



AGCAS Alumni Reunion, Kingston-upon-Hull, 17th May 2017

Another successful AGCAS Alumni reunion was held at WISE (The Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation), an institute of the University of Hull located in Hull's Old Town, next door to William Wilberforce's house. 16 members (see list below) attended from a wide range of universities and enjoyed a varied and interesting programme.

The evening before the event, eleven of the group met in Beverley for an informal drink and meal. Members experienced the atmosphere of one of Beverley's oldest pubs, The White Horse, commonly known as 'Nellies', which has multiple small rooms with York stone floors, gas lighting, and cheap beer. A meal in a private room in an adjacent bistro restaurant provided an excellent, sociable evening.

The programme the following day started with an illuminating talk from Dr Nick Evans of WISE on the work of the Institute, a brief history of slavery and William Wilberforce's role in the campaign leading to its abolition, and, most importantly, the curse of slavery in the modern world. Despite that abolition some countries within the former British Empire have never eliminated slavery, with India with its complex social structures being the most problematic. We learnt that it is estimated that there are some 45 million people enslaved today throughout the world, and that the number is growing each year. Ironically the country with the highest percentage of slaves per population is Mauritania in west Africa, the area from which so many slaves were trafficked in earlier times. It has been estimated that in 1800 there were some 45 million 'chattel' slaves. The definition of slavery has been revised by international organisations many times since then, so there are fewer 'chattel' slaves but so many in other forms which involve the deprivation of liberty of those individuals; a salutary fact, and one that William Wilberforce would surely be shocked to hear. The mushroom industry with its 24 hour production system involving individuals working shifts and 'hot bedding', has one of the worst records for using slaves. Within the UK it's estimated that there are c13,000 individuals in many forms of slavery, often exploiting trafficked people, with the majority being enslaved in the east of England.

The Institute is active in researching the problem, monitoring the growth, investigating companies' policies and producing reports and educational material to increase awareness, including many programmes and books for use in schools and colleges. See: <http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fass/wise.aspx> In response to the question "What can we do about it?", we were encouraged to ask our supermarkets (including the major ones) and shops for details of their ethical policies, especially regarding their supply chains, to sign up to on-line causes and campaigns, to be alert to suspicious behaviours and encourage notifying the police who are active in investigating these crimes and to generally raise awareness amongst our friends and colleagues.

This talk was followed by Valerie Metcalfe talking about her consultancy work in careers projects at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. After introducing us to the evolution of the country, its past and current racial unrest, employment record and the development of higher education, she spoke about an inspiring community project of the University in one of the Cape's largest townships, Phillipi. In an area of extreme deprivation, the centre is providing the opportunity for residents to develop their education and skills and to start up small businesses locally so people don't have to travel long distances, which they can't afford, to find work. See their website: <http://www.philippivillage.co.za> . In addition, she talked movingly about 'Ubuntu', a term used to describe individuals encouraging a sense of community, and striving to develop harmony.

Clearly the country is still plagued by its racial discriminatory past, for example the typical monthly wage being £500 for 'whites' and £165 for 'blacks'. However despite the current political tensions, unsettled populations and continuing discrimination, we came away with a feeling of optimism that the younger generation were determined to drive change forward.

After enjoying a quality buffet lunch, when participants were able to catch up, Margaret Dane updated the group on developments for the AGCAS Alumni Group. *(See separate note below)*

Despite the pouring rain, which the members decided to brave, Dick Lidwell then led a walking tour of Hull's maritime medieval, Georgian and Victorian town. 'Town' as 'Kingston-upon-Hull' despite being founded by King Edward the First in 1299, being granted many Royal Charters over the years, and being one of Britain's largest ports, was only awarded 'City' status in 1887, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee; maybe in revenge for its role in the English Civil war when the town on St George's day in 1642 refused entry to King Charles the First, the first hostile act of that war. The city church, 'Holy Trinity', reputedly the largest parish church in England, has just been re-consecrated as a 'Minster' by the Archbishop of York.

Finally the damp group returned to WISE for well-earned tea and home-made cake. Our special thanks go to John Oldfield (the Director of WISE) and all the staff at the Institute for providing such a great venue and for their generous support.

