

## **The Shap Jubilee – A call for nominations for the ‘Shap Re Teacher of the Future’ Award**

In April of 2019, Shap intends to make awards to up to 3 teachers (aged under 35), ideally from each of the 3 sectors, primary, secondary and special, each of £750 to be shared between the teacher and their school.

50 years ago, in 1969, the future of RE was only dimly visible. A few visionaries – or pragmatists? - had started teaching about other religions in their frequently otherwise fairly dull fields of ‘RE’.

The population of Britain was becoming at last visibly diverse and the cosmonauts and astronauts were teaching us that the world was a single thing, however much we might still be seeing the coast of Spain as the most exotic boundary we could imagine reaching ourselves.

Into this world a small band of ‘Religion’ specialists and enthusiasts met in the Cumbrian village of Shap to map out a new future for our schools and children. The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education was born.

Teacher training courses, resources, programmes of study, the hugely popular ‘Festivals Calendar’ (still going strong), a regular journal all rolled out of the Shap stable together with the prestigious Shap Award, won by nearly all the great and good of RE through the years. Shap prided itself on including in its membership not only the finest academics but also some of the finest school practitioners, so that our theory was always rooted in reality too.

Shap has had many ‘finest hours’ but perhaps one of the greatest was in the midst of the arguments about the curriculum that would eventually give birth to the National Curriculum in 1988. In that discussion, Shap was accused in Parliament – badge of honour, that – of being behind the process of diversifying RE so that it no longer focussed so exclusively on Christianity alone. (We shall overlook the fact that it was Shap folk who had devised and published the marvellous Chichester Project materials that at last offered a way of teaching Christianity as a world religion ten years earlier.)

The eventual legislative resolution was that at last the teaching of world religions was demanded in law. All maintained schools had to teach about a variety of religions.

But the task was not yet done. Now that it was required, Shap shouldered the burden of ensuring that teachers could be enabled to carry out their duties. More training, materials and publications emerged.

50 years on though, the Shap team wishes to hang up its laurels, (except of course for the Calendar which seems indestructible both in its ever-developing quality and never-ending popularity as the most authoritative such resource on the market.) As we all know, the 1988 legislative settlement has frayed and fragmented with so many diverse types of schools not bound by this law, but few now doubt that RE should include a variety of religions in its programme. It seems fair to say that that battle has been pretty resoundingly won. And that was Shap’s battle.

At a Jubilee celebration in April next year – in Shap in Cumbria of course – Shapites will gather for a last time to reminisce and celebrate.

But also, with one last fling to the future as well.

Shap is seeking up to 3 teachers (aged under 35), ideally one each from the primary, secondary and special sectors, to award with the accolade ‘RE teacher of the future’. We are seeking nominees- you can nominate yourself – to receive an award of £500 for yourself and £250 for your school to spend as you wish, but ideally on further RE development and innovation.

We don't pretend to guarantee that those chosen will be the absolutely finest in the country – that will be up to who gets nominated – but we will only make the awards if we are satisfied that these hands are safe hands into which to place the Shap baton for the future. With these awards in Shap, Cumbria, the Shap Working Party will cease to exist, but its spirit – and its Calendar – will live on.

Entries must be received by January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019. For details on how to enter yourself or nominate a potential awardee please contact Clive Lawton at [clive@clivelawton.co.uk](mailto:clive@clivelawton.co.uk) for application details.

***Alternatively***

Sir

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education plans to wind up its affairs – except for its redoubtable Calendar or World Religions Festivals which is too brilliant to do away with – at a Jubilee event in April next year (2019).

We plan to mark that celebratory conclusion with up to 3 (monetary) awards, one each for teachers (under 35) in the primary, secondary and special sectors, to applaud 'RE teachers of the future'. In this way, Shap will go out as it has operated, looking firmly to the future and seeking to promote the best practice in RE throughout the system.

Entries must be received by January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019. Anyone wishing to nominate an RE teacher for this award – teachers can nominate themselves too – should contact me at [clive@clivelawton.co.uk](mailto:clive@clivelawton.co.uk) for applications details.

Yours

Clive A Lawton

President

Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education