



**REMEMBER  
THE DEAD –  
FIGHT FOR  
THE LIVING**

## **WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 2012 PP11–13**

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# EDITOR'S NOTES



## Under attack!

**As delegates gather in Bridlington for the 94<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference the misery being heaped upon working people by the coalition government continues unabated. At every turn of the page we read of another orchestrated attack on the living standards of working people.**

Many remember the devastation and systematic destruction of manufacturing industry meted out by Thatcher and her right wing government that we are still feeling the repercussions of. Her single minded goal of undermining protective employment legislation and picking apart the trade union movement and the deliberate ploy of keeping unemployment levels high as a frightener to those in work who dared to voice opposition.

But now we have Cameron, Clegg and co whose policies against working people are potentially far more lethal than and far more overt. Thatcher did things by stealth, creating a 'me, my' culture that many aspired to. A culture where having a holiday or a video player was more important to some than protecting their friends and neighbours. A culture that convinced people to buy shares in nationalised industries we already owned and encouraged them to sell them at a profit to the Tory-supporting rich. It gained Thatcher a reputation of being the most hated woman in history and the Tories duly served her head on a platter to the British public.

## Passive resistance – or just passive?

But if we are honest, what has changed? The sins of the 80s are being replicated less than three decades later – except this time there is nothing covert about it. In Thatcher's time we would have taken to the streets in protest, but now there is almost an atmosphere of tame acceptance.

We have endured an increase in VAT from 17½% to 20% which affects the poor to a disproportionately greater extent than the rich. We have accepted changes to employment legislation that make it easier for you to be sacked and a budget that rewards the rich at the expense of the poorer people in our society.

The Tories and their Lib Dem crutch have proposed repeals of protective health and safety laws and then taken away much of the ability of working people to claim compensation if hurt while at work.

## NHS 'safe in our hands' – really?

They promised that the NHS was safe in their hands and then introduced reforms that could see parts of it privatised and placed in the hands and despite massive protests by virtually every professional health body, we find the reforms carried.

Everything is geared to widen the gulf between rich and poor and then comes the ultimate slap in the face from the budget. A major cut in income tax for the rich to enable them to spend more because this will rejuvenated the economy, whilst introducing the 20% 'pasty tax', increasing fuel duty and penalising the poorest pensioners. Double standards without a hint of remorse or embarrassment.

## Conference – 99 motions for change

And so the importance of our annual conference and the significance of our delegates have never been more apparent. Ninety-nine motions aimed at protecting the union as well as the living standards of millions of working people. It is an agenda for change that recognises the attacks being heaped upon the most vulnerable in our society and internationally and seeks to do something about it.

Whilst we need to campaign against the injustices being promoted by the government we also need to prepare for the attacks that are being played out in workplaces right across the country.

In many cases companies jumping on the passing bandwagon of fear, using the opportunity to inflict vicious cuts on workers terms and conditions whilst paying, in some cases spectacular dividends to owners. Golden handshakes (and even more lavish golden hellos at the top), whilst cutting salaries at the bottom begs the question, *why do we need huge salaries to encourage the best people at the top of industry when poverty pay at the bottom seems to be the recognised way of keeping them mean and keen?*

Ludicrous decisions by companies who welcome the Queens Diamond Jubilee as an opportunity to increase profits by producing commemorative products but refuse to allow the workers who produce the profits, the opportunity to celebrate the publicly proclaimed holiday. Maybe they caught a dose of double standards off the government?

As a union, the BFAWU has prided itself on its ability to negotiate settlements that suit all sides rather than engaging in a policy of systematic industrial action, but sometimes we are faced with no other choice. When you are between a rock and a hard place, when you are firmly backed into a corner and under constant attack you face a clear choice. You either accept that you will lose everything by tamely sitting by and doing nothing or you respond and respond hard in a bid to protect what you need to have a decent standard of living.

## Support the fight against injustice

We have already seen branches that would not be termed militant, being forced into ballots for industrial action because of proposals that would devastate their living standards. This should be the ultimate weapon, but one we are not afraid to use. We also need to renew our policy of all supporting branches in struggle in whatever way we can.

**So when delegates arrive in Bridlington, ensure they have the backing of your branch and a mandate to fight injustice wherever it may be.**

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

Since before the 2010 election, we have been fed a story that the deficit was caused by the overspending of the last Labour government.

The media jumped at every opportunity to take aim and blame Blair and Brown for wasting money on building schools and hospitals, introducing the right to paid holidays, maternity/paternity leave rights and Sure Start centres. They also attacked them for introducing working family tax credits, designed to help low paid families avoid a continuing downward spiral towards a culture of long hours and almost certain poverty.

### Are you a 'deficit denier'?

In the build up to the 2010 general election, we were told by the Tories in opposition that cuts were the answer. They also told us that if you were against the cuts, you were a 'deficit denier'. The newspaper headlines screamed that austerity was the only solution to our ailing economy.



## NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON WRITES

*April 2012 saw the UK enter into recession for the second time, not because of the legacy of the last government, but as a direct result of the sheer incompetence of the current one*

The facts were as clear as they were obvious though; the economic crisis had been caused by a world banking crash and the irresponsible behaviour of various people working within the financial sector.

However, due to the hysteria whipped up by the media as well as the Tories, people felt it was time to get rid of Gordon Brown and his Labour government. After the election, it was pretty clear that voters had lost faith in Labour but weren't exactly too happy with the idea of Cameron's Tory Party having a free reign either.

Most people remembered the 'nasty' party's last tenure in office, so they voted in a way that meant he would be restricted. This would give the Lib Dems the dual role of 'kingmakers' and 'hamstringers' to the more extreme parts of the nasty party's policy making. Or so people thought...

### The Power and the Glory...

Alas, given the opportunity of power, Pinocchio Clegg and his merry band of smirking, glory hunting wannabes chose power over duty and gleefully embarked on a joint crusade with the Tories of turning Britain into a country where food banks grow faster than McDonalds restaurants and the only growth on the high street is enjoyed by ruthless Pay Day Loan Companies.

The last budget demonstrated the priorities of this Tory-led government in unashamed fashion. Osborne crowed without one shred of humility, the importance of protecting big business and wealth at the expense of everyone else. That meant tax breaks for the rich and powerful and tax increases for the rest of us. It meant the further removal of work rights and the slashing of benefits. It's an absolute scandal that every day, people in the UK go hungry for reasons ranging from redundancy to receiving an unexpected bill that they simply can't afford whilst on an already low income. Please visit <http://www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-projects> for more information.

George Osborne's budget gave us the spin that it was designed to help those on low pay, as well as pensioners. They wanted to tell us that these groups were going to be somehow better off. The truth is as ever, totally contrary. With the in-work benefit cuts and changes to tax on pensioners; both groups will have less cash in their pockets.

### Pasties for all – at a price!

Another new tax introduced in the budget was the well publicised 'pasty tax'. This again, shows the abject lunacy of this government and demonstrates that they neither understand, nor care about the impact of their policies. I took part in a pasty tax demonstration in London along with hundreds of bakers, activists and BFAWU members. They were protesting at the introduction of a tax that could cause job losses at a time when the private sector is supposed to be taking the strain of job losses in the public sector.

It shows the folly of designing a budget specifically for big businesses, millionaires and lobbyists. It sends out the clear message that the government agrees with and supports those who want to cut employment rights, cut safety, cut pay and make it easier for the rich to avoid paying tax. The rest of us are fair game.

### 'Private is Best'

It seems that politicians are no longer interested in people's views as the NHS privatisation bill proves. They are more interested in their own seedy agendas. The 'Cash for Cameron' dinners proved that those with money, willing to pay, get the policies and the special governmental treatment that they desire in return. The fact that so many MPs, who supported the privatisation of the NHS have been revealed as beneficiaries of various private health companies only serves to strengthen the point. They are now in line for huge, multi-million pound contracts in the new Tory and Liberal Health Service.

The mission to smash the NHS is to destroy any symbol that shows that socialist policies work. Since its inception all those years ago, the NHS has continually undermined the greedy, selfish, ideological agenda of 'private is best'.

I would like to congratulate all our branches and welcome the 3000+ new members that have been recruited in the last 12 months. I would like to thank all the officials and lay representatives who have worked so hard in this recruitment drive. I would also like to pass on my gratitude to all those who have helped achieve BFAWU recognition at Solway Foods.

