of Wales that his book from 2011 *Social disorder in Britain 1750-1850: The power of the gentry, radicalism and religion in Wales* is about (Thomas, 2011).

I met Teddy at various English and International conferences. I think we met for the first time at the UNESCO conference in Paris 1983, and became good friends, as well as with Michael Stephens. But before (I still was in Poland at that time) he turned to me and asked for a contribution to his and Barry Elsey's book, the *International Biography of Adult Education* (Thomas & Elsey, 1985), with some short historical biographies of leading figures in adult education in Poland.



Joachim Knoll

Source: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/our-work/news/detail/prof-dr-dr-h-c-joachim-h-knoll-former-curatorial-board-member-dies-at-91>.

### **Joachim Knoll (1932-2024) – the first Professor in adult education in Germany and the first with an international reputation**

Professor Emeritus Joachim Knoll of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum passed away on the 22nd of March 2024. He was 91 years old, born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1932. He was the first holder of the Chair of Adult Education and Out-of-school youth work at Bochum University since its beginning, *i.e.* 1964, and the first in West Germany, and Joachim held this position until his retirement. His research interests comprised International and Comparative Adult Education; Legislation of Adult and Continuing Education; Political Education;

Media education and youth-protection; New Media Technologies for Education and Entertainment.

He was a founder of International and Comparative Adult Education in Germany. Joachim helped to make adult education a respected academic discipline in Germany. He educated many scholars, among whom we can list Horst Siebert, Klaus Künzel, Michael Schemmann. He was internationally the best known of any Professors in Germany, he was fluent in English, and maintained a broad set of contacts with international adult education colleagues and organisations. He inaugurated the *International Yearbook of Adult Education* in 1967, a forum of international scholarly exchange, and edited 26 volumes of the yearbook (from 1965 to 1997). When he retired, I continued the *Yearbook* in Bochum but with the name *Bochum Studies in International Adult Education* (from 1999 to 2002). Joachim worked with the OECD and UNESCO. Earlier, Joachim Knoll was associated with the UNESCO Hamburg Institute of Education and their *International Review of Education*. Joachim was very productive, but published mostly in German. From the beginning of his career the interest he had in democracy and liberal ideas which were based on his rejection of the experience of the Nazi dictatorship (Knoll, 1957). Politische Bildung, which

became centrally important after the war was focused mainly on young adults (Knoll, 1962). They needed knowledge about society, and Joachim was engaged in developing ideas about how to provide knowledge about society to young people (Knoll, 1988). His research interest and knowledge in adult and continuing education internationally resulted in yet another book (Knoll, 1996). But he was also interested in media culture and its influence on young people and their culture (Knoll & Monssen-Engberding eds., 2000). When the Bologna process in Higher Education was initiated, Joachim brought out an edited book about the process (Knoll ed., 2005).

After 1989, using his expertise, Joachim made an important contribution to the redesign of adult education legally and administratively in some Eastern European countries, especially in the Czech Republic. He visited Poland for adult education conferences. In 1992, Joachim was at a conference in Wrocław organized by Professor Mieczysław Malewski, at which John Field was also present.

I met Joachim early in my academic career. He was well-informed about adult education in Poland, and knew my father. Close to his retirement in 1997, he contacted me and encouraged me to apply for his Chair. I did and became his successor with a new Chair named International Adult Education. I held this position in Bochum until 2001, and moved on to a Swedish Professorship in Education in Stockholm. Joachim was always helpful in showing me how to navigate the German system and was a very good colleague and a friend. He will be remembered by his students and colleagues. We all miss him a lot.



John Field

Source: <https://historyofeducation.org.uk/person/john-field/>.

**John Field (1949-2024) – brilliant researcher, reliable colleague and a very good friend**

It was very sad to hear that John Field, Emeritus Professor at the University of Stirling, Visiting Professor at the University of Warwick, and Gastprofessor at the Universität zu Köln, born 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1949, passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. He was a trained and dedicated historian with research focused on inter-organisational conflicts and settlements in wartime adult education, adult education and active citizenship, the educational ideas and practices of utopian movements, and the relationship between skills, work, and masculinities. His PhD was on *Learning through Labour: training, unemployment and the state, 1890-1939* (Field, 1992), published by Leeds University in 1992, which he had defended at Warwick University much earlier. Together with Tom Schuller, he was a founding member of the Warwick University Department of

Continuing Education, of which Chris Duke was Chair. John later returned to Warwick, after many other appointments, to become Professor of Lifelong Learning.

