



"We must listen to the voices of working people"

Ed Miliband speaks to BFAWU members page 5



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EDITOR'S NOTES



WHEN CAMERON EXPLAINED that a vibrant private sector would take up the slack of job losses in the public sector, you could be forgiven for thinking he had been enjoying a strong afternoon beverage or something herbal.

The reality is that, as we approach the end of 2012, we are seeing what appears to be a direct competition between private and public sectors as to who can shed the most jobs in the quickest time.

Despite government figures showing that unemployment is falling, the sad reality is that the jobs being created have lower earnings tariffs attached to them. Full-time roles are being replaced by part-time roles, secure employment is disappearing accompanied by a surge in agency/temporary jobs and, worst of all, the exploitation of unemployed people by some employers who use the government's *Workfare* project as a source of cheap labour.

Who benefits from austerity?

It seems bizarre that instead of going for growth, creating jobs paying decent rates of pay and at a level where taxes are paid and dependence on benefits is reduced, this government chooses the austerity path. And the question has to be asked who benefits from this misguided way?

If it is a direct choice between the haves and the have nots, then clearly it is not the poorer of the two. It is those at the top of the earnings food chain who stand to gain the most. Employers discount to supermarkets to within an inch of the

businesses capabilities and then reduce already poorly paid workers' terms and conditions even further.

Employers who want workers on the lowest rates of pay whilst taking massive bonuses out of the business, do neither the worker nor the economy any favours – in fact the only people they help are *themselves*. While they are enjoying the high life and winning awards for producing a depression, they want you on your knees.

They are backed by a government that is prepared to legislate to disable workers' ability to defend their hard-fought terms and conditions. The same government then demonises those on benefits when the reality it is them and their ilk that creates the environment for poverty and demoralisation. Osborne tried to turn workers against working class people in his speech to the Tory party conference, saying that those on benefits hide behind drawn curtains while you go out to work.

The truth is that it is the friends of the Chancellor, the Bankers, who created the financial debacle that we find ourselves in today. Had he shown the same passion for attacking them and his tax dodging supporters as he does for making the unemployed the pariahs of society, then UK would be a much fairer place to live.

Can you opt out of paying tax?

If the government chased companies like Starbucks, Amazon and Google to pay taxes in line with sales with the same appetite as HMRC chase ordinary working people who work for these

businesses for taxes in line with earnings, then we would start to see the deficit coming down at a pace. Instead they promise tax cuts to the richest in society, those who are likely to be supporters of the government, while millions of working class people will be faced with the stark realities this winter, of whether to heat or eat.

Somewhere along the way the government has to wake up and smell the coffee (not *Starbucks*), and realise that there has to be a point when increasing inflation, rising energy prices, the uplift of 3p in fuel duty compounded with pay freezes and pay reductions, becomes a millstone that renders employment a burden – the point where the benefit system becomes an attractive option, despite its inadequacies.

30 months of opportunity

We have another two and a half years to endure of this heinous, uncaring government, but we should use it as 30 months of opportunity to build for the future.

We need to build a manifesto for workers, a manifesto for youth, a manifesto for equality and justice. We need to pressure any prospective Labour MPs to become supporters of our aims and we need the leadership of the Labour party to give dates when they will implement their manifesto promises.

We know who our enemies are within the Conservative and two-faced Liberal parties and know who our fight is with. We don't want to elect a Labour government that becomes just another shade of blue. We want a Labour government that shows the same commitment to workers that the Tories do for big business, the rich and the powerful – *no ifs, no buts*.

As we approach year end I am reminded of the John Lennon song, '*Happy Christmas, war is over*', which talks about peace during the festive period. As we approach 2013 let me be the first to wish you all a happy new year and to hope that it is the year when worker oppression ceases, when protective legislation is re-enacted and someone, somewhere realises that a living wage has to be just that.

The trade union movement is a powerful voice and we have to be heard. We should ensure that workers rise from their knees and are proud to defend what is rightfully theirs.

Happy New Year!

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN a remarkably tough one, with attack after attack on our members' hard won terms and conditions.

The onslaught by various employers within the food industry has been ferocious and unrelenting. Many have seized the opportunity to tear up agreements, impose new terms and sack loyal, hard-working, committed and skilled workers across the sector.

We will not forget what they have subjected our members to, nor forgive...

However, what these employers need to bear in mind is that this government will not be in power forever and, should they decide to come calling in order to ask for partnerships with us, they may be a little surprised, if not shocked at our response. We will not forget what they have subjected our members to, and we will certainly not forgive them.

the biggest burden. Not one of them has explained exactly why it is justifiable to push more children into poverty whilst giving those at the top a £40,000 tax rebate.

Proof of the lengths that politicians, celebrities and the establishment in general will go to in order to twist tales, conceal the truth, avoid responsibility and misinform the public has been coming thick and fast of late. The recent Jimmy Savile case is a good example, but we have also seen corruption on a massive scale with the recent revelations concerning the clear and unjustified demonisation of the 96 Liverpool fans killed at Hillsborough in 1989.

This same media and the current government's line of the day is that there is no alternative to austerity. This is utter nonsense. There is always an alternative; it's just not the one they that they want you to hear or understand. This is because it starts at the other end of their spectrum with humanity at the very heart of it.

IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP!

I am glad that our union has backed the call for a general strike as I feel that this country needs a fresh start; one that brings fairness and opportunity to *all* rather than just the richest and well-connected in our society. Diplomacy has failed and the government isn't listening. A general strike has to be the next step, as all other avenues have been exhausted.

We are told by the media (whose agenda is clearly being set by the government) that being in poverty is a life choice. This is truly absurd, not to mention insulting. I am yet to meet anyone whose aspiration in life is to bring up their kids in poverty.

Certain sections of the UK's media continue to have a lot to answer for. I watched a top Tory on the BBC telling people that they now base policy decisions on stories featured in newspapers, which is quite ironic when you consider that the stories concerned originate from lobbyists and campaign groups, such as the 'Taxpayer's Alliance' and 'Reform' with their close links to the Conservative Party hierarchy.

When challenged about various myths concerning benefit 'cheats', not one politician from the coalition has been able to put forward any real argument as to why those with the least should carry

It puts *people before profit* and doesn't put lives at risk. It's about building a fairer society; one where governments are judged on ridding society of unemployment and poverty, whilst improving health and ensuring we get access to free education. It's one where those with the ability to pay *do so*, rather than those with the least paying the most. Finally, it's an alternative where workers are celebrated, not demonised and certainly not used merely as cash cows to support the lifestyles of the wealthy.



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IAN HODSON WRITES**

Marching for A Future that Works

Contrary to popular belief, October 20th wasn't just another march as these pictures show. At the very least, it provided further proof of the strength of feeling amongst working people. After all, the majority of people taking part were workers – covering just about every profession you could think of, be they doctors, nurses, teachers, bakers or road sweepers.