I would like to give a special mention to our organiser from No 3 Region, George Atwall, who has been a tremendous influence on me in identifying new ways to organise. George has shown how commitment to recruitment and hard work is rewarded. The Solway Foods recognition was achieved in no small part, to his professionalism and work rate.

I have met many members over the last 12 months and have recently visited sites in different parts of the country. It has been fantastic to meet our members and activists who have told me what they believe we should be doing as a union and how we have helped them in their working lives. I think it's a really important part of my role to listen to what our members are saying and make sure that I act on their comments where possible.

### Workers Memorial Day

I attended the Preston Workers Memorial Day on April 28<sup>th</sup> and this year, had the honour of addressing it for the first time. It is imperative that we ensure workplaces are safe and it is essential that we don't allow employers to neglect their duty of care to their employees. It is becoming alarmingly apparent that the government's attack on safety in the workplace has had an impact on our safety representatives, with many now not wishing to volunteer or carry on.

I would warn that this is what the government is hoping for. We should not fall into the trap of thinking that there is nothing we can do. It would be fatal to fall for the media spin that health and safety is a burden. Health and safety is an essential part of making sure we have safe working environments that do not leave us with serious illnesses, injuries or worse. It has nothing to do with banning children from playing conkers on the school playground. It really is a matter of life and death and certainly no cause to joke.

In what has already been a busy year in terms of BFAWU activity, I have also recently had the privilege of attending the shop stewards forums set up by No. 2 Regional Officer, Dave Dash. He has been working on a project put together by our Executive Council in order to improve communications, encourage political activism, and see how we can maximise our resources. I would like to thank Dave for all his hard work in the development of this project.

### Promoting a People's Agenda

On the subject of political activism, one thing's for certain: the BFAWU has many budding Councillors in its ranks and we need to ensure that we play as big a role as we can in our Constituency Labour Parties. We need to make certain that the Labour Party is reflective of the people who support it and indeed founded it in the first place.

We need to ensure that at the next election, we have working class candidates who understand the real issues facing those outside the big business and banking communities. We need MPs and Councillors with a people's agenda. Not one simply designed to appease the media and those with vast wealth. Only then will we see the kind of change that real people are crying out for.

At the time of writing this, I am preparing for our Annual Conference in Bridlington. I am really looking forward to meeting our stewards and listening to some passionate debates. With so many more motions this year than we have had for a long time, I'm sure that it will be a very busy and thoroughly enjoyable few days.

If you are attending Annual Conference this year, please say hello. Both Ronnie and I look forward to meeting you.

**Solidarity.**

**Ian Hodson**

## WORKERS FIGHT BACK IN THE PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTORS



*The Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union Executive Council supporting the Demonstration in Manchester*

On 10<sup>th</sup> May, a demonstration took place in Manchester against the government's pension cuts. The changes mean that workers pay more into pensions, have to work longer before they retire, and get less after it all.

The increase in contributions from workers' wages alone will make the government more than £2 billion extra every year. But the money won't go back into paying workers' pensions when they retire: the extra cash will go straight to the government's coffers to pay for the bailout of the banks.

This is just part of the austerity being imposed upon ordinary people throughout Europe. But austerity isn't working. The Tory cuts have smashed any chance of recovery, and Britain is now in a double-dip recession.

**The Fight is on!**

# OBITUARIES

## Bert Dawson

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden loss of Bro. Bert Dawson on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at the age of 49.

Albert Alcock Dawson was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 1961 in Clackmannanshire, Scotland where he lived until 1993. It was then he moved to England to work at Austin Rover in Birmingham. Redundancy from this job is what led him to Rugby where a few years later in 2004 he started work at Manor Bakeries Rugby (now Premier Foods) where he was employed as a Warehouse Operative.

Bert was a kind and generous man who was well respected by all those that worked with him for his hard work ethic and for his willingness to help anybody – inside and outside of work. He will be fondly remembered for his love of his holidays in Blackpool, playing Bingo and having the occasional beer (or three).

The shock of his unexpected passing was felt by all who knew and worked with him and this has been very difficult as a branch to come to terms with. He will always be remembered for his warm smile, his generous nature and the genuine interest he showed in other people and their welfare. Bert leaves behind his Mother, Sister and Brother.

The strength of feeling for Bert was obvious in the collection of monies raised by his colleagues for his family, in one week alone over £400 was raised

As his funeral was held back home in Scotland only Bro. Martin Webster was able to attend on behalf of his friends and colleagues in Rugby. He also represented the company.

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February Bert's colleagues attended a night out called 'Beer and Bingo for Bert'. This was arranged for those who knew and loved Bert to go out and do what he loved best. The grand sum of £17.50 was won – not quite enough for a round! We hope to make this a regular night out so that we can remember the good times with Bert and so that we can take comfort from the fact that as long as we remember him and talk about him his spirit will live on.

**Steph Irish**



*Bert with Martin Webster and Stevie Prior*

## John Cohan

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Bro John Cohan who passed away peacefully on 12<sup>th</sup> April at his home in Northampton. He was 91 years and will be sadly missed.

John was the EC member for the Midlands District during the 70/80s and he was on the EC during the National Bread Strike in the late 70s. He was a strong socialist and a lifelong member of the Labour Party.

John moved to Northampton in the early 70s and with the late Alan Mitchell (District Secretary) and John Bryan (Regional Officer) they negotiated the recognition agreement at Henry Telfer Northampton.

Over the years, John held every post in the Branch. I was personally involved in many campaigns with John, and one of our greatest achievements was turning a post-entry closed shop into a closed shop (even the contract window cleaners were in the Union!) and during his time as Branch Chairman we had 1700 members – I think it was the biggest Branch in the Union at that time.

John was a true trade unionist and he never turned his back on any of our members who might have got into trouble and right up to his last days he was always there for residents where he lives. People like John never seem to be replaced, he was a one-off and he will be so terribly missed by all.

Our thoughts are with his loving wife, Doris.

**Dennis Nash**

## Maurice Alderson

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> of May, Maurice sadly passed away at home where he wished to be with his family.

Maurice was a founder member of our Union at Greggs of Gosforth and went on to become Branch Secretary – a position he held for sixteen years. He was also a district and regional board member.

He played a major part in the group negotiation committee helping to improve terms and conditions of employment.

He also did his duty in the community as an active councillor and was Mayor of the North Tyneside Council in 1990/1991. In 1991 he stood down from his Union duties, moving into a management role. Typically, the condition he attached to his new role was that he remained a member of our Union.

Maurice was always willing to provide kind advice to myself who took over his role and to all shop stewards and branch secretaries up until he retired early this year he was well respected throughout the Union – being nominated for a TUC award and Guest of conference which he sadly declined due to ill health.

I always enjoyed a chat with him when I came on site.

Farewell friend. Rest in peace.

**Alan Milne**

# INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FOODWORKERS 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

Ronnie Draper, Marilyn French and I attended the Congress for the International Foodworkers Union held on the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

*The theme for the conference was  
**Organise, Fight and Win!***

This was endorsed by the congress and we were informed that the membership had now reached over one million – with 153 new facilitators world-wide.

## Day 1

Congress was opened by Ron Oswald, General Secretary.

The day was dedicated to:

- 1 Standing orders
- 2 Elections of congress bodies
- 3 Endorsements of unions
- 4 Voting rights

All agenda items were approved by Congress.

## Day 2

The day was taken up with debates on precarious working with 22 speakers taking part worldwide. We were informed that 500 million people are still working for less than \$1.00 per day. There are also 200 million children under the age of 14 who are working to help their families rather than going to school.

May I take a moment of your time to give you some information on the difficulties which other trade unionists have faced in their endeavours to gain basic rights for their members. Many face dismissal, hardship, imprisonment, kidnapping and, in some cases, the ultimate cost has been with their lives. Many are fighting and will continue to do so regardless of threats they may receive.

## Permanent contracts

It is made very clear that many countries have the same problems. One is the right to a **permanent contract** in their work place. One delegate told congress of the case of workers being given three days work. The next two days they had to stand outside the gates hoping they would be chosen for work.



