

The quarterly newsletter for NUS alumni network

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Introduction from the Chief Executive

Welcome to the Friends of NUS newsletter of 2017 – indeed the first such communication for some time.

As many of you will know, along with a committee of volunteers, NUS has been working to reinvigorate Friends of NUS over the last 12 months or so. We have been building an up to date list of contacts for Friends and held a successful annual reception in November; this newsletter marks the next stage in the process. The ultimate aim is to build a vibrant and active alumni network as we head towards NUS' 100th anniversary in 2022.

The newsletter is a key part of that work, to allow us to communicate with you, and for you to contribute your own ideas, memories and opportunities. We want to let you know: what NUS is working on today; give you the chance to reflect on years past; find out more about individual alumni; and offer space for you to find out about opportunities to contribute to the student movement or offer your own opportunities to other Friends.

We have also developed more content on [our website for Friends](#). This includes bringing together resources on our history and heritage, another project we hope we can enlist Friends to support. You can read more from Mike Day on the current state of NUS' archives and what we hope you can do [here](#).

I hope you find this newsletter useful, informative and entertaining. If you have any ideas for future editions, or would like to contribute an article, advertise an opportunity, update contact details or send news about another Friend, please do get in touch with friends@nus.org.uk

Finally, I'd like to put on record my gratitude to the [Friends of NUS committee](#), who have worked diligently over the last year to ensure we develop to meet your needs. It's been a pleasure to meet so many Friends and hear stories from decades gone past and I look forward to meeting many more of you over the next year.

Simon Blake
Chief Executive



Why Friends of NUS matters

For my generation, NUS is often spoken of as one of the most powerful “old boys’ networks” in the country. 25 years after I was elected NUS President, one third of those Tony Blair appointed to his first Cabinet were people I had met through NUS. The student movement continues to supply individuals to a range of leadership roles, and it is sensible for NUS to maintain contact with those able to offer influence, advice and personal mentoring.

There are four, potentially overlapping, groups of alumni, contact with whom NUS particularly values:

- those holding positions of influence, especially in government and education;
- those with specialist skills and /or contacts of relevance to the work of NUS;
- those who, between them, are the custodians of the ‘corporate memory’ of NUS;
- those who may support, and may influence others to support, current NUS campaigns.

Friends of NUS seeks to involve all alumni and supporters. The contribution that individuals can make may vary with the time of their involvement in NUS.

From whichever generation of student activists you come, there is a place in Friends of NUS for you. Whether your contribution is that of an influencer, an advisor, a campaigner or as a custodian of collective memory, that contribution is very welcome.

As the union approaches its centenary, it is as important as ever that those of us whose careers benefitted from the experience gained in NUS play our part in ensuring that future generations of students have the benefit of an effective national voice.

John Randall CBE
NUS President 1973 - 1975

[Read an extended version of 'Why Friends of NUS Matters' on NUS Connect](#)

History Corner: My first conference

This photo was taken at my first conference at Margate in 1960. Here I am, on the left of the photo, as a very new member of the delegation from Bedford College Union Society.



I don't remember much about the Conference itself, other than being utterly confused by the jargon and procedures. I certainly don't recall why my President was being so rude!

Looking back at that time of far off innocence I recall many other conferences at Margate (the furniture never seemed to change) and elsewhere but - as with so many NUS 'old hands' it is Margate that comes to mind when the word 'conference' is spoken.

- Margaret Wallis (née Campbell), NUS Education & Welfare Department 1966-76

Dates for the Diary

25 April: National Conference reception for Friends of NUS, Brighton Centre

15 November: Friends of NUS annual reception, London, venue TBC

For more information please see the [Friends of NUS Events page](#)

Every issue, we'll be interviewing a Friend to find out more about them, their time at NUS, how it shaped them and what happened afterwards. We start with Professor Frank Rhodes, who served as Vice President in 1957/58, and Deputy President from 1958-1960. He later went on to a number of voluntary roles between 1967 and 2008.

