

**Evaluation and feedback Report**  
**The Long Revolution – towards participative democracy**  
**Wortley weekend May 2017**



*41 residential participants including Key-note lecturer and Panelist Speaker.*

*Roughly equal male and female participants; aged from 22 to 87, but mainly in the older age range.*

*34 completed evaluation forms which along with written and verbal feed-back from Lecturer, Panelists, and non-residents gave us a 95% response - quite exceptional not just for RWF but for any organisation. Each quote followed by a semi-colon is from a different person.*

**1. The value of this experience – the education and learning process...**

'Four just saying, "Excellent"; 'Invaluable - ...opportunities to continue discussion throughout the weekend'; 'High value'; 'Really enjoyed the weekend...particularly the Saturday evening video clips and following discussion'; 'Opened my eyes to many neglected areas of concern... and stimulated me to read several associated books'; 'An invaluable opportunity to learn through talking with and listening to a wide group of people with varied opinions and life experiences'; 'Enjoyable, as usual'; 'As always good though probably could have done with a better focus – not apparent what the organising theme was this time'; 'The depth of knowledge not only of lecturers/facilitators but also other attendees is so rewarding'; 'Very good and inspiring to hear from well informed people – their ideas and experiences'; 'An interesting insight into ideas I was not very familiar with'; 'Every day is a learning process – good to find there are still people who are showing intelligent concern in dark and dangerous times'; 'Excellent to contain all this in one short weekend - unique...'; 'Excellent – plenty of stimulating conversations and food for future thought and research'; 'Excellent as always, especially with some new contributors this year'; 'Very good, informative... hearing different perspectives'; 'Very good as usual but as I was a facilitator I missed out on group discussions ...'; 'A very worthwhile experience'; 'Stimulating, spiritually refreshing'; 'Terrific';

Extremely worthwhile in every way... some new interesting people'; 'Good - particularly gaining from first-timers mixing with old hands, learning from each other'; 'Opened my mind... and opened my heart'; 'Getting together with like/unlike-minded people who share a common interest in discussion and action'; 'A very good learning experience. Thoroughly enjoyed it and would like to attend again'; 'Very worthwhile. An opportunity to hear a range of views, some new to me and giving fresh approaches. I find some of Williams' writings heavy going and would appreciate it if we could have talk/s giving an outline of RW's thinking and a summary of his ideas'; 'This was my first experience of a RW weekend. I enjoyed it tremendously.... some of the evening sessions went on a bit too long... hard to assimilate after a full day, but the late-night music was fab!'; 'Positive ideas for developing our own projects'; 'Fantastic chance to talk to others with erudite and diverse opinions - I felt quite restored by the Saturday in particular';

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**2. Advance information & preparation** (notes, web references and recommended books)

'Excellent: e-mails and website'; 'Excellent range of information and detail'; 'Didn't get any as applied late'; 'The prepared sessions provide an important focus to discussion'; 'Fine: a system for getting handouts copied before sessions would have been useful - facilitators should, maybe, e-mail in advance'; 'very helpful'; 'It arrived in good time, very informative'; 'Every effort was obviously made to provide advance information...'; 'All good, but was not sure about payment of fee-balance arrangements'; 'Much appreciated the e-mails leading up to the weekend. Really helpful and very informative'; 'Great: very thorough; (prompted me) to have another look at Raymond Williams'; 'This is helpful'; 'Useful'; 'I did find RW's book *The Long Revolution* a bit hard going...'; 'Good advance preparation for a broad brush overview'; 'I should have prepared but didn't - apologies, health and family reasons'; 'Good, though not consistent across the sessions'; 'Realistically, participants are not going to read all the "base" books and materials...'; 'I felt well prepared. As a 'newbie' I'd have appreciated a bit more practical information about, for example, 'options' for meals. I had to 'research' train and travel times, Sheffield/Chapelton/Wortley...'; 'Good'; 'Very good, as ever, and particularly David Whalley's links for reading and his *Populism* paper'; 'First-rate'. Three just saying, 'Excellent', ditto 'Very good'.