*Marilyn French and Jackie*



*Ronnie Draper with Stephen Mugole,  
General Secretary, Ugandan  
Foodworkers Union*

Therefore, these people had:

- **No security**
- **No decent wage**
- **No respect**
- **No dignity**

The International Food Union continues to support these workers and will increase its efforts over the next five years. The unions stand in solidarity and their slogan is:

*'The Company Holds Out for 20 Years  
– We Will Go One Day More!'*

## Day 3

Regional reports given.

After these reports, resolutions were moved and adopted by congress.

## Day 4

Elections took place for the executive committee and Ronnie was elected as substitute for the United Kingdom.

- Debate on organising
- Serving the membership
- Retaining the membership.

The congress closed on Friday.

I would like to thank all those involved in the congress.

**Jackie Barnwell**

EC member for Birmingham/  
West Midlands

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MCDONNELL

Region 1 Stewards quiz Labour MP for Hayes & Harlington (and Labour Representation Committee chairman) **John McDonnell** on what part trade Unionists can play in pushing the mandate for change. We record John's stance on the alternative to austerity, his current take on Labour and the Con-Dem coalition and his soft spot for Twitter.

## Union/Labour: A brief history

Opening with a history about the formation of Unions. John noted that, during the industrial revolution, it was '*a workers secret*' that '*if we are together, we are strong*' – as opposed to being weak and isolated (independent of trade unions). Employers outlawed workers from pledging oaths of allegiance to trade unions. The phrase '*strong together*' is a truism, born out of such a concept.

People realized they needed more than solidarity, they needed a political voice and legislation to protect them at work. At the end of the 19th century, the Labour party formed out of the trade union movement, a broad church of differing views (economists, socialists, trade unionists etc.)

This improved the lot of working people in the country. Clement Attlee brought in the Welfare state after the second world war – alongside the free healthcare of the NHS, free housing and education, one of Labour's finest achievements. During a critically desperate time for Britain, this was a much needed lifeline.

## What is the role of the Labour Representation Committee?

Spearheaded by John (Chairman), the LRC meets up with ministers and the Civil Service to discuss strategy and shape policy.

This article is reproduced from a feature currently on the website:

[WWW.BFAWU.ORG](http://WWW.BFAWU.ORG)

Visit the site to see it in full



### What 'change' means (according to the Tory gospel, 2011 to date) A few examples...

- New legislation introduced is dismantling the welfare state
- Austerity as a result of the economic crisis. (The current recession mirrors that of the 1930s – caused by speculators, leading to a debt bubble, the bubble burst, policies introduced where wages, benefits and public services cut, recession turns into a depression.)
- This system of more unemployment and less income tax doesn't work, as only spending will help stimulate the economy. The economy is not growing.
- NHS Act – bill to privatize the NHS, 20 billion pounds cut, top services been cherry picked by private investors, postcode lottery. Assessment tests for cancer and the blind has risen.
- Housing and disability benefit cut, John noted with alarm that food parcels were been distributed as a result of so many off benefit.
- EMA and legal aid cut, healthcare and paternity grant cut.
- In education, student tuition fees of up to \$9000, private companies taking over academies and free schools.
- Restriction of workers rights– employment tribunals will make people pay up front.
- Trade union rights are been regularly removed and constantly under attack.

Given Britain is currently the seventh richest country in the world, John said: *'This has nothing to do with a lack of resources, rather, a lack of distribution.'* He added: *'You certainly cannot say it's on the basis the money isn't there. The rich have just received a tax cut on the highest rate of tax. There are solutions – addressing the 93 billion tax evasion, for instance – or making top 10% earners in Britain (whose wealth totals a whopping £175 billion) pay a one off 20% tax rate.'*

Professor Greg Philo's fiscal philosophy would, in effect, virtually wipe away the deficit.

### What else would create an alternative to austerity?

A 'Robin Hood' financial transaction tax on the banks and John's proposal for a dedicated drive towards creating 1 million climate jobs to increase growth. It's evident there is quite clearly an alternative to austerity.

If you are going to cut something, why not start with cutting defence spending, such as the 75 billion invested in Nuclear weapons?

### What is the next step?

*'We need to bring this government down. We have seen more industrial action in the last 18 months than we have in the last 20 years.'*

The November 30th Public Sector Workers Strike (estimated at 2 million and tens of thousands in street rallies) demonstrates the solidarity and strength in numbers you spoke about in your introduction. What more can be done?

*'TUC demonstrations, campaigns in parliament and lobbying MPs... when there's a demonstration at occupations or factories, go there and support it. For example, the disabled people who chained themselves to Trafalgar Square and closed it down or the student occupation – they shouldn't be saddled with debt, they are our future. It's a lesson in solidarity. The key is the voice of the masses. Don't underestimate the influence of affiliating to Labour solidarity with others and a parliamentary voice.'*

### And what about Cameron?

*'Cameron is right in one sense when he says we are all in it together – we are in it together against him!'*

### If the need arises to raise the chalice against certain employers (of which seven of our delegates work for in this room) who rip up contracts, terminate agreements, cut salaries and hours, what position would we take?

**(Steve Finn, Region 7 FT0)**

*'If the company isn't budging, we would write a parliamentary headed letter to them and invite them to parliament. We could insist on meeting with the company. This would be a PR disaster for the company in question. Alternatively, motions in parliament (such as the recent EDM to Park Cakes) or we can name and shame such companies on the parliamentary floor during debates. Issues can be exposed here with no legal threats.'*

*Such tactics apply pressure, with the issue fed through Union. MPs can even join the picket lines.'*

*In January there was dossiers going round from employers feeding information to the police and security services blacklisting trade union reps for future employment who had been on demonstrations. This was sanctioned by executives.'*

### What is your view on the Labour party's failure to address certain past and current issues?

*'The Labour party has been losing activists for the last 30 years. In '97 Blair praised Thatcher, which was a kick in the teeth, the current opposition doesn't stand up enough to blame the coalition and members are been lost. To then agree with the cuts is dampening the enthusiasm and spirit of members. It's a transitional period which, looking back, lessons need to be learned from. In '97, health workers marched out in response to the privatization of more jobs than Major and Thatcher put together. There was no consultation in regard to Pensions, no consultation over Iraq.'*

### You had some tongue in cheek comments about the Iron Lady misinterpreted we understand?

*'Yes. When asked a question 'What was the best thing I could do to change the world', I replied, as a joke, that it would have been to assassinate Margaret Thatcher. Nothing was initially said or misinterpreted, but following my repetition of this at a GMB conference and I was receiving threatening letters from Generals in Surrey and upset, little old ladies in Surrey...'*

**You say we have lost working class representation in parliament. What hope is there for change here?**

We need to encourage each other to join the party and attend meetings. When gathering members and candidates, training and support can be offered for public speaking, organizing meetings etc. Everyone has a responsibility and a part to play, whether by themselves or through recommending someone they know.

**Tell us a little bit about your adventures on Twitter**

Following a 'tweet' on November 4th March at Whitehall Parliament Square – 'Fantastic turnout – shows what happens when people get angry' The Daily Mail responded with 'Students get angry, MP's tweet causes riot!'

**What was your response?**

I made the point that I was actually present at a meeting with 12 police officers at the time...

**So that was the end of the matter, we trust?**

'No, another story followed, this time headlined 'MP's cunning alibi!'

**Given the lies over the depression and austerity plus the constant propaganda war against trade unions by the mainstream media, how can we best influence the public with our core values and beliefs?**

(Andy Law, Manor Bakeries, Stoke)

'With a clear message, appealing to issues that affect people, via word of mouth. When I attended Brighton Festival, for instance, there was such a buzz. You couldn't move. People were asking for tickets, young people were getting involved, it was very positive.

Also, we can create our own media, but be sure that you are professional and use the right PR technique. That's something focus groups need to concentrate on and that I observed when part of the Greater London Council.'

**Do you think its right and fair approach to open the gates to Eastern European workers when we have so many cuts, people on the minimum wage or with degrees sitting around jobless? (VJ Kumar, Forest Cakes)**

'The key issue is jobs for everyone. What we don't want to be doing is building a brick wall around Britain. We live in a world without borders. We are all mobile. We are all immigrants and everyone, everywhere should work together, not compete with each other, so we all have the same opportunities wherever we go in the world .

The questions we need to be asking are 'are there enough jobs?' (to which the answer is NO) and 'how skilled are our workers through training and education?'

