

## **Open University Development & Environment Society A Brief History**

The Society was set up by a group of students who got on well during the fourth week of Summer School during the first year of U204 (Third World Development Studies) back in 1984. They held committee meetings in a smoky bar at Euston Station as most members came from North of London. Originally they produced a Newsletter (I have some original copies if anyone would like them), and just got together as friends. One of the founders was Dorrell Dressekie and the first Chair was Roger Bennet.

The following year everyone who had done the course was invited to join and Jane Weston and I joined at the same time. We suggested holding talks etc and from what I can remember I did the first based on my extended essay on the Garment Workers of the Philippines, in the upstairs bar at The Wheatsheaf. It didn't go too badly and then we set up a series of talks on a regular basis.

In the late 80's we introduced the Revision Weekend combined with an Interest side. The Interest side was very successful early on with the first topic being Tourism and second being East Timor. We were lucky enough to have excellent speakers including Sue Wheat from Tourism Concern and several speakers from Tapol (incl. Carmel B? - can't remember how to spell her name).

Some of the meetings at The Wheatsheaf were very successful and on occasions when we had course team members (Tim Allen), people were sitting on the floor!

We tried various excursions to the regions using people based in places like Bristol and Leicester, but we found it really difficult to get together. Gradually it seemed the only thing that really worked was the Revision Weekend. Seventeen years on and the Internet seems to be bringing life back to the Society.

Michael Munson,  
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