They represented the real 'big society'. They are the real wealth creators of UK PLC and yet they were largely ignored by our so called 'free press' on the day. Why? Because their real masters in government want to paint a picture that working people buy into the need for austerity, hoping that the wider public falls for it hook, line and sinker, whilst the usual suspects run away with all the loot. Hiding reality is their way of pretending that working people are an irrelevance, there to be divided and conquered. **Well, we are not.**

Putting money in the hands of the few

This government of millionaires for millionaires is the last breath of a failed neo-liberal experiment which has caused so much disaster, pain, suffering and poverty to those on already low incomes. Rising fuel bills, train fares, cuts to our NHS, attacks on our employment rights, undermining health and safety regulation and the removal of free education has all been designed to put money into the hands of the few. It has nothing to do with economic necessity.

Revolution is not about violence or street demonstrations; it's about changing the system and that's what we are in the process of trying to do. I strongly believe that change is coming. Look at our history. After World War II, we had no money, yet we built houses, created the NHS, provided free education and remained strongly committed to full employment. Whilst being far from perfect, it was certainly a lot better than the world we seem to have today. Banks were controlled and didn't control us and politicians were judged on what they delivered for the people, not on their ability to deliver for the selected self-interest groups they serve.

Isn't it amazing how Tories will have dinner with you if you give them £250,000, but if your child or partner gets killed at work, they refuse to speak with you?

Support the alternative

It's time to wake up. It's time to be part of a seismic change in our society and if our politicians want to be a part of it, they had better start recognising who the important people are, because it's certainly not the lobbyists: it's *us* – **the people**.

This crisis wasn't caused by acts of God or by investing in health and education or even trying to alleviate poverty. It was due to too much wealth and power being in the hands of too few; mostly men with no affinity or commitment to anything other than themselves.

Various meetings promoting the alternative are taking place nationwide. I urge you to attend the meetings against austerity and for a fairer future; I encourage you to affiliate your branches to the National Shop Stewards Network, Right to Work, Unite the Resistance and Boycott Workfare.

The time for doing *nothing* has long gone.

If you want a future for your children and grandchildren; if you want fairness, justice and an NHS; if you want to make sure exploitation at work is ended and the introduction of a living wage, join the campaign.

Solidarity!

Ian Hodson



20TH OCTOBER – AN AMAZING DAY

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of trade unionists from all over the UK took to the streets of London with our activists travelling from Wales and England to join the march for the alternative. Members in Scotland and in Northern Ireland also played their part in demanding an end to the destructive policies pursued by this government of millionaire and big business.

Those taking part said they were there to protect the NHS as well as to send a clear message that they have had enough of being made to pay for a crisis caused by bankers and those at the top. Everyone was determined to continue to fight for a better future for *all in our society* – not just those at the top.



"ONLY LABOUR CAN BIND THIS COUNTRY TOGETHER AS ONE NATION"

IN ADDRESSING A UNION with a long and proud history within the Labour Movement, I think it is important to recognise the achievements of the BFAWU and the crucial issues that affect your members.

First of all you have protected your members' health and safety at work. You have won recognition for Baker's Asthma as an industrial disease. You fight to ensure a safe working environment in terms of the heat and cold in which members perform their work. You have supported your members when they have been injured in their daily working lives.

On a national political level you have highlighted how out of touch this government really is over the *pasty tax* saga. Your campaign forced the government (and George Osborne in particular) into a pathetic denial of the effects of his tax and ultimately into a collapse and U-turn about his inept policy. This sorry state of affairs demonstrates three things.

The first is just how incompetent this government is. In the last two years we have had the *caravan tax*, the *churches tax*, the *granny tax*, panic at the pumps, dinners for donors, and David Cameron having country suppers with Rebekah Brooks.

The second is that they stand up for completely the wrong people. I believe in a government that stands up for working people in this country and puts compassion at its core. They talk about getting the deficit down, and of course that is important, but they really believe that they are going to get the deficit down by cutting taxes for millionaires. They talk about being 'all in it together' but at the same time as they are cutting taxes for the richest, they are cutting tax credits for some of the hardworking people who need it most.

And they really believe that working people have too many rights at work, and that the best way to help the economy is to take some of them away. When David Cameron commissioned a report from a millionaire Tory donor on how to make Britain more competitive, he suggested letting employers sack employees because they *'don't like*

them', taking away parents' rights for flexible working (like working from home or job-sharing), opening the door to employing children, and even letting some employers pay less than the minimum wage. It was the biggest threat to employment rights in decades. If the Tories are seriously going to try to take us back to the Victorian era when it comes to rights at work, we are going to stand up to them and make sure it doesn't happen.

But the third thing it shows up is simple: we need a government that does what you at the BFAWU have always done – listen to the voices of working people. We need a government that believes in the spirit of One Nation – where everyone has a stake – and that includes the working people of this country. It means a country where prosperity is fairly shared – including with the working people of this country. And it means a country where we have a shared destiny, a sense of a common life that we lead together.

Over the last few years, not just under this government, the voices of working people were not heard enough in our politics. Governments have been silent about the responsibilities of those at the top for too long. And they have declined to hold those with power to account, whether it was Rupert Murdoch or the banks.

Under the next Labour government, that is going to change. With me as Prime Minister, Labour will not be afraid to stand up to powerful companies when they act in a predatory way. So if you have a bank account, you have to feel that competition between the banks means you are getting a good deal. And we will say to everyone who pays gas or electricity bills – we will change the rules to make sure that the energy companies don't rip you off. We will bring in a new technical qualification so that everyone who doesn't go to university still has a chance to learn the skills they need and get on in life.

Most of all, we will do everything we can to make sure that when the economy grows, everyone benefits. We have to give opportunity to everybody in society, not just a lucky few. That means better qualifications for those who are not going to go to university, and better jobs which offer better training and better prospects.

A Labour government would do what the BFAWU does every day – listen to the voices of working people. That is how we are going to bind this country together as one nation, and rebuild Britain so that it works for everyone.

Ed Miliband



I RECENTLY ATTENDED the **Labour Representatives Committee** meeting held in Bristol – the aim of the change of location is to encourage wider participation of grassroots members. The meeting drew attention to the appalling number of care homes and day centres that were about to close in the area and distributed flyers.

This is due to the austerity measures that this Tory government are implementing and the choices that they make are leading to council care services for the elderly and vulnerable being slashed. When these care homes close, approximately 200 of their residents will have to find new homes to live, and this will probably mean being forced into a privatised care home. The likelihood is that the governments push to make ill-thought out cuts will mean they become *unregulated*. Employers faced with decisions on profit will reduce training budgets or cut staff leading to stress and other issues faced by understaffed,



overworked employees who, records show, receive minimum wage and terms and conditions but are expected to work long hours supporting the elderly and vulnerable in our society.

People in these homes will have worked all their lives and paid their taxes and insurances, believing they would be cared for. Now, due to the ideological agenda followed by this Conservative/ Lib Dem government, this is how they are being repaid.

Now with people living longer we now

require *more* care services not less. In Bristol alone, their plans show a shortfall of 250 places and this will probably be a lot more, as 650 places will be needed in the next 5 years (council's own estimate).

All of us need to defend these services as we are *all* getting older, paying our taxes and insurances to the government, whether it be Conservatives or Labour. You never know we might need these, at sometime in our own lives.

The day centres that give a lot of support to the residents or other people in care will be replaced by *hubs*. These will be harder to get to and the isolation and loneliness of the elderly and vulnerable will get worse. I have to say that I have only seen this documentation in the Bristol area, but with these cuts it must come throughout the country.