We need a proper distribution of resources. We need to build up manufacturing and invest in our skills base.

We should follow Germany's lead and create 1 million climate change jobs, in reality we are ten years behind them.'

**THE BFAWU SLIPS AND SAFETY SHOE SURVEY**

Ian Hodson has circulated all branches with the Slips and Safety Shoe Survey 2012 (Cyclo 09 & 10.12).

Your participation in this survey is absolutely vital as the comfort and protection of your safety shoes is a significant factor in how safe you are in your workplace.

Your **Regional Officer** or your **Safety Representative** has copies of the survey for you to complete.

Please ensure you get a copy and complete – **and then return it before the July regional Meeting.**

The results will be collated and published as soon as they have been processed.

**Your participation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.**

**BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION BFAWU STRENGTH IN UNITY**

**BFAWU Slips and Safety Shoe Survey**

Please fill out the questionnaire and answer all the questions. Your data will be processed and evaluated anonymously. When the survey is complete you will be informed of the overall results. Your participation is important. Only a high participation rate leads to significant results.

Thank you for your co-operation and commitment.

It is important that your safety shoes provide you with comfort and protection.

For each question, please circle **Yes** or **No**

**Is there a specific type of flooring in your workplace?**

Wood	Yes	No		
Resin	Yes	No		
Other	Yes	No		

**Is there a compulsory shoe policy in operation?**

Safety shoe	Yes	No	Athletes foot	Yes	No
Sensible shoe	Yes	No	Arthritis	Yes	No
Does your Company provide a supplementary amount towards your footwear?	Yes	No	Rheumatism	Yes	No
Is there a choice of shoes available?	Yes	No	Toenail problems	Yes	No
<b>Are your safety shoes...</b>			Any other problem please state	Yes	No
Comfortable?	Yes	No			
Too tight?	Yes	No	Have you access to a Chiroprapist?	Yes	No
Too loose?	Yes	No	Are your shoes shared with anyone else?	Yes	No
Wrong size	Yes	No	<b>Does your job involve the following?</b>		
Have holes in them	Yes	No	Much walking	Yes	No
Poor support	Yes	No	Much standing	Yes	No
Poor fit	Yes	No	Much lifting/pushing	Yes	No
Have insoles	Yes	No	Strenuous work	Yes	No
	Yes	No	Working on hard floors	Yes	No
	Yes	No			

**Do you suffer from any of the following ailments when wearing your safety shoes?**

Wet feet	Yes	No	<b>How long since you last had new shoes?</b>	Yes	No
Cold feet	Yes	No	Less than 1 year	Yes	No
Blisters	Yes	No	More than 1 year	Yes	No
Bunions	Yes	No	More than 2 years	Yes	No
Cuts/sores	Yes	No	More than 3 years	Yes	No
Corns	Yes	No	More than 4 years	Yes	No
Calluses	Yes	No	More than 5 years	Yes	No
Hot/sweaty feet	Yes	No	<b>Overall are you satisfied with the footwear that you use for work?</b>	Yes	No
Malformed toes	Yes	No			
Fallen arches	Yes	No			
Sprains	Yes	No			
	Yes	No			

**Your participation in completing this questionnaire would be greatly appreciated.**

**Please return to your Branch Secretary or Safety Representative.**

## WHO HAS PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHILD?



by **JOANNA McCLEAN**  
family law expert at  
MWR Solicitors

Should you require any further information on any of these issues or any other family related matter, contact Joanna McClean: tel 01772 254201 or email: [Joanna.mcclean@mwrlaw.com](mailto:Joanna.mcclean@mwrlaw.com)

Parental Responsibility (PR) is a legal term meaning having the same legal rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority as a parent but attaining rights can be quite complex.

Having PR for a child means that you are either responsible for, or have the right to be consulted about, important issues such as the child's general welfare, health, education and religion. On a practical level this relates to day to day decision making and enables you to see a child's medical records, attend parents' evenings at school and to be consulted on any proposed change to the child's name or residence.

In the UK a mother automatically acquires PR for a child upon birth as does a child's father if he is married to the child's mother – but what about unmarried fathers?

An unmarried father acquires PR by being named on the child's birth certificate from 1st December 2003 in England and Wales, from 4th May 2006 in Scotland and from 15th April 2002 in Northern Ireland. It is worth noting that if the birth is registered *outside of the UK* then the unmarried father will not automatically gain PR.

Fathers who do not currently have PR can gain it by; marrying the child's mother, entering into a PR agreement with the child's mother prescribed by the Court or by applying a PR order from the Court.

### Who decides?

The Court must consider whether it is in the child's best interest for the father to have PR. The applicant father would need to explain his reasons for applying, and show amongst other things a level of commitment and attachment to the child.

### Unmarried fathers and PR

Unmarried fathers can also acquire PR in the following circumstances:

- By being named on a Residence Order.
- By being appointed a guardian by a Court.
- By being a *testamentary guardian* upon the death of the mother (only if no other person has parental responsibility for the child).

### Step- and grandparents

Step parents do not automatically acquire PR for a child even though they may be living in the same house and supporting the child financially.

Step parents can acquire PR by entering into an agreement with someone who already has the PR for the child in question. It isn't however enough to be living with that person, you must be married to, or be the civil partner of the parent in question.

If grandparents have a residence order in respect of their grandchildren they will assume PR. Without the order it is still possible to gain PR in a similar way to that of step parents, by entering into a PR agreement or by Order of the Court.

The law recognises that family circumstances can often be complex. Should a grandparent or other friend or family member finds themselves caring for a child for whom they do not have PR or a residence Order for the Children Act 1989 allows them to do "whatever is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare."

Once in place, PR must be exercised appropriately and jointly with the other people who share responsibility until the child reached the age of 18.

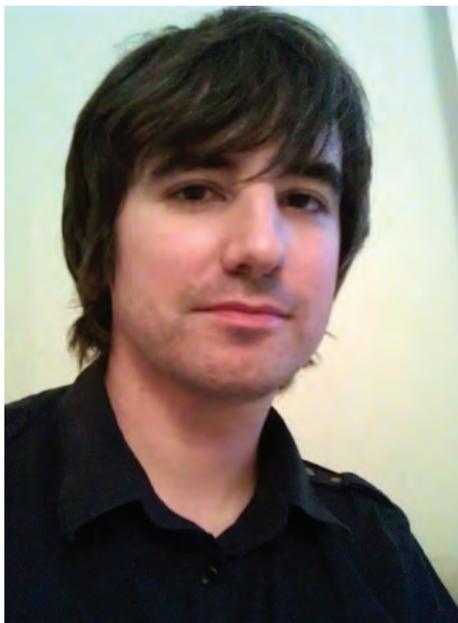
## REGION 7 LEARNING CENTRE READY AT LAST!

The learning centre in region seven is ready to go and we will be starting our first course in the last week of May. The course is now booked out. It is our intention to use it for Health & Safety updates as well, with Bro D Best declaring his thoughts on how it will benefit his committee.

*I would like to thank everyone who has made it such a pleasant place to work in.*

**Billie Gallagher**, Regional Officer





**JOEL SMITH  
OF THOMPSONS  
EXPLAINS THE LAW  
THAT PROTECTS  
EMPLOYEES WHEN  
THEIR JOBS TRANSFER  
TO ANOTHER  
EMPLOYER**

### What is TUPE?

Given the current difficulties in the wider economy food manufacturers will, like so many sectors, be looking to make changes that will protect, or indeed improve, their profit margins.

This can lead to a range of measures, for example, takeovers, mergers or contracting out. But this can create uncertainties for the workforce which BFAWU reps will need to address. When a business, or part of it, is transferred to another business, then the **Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE)** require an employer to consult with employees about the transfer and, in the long term, provide some level of protection to employees' terms and conditions.

An understanding how the TUPE regulations can provide protection for members is therefore important.

The TUPE Regulations preserve an employee's contractual terms and conditions when a business, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer or when the work a particular group of employees do is contracted out to another supplier.

# T.U.P.E. LEGISLATION WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

The Regulations apply to:

- mergers
- contracting out or in services
- changing contractors.

In order to gain protection under the original TUPE regulations, employees were required to establish that there had been a transfer of a stable economic entity which kept its identity with the new business. In 2006 there were amendments made to the regulations which were intended to clear up some of the uncertainties. But the question of whether or not TUPE applies remains a contested area – and often employees can find themselves in the middle of a legal dispute between two or more businesses over whether or not TUPE applies and who is responsible for the employees.