What did you do after your time as an elected NUS officer?

I went on to become a school teacher in London initially, then later became the director of a labware company. During this time I was also a Labour councillor in Wood Green, and then the first few years of Haringey Council after the reorganisation. I completed my doctorate, worked at Enfield Technical College and Middlesex Poly, before I became Professor of Public Sector Management at the University of Juba in what's now South Sudan in 1980. Sadly I had to return to the UK when civil war broke out in 1988, and ended my career working at UWE and for BT.

How did your time at NUS shape you?

I owe my social and political awareness to NUS. I worked for Colgate Palmolive and it was only when they doubled my targets I went into training college – it was there I got involved in political activities, the debating society, the Student Socialist Federation, and finally NUS conference in 1955.

What was your biggest accomplishment at NUS?

The Anderson Committee, no question. We won [the national system of maintenance grants] against a lot of opposition, we had no support from the TUC, who thought if parents could afford it they should pay. After that, NUS was much more respected.

What's your favourite memory of your time at NUS?

Going to an ISC meeting in Klosters in 1960. We flew to Zurich, my first ever flight, and we stayed in a 4 star hotel. A style of living I'd never come across before!

You wrote the first major history of NUS in 1967 – fifty years ago. What do you think was the key lesson from NUS' first 45 years?

It changed from a patrician to a plebeian organisation, from Oxbridge to a wider set of institutions, though we didn't do a great deal for some, like the training colleges, until the 1950s.

How would you like to be remembered?

As one of the team who got student grants. It opened the door to so many from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also that I helped improve the training college conditions.

What advice would you give officers today?

They're so much more sophisticated than we were! I'd say look around you and see what needs doing. Work as hard as you can to climb the ladder. Be a conviction politician, have a purpose.

Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you! If you have anything to contribute to NUS alumnus newsletter, or would like further info on any of the topics covered in this issue, contact friends@nus.org.uk



Did you know?

20 years ago... in 1997, Shamin Akhtar is elected as NUS Scotland President, the first Black student to hold this post.

25 years ago... in 1992, NUS won exemption for full-time students from the newly introduced Council Tax.

40 years ago... in 1977 Sue Slipman was elected National President, the first woman to take up the post.

50 years ago... in 1967, NUS' evidence to the Latey Committee was instrumental in convincing them to recommend lowering the age of majority from 21 to 18, which included extending the franchise to those aged 18 and over.

80 years ago... in 1937, NUS publishes its first ever research report, *Student Health: The Report of an Inquiry into University Health Services*.

95 years ago... in 1922 NUS was founded, on 10 February.



Noticeboard

The end of an era - Peter Anwyl retires from International Students House

"Many readers of the Friends newsletter will be interested to know that Peter Anwyl retired at the end of December 2016 after twenty hugely successful years as Executive Director of ISH, following periods at the University of London, NUS Conference Department, NUS Finance Committee and the University of Kent. Peter has been a key figure in many of our lives – as role model, mentor, representative, supporter and friend.

"Peter's colleagues at ISH organised a fantastic send off and had gathered together figures from all stages of Peter's life and there were many overlapping grapevines and squeals of recognition. Both Peter and Ellenor love a good party so there was lots of music from over the years. Among the speeches was one from a colleague from Kent days who aptly described Peter as 'A Socialist Entrepreneur Par Excellence'. Ellenor read a glowing tribute from Frank Rhodes who set Peter's achievements in the context of the foundation of ISH by Mary Trevelyan in 1968 and its subsequent development under Bill Murray who Peter succeeded in 1997." - *Margaret Wallis, February 2017*

Trustee Board Vacancies

Most students' unions now have trustee boards, which consist of elected student leadership and external lay trustees. For so many of us, our students' union was instrumental in shaping our lives. If you'd like to give something back and consider joining a trustee board, a number of SUs are working together to find new trustees. For more information and to apply, see their website [here](#). You can also find out more about joining the NUS board [here](#).

The deadline for content for the next edition will be 19 May