We need to fight them, we need to change, and we need to WIN. Not just for these residents now – but for future residents, who could be *us* or relatives and friends.

So I ask all who are affiliated to Trades Councils or Local Cluster Labour Parties to fight any closures to council care services homes or day centres. This is not right for the people of Bristol and it's not right for the people of the UK.

Peter John Fox
National Vice President

THE HAPPIEST DAY!

In the shadow of Blackpool Tower, **Geoff Atkinson** (No 4 Organising Regional Secretary) and **Sharon Innes** (Branch Secretary, Burton's Biscuits Salaried Staff Branch 423s) got married on Saturday, 10th November.

We wish them every happiness!



LRC NATIONAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

The global capitalist crisis is the biggest threat facing working class people for decades. Throughout the world the cost of capitalist failures is being paid for by cuts to working people's living standards.

To avoid a similar fate here, the Labour Party must resist the cuts falling on working class communities and offer a genuine alternative based upon the redistribution of wealth – including public ownership of essential services like banks, railways and the energy sector, through building new publicly-owned infrastructure including council housing and renewable energy, and by raising living standards through job creation, pay rises and increases in welfare.

Trade unions are the primary opposition to the current government's austerity drive, and the massive turnout on 20 October demonstrates the capacity of our movement to organise large numbers.

There is a huge opportunity to bring more people into struggle, to make the arguments for socialism and to build the LRC both inside and outside the Labour Party. We should support every action aimed at defending our communities from austerity – and work within the Labour Party to give political expression to the resistance and to assemble a majority for a rejection of cuts. Only then will Labour win back the millions of working class votes it lost between 1997 and 2010.

In this coming period the LRC needs to do better at fundraising, organising, and being more visible within the Party as well as to those outside – and *Labour Briefing* will play a key role in this process. Given limited resources, this will require the active participation of members and affiliates – and especially the commitment of those elected to the National Committee.

The incoming National Committee should work with members and affiliates, and as broadly as possible with other socialists and labour movement bodies.

Objectives are to:

- Highlight and publicise arguments against cuts and privatisation and expose the myths peddled by the coalition government and others
- Fight for socialist policies within the Labour Party at all levels, including through the affiliated unions, which have a key role
- Campaign relentlessly within the party to shift it away from the New Labour legacy by outlining a clear socialist vision for an incoming Labour government
- Support and work to build united left groupings within and across the trade unions
- Stand with and support those taking industrial action against cuts, and to promote donations for the Fighting Fund
- Support and learn from international struggles against austerity
- Call on Labour councillors to resist the cuts locally, and to refuse to implement them, and to help build the forces which can sustain that level of resistance
- Develop a socialist local government strategy for Labour councils
- Bring together a conference of LRC Labour councillors to discuss strategy, share experiences and build a councillors' network
- Secure the selection and election of socialists at all levels within the Party
- Work with others in the Party to deselect councillors and other representatives who support neoliberalism and the working class paying for the crisis
- Support the development of local LRC groups to organise in their local areas to achieve the above goals
- Support the development of equalities caucuses within the LRC to improve our representativeness and to fight oppression
- Help build *Labour Briefing* as a means of raising the profile of the LRC and, above all, as a means of helping to transform the balance of forces within the Labour Party and labour movement

LONG SERVICE AWARDS AT PARK CAKES, OLDHAM

A Report from
Julie Summersgill

ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 10TH 2012, Park Cake Bakeries Oldham, held its annual long service awards.

This is in recognition of years worked at Park. Employees are given paid release from work, wined and dined for free along with their partners, presented with a cheque and a memento of the occasion. The BFAWU are also invited along, to present long service badges.

Unfortunately, Ronnie Draper was unable to attend due to being a delegate

at the TUC conference in London. Fortunately, Ian Hodson, National President was able to attend.

When everyone had eaten, **Julie Sherratt**, Factory Improvement Manager, presented everyone with their awards. It was then Ian's turn and, for once, he was a man of few words!

20 year service badges were awarded to:

- Elizabeth May – Branch 466
- Seamus Farrelly – Branch 466
- Bernadette McMyler – Branch 467
- Linda Mellor – Branch 467
- Linda Britt – Branch 452
- Steven Nield – Branch 452
- Rowena Riley – Branch 452
- Narendra Mistry – Branch 452
- Ramila Patel – Branch 452
- Margaret Dunscombe – Branch 452
- Julie Wilde – Branch 452

40 year service badges were awarded to:

- Jennifer Jones – Branch 467
- Elaine Leigh – Branch 452
- George Thacker – Branch 452

Here's to the next 10 year milestone!

Julie
Branch Secretary, Branch 452
Park Cakes, Oldham



Just to show that the USA have some bad employers as well.



IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT to break the solidarity and resolve of striking BCTGM members across the country, **Hostess Brands** is falsely claiming that its decision to close three of its bakeries – St. Louis, Cincinnati and Seattle – is the result of the nationwide strike against the company by BCTGM members.

In fact, according to the Company's 1113 filing with the bankruptcy court earlier this year, as well as its last/best/final and non-negotiable proposal to its BCTGM-represented workers, the company was planning to close at least *nine* bakeries as part of its reorganization plan, although the company refused to disclose which bakeries it intended to close. This is in addition to the three bakeries that were to be closed as a result of the company's planned sale of its *Merita* division.



HOSTESS CONTINUES 'PATTERN OF MISINFORMATION'



"The recent claim by Hostess CEO Greg Rayburn that our strike is the reason for the closure of the 3 bakeries is simply not true"

Frank Hurt

BCTGM International Union President

Moreover, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay was quoted in a November 13 KMOX-CBS St. Louis article stating, "I was told months ago they were planning on closing the site in St. Louis... and there was no indication at that time it had anything to do with the strike the workers were waging."

BCTGM International Union President Frank Hurt stated, "The recent claim by Hostess CEO Greg Rayburn that our strike is the reason for the closure of the three bakeries is simply not true. That statement is a continuation of a disturbing pattern by the company of issuing public statements that are erroneous at best and disingenuous at worst."

"Our members rejected the company's outrageous proposal by 92 percent in September. Rejection came from every corner of the country."

"They were being asked to vote on

a proposal with massive concessions, knowing that their plant could very well be one of those to be closed."

"Our members are on strike because they have had enough. They are not willing to take draconian wage and benefit cuts on top of the significant concessions they made in 2004 and give up their pension so that the Wall Street vulture capitalists in control of this company can walk away with millions of dollars."

Over the past eight years since the first Hostess bankruptcy, BCTGM members have watched as money from previous concessions (supposed to go towards capital investment, product development, plant improvement and new equipment), was squandered in executive bonuses, payouts to Wall Street investors, payments to high-priced attorneys and consultants.



BCTGM members are well aware that as the company was preparing to file for bankruptcy earlier this year, the then CEO of Hostess was awarded a 300 percent raise (from approximately \$750,000 to \$2,550,000) and at least nine other top executives of the company received massive pay raises. One such executive received a pay increase from \$500,000 to \$900,000 and another received one taking his salary from \$375,000 to \$656,256.