### Applying TUPE

Fundamentally, whether or not TUPE applies in a particular situation depends on whether the activities carried out *before* the transfer were similar to those carried out *after* it.

For example, what if the production of a particular brand is outsourced to another manufacturer? This might be covered by TUPE. But whether or not the employees who dealt with the particular brand should follow the brand to the new manufacturer will depend on whether they were allocated to work on the brand and whether this was their principal work.

So in a factory where employees deal with numerous different brands or where there is a significant amount of rotation between production lines then TUPE may not apply to a single brand that moves manufacturer. However, where employees deal with a limited number of brands or where a particular brand forms the bulk of their work and the contract for this work moves, then TUPE may mean that the employees should also transfer with the contract.

There are many possible scenarios.

### Duty to Inform and Consult

If there is a TUPE transfer then Regulation 13 means that long enough before the proposed transfer, the current employer must inform the appropriate representatives of any affected employees (such as the recognised trade union) of:

- The fact that the transfer is to take place

- The date or proposed date of the transfer, and the reason for it;
- The legal, economic and social implications of the transfer for any affected employees;
- The measures which the employer envisages will be taken in relation to any affected employees or if no measures are envisaged; and

If the employer is the *transferor* (old employer), the measures, in connection with the transfer, which they envisage the transferee (new employer) will take in relation to any affected employees, or if no measures are envisaged.

If the current employer thinks there are likely to be any measures taken by the future employer after the transfer, then it must consult with the workforce about the measures. It must start consultation in good time prior to the date of the proposed transfer and consult with the workforce with a view to reaching agreement.

### Failure to follow the rules

If the employer fails to take the necessary steps to inform and, if required, consult with the workforce then claims for compensation can be pursued. If successful, an employment tribunal can order the employers to pay to each employee up to 13 weeks pay, although tribunals often award less than this maximum amount.

Joel Smith



This is the first part of a two-part article Joel has written for us.

Part two will look at how the TUPE regulations protect against *unfair dismissal, pay and working conditions*, and the challenges faced by the unions in preventing the government from watering them down.

Look out for it in the **Autumn FoodWorker**



## COVER STORY

# WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 2012



This year I have attended the Chorley and Preston Workers Memorial Days. The themes of this year's events are:- The governments agenda to remove Health and Safety Legislation, and Public Sector Cuts on Health and Safety Inspections.

The first was Chorley's on Friday April 27th at 5:30pm which starts at the main gates of Astley Park. A short march past the cenotaph, led by the torch bearer and the piper, to a tree planted by the committee some years ago, at a past event.

The Reverend Polly Mason opened and welcomed everyone to the event. There was a poignant phrase in her address to the congregation of 'Remember the dead, but fight for the living'. This continued throughout the ceremony.

Speakers came to the fore and Lindsey Hoyle MP condemned the government on the cuts to the Health and Safety Executive and the laws that they are bringing in against health and safety.



## *Peter John Fox shares his experiences of Workers Memorial Day in Chorley and Preston to introduce our coverage of this year's events*

Hilda Palmer from Hazards spoke on behalf of *Families against Corporate Killing* as Linzie Herbertson could not attend as she had been involved in a car accident.

Other speakers there were Mathew Tollit from Thompsons Solicitors, also Steve Turner and Pat Coyne from Unite the Union.

All spoke with great enthusiasm for health and safety in the workplace.

The Reverend Polly gave a closing address in which a lone trumpet player played 'Gresford' which was written especially for the loss of 266 miners in a tragic accident. Then the piper played 'Abide with Me' before the close at 7pm.

The day after I went to Preston and met up with others from our Union, John Owens, Mick Egan, our full time officials John Higgins and Geoff Atkinson and our National President Ian Hodson.

Andy Birchall opened this event and it started with a puppet show performed by the six finger puppet company. This was a very clever and amusing way of putting the message across to everyone.

*Continued next page*



*Sadiq Vohra of Thompsons Solicitors addresses the rally on the effects of changes to the legislation*

The sound of the Piper came from behind us, and it was the procession from Chorley Trades Council to pass on the 'Torch of Hope' over to the Preston Trades Council delegates. We had a minute silence led by Fr Andrew Teather, and a few prayers for all faiths.

The Deputy Mayor of Preston addressed the congregation. (the Mayor wouldn't attend as she is a conservative). The next was Mark Hendrick MP for Preston, who spoke about the damaging cuts the government are making and the changing of the laws to cut Health and Safety in the workplace.

Our National President was next, he spoke passionately about the cuts and of organising in the workplace, also campaigning against the government cuts.

Ian McGill (Fire Brigade Union) spoke on the amount of time it now takes to get to an incident. Before the cuts the national average response time used to be 4 minutes. It is now 7 minutes and the implications of this can be catastrophic. We all must get behind them as it is not just the fire brigade that has to think of their own health and safety when they reach an incident, it's the extra time the incidents have had to get a hold, and how it also affects us if we need them – every second counts!



*National president Ian Hodson spoke passionately on campaigning against cuts to H&S regulations*

This is a disgrace by this Tory government who are putting a lot of lives at risk with these cuts. Could this be classed as Manslaughter by this government?

Other speakers included Ron Sinclair (UCATT), Sadiq Vohra (MWR Solicitors), Janet Newsham (GM Hazzards and FACK) Darren Gerrard (PCS), Peter Billington (Lancashire TUC Secretary), and Pat Coyne (Unite).

We then marched through Preston town centre from the Flag Market to the Corn Exchange Memorial.

This is where we laid the wreaths and I was honoured to be asked to lay the one for the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union.

As each wreath was laid the person said Remember the Dead, and the reply from everyone was Fight for the Living. The event was closed at 1:15pm. We were all then invited back to the Stanley Arms for a few sandwiches (washed down with a few scoops of beer).

So lets Remember the Dead and **Fight for the Living**

**Peter Fox**



*Attending the Workers Memorial Day: Sadiq Vohra, National President Ian Hodson, Geoff Atkinson and John Higgins*



*Ronnie Draper addresses Trades Council before laying a wreath at the site of the Memorial Tree*



## WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY – HARTLEPOOL April 28th

No 5 region would like to thank the General Secretary Ronnie Draper who agreed to speak at the Hartlepool Trades Council Memorial on April 28th.

Ronnie made a very passionate speech on the workers that have been killed at work – not forgetting the many workers who have died through industrial diseases.

He also criticised this Con/Dem government for their continuous trivialising of the Health and Safety legislation – continually referring to conker fights – when their agenda is to *weaken the legislation*. He stated that we will continue to fight to improve Health and Safety (issues such as *workplace temperatures*) and offered Ian Wright MP for Hartlepool the opportunity to join our parliamentary group.

Many thanks to the members who attended and 'Remember the dead but fight for the living'.

**Alan Milne**, Regional Officer

# WAREHOUSE SAFETY



**IAN REMINDS US THAT: WAREHOUSES ARE DANGEROUS PLACES**

Consider a typical forklift – it is extremely heavy, dense in construction, usually carrying additional weight, has visibility issues for the driver, and is normally moving in and out of crowded areas. They are normally stacked higher than the driver's vision range. Some would say is like an accident waiting to happen – and the only reason most accidents don't happen is due to the skills of the operators.

## Understanding the issues

Having met with some reps from our distributions and warehousing and understanding some of the issues they face here is a simple advice guide for making sure we can improve safety.

Type of accidents

- Worker/forklift collisions
- Load falls onto worker
- Driver trapped between forklift and other object
- Forklift drives off loading dock

## Causation

When you look at the causation you find that **driver error** accounts for a portion of these accidents.

Roughly 25% of accidents include causative factors like: poor lighting, high noise levels, poor pedestrian traffic control, high speeds, poor safety aids on equipment, dangerous driving conditions, and insufficient aisle space – all of which can be resolved through corrective action before an accident occurs.