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**3. Balance of plenary lectures and small group sessions:**

Four just saying: 'Very good'; Ditto with five 'Good's; 'Yes, really good balance'; 'Just right'; 'A good balance'; 'Mainly OK - rather a diverse range of topics. An overriding theme would have helped focus discussion'; 'Would have liked one or two more lectures'; 'Well balanced'; 'Good balance, well arranged'; 'Many people in the groups had an interest but not a lot of knowledge. I would have welcomed more lectures'; 'About right, but difficult to get quite right...The YouTube clips were interesting...'; 'Suited me well.'; 'Worked well'; 'OK and the YouTube development I enjoyed. May have been better though just to have 23 minutes of Chomsky?'; 'These work well'; 'More lectures by controversial figures would have been welcome'; 'Well planned and delivered'; 'OK'; 'OK, but (inevitable) changes impacted on programme and attendance'; 'Just about right'; 'I'd have liked a plenary after small group sessions'; 'I'd have less lectures and more small groups'; 'Good balance';

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**4. Comment on specific sessions:**

**a) Special Guest Lecture**

*'Carole Hillengrand's clarity, erudition, sensitivity, excellent'; 'Really enjoyed the lecture, covering areas I had no experience of previously, very enlightening'; 'An unusual and unexplored subject - fascinating'; 'Informative from a medieval perspective; It's difficult to make any valid statement that's TRUE of all Muslim women. Islam is such a large complex topic that almost any statement is both true and false at the same time.'; 'Rather general in terms of content - didn't question or challenge news with 'oppress' women or even encourage discussion on this'; 'Not clear of relevance of this particular session. Would have liked more discussion on secularism/tolerance issues rather than*

specifics of Islam'; 'Thought provoking, very reflective lob-sided view on Muslim women'; 'Interesting, very topical, wide ranging and packed a lot into available time'; 'Excellent overview, but would have welcomed fewer points but discussed more in depth'; 'Extraordinarily well informed and well balanced in approach...'; 'Illuminating, well informed. Big subject'; 'Enjoyed this...'; 'Informative, stimulating and timely'; 'Good'; 'Very interesting'; 'Very exciting'; 'Informative and well-structured but leaving some important questions unanswered.'; 'Excellent, and the lecturer gave me more information on Muslim girls education and early marriage after the session'; 'Well delivered'; 'Post Truth?'; 'Exceptional clarity on the weekend's profoundly relevant themes: Islamophobia, racism and sexism'; 'Very interesting but skirting over a vast subject'; 'Very interesting and gave me a much better understanding of women's place in Islam'; 'Very well presented but perhaps too wide ranging... would have liked more 'in depth' focus on modern life and less on dress'; 'Good choice and balance'; 'Effective because of time limits observed'; 'Had some issues with the lecture but they were theoretical rather than a comment on the presentation';

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**b) Panel Session/s**

'Very good'; 'Excellent'; 'Needed a specific topic to discuss. TV clips good but again rather unfocussed'; 'Both 'b' and 'c' were mind expanding, broadening one's horizons'; 'Both good and the final one was interesting about the future'; 'Good'; 'Good but preferred the sessions as in 'c' below'; 'Enjoyable'; 'OK'; 'Very informative'; '...hard to judge their value or relevance'; 'Not as good as usual. Inaudible at times – hard to hear the questions'; 'Better than usual, less domination'; 'Post Truth?'; 'Good range – the video presentations were tricky due to sound issues...'; 'Great that we had direct contact on the weekend by e-mail/social media/YouTube from Chomsky, Derek Wall and Anthony Barnett'; 'Not of particular interest to me'; 'videos not really my thing'; 'Good balance between presentation and response';

