

## ***A double helping from the SEC***

*Continuing our occasional series of brief articles setting out how the SEC has helped members, Bill Rigby gives two examples of 'SEC membership influencing my life'.*

In the first example, a voluntary organisation was looking for advocates for parents in dispute with local authorities about the provision for their children, and the request was circulated to SEC members.

"I don't do cases," was my first thought. "I'm a policy guy – broad brush meta-management is what I aim for, not being involved with detail ..."

After some tentative discussions, and a woundingly low score on an assessment of my knowledge of the law and skills in advocacy, I agreed to try a 'case', as demand was enormous, and there was no-one 'in the North' to help.

Ninety cases later, having engaged with over thirty local authorities; I learned the real truth about the policies which I had thought I knew in detail. Being a gamekeeper-turned-poacher was immensely rewarding to me, and of great value to the 90 or so families who had asked for support.

Wouldn't have missed it for worlds!

The second example begins with a phone call late one Thursday evening.

"Is Mr Rigby at home? Would he like to start a new university?"

"Where?" says Shan, cautiously.

"In Uganda – do you know where Uganda is?"

... Three years' later we were back in the UK, totally enriched with a whole host of experiences, new relationships and ambitions; ready to embark on a new career with renewed inspiration, motivation and energy.

Again, I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

We (Shan and I) now promote Education for Sustainability. Without the experiences above, I would have had little understanding of either 'education' or 'sustainability'. But we are getting there, and for that the SEC can take much of the blame!