Over the past 15 months, Hostess workers have seen the company unilaterally end contractually-obligated payments to their pension plan. Despite saving more than \$160 million with this action, the company continues to fall deeper and deeper into debt.

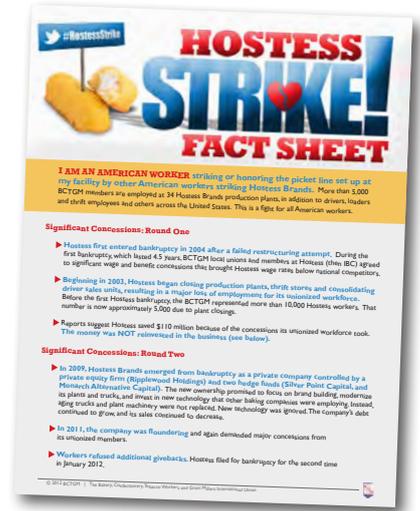
A mountain of debt and gross mismanagement by a string of failed CEOs with no true experience in the wholesale baking business have left this

company unable to compete or survive.

A total of 24 Hostess production facilities are on strike or honouring the strike with picket lines established by striking Hostess workers at other BCTGM-represented facilities. Additionally, BCTGM members at one transport facility also are on strike. Company claims that union members are crossing picket lines and maintaining production at striking plants are vastly untrue.



David B Durkee
International Secretary-Treasurer &
Director of Organisation BCGTM



The BCTGM represents more than 80,000 workers in the baking, food processing, grain milling and tobacco industries in the United States and Canada.

Follow the BCTGM:

- Web: www.bctgm.org
- Facebook: <http://facebook.com/BCTGM>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BCTGM>

STEVE HEWITT RECEIVES HIS 40 YEAR SERVICE AWARD AT GUNSTONES BAKERY



STEVE HEWITT RECEIVED HIS 40 year service award at Gunstones Bakery in November. Present were Ronnie Draper, (General Secretary), Sam Vickers, (Regional Officer), David Sorby (Branch Secretary), David Rhodes (Branch President) and all Steve's colleagues in the Blip Department.

Ronnie presented Steve with his

badge, certificate and a cheque for £150. Ronnie thanked Steve for all his years of loyalty to the union. Steve joined the union in 1972 and was earning £10 per week with contributions to the union of 12p. *Steve would like to thank everyone involved in the recognition of his 40 year service, it has meant a lot to him.*

David Sorby

... AND WELL DONE, IRIS!



IRIS HODSON (515 branch) receives her 40 year award from Dick Punshon.

Iris was a shop steward in 514 branch where Dick was the Branch Secretary.

Well done Iris!

Alan Milne

TUC CONGRESS BRIGHTON 2012



VI CARR REPORTS FROM BRIGHTON

I ATTENDED THE TUC CONFERENCE in Brighton 9–12 September along with other Delegates Marilyn French, Pauline McCarthy, together with our illustrious leader/General Secretary, Ronnie Draper.

We had a very enjoyable and constructive Conference.

Ronnie Draper spoke on behalf of the BFAWU, moving one motion and speaking in support of others.

On one of our motions we accepted an amendment by UNITE (Ronnie moved the amended motion).

Power of the Supermarkets

Conference calls on the General Council to support the monitoring of the power that Supermarkets have over food manufacturing and supply.

Without doubt the insistence of these massive corporations on having huge discounts have cost industry thousands of jobs and led to increased casualization and pressure to reduce the terms and conditions of agriculture as well as food manufacturing and supply chain workers.

Congress believes that the Grocery Code Adjudicator Bill must give the Adjudicator ability to prevent transferring excessive risk and unexpected costs downstream.”

Motion carried.

Cuts to the HSE

We also had a motion on Cuts to the HSE which was composited along with other motions plus amendments on Health &

Safety issues. Ronnie spoke in support of the composited motion: *Health and Safety at Work*. The motion was **carried**.

The BFAWU Motion (before being composited) read:

Congress supports a lobby of the government to review and revise the decision to cut the Health & Safety Executive budget by 35 per cent. Undertaking action to reverse this trend would be in the best interest of both



employees and employers. Congress rejects claims that Health and Safety is a burden on workplaces as there cannot be a price put on saving lives. Everyone should be entitled to the dignity of the safest workplace possible.

Beyond the Fringe

The delegation also attended several Fringe meetings. Ronnie Draper was a guest speaker at the Fringe meeting held by The Trade Union Coordinating Group. Other speakers were John McDonnell MP, Hilda Palmer (Hazards), Steve Gillan (General Secretary, POA). Bob Monks (General Secretary, URTU) chaired the meeting on *Workers under attack*.

Workers under attack: Health, Safety and Violence against the Workforce.

The government's relentless attack on Health and Safety continues without remorse. Under the cover of 'austerity', the HSE is being cut to the bone, with the consequential loss of professional expertise and specialist knowledge.

These misguided cuts will only result in cuts to workplace inspections and implementation of regulations – to the detriment of employers as well as workers – and place those at work in danger of serious injury, even death.

At the same time, as services are cut and the pressure on everyone builds, workers are subject to increasingly violent physical and verbal abuse. *How can we defend health and safety at work?*

As always, Ronnie Draper, our BFAWU General Secretary, did us proud.

"... a very good conference"

I would like to thank all of our delegation for looking after me when I tripped fell and broke a bone in my thumb, and No, I was not drunk.

Apart from my accident we had a very good Conference meeting up with some old friends and making some new ones.

Vi Carr
EC Women's Representative



Ronnie talking at a meeting addressing Workers under Attack – H&S in relation to acts of violence against workers



THE GOVERNMENT LIES: WORKERS DIE

The Con-Dem coalition has kept up a sustained attack on workplace Health and Safety law and its enforcement, though rubbishing it in the media, slashing the budgets and activities of HSE and Local Authorities. They have commissioned the Lord Young, Professor Lofstedt and Red Tape Review to 'remove the burdens on business' and to carry out these recommendations.

The Hazards Campaign set up the 'We Didn't Vote to Die at Work' campaign to challenge the lies on which their attacks are based and to mobilise resistance. Specific regulations are being scrapped, ACoPs downgraded and RIDDOR gutted and work-deaths have gone up even in a recession – so join us in telling the government: **'Stop it you're killing us'**



On this government's watch, work-deaths reported to the HSE (a mere fraction of the total) went up by 19% in 2010/11 from 147 to 175, and stayed up at 173 provisionally last year which is incredible in a recession when deaths usually fall. Stress has gone through the

roof in all workplaces due to job cuts leaving fewer workers with heavy workloads, insecurity and bullying.

In addition to the 35% cut in the HSE budget (and at least 30% cut in Local Authority enforcement) announced in October 2010, DWP minister Grayling banned 33% of all proactive, preventative inspections in March 2011 resulting in 76,000 less proactive inspections in so-called 'low hazard/risk' workplaces, so most employers know they need not fear an inspector calling to check they are complying.

Regulations don't kill jobs, but lack of them does kill people – as a mountain of evidence shows.

Recent research by Professor Toffel of the Harvard Business School shows that the proactive inspections that Chris Grayling banned are actually good for business – 'New Study Shows That Workplace Inspections Save Lives, Don't Destroy Jobs': www.hbs.edu/news/releases/toffelscience051712.html.