## Lighting is important

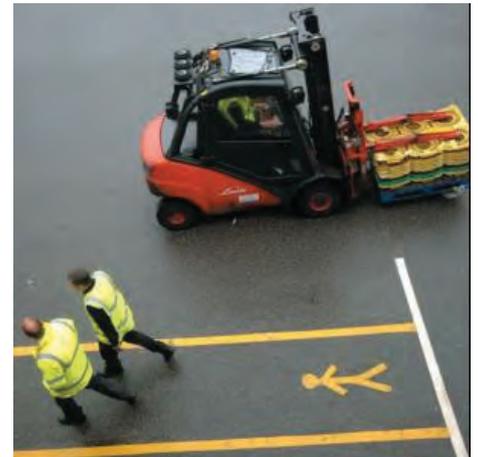
Is there appropriate lighting can you add lighting to the forklift and what about reversing? Can you put a different light colour that would indicate a *reversing* truck

## Noise levels

Can workers hear a forklift approaching or the forklift backup beeper? You can reduce background noise by isolating equipment with acoustic screens or curtain walls to deaden sound. Specify maximum noise levels when ordering machinery and opt for quiet design conveyor systems. Some of our reps have told us that alarms on machines sound similar to those used in warehouses: maybe look for an alternative sound to enable workers to distinguish between them more easily

## Pedestrians

Keep pedestrians safer by creating clearly marked and barricaded traffic lanes and work zones.



Educate personnel and visitors about staying within the marked pedestrian zones. Enforce training with steel guard rails that keep forklifts and pedestrians from running into each other. Then go one step more – assess hazard locations where forklifts can appear unexpectedly from around corners, doorways and ramps.

Put protective devices in those locations to increase awareness, alert oncoming traffic, and to prevent pedestrians from crossing the path of an oncoming forklift.



Wide view mirrors placed strategically greatly enhance visibility for both forklift drivers and pedestrians at intersections where oncoming traffic is hidden from view. Motion detection alarm systems use flashing lights and audible sirens to alert both forklift drivers and pedestrians of oncoming traffic. These are both great safety additions, but they still leave the decision about proceeding up to the individual.

### Crossings and intersections

In busy warehouses, you can't afford the risk of those choices. At crossings and intersections, you need a physical barrier maybe a safety gate system which requires the pedestrian to push a button in order to open the crossing gate. There are motion detection monitors, this type of system determines if the crossing is clear of traffic and will open the gate if conditions are safe. If there is oncoming traffic of any kind, the gate will remain closed until the traffic has moved safely out of range. Only then will the gate open, lower the forklift barriers, and allow pedestrians to cross safely.

### Braking distance

How fast are operators working are they under pressure to perform and feel that speeding is the only solution? Post-accident audits show this can be the case. Generally, forklifts involved in accidents are averaging 8 miles per hour, and while OSHA has not set speed limits, keep in mind our momentum equation – mass (large forklift) x velocity (weight x speed x 1.5). At even 5 miles an hour, that fully loaded forklift is now equivalent to a full size car travelling at 20 mph.

That's a lot of impact force and capacity for injury and damage. Within the rack aisles, speeds should be even slower to compensate for the increased likelihood of encountering workers in the aisles.

Speeds should be no faster than 3 miles per hour, making it easier to avoid collisions and keeping stopping distances shorter. These speeds should be strictly enforced. Lost production costs won't be anywhere near what you'll be paying in injury claims if you don't enforce speeds.

### Visibility

Wide angle rear view mirrors are a must, frequent inspections to ensure horns and backup beepers are working. Is everyone aware of safety protocols in regard to using the horn? Do drivers use their horns? Is everyone trained on the meaning of different beep patterns?

### Equipment and driving surface conditions

Are forklifts regularly inspected and any issues recorded? Are the correct



replacement parts installed? Be aware the battery weight can also change the forklift's ballast weight, which alters the lift and load capacity. It also affects steering control. Stick with factory defined parts. Remember that OSHA prohibits altering ballast weights.

### The surfaces

Remember that the tyres are designed for smooth concrete floors and are going to respond differently on asphalt or loose soil. Unexpected dips in the travel surface can upset the load balance, creating the potential for injury from falling loads and floor cracks can cause major discomfort and long term injury to drivers.

Make sure that not only forklifts are in top condition, but also the surfaces they will be travelling on.

### Aisles

Keep them clear of clutter, stacks of broken pallets, temporary work zones and other obstacles to safe driving.

Good housekeeping definitely goes a long way toward increased safety, but how about aisle spacing? If aisles are too narrow, forklifts are not going to be able to manoeuvre safely within the aisle. Drivers shouldn't have to be concerned about hitting racks – this will enable them to be more aware of other workers in the area.



# MANOR BAKERIES STOKE

In September 2011 ten people set out on the ULR journey, they were looking forward to working with the company to bring learning to the shop floor workers. Having the support of Richard Wainwright, branch secretary, and management they completed the ULR Stage 1 training.



(L-R back) Raghbir Singh, Diane Forrester, Raja Sangaraju, Iamreen Bibi, Wendy Stanley and Ricky Holcombe (course tutor). (front) Farzana Shoeb, Stuart Bailey, Ian Day, Andy Law.

The ULRs have over 80 years service between them at the bakery and are looking forward to helping others on their own learning journey.

**Dianne Forrester** (23 years service) I am looking forward to be part of the ULR team that helps the workforce achieve their goals and dreams regarding learning and to be able to learn along side them.

The learning centre is a valuable asset to the bakery which will give everyone a chance to participate in learning and I am proud to be part of that journey and watching the people, and the centre, develop and succeed.

**Ian Day** (18 years service) I see this as an exciting time. I am looking forward to being part of the steering group that ensures the learning takes place in a smooth and coordinated way and also finding out what is on offer from colleges and learning providers in our area.

**Wendy Stanley** (11 years service) I am looking forward to helping people overcome their fears of learning to gain the qualifications they want. I am excited and nervous about being a ULR but I am looking forward to the challenge. I believe the role will benefit me greatly as well as the company.

**Andy Law** (8 years service) I am really pleased to be part of this learning initiative. Learning is a lifelong process and I believe it is an opportunity that should be relished and taken advantage of

by everyone. Through the development of the learning centre I feel people will now be able to develop their skills base which can lead to better prospects for all.

I see this as occasionally nerve racking but a hugely exciting challenge.

**Farzan Shoeb** (6 years service) I want to help people overcome their barriers to learning. I believe that learning will enhance employees' confidence and their ability to work more effectively improving the overall quality of the workplace.

**Iamreen Bibi** (4 years service) I want to help the people I work with overcome their barriers to learning as well as my own. I believe we can make a real difference and that everyone, should they want to, have the opportunity to further their learning and take advantage of future prospects.

**Raja Sangaraju** (4 years service) My aspirations of being a ULR are to give support to my fellow workers to enable them to achieve their goals. It is a very exciting time and can only be achieved with the full support of all concerned.

**Raghbir Singh** (4 years service) I am looking forward to taking part in the learning process myself and helping and encouraging others to achieve better skills for themselves.

**Stuart Bailey** (4 years service) As a ULR I want to learn as much as possible and pass on that information and knowledge



to the best of my ability. I believe the first few months will be quite challenging but will be a very rewarding experience for everyone at Manor Bakeries. Meanwhile work was also going ahead to complete the learning centre.

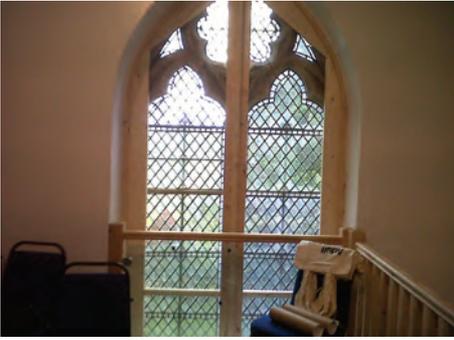
The BFAWU installed the computers and management provided chairs, desks and fully refurbished the room. The centre opened on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September and was named 'The Gateway'.



Already the team have initiated Skills for Life courses with Stoke-on-Trent College which are run every Tuesday in the learning centre, with around thirty participants in English, Maths or ICT.



Diane Forrester, Raghbir Singh, Raja Sangaraju, Richard Wainwright, Iamreen Bibi, Stuart Bailey and Wendy Stanley.



