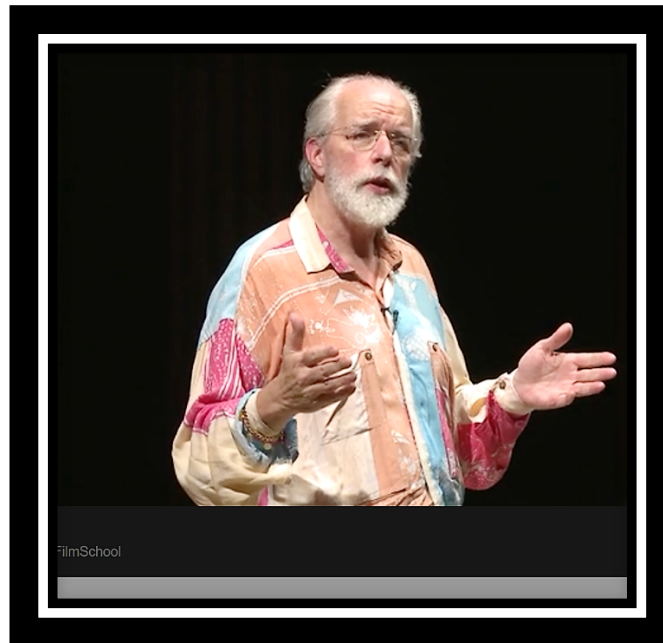




Clive Lawton



When I joined the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1979 as their Education and Community Relations Director, I discovered the wonderful world of RE. Until that time, I'd been 'withdrawn'! I threw myself in with enthusiasm, advising on Agreed Syllabuses and trying to produce useful materials on Judaism for school use and was soon encouraged to join the Shap Working Party, not least through the urging and sponsorship of Angela and Hugo (Gryn).

I immediately warmed to the mix of professional educators and academics and committed adherents (to diverse religions), but always with the accent on producing the most constructive and 'honest' material possible on the various world religions, without comparison or judgement. I learnt huge amounts about other religions to add to my encyclopedic knowledge of Judaism and my fair coverage of Christianity. I loved - and still do - the quality of the conversation and the calibre of the people I meet at Shap.

When Desmond Brennan stood back from editing the Calendar, in those days in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equality, I took up the reins - which taught me a whole lot more! I became a world-leading calendrical expert (it's a very small field!!) and extended my knowledge and insight into Islam and the eastern religions, giving me the base to do my Masters in Hinduism and Islam. I compiled and edited the calendar for, I think, about 11 years.

The **Shap** working party on World Religions in Education



I have been Chair of Shap three times, on the first occasion in the heady days in the late 80s when we were identified as the premier organisation leading the way in ensuring that RE was properly broad and inclusive and open. I was hugely proud when we were mentioned in the House debate on RE as one of those who stood in the way of the desired (by the government of the day, not the Church!) complete hegemony of Christianity over the classroom! Then again in 2008 for three years, and my third stint as Chair in 2014 was mostly dominated by my attempts to close the WP down, not through any antipathy at all - I still love(d) the fellowship of it - but because it seemed to me to have completed its mission. And now I've been kicked upstairs, appointed President a couple of years ago, while my back was turned, in a sardonic plot by the members to make me preside over my own demise!

Clive Lawton