The consequences of fewer proactive inspections of cooling towers has been implicated in the deadly *Legionella* outbreaks this summer. The Olympics was kept safe by a massive proactive inspection of London's cooling towers which found at least half of them were poorly managed.

The inspection itself, however, ran into problems of a lack of experienced inspectors as the HSE now only has 3 Doctors and 18 occupational health inspectors, compared with 70 of each 20 years ago.

The wiping of work-related ill health off the agenda continues with proposals to change RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) again. Employers now only have to report absences over 7 days – which has removed 30,000 reports.

Current HSE consultation proposes removing the duty on employers to report any occupational illness unless caused by a biological agent. This would remove, for example, musculo-skeletal disorders, skin and nerve diseases, VWF, much occupational asthma and lung diseases.

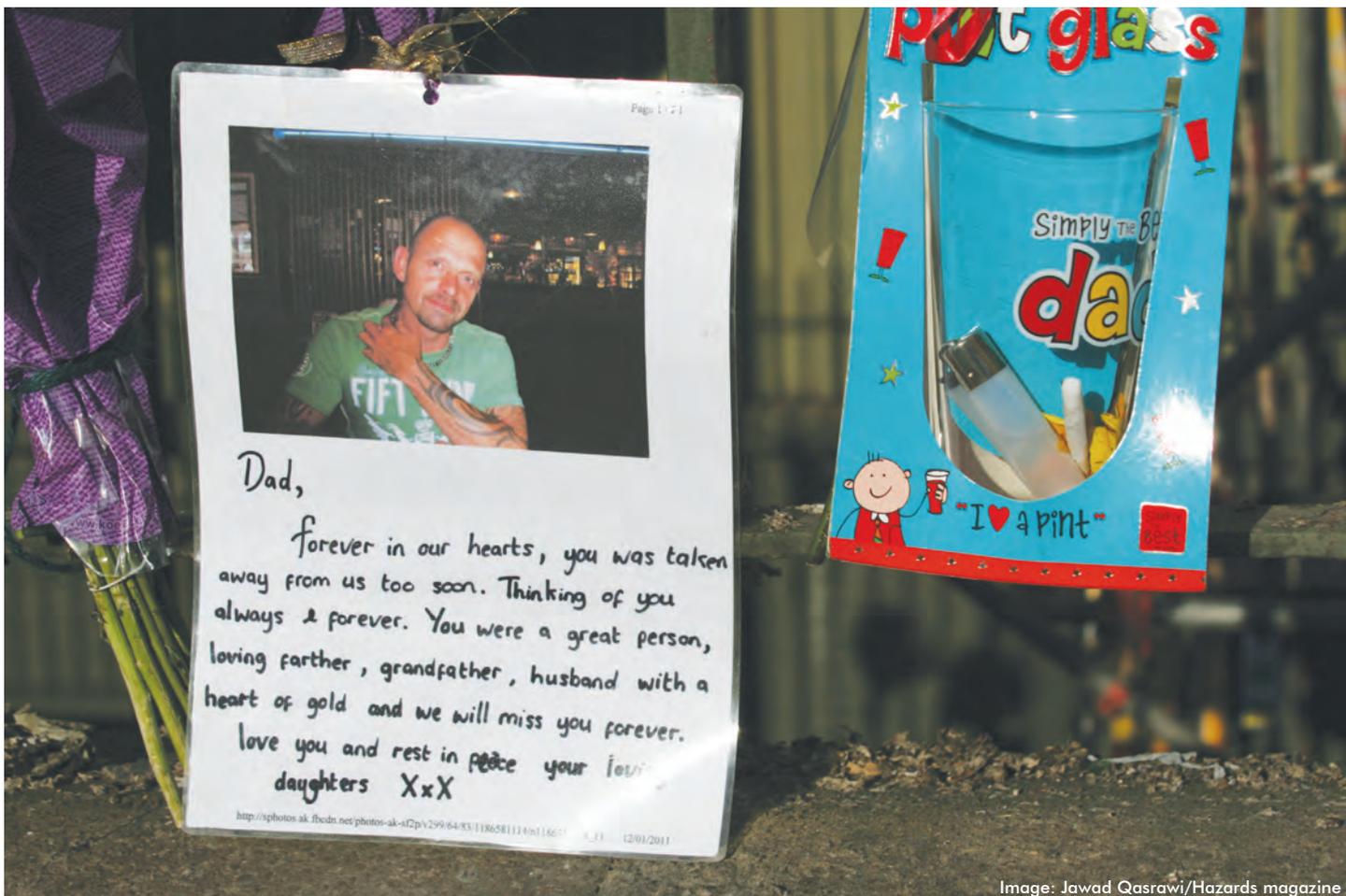


Image: Jawad Qasrawi/Hazards magazine

The attack on regulation and enforcement is based on the lie that it is a 'burden on business' the truth is that failure to manage health and safety causes deaths, injuries and illnesses. The vast majority of the health and benefit burden of these costs falls on individual workers (55%) and taxpayers (24%), with employers picking up **only 22%** of the £40 billion minimum annual cost they cause!

Following Professor Lofstedt's recommendation, the government started reviewing regulations and Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP). Some regulations no longer in use have already been repealed and, after consultation, others (including those on construction head protection and tower crane notification) are due to be scrapped – with only the Docks Regulations securing a temporary reprieve. The dangerous proposal to downgrade the ACoP to the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations*, to mere guidance, has been fiercely resisted in the responses to the consultation.

The latest turn of the screw on workers' lives and health came in a last minute amendment to Section 47 of the **Health and Safety at Work Act** which Vince Cable put into the **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill** at the Report stage.

Intended to implement Lofstedt's recommendation to remove strict liability, the amendment goes further and removes *civil* liability from all health and safety regulations, unless they *specifically* allow it. **This will make it harder to claim compensation for injury** in some cases and generally undermine the importance of complying with health and safety regulations generally.

Less than 10% of workers injured or made ill by work receive any compensation at the moment, and while any reduction is a bad thing, cuts to enforcement and regulation are bigger threats

The government's bankrupt policies are destroying the health and lives of the workers who make everything, deliver all the services, and do all the work – the real wealth creators! The fetish with cutting 'red tape' frees up employers to make workers' lives more dangerous, more unhealthy, more unpleasant and more insecure.

Taking away the already inadequate safety net of workers' protection puts the real burden on workers, their families and the economy – and we simply cannot afford it. The Hazards Campaign says there is not a shred of evidence for this populist, ignorant and deadly policy. All the evidence shows that lack of regulation and enforcement kills workers and the public. The government must **'Stop it: you're killing us'**.

Hazards campaign

Hilda Palmer

Join us and fight back:

<http://www.hazards.org/votetodie>

<http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk>

...and find us on Facebook: [We Didn't Vote to Die at Work](#)

info@hazardscampaign.org.uk

A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE ON CUTS TO HSE



JULIE BLACKBURN
OF
THOMPSONS SOLICITORS
SAYS THE GOVERNMENT IS
TAKING WORKPLACE
HEALTH AND SAFETY BACK
TO VICTORIAN TIMES

THE GOVERNMENT IS AMENDING Health and Safety laws to stop working people relying on them for protection from injury, or to claim compensation from their employer.