## BFAWU-SUPPORTED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, CRIFTINS IN SHROPSHIRE

Back in September 2011 JV and I met with Karen Davies, a dyslexia and workplace learning consultant based in Ellesmere Shropshire. Karen had been asked, through Judith Swift, to evaluate the dyslexia resources that were developed in the previous project. The team were quite reluctant to use the equipment and do the assessments as we were not trained or could not support efficiently to roll this out in the workplace. Karen agreed that the presentation was not appropriate to the audience and purpose of the training to be used and, in partnership with UnionLearn, would arrange for the equipment to be passed back.

While chatting in general, Karen was telling us about a project she was involved in with St. Matthew church in Criftins, in the village where she lives. The church was built in the 1870s and its primary congregation were general farm workers in the area. Karen, in another life, is an ordained Curate and is heavily involved with the local community. She told us about a local project, the **Meeting Points Community Development Project** which they had wanted to develop in 2010, but first had to raise £45,000 in 6 months for the work to be done on the old vestry of the church. They managed to raise all the funds in the time allotted from the European Social Fund, local community,

charities and grants and the project was completed by October 2011.

There has been a new kitchen area and toilet facilities for the disabled installed. Their architect then told them about the upper roof area and how it could be utilised. After discussion, it was decided to put in a mezzanine level that can be used for meetings, group activities and learning. John and I were invited to look at the space with the view of installing computers (see the photos at the top of the page).

We installed three computers and a printer on the 7th February and took some promotional material from BBC Click online and also the Go-On website. The Meeting Points management group had already had the internet installed so the computers were ready to go. We know that Karen was aware of the needs of the people who couldn't manage the stairs and had therefore got WiFi facilities too so they could use laptops downstairs.

The room accommodates the three computers comfortably leaving room for more tables to be added or taken away depending on the activity. The mezzanine level has kept the church window at one end and put secondary glazing in, at the other end there has been a windowed arch built in so the room can be viewed from the main body of the church. It has a bright airy feeling and is very welcoming.

Working with the community is one of the areas that the BFAWU Learning Services is looking to work with more in depth. People looking for a job in the baking industry now have to go through an assessment for employment and that before they are given an interview. We want to reach people throughout the different communities to help in an informal setting so they can update their skills, CVs and learn computers.

The aim of Meeting Points is to offer learning opportunities, money advice and care opportunities to the wider community – unrelated to the church. The particular objectives are to support the unemployed, those experiencing debt problems in the Oswestry and North Shropshire districts. The Meeting Points will have three fully trained money and debt advisors therefore they can reach all the members of the community including, the elderly, young families and those experiencing exclusion.

Working in the community can help people from all walks of life, from basic computing and job search to upskilling for the jobs market.

The outside photographs are taken from the church's website.

[www.cdwf.org.uk/churches/criftins](http://www.cdwf.org.uk/churches/criftins)

**Karen Plasom**

BFAWU Learning services – project worker



# DOUBLE CELEBRATIONS AT IRWIN'S BAKERIES, PORTADOWN

It was double celebrations at Irwin's Bakeries in Portadown where employees had completed their learning course on site. The company have been very supportive in this, which has meant a good working partnership has been built up, so no problem cannot be resolved.

As a number of union members have reached the milestone of twenty years membership, they received their badges from General Secretary, Bro Ronnie Draper. Michael Walker received his forty year membership badge.



General Secretary Ronnie Draper with recipients of the Membership Service Awards and the Joint Learning Awards



General Secretary Ronnie Draper presents Michael Walker with his 40 year badge

It turned out to be a day of surprises for Michael Walker with the company making a long-service award to him.

The company put on a buffet lunch which I'm sure everyone enjoyed – especially Martin's daughter who stole the show.

So congratulations to all involved and thank you for allowing us to share in your success!

**Billie Gallagher**  
Regional Officer



## Irwin's Roll of Honour

### BFAWU Membership Service (20 & 40 year) Awards

Michael Walker, Drew Bailey, Philip Hamilton, John O'Hare, Darren Runnett, Margaret Milsop, Terry Crawford, Mario Sembi, Wayne Dougan, Conrad Farrell and Christopher Duff.

### Joint Learning Awards on behalf of WD Irwins & BFAWU

Carlos Duraes, Connie Farrell, Jackie Hall, John O'Hare, Trudi Haire, David McGarvey, Marion Sneddon, Noel Mullen, Dennis Cairns, Martin O'Neill, Drew Bailey, Wayne Dougan, Paul McNally, Paul McKeever, Daphne Kilpatrick, Robbie Warnock, Don Gillis.

# Learners Stories (1)

## MANOR BAKERIES, CARLTON LYONS DEN LEARNING CENTRE

### WELL DONE TO TRACEY MEADOWCROFT! ON HER ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Tracey missed a lot of school as a child as she moved around a lot and hardly went to school and, when she did, she says she was just given a book and told to copy it out.

Tracey says “I got no encouragement from my parents. When my dad would see me with the paper he would say, ‘Why are you doing that?’ It was only when I found out that he couldn’t read himself that it made sense because he was normally so very encouraging”.

### I'd love to have read the children their bedtime story

Tracey has worked in various roles but mainly she stayed at home to look after her 3 children. She says that when her children were young she always felt bad that she couldn’t read them bedtime stories, she would make up her own stories but it would have been lovely to be able to open a book up and read them a story.

Then at the school her children attended they started up some adult literacy classes and Tracey went along but stopped because some of the children got wind of what they were doing and started to take the ‘mickey’ out her children.

### Confidence booster!

Tracey decided to try and do something about her reading and managed to get on a local training course, where she completed her Entry Level 1&2 in English and she says it was a real boost to her confidence. At the training I met her partner Brian, and she says that Brian has been a real support to her encouraging and supporting her along the way.

Tracey stayed at home when her children were young but once they were older she went out to work.

### *“Over the years... You develop different stuff to hide the fact that you can’t read”*

Tracey started at Manor Bakeries part time and went full time when her youngest son left school. Tracey says “I’ve worked my way up and I’m now a Product Monitor Checker. People seemed to be really surprised when they found out that I couldn’t read they say ‘How can you do your job and not be able to read?’ but over the years I found ways round the reading. You develop different stuff to hide the fact that you can’t read”.



Tracey shows off her *Achiever of the Year* Award from Barnsley College

### Achiever of the Year Award

Tracey started going to classes in the Lyons Den learning centre at work so as well as completing her NVQ Level 1&2 in Food Manufacturing she has also completed her Level 1 English and will be going on to my Level 2 this year. Tracey even received an award from Barnsley College “Achiever of the Year”.

### ...The Rats – cover to cover!

Tracey says that attending the classes has made real difference to her life, She says “I have been try to complete James Herbert’s book, *The Rats* for the past 10 years, reading it, re-reading it but I just couldn’t get through it. However after the course I sat down with it again and I managed to read it cover to cover. I was so excited!”

Tracey now has grandchildren and she says she can’t believe that she’s able to read them a bedtime story, her confidence has received a real boost she also says that her dad would have been so very proud of her.

Recently the Lead Union Learning Representative (ULR) at work asked her to ask if she wanted to become a ULR, and she’s seriously considering it as she feels that it would be good to help people out who are in the same position as she was.

*Tracey says she used to tell people that she couldn’t read but now she says she can tell them, ‘I can read but slowly and I still find some words tricky but I’m getting there’.*

## LEARNER STORIES (2)



**Highly  
Commended  
Award Winner**  
**GAIL BIRD**

**Congratulations to Gail on receiving the *Highly Commended Award* at this year's Adult Learner's Week Awards! Her achievements are an inspiration to us all.**

Gail struggled at school and she says she felt like the teachers weren't trying to help her. "There was no-one to sit and help you at my school. I just wanted to be like everyone else, able to pick up a book and read but it didn't seem like it was meant to be."

After she left school and went to work at Redferns, a local glass firm, where she was a temp for 9 months. Eventually, however, the firm had to let Gail go and she was unemployed for two weeks.

Luckily, Redferns then asked her back. She was very pleased and thought it was brilliant – but then she had to do a test. Gail says, "my reading really let me down, I failed the test and they let me go, I was gutted".

### **"I just want to be normal"**

Gail has worked at Manor Bakeries/ Premier Foods in Carlton for the last 23 years and she enjoys her work. However, every year operatives have to do tests in Food Hygiene and Health and Safety.

Gail says, "I always used to dread those courses. I'd feel embarrassed having to ask the other people on the course to help me with the reading and I just got sick of it. I just want to be normal".

