Robin Stewart 1948 – 2011
MT Editor 2001 – 2008

Robin jointly edited MT with Helen Williams for seven years, as part of a team with Geoff Dunn and later Colin Foster, working closely throughout with David Cutting, the designer and Marten Gallagher, web designer.

Helen writes:
I first met Robin when Geoff invited me to collaborate in bidding for the MT editorship in 2000. At the time, he was teaching in St Austell with Geoff. I wondered who this quiet, rather stern man was. I grew to know him as astute and intelligent, a man of few words, with a wicked sense of humour. As an editor he was scrupulous, and as a colleague he was entirely trustworthy and sincere; reserving judgement but suffering neither fools nor foolish diktats. Famously, he reserved judgement on joining ATM until becoming editor, ever after attending close on every GC meeting in Derby, travelling all the way from his home in Northern Ireland, rising at some ungodly hour to arrive in time. He spoke his mind quietly; calmly saying when you were adrift. Robin had an eye for a writer and a good article, working patiently and painstakingly to bring a piece of writing to life. We all found him an absolute pleasure to work with.

Geoff writes:
Robin escaped Ireland for Cornwall with an English degree from Dublin University. He was working behind the bar in a pub in Par when he noticed an advert for a temporary teacher at a local secondary school (later Penrice Community College). He got the job and became a special needs teacher, subsequently taking charge of the department. He became a year head and in the headteacher’s opinion was the “best pastoral practitioner I have ever seen”. Robin taught many lower attaining groups, including mathematics, for many years. He became deputy headteacher but still had the time and skills to accept the challenge of teaching the higher sets in mathematics. His results were outstanding. He had no formal training in mathematics teaching but he knew how children learnt it; he loved that and he loved mathematics.

Colin writes:
When I joined the team, I quickly realised the significance of Robin’s contribution. His judgment as an editor was unerring, and if Helen or I were stuck with an article we had received, we knew that Robin would see exactly how it could be made to work. His eye for detail led to meticulous proofreading, so that nothing got past him! He had a wide experience of writing himself, contributing regularly to the education sections of some of the Northern Ireland papers, locally in Cornwall and having an article on homework published nationally here and abroad. It was Robin that encouraged me to write for a newspaper.

David writes:
I soon came to realise that behind Robin’s rather dour appearance was a very human, caring man with a sharp sense of humour. I will remember him most of all for his integrity and his loyalty and, I like to think, our mutual respect for each other’s professionalism.

Marten writes:
A dry, sometimes obscure but invariably erudite wit, made my dealings with Robin a joy and an education. His insights and his tales of life – personal, educational and political – of the north of our shared home island were entertaining, exasperating and acerbic, respectively. His was a path less trodden, dark in the undergrowth yet all the more illumined for his passing there.

Robin was a good man with a keen sense of right and wrong, whether railing against the 11-plus in his Reflections pieces or supporting younger writers. It was our privilege to work with him and education needs more folk like Robin. We will all miss him greatly.

Helen Williams
MT Editor 2001 – 2008
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