AGCAS members attending

Andrew Bottomley
Paul Cox
Sheila Cross
Margaret Dane
Tom Davie
Lorna Froud
Di Hay
Richard Jones
Russell Jones
Lesley Knaggs
Rose Mortenson
Pat Quinn
Margaret Wallis

Plus the organising team:

Mandy Jones
Dick Lidwell
Valerie Metcalfe

Dick Lidwell 27.5.2017

AGCAS Alumni Group reunion 17 May 2017

Business meeting notes

Introduction

Margaret Dane opened the session by thanking the organisers, Dick Lidwell, Valerie Metcalfe and Mandy Jones who had worked so hard together to ensure such a successful and enjoyable event and our hosts at the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) who generously provided the venue and an excellent lunch. She noted apologies from Elaine Boyes, AGCAS Executive Director who had another AGCAS commitment and Linda Byrne, AGCAS Learning Manager who unfortunately had flu.

AGCAS Alumni Group – Looking to the Future paper

Margaret introduced the proposals which have recently been approved by the AGCAS Board and the revised Board paper which she circulated to all listed AGCAS Alumni prior to the reunion. Drawn up and revised by a sub-group comprising Margaret Dane, Anusha Everson, Paul Hacking, Dick Lidwell, Martin Pennington and Bob Porrer, these proposals aim to recognise the AGCAS Alumni as a group rather than just individual retired members and to put the group on a firmer footing with formal status within AGCAS. We are delighted that the AGCAS Board has now agreed to all the main aspects of our paper and that the Board and staff will work together with us to implement these. Margaret thanked those alumni who had written thanking her for her efforts in seeing this through to successful completion.

Another copy of the Board paper is attached to these notes, but briefly the proposals cover:

- Recognition of the title AGCAS Alumni Group & agreement to widening its membership
- Approval of the Purpose and Aims of the group
- Recognition of the benefits to AGCAS and to AGCAS Alumni members of the group's existence
- Agreement to the actions to be taken to support these aims in line with the AGCAS Strategy and to the proposed administrative arrangements between the AGCAS Office and the Alumni Group

Discussion

Going through the paper some concerns were expressed about excluding those alumni who may be doing occasional pieces of consultancy work but are not in regular paid employment and the consensus was that such alumni should be included.

Some alumni expressed concerns about the level of the one-off membership fee but it was pointed out that this level reflected the removal of an annual subscription and would normally be paid at the point of ceasing employment. In addition there should be encouragement to services to possibly pay this as a retirement gift and for individuals to gift-aid it.

Going forward

The AGCAS Alumni Group will now be co-ordinated by a small sub-group of volunteers who will: liaise with group members, the AGCAS Office & Board as appropriate; manage communications and publicity and assist with the development and maintenance of the on-line community. Margaret asked for volunteers around the table and Lorna Froud indicated that she would be willing to help. Martin Pennington and Val Butcher have also said they would be willing to support the group but more offers are needed as it is likely there will be enough work for up to 5 in the initial stages of these new developments. Margaret agreed to seek further volunteers.

Reunion 2018

Finally, agreeing that this had been one of the best reunions, there was a brief discussion about planning the 2018 event and it was recommended that if possible a joint meal the evening beforehand might be arranged. There were no offers to host the next event at this stage so Margaret agreed to seek further offers (attaching a list of venues & dates so far) when circulating these notes.

AGCAS Alumni Group – Board paper agreed May 2017

The title “AGCAS Alumni Group” has been adopted and widely used over the past few years to reflect the changing nature of the group and to acknowledge its broader constituency. This title will now be used in AGCAS communications.

There are **three categories of members** in the AGCAS Alumni Group:

- **Retired members of AGCAS** who are no longer on the staff of AGCAS Services. They will be charged a one-off membership fee of £75 on joining. Where appropriate, Services may wish to include this fee as part of their retirement.
- **Recipients of Honorary Life Membership of AGCAS and/or of the AGCAS Lifetime Achievement Award** (this includes some individuals who may not have been employed within an AGCAS Service). Membership is free for this category.
- **Ex-AGCAS members** who have left AGCAS Services and the careers and employability sector before retirement, but who wish to remain in contact with former colleagues and in broad touch with the profession. They will be charged a one-off membership fee of £75 on joining.