Amendments to the **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill**, which is currently going through Parliament, will overturn law which has been in place since 1898.

It will result in the end of employers being *automatically* liable, under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to pay compensation when they had no excuse for a worker being injured.

Strict liability is our protection

In law this is called **strict liability** and it happens when the employer really cannot argue they are not responsible for what happened – for example, when a food manufacturer fails to guard a machine and someone suffers a traumatic amputation.

Employers are also automatically liable for breaches of things like the duty to keep walkways in workplaces free from hazards that could trip people up.

In those circumstances, the injured worker doesn't have to prove the employer was at fault for what happened. They simply have to say *'the law says you should have done this and you didn't'*.

Changing the balance of proof

If the government succeeds in getting its amendment through, BFAWU members injured through no fault of their own will always have to demonstrate that their employer knew or ought to have known that the machine was unsafe if they are to get compensation for their injury.

This is very unfair. It loads the dice against the worker. Most machinery today is complex and there can be any number of reasons why it may go wrong.

- It could be down to the employer, the manufacturer, the company that services it, or anyone who has modified it.
- A boss may not personally have left the hazard on the floor, but they were ultimately responsible for ensuring it did not happen.

By not providing employers with an excuse when something goes wrong, the strict liability provisions in the Health and Safety at Work Act currently mean that an injured person doesn't have to find out which of them was responsible.

Instead, their employer has to show that they have complied with their health and safety duties and are not in breach of the regulations.

This requirement provides a better level of protection for employees because it focuses an employer's attention. **Regulations encourage good behaviour.**

'Red Tape' not bad for business

Good health and safety should, of course, be a priority for employers – irrespective of what it costs or the benefits it brings. But there is also plenty of evidence that it is very *valuable* for business. Having employees constantly going off sick because they have been injured or made ill by their work is expensive.

Reputations can also be made, or ruined, by safety records.

Encouraging poor employers

The changes proposed by the government will not only set health and safety law back over 100 years, they will encourage poor employers to pay lip service to health and safety generally.

They also come at a time that court rules are changing, making it more difficult for injured people to find a lawyer to take their compensation claim unless it is going to be very straightforward.

Even if they are able to pursue a claim and win, they may not be able to get back the costs of taking the claim, such as medical reports, even if they were necessary to win the case.

Discouraging justifiable claims

This will do nothing for employer/employee relations. People injured through no fault of their own will be put off making a claim because they do not have the requisite knowledge about why they were injured and will inevitably end up feeling 'hard done by' as a result.

Equally, the costs and duration of the claim will increase which will not make the employee feel good about their employer either. We are seeing blow after blow to injured people.

BFAWU and Thompsons will work with the TUC, individual trade unions, health and safety campaigners and Labour MPs to oppose these dangerous amendments and **will continue to support injured members.**

Julie Blackburn
Thompsons Solicitors

8th GREEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE



Peter John Fox reports

NORVILLE GRAZETTE AND I went to Congress House in London, Headquarters of the Trade Union Council (TUC).

The issues of debate were:

- What does it take to grow a green economy?
- What makes a good green government?

The first panel on stage was **Peter Young** (Chairman Aldersgate Group), **Sue Ferns** (Head of research, Prospect/TUC general council) and **Craig Bennett**.

They spoke about businesses, and what it did for them and the investments that were needed to succeed in getting a greener economy. The last Labour government got us off to a good start with the climate change act and the investment that they made in wind turbines, onshore and offshore developments. We need to invest in tunnelling equipment at home instead of in Germany or France. This should help to kick start the economy and create jobs

Is Growth in the green issues the right way forward as it will take up to 10 years to come to fruition?

The answer is definitely 'Yes' as we need to save our planet – but we cannot do it alone. We need an International development plan that all governments can adhere to.

Our government needs to take more of an interest in green policies, issues, and industries to develop the technology to underpin and make these policies work. We have to accept this comes at a price but it is a price that needs to be paid, this is investment that will help save the planet and give us the consumers a cheaper and safer energy consumption.

Francis O'Grady (General Secretary elect of the TUC) slammed the government for the lack of policies and that ministers needed to promote growth in green issues. The TUC want a fundamental change, with more investment in solar and wind technologies, looking at new policies to lower carbon emissions.

A long term vision is needed, not a short-term fix, as we need to provide training in this field – potentially worth £95 billion to the UK economy, and the green economy would sustain 1 million jobs and would have a trade surplus, available for export.

She wants unions to work alongside businesses and help with the change to green issues. **Union Learn** are now pushing through learning in green issues.

After lunch a new panel sat, and on it was **Caroline Lucas MP** (Green Party), **Luciana Berger MP** (Shadow minister for climate change) and **Lord Deben** (Chair of Committee on climate change).

It was said that governments need to look beyond a 5 year term of office, and to invest in to the green economy. This would help us to get out of recession, and have low carbon policies put at the heart of all their decisions.

I believe that this can only be done by a cross-party committee who believe in green issues so that there can be continuity throughout the process with whoever is in power.

Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, **Vince Cable** MP spoke next, on renewing nuclear power stations and building more offshore wind turbines at a cost of over £15 billion. A question and answer session followed and I was fortunate to ask one.

I asked about *Fracking* and why the Government was insistent on going ahead with it, especially when a report on a survey of a town near to a fracking site was published. This report said that 80% of that town had health issues with throat and sinus problems.

He denied that the government was pushing ahead with fracking, and they shouldn't if there is Health and Safety involvement in this due to public health.

My overall experience of this conference was positive, and made me want to know more of what we can do, and the other ways in which we can produce energy without destroying our planet.

GOOD NEWS FROM A RETIRED COLLEAGUE

Hello Everyone,

Cancer is scary I know but let me tell you there is nothing to be afraid of. To me the cancer was nothing. Just a virus, a bug that had to be rid of. My worry was the unknown, post operation. If I died on the operating table I would not know about it. However due to the professional care of the underpaid, overworked young nursing staff, who all look after me 24/7, one on one, I am here today. I want to tell everyone NOT to be afraid, I found it to be a walk in the park, easy peasy.

I had two major operations to remove cancer from two different places within 13 weeks of each other. I am 63 years old. I would go again if I had to. Chemotherapy no problem. There are so many myths and wild stories going around about cancer treatment no wonder people, in particular men, will not go. I would sooner go to Christies than the dentist anytime.

I have volunteered to do research as I did on the 12/11/2012 to help not only myself but others that will come after me I must return a little of what has been given back to me, LIFE. By going to research they might, just might find that extra something to help others. Having cameras (Bronoscopy) down my throat into my lungs and into my stomach, what is left of it, Everything is fine, no abnormalities, no cancer cells, lungs are getting cleaner. Where the cancer was cut out from it is healing well. Whilst having the procedure, the doctor cleaned my lungs as well. Though the whole procedure is a little unpleasant, it is painless, Cancer is not a killer if caught earlier enough, it is up to you to get to the doctor first with it, at the earliest opportunity. Not the cancer to take you when it is too late.

I thank everyone for their prayers and support. Especially one particular person who watched over me and he has held my hand since May 2011.

Paul George

Retired branch secretary Hampsons Bolton.

