

CAREERS

# Springboard

WEST BERKSHIRE



**David Skinner (1944-2017)**

**A tribute to David's volunteering  
contribution in helping those out  
of work and seeking a new job**

This booklet commemorates David Skinner's generous giving of his time and knowledge to Careers Springboard West Berkshire (CSWB) in helping out-of-work job seekers.

It describes David's particular contribution over the past decade, first as volunteer, and later as Chairman.

It includes messages and tributes from job seekers, volunteers, Trustees and those with whom David came into contact during his time with CSWB.

## Careers Springboard West Berkshire

Careers Springboard West Berkshire (CSWB) was set up as a volunteer-led organisation in 2006. It succeeded the Newbury Executive Job Club which used a paid professional to run its workshops. It fills a gap in the market for provision of job seeking services to older, more senior workers, since most Government programmes target the younger, lower skilled, unemployed.

One of a trio of similar Thames Valley job clubs it was funded by the Branshaw Foundation and project managed by Isabella Kerr who provided support to a cadre of local volunteers. In 2010 CSWB was a founding member of the charity The Foundation for Jobseekers which acts as an umbrella organisation for the now four job clubs. In April 2014 CSWB became a registered charity.

Since 2006 CSWB has supported over 800 out-of-work professionals and managers. David would have personally met over 500 of them, many of whom would have benefitted from his workshops and/or individual guidance.

### David Joins as Volunteer

David joined us early in 2008 and soon made his contribution count. He was ideally qualified to help our middle-aged job seekers (average age 50) as the profile provided by him at the time shows:

"David trained originally as a chemist, carrying out research into the chemical and physical structure of wool for which he obtained a PhD. He then spent 28 years as an Education Officer in the Royal Air Force, holding a variety of posts in education and training in operational and policy roles. His most recent role was as head of the RAF's resettlement service, managing a group of advisers providing advice and counselling for those people preparing to move into a career in civilian life.

David became self-employed in 1999 as an independent freelance trainer, specialising in business communication skills, management development and outplacement. He is passionate about the vital importance of written and oral communication skills in business, and is a keen user of accelerated learning methods to make his training workshops relevant, memorable and fun.

He is married with two adult daughters, one of whom lives in France. He is a volunteer driver for the Newbury Handybus and a senior observer with the Newbury Group of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, for whom he edits and produces a lively bi-monthly newsletter. His other interests include foreign travel, cricket and lifelong learning."

## David – Speaker and Advisor

David's initial contribution was providing 1-on-1 advice to job seekers – helping them with their CVs, working with them on their future career plans and generally mentoring them. This aspect of his work continued throughout his involvement with CSWB. His impact on job seekers is evident from their testimonials – see 'Messages and Tributes'.

After settling in David stepped up to the plate and ran two workshops in our Summer 2008 programme:

- May 13      Preparing Your CV**  
Different formats of CV and how to develop one that is right for you  
*Speaker: David Skinner*
- July 1      The Written Word – covering letters, direct mail and forms**  
How to write effective covering letters, and fill in the blank spaces on application forms. How to get your message across when writing speculative letters to employers.  
*Speaker: David Skinner*

He was passionate about job seekers being able to write clearly and concisely when composing their CV and covering letter.

He continued to run these sessions and added in 2009 a 'CV Masterclass'. This is a shorter workshop after our main meeting, which initially ran 2-3 times per programme but more recently once a term.

However, David did not restrict himself to these topics but substituted when others were away. More recently with fewer available speakers, he ran more and different sessions. So job seekers would have found him leading on these amongst other topics:

### **Getting Started (Basics)**

The A-E of getting a job; creating and marketing yourself

### **Responding to Adverts**

Where to look, how to read between the lines and prepare your response

### **Hone Your Phone Technique**


Learn how to plan your calls and hone your scripts - includes a practical session to help you get past the gatekeepers

### **What Employers Look For**

Learn what it's like from the other side and get some tips on how you can make yourself seem the ideal candidate

### **Interview Skills**

Your chance to role play interview scenarios



**THE SELF-HELP GROUP  
SUPPORTING JOB SEEKING  
MANAGERS & PROFESSIONALS  
IN WEST BERKSHIRE**

**Programme  
May - July 2008**

A series of free workshops and advice sessions on improving your job-seeking skills, especially those who are currently out of work.

Learn to:

- Make your CV have impact
- Find 'hidden' jobs
- Network more effectively
- Market your capabilities
- Be successful at interviews
- and much, much, more ...

