

What was your own education like?

I was the classic working class lad whose life was changed by education. I did well at school – a Catholic grammar in Hull run by the Marists. I was due to go to Cambridge after my gap year but I went to New Guinea with the VSO. When I came back I thought Cambridge was not about real life and instead enrolled to do sociology at Leicester and afterwards, decided to do a PGCE.

What prompted you to go into adult education?

As preparation for a dissertation for my degree, I had worked in what was then called an approved school and worked with troubled adolescents. It was the early '70s and it was a time of change in the world of education – the free school movement and so on but schools seemed a bit traditional and hierarchical to me. Post 16 education seemed a bit closer to the zeitgeist. Leicester had just set up a sixth form college – one of the early wave of sixth form colleges. I applied for and got the post of head of sociology – though I was a department of one! It was a time of great change and tremendous energy.

It seems you could have been set for an academic career, what made you go into management?

I got involved in management because I guess I was the classic stropky sociologist

and was quite critical of the way things were being done. But you can either snipe from the sidelines or get stuck in and try and do a better job. I was also a passionate believer in the principle of

bringing together the two traditions of academic and vocational education in an institution where they would be accorded equal respect. When a job came up for assistant principal at a newly established tertiary college at Halesowen in the West Midlands, I went for it. I really learned about management there – particularly how easy it is in doing something new, to underestimate the necessity of getting the basic stuff right. I moved as vice-principal to Derwentside Tertiary College in Consett, trying to get away from a silo dominated departmental approach.

And your next move?

The logical next step was to run my own show and I looked for a principalship. Port Talbot, which was also a steel town like Consett, seemed a good fit. Afan College, which had been set up from the merger of the local technical college and the sixth forms of the four local secondary

**CURRICULUM VITAE**

Mike Galloway has been involved in further education for 35 years. Starting off as a sociology teacher, he has been a principal at sixth form colleges and tertiary colleges and was regional director for the Further Education Funding Council. In his last job, as principal of York College, he piloted the successful merger of two post-16 colleges to create York College and masterminded its move to a brand new building in 2007.

schools was struggling because its first year had had its share of problems.

There was no underlying philosophy for the new college – they had simply changed the names. I learned that when you are doing something new, how important it is to have staff who believe in what you are trying to do, so that it's much easier to shape the institution. Otherwise you are left trying to bolt it on afterwards.

What was the attraction about going to York Sixth Form College?

I felt there was tremendous potential. It was a successful sixth form college but, perversely, I felt it was having a negative impact on the wider post-16 provision, particularly the York College of Further and Higher Education, which was 400 yards away and which, because it didn't offer A levels, was perceived by some as second class. I knew there was potential for a merger. However, I had to persuade my governors that in the broader interests of the whole community, a merger would be a good thing.

But you didn't stop there?

No – there was huge potential for the site, once you had amalgamated the two colleges. We could release land for development and on the back of that build a fantastic new facility. Which is what we did. A lot of that is down to creating partnerships, with the local education authority, with the regional development

agency and so on. We

created a new building that people can be proud of, which was developed in close consultation with staff and students and which can genuinely accommodate the diversity of people who use it. But building a new college was not just about bricks and mortar, we have changed the way we work pedagogically, technically and so on. The new build was always a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Tell us something about your role with Navigate

My task is to provide the kind of advice on recruitment and interim management to the further education sector that Navigate has been doing with schools and education authorities. Many colleges know they need to go and look for the best senior staff and not just hope that an advert in the TES will do the trick. But they are not sure about the best way to go about looking. That's where we can help.

And when you aren't working?

I love sport, though I don't play footy like I used to. I am still a season ticket holder at Hull City and go to lots of games with my brother. It's also a great point of contact with my dad who's 88 now. I still run regularly, though my marathon running days are now well behind me. My wife and I have a place on a lake in South West Florida. We started it as an investment but really it's a bolthole and we love it!

When you do something new, you need staff who believe in it too