[N.B. Those continuing to work in the careers/employability field or those working in another capacity but seeking to remain in closer touch with on-going professional developments or a return to the sector, should apply for Conference Membership which allows such individuals to get more involved in AGCAS activities, events & training and is defined as: ‘...an individual membership category for careers and employability and associated professionals who are freelance or who are employed by an organisation which does not have AGCAS Service Membership.’]

Purpose & aims of the AGCAS Alumni group

- To maintain contacts and facilitate networking with colleagues in HE careers work
- To enable members to keep in touch with HE careers and employment developments
- To share experience of life beyond AGCAS and retirement and support the transition from work to productive and satisfying retirement for potential, current and future retirees
- To make available the expertise and knowledge of Alumni to AGCAS and AGCAS Services through contributions to reviews, consultations, projects and other developmental work
- To enable Alumni members to act as ambassadors for AGCAS, as appropriate, facilitating links with other organisations and individuals of potential benefit to AGCAS and its members
- To provide case studies of projects undertaken by members in retirement or semi-retirement as an inspiration and example to others

Actions to support the group’s goals in line with AGCAS Strategy

- Development and maintenance of, and access to, an accurate and up-to-date membership database, carried out jointly by the AGCAS Office and Alumni Group through annual updates and encouragement to Services to alert retiring members to the group’s existence
- Continued annual meetings and encouragement of relevant regional events
- An on-line Alumni Community through the AGCAS website for Alumni to keep in touch with each other and to allow regular communication and discussion
- Publicising the resource AGCAS Alumni can provide to AGCAS and its member services
- Support for the work of AGCAS through appropriate contributions from Alumni, such as production of case-studies outlining the range of activities of AGCAS Alumni, illustrating the diversity of activities and achievements beyond AGCAS and retirement

Benefits of AGCAS Alumni membership

Members of the AGCAS Alumni Group will be kept in touch with what is going on in the sector as part of an active, committed and supportive community of current and retired HE careers and employability professionals. Benefits include:

- Receipt electronically of the fortnightly AGCAS Arena newsletter and Phoenix, AGCAS' digital professional journal, issued three times per year
- Access to AGCAS professional development courses and conferences at member rates
- Invitations to participate in surveys, focus groups, consultations, mentoring and to contribute to the future success of AGCAS as appropriate
- Invitations to annual reunions organised both for social/networking reasons and for updates on AGCAS and the current and developing work of AGCAS Services
- The potential for regional Alumni events to be organised and publicised by Alumni
- The opportunity to publicise Alumni news and events and to facilitate contact between members through access to an AGCAS Alumni on-line community and to appropriate parts of the AGCAS website

Benefits to AGCAS

- Recognising and building on the often very significant contribution of previous members to the work and reputation of AGCAS
- Opportunities to share Alumni members' reflective experiences, learning, skills and expertise in ways to benefit both AGCAS and its member services
- A contribution to AGCAS revenue
- Avenues for developing awareness of its work and achievements as a professional body via AGCAS Alumni who are members of other relevant organisations and can raise the profile of AGCAS in other professional circles.

Administrative arrangements between AGCAS Office and Alumni Group

- It is expected that AGCAS communications with Alumni members will be via email
- The AGCAS membership database will hold details of all three categories of AGCAS Alumni and make this available for the organisation of events and for the emailing of information (in line with AGCAS's Data Protection statement).
- All those on the list will be invited to join the AGCAS Alumni Group on-line community, which would permit direct contact between members.
- The AGCAS Office will arrange for Arena and Phoenix to be sent electronically to all Alumni Members and for access to approved areas of the AGCAS website
- The AGCAS Alumni Group will be co-ordinated by a small group of members who will liaise with AGCAS and the AGCAS Office as necessary and manage the on-line community
- The AGCAS Office will handle the finances of the AGCAS Alumni Group:
 - Collection of the one-off fee for membership on joining
 - Payment of invoices, including up-front deposits for reunions/events in the expectation of receipt from the organisers of full reimbursement from charges to those attending.
- Support for the Alumni group will be reviewed annually as part of normal office business
- The level of the Alumni Membership fee will be reviewed in line with other changes to membership fees