Details inside and at:  
[www.careerswestberks.org.uk](http://www.careerswestberks.org.uk)

## **Volunteering Plus**

As well as the weeks where David was leading the meeting workshop he was often present, even when not formally required. In recent years you could rely on him being present almost every week to support the speaker and other volunteers. Most frequently he was chairing the meeting, welcoming newcomers, and conducting in a masterly manner the round-robin 'Tell Me about Yourself' which started every meeting. David listened attentively and always had useful words of advice to impart to the job seeker.

Outside of the meeting David also made a useful contribution in keeping the show on the road. He attended virtually every volunteer meeting (once or twice a year) since he joined. At these meetings he undertook to perform a variety of action arising. For example, he often met with potential volunteers and found the best way in which they could help.

Perhaps David's greatest contribution was planning and orchestrating the move from the Town Hall Council Chamber to Broadway House. Our meeting room and hire of equipment at the Town Hall was costing around £5,000 a year. By moving our meeting room, the ongoing hiring costs, our main outlay, is now well under £2,000 a year, a saving of over 60%.

## **David as Chairman**

Within a year or so of volunteering David in 2009 became our deputy chairman, standing in for George Athorn as needed. In fact, so adept was David at chairing, that he chaired many of our volunteer meetings and AGM, even at time when George Athorn remained chairman of the organisation. Having been chairman since CSWB's inception George Athorn resigned in July 2014, when David was formally voted in as the new chairman.

As chairman, David organised and chaired volunteer and Trustee meetings. He ensured that the meetings ran smoothly and addressed key issues that affected our operation and our support to job seekers.

In this chairman role he represented CSWB at The Foundation for Jobseekers. He attended two formal meetings a year, and also circulated information about training sessions and other activities organised by the Foundation. He himself attended many of these training evening sessions at Bracknell including those on coaching, feedback and fund-raising. He reported back to the rest of the volunteers anything relevant and useful.

## Messages and Tributes

From volunteers, job seekers and others.

✘ ✘ ✘

“You name it he did it, the list is endless.  
King of the CV Master Klass!  
Superior Spellin Super Star  
Dependable, determined, and indefatigable  
Fabulous sense of Fun.  
Gave generously of his time to jobseekers in one to ones  
Yorkshire Ambassador to France and Malta!”  
(George Athorn, former Chairman and Trustee)

✘ ✘ ✘

“Thank you for sending me the news about David Skinner. I was really very sad to hear it. My memories of him as a volunteer were of a man with true integrity, and someone whose views and advice were based both on undoubted experience, and on practical sympathy for everyone struggling to get their lives back on track. His family must be very proud of the difference he has made to the many jobseekers he has helped over the last years.”

(Isabella Kerr, former project manager, Branshaw Foundation)

✘ ✘ ✘

“Deeply saddened by the news, but feeling privileged to have known David Skinner for the past 9 years.

David was a true gentleman and scholar. He had an infectious sense of humour which made his business presentations all the more entertaining. A truly brilliant man with modesty, wit and compassion. He will be sorely missed but never, ever forgotten.

Sincere condolences to his wife and family.”

(Sally-Jane Kruger, Volunteer)

✘ ✘ ✘

“Very sorry to hear. He will be missed. My thoughts are with his family  
Sorrowfully

Charles Fowler” (Volunteer)

✘ ✘ ✘

✘ ✘ ✘

"David led CSWB with commitment, enthusiasm and vigour. He was dedicated to the organisation and was an ever presence. He always delivered a high level of professionalism and was available to give our clients helpful advice and guidance. He was always welcoming to new attendees making them feel at ease and at home.

He will be missed by the volunteers at CSWB and the clients who benefitted so much from his contributions.

Our thoughts go to his wife and family at this difficult time.

Sincerely

Adrian Foster-Fletcher" (Deputy Chairman and Trustee)

✘ ✘ ✘

"For nearly a decade David made a great contribution to the running of CSWB – as a speaker, a mentor and more recently as our chairman.

He was always cheerful and imparted his knowledge with authority. He gave generously of his time and knowledge to job seekers. That CSWB is in a good state today is largely due to his encouragement and support of job seekers and volunteers alike.

His presence will be sorely missed."

(David Skyrme, Volunteer and Trustee)

✘ ✘ ✘

"As a CSWB Volunteer I had the great privilege of working with David over a number of years whilst helping CSWB on IT and making some presentations.

David was extremely helpful and encouraging in all my dealings with him, he had a great sense of humour, which made working with him a great pleasure.

He will be greatly missed at CSWB."

(Bob Cooke)

✘ ✘ ✘

"Very sad news indeed. David will be much missed by all.