Chris Duke introduced both John and Tom to me in 1985, as I recall. From that time on, our paths as colleagues crossed many times. We attended the same conferences, I visited the University of Warwick and Chris Duke and his family in Leamington Spa a number of times, which provided occasions to see John. A long-lasting friendship between John and myself thus began. We were able to follow our mutual careers, and also our family lives, closely. Therefore it, is extremely sad that John, whom I knew for most of my professional life, is gone.

John's interest in language and learning goes back to his father's experiences in the Hong-Kong prison camp that he was imprisoned in as a British soldier during the Second World War. This also accounted for John's interest in the history of labour camps in Britain (Field, 2013). An interest in higher education, which he did not intend at first to aim for, was sparked by a fascination with E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). It is an interesting coincidence that I also read this book, which made a great impression on me, in the late 1960s. I had found this book in my home, among my mother's books.

John published 155 academic articles and was active to his last day. His recent publications include *Working Men's Bodies: Work Camps in Britain 1880-1940* (Field, 2013). One of the main focuses of his research was an understanding of social capital and social movements (Field, 2015). Professor Mieczysław Malewski from Wrocław University invited Chris Duke and John Field from the University of Warwick (and I also travelled there from Sweden) to a conference on *Adult Education as a Social Movement* in Karpacz in 1992, and a long-lasting friendship and research co-operation began between the four of us. This conference became the embryo for the ESREA network on Active Democratic Citizenship. All four of us were founding members of ESREA in 1992. We also sat on the ESREA interim steering committee. John Field was well known to Polish researchers and some of them worked with him on EU research projects coordinated by Barbara Merrill, in which Professor Ewa Kurantowicz and Dr. Adriana Nizińska represented Poland.

John Field came to Sweden several times. I especially remember when he visited me and Bernt Gustavsson in 1992 at Linköping University, as we were interested in residential adult education, and discussed Swedish folk high schools. We were also involved in research on social movements. From 2008-2014, we collaborated in two European projects about non-traditional students in Higher Education – RANLHE and EMPLOY – in which we were together able to contribute a lot to European perspectives on access, retention, drop-out and employability. In both projects, Professor Camilla Thunborg was also involved (see Finnegan, Merrill & Thunborg eds., 2014).

John's contribution to this book was an article on Scottish students' identities (Field & Morgan-Klein, 2014). The last time I saw John was on May 3, 2023 in Stockholm, where we had a long chat in a café. I had no idea it would be our last meeting.

John Field was closely associated with the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning in Hamburg. On their website, the Institute writes: "It is with deep sadness that the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) notes the passing of John Field, a giant of adult education scholarship who also made a significant contribution to national and international policy advocacy in lifelong learning, and the work of UIL over the past decades" (UIL, 2024). He was a genuine international scholar who knew both German and French.

John Field was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2006 by the Open University, UK. In 2014, he was inducted into the International Hall of Fame of Adult Educators. John was a brilliant researcher, a reliable colleague and a very good friend. He was energetic and quick in both speech and thought, and he was a very good mountain hiker, but most of all he had a positive mood or spirit, which he could spread to his colleagues, friends and students. I admired him for his humour, intellect and friendship, and will never forget his love of life, his generosity and his jokes.

## **In conclusion**

All of these famous adult educationists are no longer with us, but their visions and ideas, their writings and their confidence in adult learning are still in our memories, in their students and colleagues, and will remain so. They have many features in common, but one feature is special: a confidence in underprivileged adults' potential to learn. They also advocated and worked for open access policies and measures for adult learning.

Peter Jarvis was a part-time/mature student himself, and a tutor at the Open University. He "always embodied genuine concern for human rights, inclusive access to education and the empowerment of those marginalised in society at home and abroad" writes Crossley (2019). Lalage Bown was also engaged in the Open University, and she worked for African women's literacy and for widening access to adult education in the UK. Chris Duke never forgot how he earned his education, and worked for non-traditional students' access to continuing education. Teddy Thomas, probably the most 'left' of all of them was keen on inclusion, solidarity and social change. Joachim Knoll's engagement was international, both in Eastern Europe and in other continents. He was involved in Politische Bildung, so very important for West Germany, and in the inclusion of adult students in learning by giving them a second chance. John Field's commitments encompassed international policies of lifelong learning, social capital and active citizenship, but most of all his engagement was directed to supporting and

promoting his students and younger scholars in their research and career advancement both in Britain and internationally.

These were men and women who made a lasting contribution to adult education research. We can learn a lot from them and will not forget them.

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