AN ODE TO UACES

In praise of UACES, of its professors and readers, its PhD researchers and junior lecturers; for providing all of us with a safe habitat, our eclectic collective academic species.

A toast to UACES, to the people who ran it, and who run it, so seamlessly behind the scenes; to their etiquette, professionalism, friendly faces.

Let’s hear it for UACES, for its awards and prizes, outstanding monographs and edited volumes; for the groundbreaking articles, the succession of innovative doctoral theses.

Thanks be for UACES, for the editors and reviewers of its international peer-reviewed publications, the top notch JCER and tip-top, cream-of-the-crop Journal of Common Market Studies.

Hallelujah for UACES, for its generous grants and bursaries, funding conference trips and collaborative research networks, presently in energy, accountability and technology-security societies.

Thumbs up for UACES, for its blogs, forums, directory of experts; not to forget its rotating committee members, their consultation and conciliation, hotly debated formation of local pub preferences.

A tribute to UACES, to its small, bespoke workshops and familial annual conferences, in far-off, exotic, sunny places. And sometimes in Britain.

A shout out for UACES, for every university that hosts us, from Angers to Bilbao and Bruges, Cambridge, Cork and Kraków, and next year Bath; maybe one day, Cádiz, Venice, Tblisi, Tunis…

Applause for UACES, and all that’s contemporary, constant and conflictual, the crises, empty chairs, incremental changes; and for coping, with shocks, like the outcome of referendums, with party-first politics and unintended consequences.

Hats off to UACES, that’s European headwear of every fashion: balaclavas, bowlers, bonnets and berets; worn by MEPs and Commissioners we’re keen to interview; but what’s their fashion exactly when they’re double-hatted?

Glory be for UACES, for our studies of burgeoning policy areas, baroque institutions and winding path dependencies, sweet cassis liquor and van Gend en Loos, the precedents and rulings, winners and losers, the baffling labyrinthine legal cases.

A merit for UACES, for its seven patrons and constitution, its AGM and annual elections; and for keeping UACES on a steady course, a distinction for our former chair and secretary, now honorary president, Helen Wallace.

Hooray for UACES, it makes academia pay; because beyond the classroom and marking, the elusive grants, teaching buy-outs and dreams of sabbaticals, we all know from commitment and experience, this sure ain’t showbiz.

Here’s to UACES as a space for gathering and debating; and for cultivating committed Europeanists; and to Europe – come what Theresa May – to the ardent defenders of interdisciplinarity; to those friends no longer with us – yesterday’s brave pioneers of European Studies.

Three cheers for UACES, and for its current chair, her commitment to the role, how between L’boro and London, with flair and panache and a little je ne sais quoi she miraculously covers all the bases.

So, let us all raise a glass to UACES, for 50 years of association past, an achievement that surely can’t be undone and – because UACES means UACES – for the 50 years of continued association to come.

Paul Stephenson, 8 December 2017, British Academy

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University Association for Contemporary European Studies