Please pass our thoughts to his family."

(Jim Morrison, Foundation for Jobseekers, Bracknell)

✘ ✘ ✘

✘ ✘ ✘

“I was so sad to hear about David's passing.

He was so helpful to everyone he met at CSWB, whether as a jobseeker or as a volunteer.

He gave his time willingly to CSWB, and there have been so many people he helped with getting a job.

I will miss his sage, funny words of wisdom.”

(Gayle Ashby, CSWB Administrator)

✘ ✘ ✘

“I am so sorry and stunned to hear this news. What a sad and awful shock all round for everyone. I am so sorry to hear this.

David was an extremely helpful, kind, generous man. No matter what he personally was feeling, even when he was clearly unwell, he still put the needs of the job seekers first. Helping and encouraging in any way that he could. Giving of his knowledge and his own time so generously. Never judging, but always encouraging and championing each job seeker, no matter what.

What an amazing man. And what a very sad loss to us all.

My thoughts go out to his family especially, and to everyone who was very fortunate to have known David.

My warmest wishes and thoughts.”

(Sue Curtin)

✘ ✘ ✘

“This is sad news indeed.

David was a delightful man – courteous and always with a smile.

Please pass on my condolences to his family.

With best wishes on a sad day.”

(Roger Hunt, recruitment consultant and CSWB workshop speaker)

✘ ✘ ✘

“I am very sad to hear of David's passing. He was a good friend and very supportive to me as a Coach at Springboard. He will be missed.”

(Linda Sutcliffe)

✘ ✘ ✘



✘ ✘ ✘

“I'm much saddened to hear this news.

David was a great example of someone who chose the path of selfless dedication to others and I greatly appreciated the leadership he has given myself and Springboard.”

(Jonathan Sayers)

✘ ✘ ✘

“Being unemployed was a struggle and the CSWB group provided valuable help.

As one of the leading members of the team David always provided good humoured and sensible advice during the darkest of times.

I was lucky enough to move on from being a participant to volunteer. David welcomed me to the team and made joining the team as easy as possible.

Thanks.”

(Mark Robbins)

✘ ✘ ✘

“It is with great sadness that I hear of the passing of a true gentleman. I only attended Springboard for a few weeks last year but found that time most rewarding, in my search for my next job. What I remember about David was his great common sense and wisdom and he was an excellent mentor. I offer my condolences to the family at their very sad loss.”

(Adrian Dunn)

✘ ✘ ✘

“This is sad news.

I recall David providing a few talks during my short time at the Town Hall meetings in Newbury.... having gain a new job, still my current job from Apr-2010 so a few years back, the job has grown from 1 to 3persons.

It was through the ‘Springboard’ that I discovered a route to some paid training via the Job Center... I think called ‘Retraining Managers’. Well it certainly helped my two interviews, which subsequently landed me the job.

My thoughts with his family and friends.”

(Peter D Twinam)

✘ ✘ ✘

✘ ✘ ✘

"I am so sorry to hear about David Skinner. I didn't know him very well, but had a few exchanges with him, mainly at the weekly meetings I attended.

It was David I first contacted to ask whether CSWB would be appropriate for me and he was very welcoming and encouraging. He was very friendly and approachable and often quick to laugh or to give his audience reason to laugh along with him. I didn't realise he was so ill and am very sad to hear about his passing. My thoughts are with his family at this very sad time."

(Jo Ramshaw)

✘ ✘ ✘

"I was very saddened to hear of the recent passing away of David.

David helped me build a plan and skills that supported my return to work after nearly a year of unemployment. I particularly remember his ability to instil confidence in all of our abilities of those that attended West Berkshire Careers Springboard in Newbury. I appreciated that his work was done on a voluntary basis each week, and made such a difference to us all.

My condolences are heartfully sent to David's family, friends and colleagues."

(Mike Park, Wokingham)

✘ ✘ ✘

"It was with great sadness that I read your email. David was a great source of support when I found myself out of work 6 years ago.

I am sure he will leave a large void in the organisation.

I send my best wishes to you all as you deal with the loss of a close colleague and friend."

(Sam Ottaway)

✘ ✘ ✘

"David was a great help to me when I felt very alone, having suddenly found myself facing redundancy. His passion for helping people and putting others first was amazing. I met David twice as I was made redundant twice and each time was welcomed as a friend and made to feel at ease. He will be greatly missed and I just hope that the group continues to support people and carry on the great work he started. My condolences to his family, may they take pride in what he achieved and take solace from the help he gave to others."

(Carrie Baker)

✘ ✘ ✘