**Discussion Circles/workshops/seminars**

'Good choice... and exchange of ideas on the topics'; 'Generally useful and informative. Might be useful to be a bit more specific about when each session is running'; '..give you a different perspective, even changing your point of view'; 'Enjoyed these, well facilitated'; 'Good for getting to know each other and to hear the whole range of voices'; 'All worthwhile – helpful in many ways'; 'These were the most useful for me'; 'As lively as ever – well behaved!'; 'Good variety'; 'I only went to Bob's Post Truth - very enjoyable'; 'These work well'; '... good.. if well chaired'; 'Well facilitated'; 'OK'; 'Illuminating +'; 'Perhaps a few more handouts from the facilitators, more preparatory material before sessions'; 'Some very interesting views were expressed'; 'All of these were interesting and well facilitated. Especially enjoyed poetry and KW session'; 'It might be an idea to chose/brief facilitators - a) who understand what facilitation is, and b) who have listening skills. NB This does not apply to most facilitators'; 'Attended as student only one – good community learning experience'; 'All the ones I attended were well organised with lively discussion'; 'Enjoyable and stimulating'; 'A good choice to listen to other people and exchange ideas on the topics'; 'Excellent collaborative and moving'; 'Four 'very good's and two 'Good's.

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**5. The Venue; and value of the residential experience**

'Mostly comfortable. Issues around rooms over bar, which meant no sleep for some people. Our room had a strong smell of smoke. Food OK, but some training issues ie no coffee in room'; 'Generally good, though bedroom has a taint of tobacco smoke'; 'Excellent venue, a lovely ambience. Not enough bar staff. Microphone should be available for all sessions'; 'Thoroughly enjoyed the venue/excellent facilities/very helpful and efficient staff. Food good'; 'Excellent location'; 'Very comfortable'; 'The venue in general very good. The bedroom a bit cramped (shared room, number 20) so I fell over a

chair leg at one point. Food good but starters a bit confusing & fruit variety too meagre really'; 'Fantastic venue, great food, service and rooms'; 'Always a pleasure'; 'Stayed in Room 45 - that wing is above the bar - no sleep, constant noise'; 'Loved Wortley Hall as ever'; 'This is good'; 'An attractive and comfortable venue. Excellent meals. A better sound system is needed'; 'Beautiful venue but rooms are 'the luck of the draw'. We had booked a ground floor room but were given an upstairs one - luckily near the lift'; 'Becoming a problem. We are second class (to weddings). After a long day nobody want a room above a performing circus until 3.00am.'; 'Ease of access on site'; 'Love it - great location and fine experience (though the rooms and furniture - beds! - are of variable quality'; 'Beautiful setting, nice rooms and excellent food. Unfortunately the wedding guest noise at night was sleep disruptive. Staff excellent and helpful'; 'Very good, no complaints. Accommodation, food and surroundings could not be faulted'; 'Great venue - v. friendly, helpful staff, comfy room (a bit of noise after weddings). great food. I'd found my bearings by Sunday but a plan of the Hall would have helped.' 'Wortley Hall is an excellent choice; peaceful location and relaxed surroundings with enough 'space' to make relationships with other participants'; 'Excellent'; 'Staff & facilities brilliant. Rooms too hot. Projector poor'; 'Wortley Hall is a very comfortable setting, the food and coffee break service was very efficient. Wonderful food and good range of choice'; 'Fantastic - wonderful setting and amazing public rooms, a rare treat'; 'A good, safe, pleasant location'; 'Venue beautiful, excellent food. Wi-fi is an issue'; 'Wonderful as ever'; 'Wonderful'.

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#### **6. Fees and subsidy issues**

'Fine'; 'No problem'; 'Fees very reasonable and good value'; 'Costs very reasonable'; 'Very comfortable'; 'Price good'; 'Good value'; 'These are good value'; 'Very fair'; 'Very reasonable thanks to the subsidy'; 'Help directed towards single issue short breaks perhaps at other venues. Maybe, midweek in SP Library'; 'Very generous'; 'Excellent'; 'This was a gift, courtesy of my friends, (following late cancellation). I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity.' 'Really appreciate the subsidy, very manageable and well worth the cost'; 'Fantastic value'; 'Small subsidy for my musical contribution was appreciated'; 'Thanks so much for helping me out with bursary - very much appreciated'.