AND LEST WE FORGET

By
Alan Huxley

*A tribute to all comrades
who die in work or
combat*

Spare a minute in your days, for all
those fallen men
So just remember, remember them all,
before we all forget
We owe the comrades some respect, so
go and show them all
All these tragedies that happen, makes
everyone feel so small
You're a lion beyond the grave
You're a lion beyond the grave
So remember everyone who died
The soldiers, the workers, the Saviour
Some people told lies of our fallen men
So remember them, lest we forget

The past that turns to the future,
'cause now it doesn't feel the same,
Who we care for are dying, my friends,
am I living my life in vain?
One day I went to the cemetery and I see
all the gravestones

People standing around and crying,
why oh why did you have to go?
They will rise again, God takes the
special ones
We will rise again, when nobody knows
You will rise again, its where I wanna go
I will rise again, before we start to show,
that you're...
You're a lion beyond the grave
You're a lion beyond the grave
So remember everyone who died
The soldiers, the workers, the Saviour
Some people told lies of our fallen men
So remember them, *lest we forget*

In loving memory of
GARY CLOWES

COMMENTS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY SCHOOL AND WESTMINSTER GUIDED TOUR

Bro Dave Dash Regional Officer

“IT WAS A PLEASURE TO ORGANISE, on 18th October 2012, a **Parliamentary School and Westminster Guided Tour** for a group of Reps and FTOs. We were told about the Bakers’ Union Parliamentary Group and how it was founded and how it works. *Campaigning to win* – using Parliament to support BFAWU campaigns. We were also told how Parliament works and how new laws or changes to existing ones are brought to Parliament by the Government and by individual Members of Parliament. **John McDonnell MP** also gave us a very informative and detailed tour of Parliament.

This was a great opportunity afforded to us by the BFAWU. As you can see, the group photo was taken outside of Westminster Hall (Palace of Westminster) which was built and completed in 1099. *Stood in front of 900 years of history!”*

Sis Patricia Senkbeil Greggs Shop Rep

“I just want to say thanks to the BFAWU for organising the trip to Westminster. It was a great day and such amazing place to visit, loved that we got to sit in the House of Lords as well the House of Commons”.

Sis Vicky Watkins WULF Project Coordinator

“I thoroughly enjoyed the Westminster tour and would recommend further trips as I found the tour very educational, especially the little chapel they had inside there, which I would not have known if it wasn’t for this trip. It was also interesting to see the House of Commons and House of Lords in action with their debates”.

Tony Sedgwick Branch Sec. Hovis Wigan

“On the 18th of October I had the pleasure of going on a guided tour and workshop to the House of Commons, we had an excellent and informative day. I would like this opportunity to thank Dave Dash who organised the trip and also John McDonnell MP who accompanied us with is valued knowledge. I know this was a pilot scheme for our union and I personally think it is an excellent way of politicising our reps and showing them how the heart of government works. I hope other people have the chance to engage in what was a wonderful experience, *Thanks again.*”



From left to right:- Bro Dave Dash, Sis Vicky Watkins, Sis Julie Knight, Sis Rachel Mullen, Bro Mark Andrews, Bro Ian Hodson, John McDonnell MP, Bro Anthony Sedgwick, Sis Patricia Senkbeil, Bro John James and Bro Gary Johnston

Julie Knight Shop Steward & ULR Warburtons Enfield

“Just to let you know how much I enjoyed the ‘Westminster Guided Tour’ on the 18th October. Most of us met at Westminster Station, as we had come from all over the country (some had come ready to stay over for the rally on the 20th October) we had something to eat in the Westminster Canteen, giving us a chance to introduce ourselves etc. On to passing through Security to enter the Houses of Parliament – well exactly the same as going through an airport!! And you even get your picture taken (a nice little souvenir of the day, although not my best picture!).

Our Guide was MP John McDonnell, and we started in Westminster Hall, down into the ancient Royal crypt with John pointing out the cupboard that 2 suffragettes had stayed in on the night of the 1911 census (so they were able to claim that 2 WOMEN were in parliament!).

Then we went on through St Stephens Hall with the magnificent paintings and statues. We also got to sit in a room where discussions and debates would be held, and viewed both the House of Commons and House of Lords from the public gallery.

I found the trip thoroughly enjoyable, and I could actually feel the history and

importance of the surroundings – I would recommend the trip to everyone!! The only down side was there was a lot of walking – and I had on a new pair of shoes, (and still have blisters to show–my own fault!) So maybe a mention about there being quite a few stairs etc. would be of help to people with mobility issues. All in all a fantastic day, *Thank you!*

Mark Andrews Postal Branch Member Br. 450

“Firstly, I would like to thank BFAWU, the Labour Party and John McDonnell MP, for providing me the opportunity to have a guided and informed tour of Westminster.

The guided tour by John McDonnell MP was informative and inspiring, with the after-tour discussion about parliamentary process and the situation the country faces from the current coalition government, enlightening!

It was both a humbling and exciting experience and one I would recommend to any other union member, *‘Don’t hesitate, go and enjoy, you will be enriched and rewarded for the experience’.*

It has certainly helped me personally; reviewing my situation and my future outlook on representing those who are not as fortunate as me and wanting a socially-equipped society balanced in justice and equality”.

2012 HAS PROVED to be a year of celebration with the stunning Olympics and Paralympics just part of an extraordinary year of sporting achievements and surprises.

Whilst sporting endeavour took centre stage, many of us were overwhelmed by the powerful and moving opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Danny Boyle's utopian vision of a Britain characterised by equality, diversity and eccentric good humour also highlighted the central importance in our society of a commitment to public service.

MPs and lawyers on a trip to Colombia organised by the campaigning group Justice for Colombia to which Napo is affiliated. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist with hundreds of trade union activists having been murdered, tortured and imprisoned in the past few years alone. We met with trade unionists, human rights activists and peace campaigners. But we also spent time with ordinary Colombians, people who, for example, have lost their children as a result of Government prompted disappearances.

should find itself under threat from privateers such as A4e and G4S. It appears that their long record of failure is no hindrance to further opportunities to take over parts of the public sector.

The debacle over G4S's inability to provide sufficient security staff for the Olympics suggested that the company couldn't facilitate inebriation in a licensed hostel. Indeed, the fact that it even approached Napo earlier this year to seek assistance with recruiting probation staff indicates that it is also having difficulty distinguishing its posterior from its elbow!

100 YEARS OF NAPO

It was a reminder of how much we have achieved and of what is at risk if the forces of the market and competition have their ideological way.

2012 also marks Napo's centenary. Surprisingly perhaps, Napo was created in 1912 at the behest of the Home Office, a decision many Government ministers and officials may have come to regret! For its first 70 years Napo was a professional association primarily focussed on practice and training issues in the Probation Service and Family Courts. However, since affiliating to the TUC in 1982 Napo has become an active participant in the labour movement and placed a greater focus on political campaigning.

In contrast to our long and proud history, the Con/Dem Government has reached the ripe old age of nearly two and a half looking distinctly past its sell-by date. As it creaks along there is no disguising the fault lines running through the very heart of the administration. The sight of the Tories and Lib Dems cancelling each other out during the summer over House of Lords' reform and electoral boundary changes provided all the evidence, if any was needed, that this regime lacks integrity and unity of purpose.

