



"We make learning special"

Desert Island Discs – Rod Bolitho

How did you get started and how long have you been involved in ELT?

I got started by earning beer money at Kings School of English Düsseldorf when I was doing my year as a language assistant in Germany. The people there asked me if I wanted to work on their summer courses in Bournemouth and I never looked back after that. Frighteningly, that means I've been in ELT for 40 years.

Was there anyone in particular who inspired you in your early days in ELT?

One person who helped me a lot in my early days was the late Alf Crosby, then DoS at Kings School. He loved talking about teaching and always had time for a novice like me. Later, I learned most through reading; I was strongly influenced by the work of Earl Stevick, Carl Rogers, A.S. Neill and John Holt.

We all need a change from time to time. Can you suggest a life-changing book/film/experience?

Nothing life-changing, but I remember being transfixed by Eisenstein's films and by R..D. Laing's writings on anti-psychiatry. The experience which has left the biggest mark on me - so far – is becoming and being a father.

Have you worked in any other areas?

Only in student jobs – navvying, bus conducting, office boy, lift attendant, Xmas post, waiter, barman, catalogue packing – anything to keep me in funds.

It's Desert Island Discs time! Name 5 albums you would take with you.

Actually, singles have always been my preference, since albums that are designed as albums usually include some substandard stuff. But here are a few from many:

The Music from Zorba the Greek (my all time favourite film)
It's Too Late to Stop Now Van Morrison
Greatest Hits Roy Orbison
Any Atlantic Soul Collection with stuff by Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding,
Wilson Pickett, Sam & Dave etc
And a single: *Stay with me Baby* by Lorraine Ellison (greatest soul recording
of all time!)

And books?

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance Robert Pirsig
The Origin of Species Charles Darwin
Robert Frost's Poems
Winnie the Pooh
Europe: A History Norman Davies

Websites? Either one or two you find interesting/amusing/useful (preferably NOT useful, but if you must....) and/or a couple which lead to information about your publications, or anything you want the world to know about.

I don't spend any time surfing the net so nothing to report here, though I did get hooked into one or two outstanding blogs during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I started off wanting to be a footballer, then later a journalist. Anything but a teacher as my family was full of them!

What has been your worst teaching moment (so far)?

Losing my rag with a class of obnoxious German teenagers who were hell-bent on baiting me. I walked out, went straight to the Principal's office and said I wasn't prepared to take any more from them. He went in, bawled them out and asked me to go back in. I did, and they apologised and let me get on with teaching them after that, though it was an uneasy truce.

Are there any other questions you would like to be asked, or that you would like to ask other NILE trainers (and were always afraid to ask!). Would you like to ask them generally or are they directed at specific colleagues?

I'd like to be asked what really matters to me in life.