

EDUCATION/ LEARNING for LIFE.....WHY?

Margaret Campbell

Attending courses at the People's Centre in Wallsend.

Wallsend was originally known as Segedunum, the last Roman fort at the end of Hadrian's Wall, as it turned down towards the River Tyne.

The majority of courses at the Centre, are organised, developed and delivered by the Association of Part Time Tutors, a local and recently formed forum for part time teachers.

From a selection of courses on offer, I have, over the last two or three years, been attending some of those relating to IT.

Graphics and Page design,

Word Processing and Website creation.

The easy and perhaps obvious question would be why **at your age?**

All of us see the merit in funding learners who will be taking up, and returning to, paid employment, and young students who are about to enter the world of work.

But aged people?? Where is the merit in this?

Well, what about the ever-growing 'Volunteer Sector?' Unpaid workers. Of which I am one.

My knowledge of IT has enabled me to become a tutor with Age Concern.

Older people are eager to take up these one-to-one sessions, which prove to be more than merely learning to use computers, but also a support and confidence-building exercise. It is a proven fact that stimulation of the mind can and does produce improvement in health and therefore well-being.

This is especially evident in our outreach sessions, which take part in sheltered housing complexes throughout the Borough. Residents, who are separated from their families, are learning to communicate via email. And it's such fun!!

I make use of my Page design and Graphics training to produce newsletters, leaflets and posters for two local charities, helping them to achieve publicity and to promulgate information at an affordable cost.

Web Page Design has proved useful for me to help a Forum of Volunteers, which is working to improve the lives of older people in North Tyneside. Once I have carried out the training of these volunteers, they will have their Website up and running.

On Wednesday afternoons, I take part in an ongoing course on philosophy, and, the inextricably linked, politics.

Under the tutelage of the Association of Part-time Tutors I have the opportunity to listen to some august speakers and participate in strong debate and argument.

I have also been exercised to revisit those books which I used to pore over 30 or so

years ago. Granted, the information is now not so easily assimilated and once read, is not retained for the length of time as before, but it is no less enjoyable and stimulating.

Such a course as this is not always widely available, and we in Wallsend are privileged to host it.

From this course come satellite sessions on ethics, music and art appreciation and drama.

At the end of each term, there is the option of writing an essay, which, if deemed suitable by the North East Open College Network, will be accredited at level 3.

We adult students can feel that we have to justify expecting continuous education when the perception is that we are not able to “put it to good (ie profitable) use” But, maybe education/ learning for its own sake should be the objective and the right of people of all ages.

Quote, “The appetites of adults to be shown the foundations and processes of thought will never be denied by a British administration”.....Winston Churchill 1953.

So! What’s next for me? Well, I intend to improve my limited knowledge of French. And the benefit of this?? With a number of grandchildren coming up through the education system. That answer is obvious.