It is, however, still capable of doing enormous harm and in the past few months we have experienced the damaging effects of so called NHS 'reform' and a budget which launched a sustained attack on the poor and elderly whilst rewarding the top 1% of income earners.

More than just warning shots from the ranks of those the Jam once astutely described as the 'Eton Rifles'.

I had the privilege this year of joining a delegation of senior trade unionists,

As I sat in a crowded and cramped flat in a poor suburb of Bogota listening to a succession of mothers describing the disappearance and subsequent murder of their young sons, I went through what I can only describe as a life-changing experience, much as I had when I stood in the streets of Hebron in the West Bank during my visit to Palestine last year.

That trip acted as a reminder of the importance of UK trade unions' commitment to the international labour movement. Ronnie Draper, Marilyn French and I visited New York over the summer with the GFTU and were struck by the number of issues and concerns we shared with our comrades in the States.

One of the privileges of union activism is the opportunity to meet with and support other unions. No matter how diverse the unions may be (and Napo and BFAWU are about as different as two unions could be!) we share many common values and aims as we fight for the best interests of members and the work they undertake.

The recent *March for a Future that Works* was a reminder of how strong and powerful we are when we work and stand together.

G4S couldn't facilitate inebriation in a licensed hostel

It's good to be reminded of our solidarity when considering our individual battles on behalf of members. Napo's overriding priority at this time is our fight against the Government's driving desire to privatise as many public services as possible. How ironic it is that the Probation Service, which has been successfully changing criminal behaviour for so many years,

The experience in Probation is that so called 'healthy competition' has caused nothing but division, distrust and demoralisation. Our Service, the communities we protect and the people we supervise day to day deserve better than this.

But I am pleased to report that, even at 100, Napo is well and Napo is strong. And Napo is ready. Ready to face any challenge that is thrown at us and ready to respond with determination in support of the work of probation and family court staff and in defiance of those who threaten our principles and values.

It's great to know that we have the support of other unions like BFAWU at times like this. **Be assured that Napo is ready to stand with you and give our support whenever you need us.**



Jonathan Ledger
Napo General Secretary

HOME IMPROVEMENTS: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY GO WRONG?

AS THE HOUSING MARKET remains stagnant, more and more people are staying put and spending huge amounts on home improvements.

But where do you stand legally if things don't work out? **Altaf Patel**, a partner at MWR Solicitors in Preston, discusses some of the issues

The recession has seen more than 30% wiped off the value of the average UK home since the peak of 2007, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

This has left many families unable to move due to negative equity – and an increasingly popular option is to extend or improve your home. DIY can be part of the solution, but most of us end up paying skilled tradesmen at some stage of a major home improvement project.

With so much hard-earned money changing hands, it's vital to ensure you get the service you are entitled to. Just as importantly, if things do go wrong, knowing how to get compensation can prevent huge financial losses, sometimes amounting to many thousands of pounds.

Specialist firms of solicitors are well placed to advise home owners on the often complex technical aspects of drawing up watertight contracts, negotiating a compensation settlement, or even taking matters to court as a last resort.

The scale of the home improvement boom is underscored by research from Everest, which suggests a third of Brits want to make their homes look nicer, while we on average have spent more than £2,000 per household on home improvements in the last 12 months.

This trend is driven by reality television programmes such as *Grand Designs* and *The Home Show* which help persuade almost 35% of us that we need



Altaf Patel of MWR Solicitors explains

to make improvements to our homes. Over a typical person's lifetime, home improvements cost £60,000 per family and take up around 18 months of an individual's life.

How to find a tradesperson or builder

It's essential to do your research thoroughly. This will save you cash and avoid heartache. You should find out which tradesperson will do the best work, which is not always the cheapest.

You can do this by checking out references – word of mouth recommendations are especially reliable.

You should then approach no fewer than three tradespeople for written, itemised quotes. You must also make sure the quotes are like-for-like, whether VAT is included, and who is buying which materials – you or the builder. Next, draw up a full and detailed brief. This must describe exactly what work you want done and what this includes. For instance, if you are having a new kitchen fitted, will the sink or washing machine be relocated or kept in the same place?

Written contracts are vital

It's important to reach a formal, written agreement with your builder on what happens if something goes wrong. For example there might be a delay in the completion of the work, or an unexpected complication could involve extra costs.

The aim of the contract is to protect you and the trader, so you both know where you stand from the outset. The contract is a legally binding document and you should read through it carefully to make sure you understand all the terms. If you don't, you should get professional legal advice. It will cost much less than you think and could enable you to avoid major hassle and the loss of large sums of money.

What if it goes wrong?

If your home improvements project runs into difficulties and isn't completed satisfactorily, various solutions are available.

Firstly, review your written contract and take a close look at your *statutory consumer rights*.

A written contract contains 'express terms' formally signed up to by both parties, but you should also be aware of *unwritten* contractual terms that the supplier may have breached. These unwritten contractual terms are known as 'implied terms' and include conditions such as the supplier of goods having the legal right to sell them.

In situations where suppliers have agreed to deliver and fit materials, such as kitchen appliances, you as a consumer can expect the quality of materials to be satisfactory, in line with the description and price of the materials.

Materials supplied under the contract must be reasonably fit for the purpose agreed between the consumer and the supplier. If the supplier breaches the contract in any way – express or implied terms – the consumer can claim damages. If the breach is 'material' – if the supplier deliberately uses different materials to cut costs – a builder using a cheap tarmac in order to save money. You as a consumer have the right to reject the materials.

If you are experiencing problems during or following home improvement work, you should seek legal advice. MWR Solicitors has a team of lawyers who specialise in consumer rights and will explain the legal options open to you in plain English.



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About BFAWU Rewards

- BFAWU Rewards is an amazing new benefit, exclusive to BFAWU members. You can now get great cashback & voucher deals from over 2,500 of the UK's largest retailers like Tesco, Debenhams, M&S, Expedia, B&Q, AA and more. You could easily save **£500 each year** on things you buy anyway.
- The Rewards website is ideal for Christmas shopping like gifts, food and holiday bookings. *With BFAWU Rewards you will never pay full price again!*
- Our retail partnerships span travel websites, high street brands, fashion brands, electronics, groceries, books, entertainment, insurance providers, breakdown cover, pets and more.

There is definitely something for everyone to save on!

How does the website work?

- To save money with our cashback and voucher deals follow these 4 simple steps before you shop:
- Sign in to BFAWU Rewards: www.rewards.bfawu.org
- Search for the retailer you want to shop with, like Tesco, Expedia, M&S
- Go to the retailer's website through BFAWU Rewards. Shop at the retailer's website and pay normally
- Your cashback tracks automatically. You will receive an email within 72 hours confirming your cashback

Saving money was never easier. Visit BFAWU Rewards to learn more.

How do I get my FREE Membership?

- Just log onto www.rewards.bfawu.org. Click on the 'Get Rewards Membership' link on the top of the website and fill out the simple form.
- You will need your BFAWU membership number and a valid email address.
- Once we verify your membership details, your BFAWU Rewards Login details will be emailed to you.

If you are not sure about your BFAWU membership number please contact the Branch Secretary or Regional Office.

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