### **Into the Lyon's Den!**

Gail was aware of the union learning centre at work. Called *the Lyon's Den*, it's situated next to the canteen and she was curious about what was going on in there. She noticed that there were computers and one day after lunch one of the ULRs approached her to find out if she was interested in doing some learning.

"We had a really good chat and I thought *why not?* I wanted to know more about computers because they're everywhere but, more importantly, I wanted to be able to read properly". Gail says she felt she could talk to the ULRs in the Learning Centre and Lisa the project worker from the Learning Services. They helped her get on the right courses and were just so friendly and supportive.

### **Tests revealed Gail has Dyslexia**

The Learning Centre referred Gail to Northern College and took a range of tests to assess her ability and she found out

that she has dyslexia which made sense as to why she was experiencing problems. Since then Gail has gained Level 1 English and she is now planning to get started on her Level 2. "I've only just got started and I feel there is so much more for me to learn" and her plans are not just constrained to reading as she says it's her ambition to learn every single machine in the plant.

Gail has also become a more IT literate as a result of learning at the Lyons's Den. When she first started attending the learning centre she thought she'd never get to the point where she could use a computer, but now she has an email address, shops online, downloads music, she can check her bank balance when she needs to and she's even bought herself a laptop.

To highlight this, Gail talks about when she recently bought a DVD player and wasn't able to connect it up to the TV properly. She says with a smile "I was able to Google the make and the model and I found the instructions on how to connect it up properly. I could never have done that before. I feel so much more confident and normal now; I was always scared *but not anymore*.



# TUC YOUNG MEMBERS CONFERENCE

On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2012 I was lucky enough to attend the TUC's Young Members Conference at Congress House in London.

This is the second time I have been to this conference, the first being in 2010. Both times I have been I have come away inspired and full of hope for the future of the Trade Union Movement. This is because I know I have met the next generation of Trade Union activists and I know that they want the same things as we all do as activists: *equality, workers' rights, and better terms and conditions* among other things. The fight will continue to be strong for decades to come because of all of the young activists across the country.

There were 14 motions put to the conference, plus 1 emergency motion – each one of them interesting and sparking plenty of debate amongst the conference. We could, however, only vote for one to be put to Congress, and if we could have picked all of them we would have. They all dealt with important issues, but the

one that was put through was number 14, the motion that was submitted by UNISON. The motion was about how a good proportion of young people are unaware of what unions do and what key things they have fought for and won, and how huge the achievements actually are: for example, *minimum wage, equal rights, health and safety laws* and countless others.

*"I have come away inspired and full of hope for the future of the Trade Union Movement"*

UNISON believe that without an awareness of these achievements, and how they were won, they would not be valued or sufficiently defended. The motion wants the TUC to have a *political education programme* aimed at young workers that addresses how trade union activity has delivered key rights for workers. In addition, it should consider

how this could be developed for young people who are members of young people's campaigning organisations, and finally develop a positive media campaign about the value of trade union membership and participation.

Personally, I think that this motion is quite important. We need to do something to tackle the media's negative view of trade unions before it is too late. I think that the main message of this is that trade unions really need to start shouting about our achievements so far, to make the young generation of workers realise that it wasn't always minimum wage and paid annual leave, and I know I've said it before but I'll say it again, *we need to educate young people on what trade unions are and what we do.*

We need to make them realise that we are actually relevant to them and that they need to be a part of the trade union movement sooner rather than later.

**Rachel Mullen**

Branch 529 Greggs North East

## THANKS TO THOMPSONS SOLICITORS



Rachel Mullen receives her cheque from Mike Lafferty

Supporting young members in trade unions is second nature to Thompsons Solicitors – after all, at our BFAWU conference it's the **Thompson Youth Award Trophy** that's presented to the winner.

In 2010 the Thompsons Youth Trophy was awarded to one of our young activists in the BFAWU: Rachel Mullen from Greggs Branch 529.

This was her first conference and, at the time, Rachel was a new shop union representative who had been organising and recruiting new members in Greggs shops.

Rachel is still working part-time in a Greggs Shop and continues to develop her role as a shop union representative. She has also represented our union at the GFTU and TUC Youth conferences, and is in her second year studying part time on a six- year GFTU course on **International Trade Union and Labour** BA Honours Degree at Ruskin College, Oxford.

Thompsons Solicitors have very kindly agreed to support and sponsor £422.50 towards Rachel's 2nd year course fees.

**This financial support will really make a huge difference and enable Rachel to continue with her development within the Trade Union movement.**

**SO, A BIG THANKS TO  
JULIE BLACKBURN, THOMPSON SOLICITORS**

# CONFERENCE DELEGATES 2012

Branch	Name	Branch	Name	Branch	Name
104	Elias Milne	238	Amanda Wakefield	335	Colin Curtis
105	Julie Knight		Colin Morgan	339	Stephanie Irish
	David Linwood		Maurice Cunningham	341	Dorota Kulakiewicz
108	Ishfaq Gul	247	Phillip Robinson	343	M Holmes
109	Oscar Onyemaechi		Phil Stephenson		Charanjit Singh Deo
	Godson Azu		John Newman		Onkar Singh
111	Vijay Jhall	252	Kenny Robbins	347	M Kamal
	Mustaq Mohammed		Gloria Martin		Mark Brooks
112	Ganesh Sivarajah	253	John Harding	349	Shobhana Patel
116	Hamid Lubega		Dawn Scott	352	M Letts
	Carlton Glenn		Christopher Lay		Guljinder Purewal
	Ayesha French	256	Stacey Oakley		Hemant Shah
	Zoe Parfitt		Mark Mcintyre	353	Francesco Lallo
123	Mohan Singh		Robert Hillman		Lukasz Bemka
	Vincent Payne	284	Paul Crandon	3554	John Crawshaw
	Norville Gazette	298	John Morton	356	Paul Simpson
130	Cecil John	301	Wayne Gammon	3579	Steve Miskelly
	Omar Al-Amoudi		Anita Giblin	3579	Paul Scothorne
137	Rodney Fletcher	302	Andree Sparks	3579	Andrew Dalby
	Kulwinder Shukla		P Bhupla	359	Colin Hall
	Gurnam Ram	303	Sham Bensal	363	Philip Quanbrough
139	Patrick Kelly	307	Pete Cummins	364	M Busfield
157	K Ganeshmoorthy		Kevin Clarke	365	Lee Pepper
182	Colin Envis		P Middleton	367	Anthony Hardy
189	Paul Norris	312	Imran Hussain		David Murdock
201	Janine Cokayne		Arif Hussain		Kim Elvidge
	Jason Moore	313	Haroon Rashid	388	David Clarkson
215	Pat Rowley		Anjam Hussain		Scott Meadon
230	Dai Mort	326	Raja Hussain	390	Richard Wainwright
	William Adams		Parmjit Singh		Warren Broomhall
	Neil Lewis		Mohinder Badhan		Stuart Bailey
		331	Jacqueline Barnwell	392	William Bellamy
		333	Kashmir Dosanjh		G Tittensor
		334	Dharminder Bains	393	Russell Hulse
					Daryl Lancaster

# CONFERENCE DELEGATES 2012

Branch	Name	Branch	Name	Branch	Name
402	Craig Rogers	459	Dorothy Shuttleworth	568	Helena England
405	Alan Carr		Michael Redshaw		Peter Pratt
	John Williams		Paul White		Barry Johnson
406	R Brookens		Debra Chappell	569	Anthony Richardson
407	Gerrard Morris	460	David Hough	570	Shaun Orr
408	Sharon Cooper	466	Seamus Farrelly	571	R Rose
415	Sharon Boyle	472	Colin Gerrard	577	Olive Molloy
	Norma Mesa	503	Mark Mchugh	578	S Dable
	Renella Broxton		Chris Plunkett	580	Sarah Woolley
417	Anthony Sedgwick	504	Andrew Moore		Keith Hutchinson
	Peter Fox	505	M Lynch		S Frodsham
	Viktor Hughes		Violet Carr		Lynda Hellowell
	Thomas Sharpe	508	Monica Currie	582	Pauline McCarthy
418	John Boyle	509	John Bennett		David Lawrence
	Ian Gregory	512	William Brennan		Sheila Hyman
419	Shaun Welsby	526	T Caffrey		Adrian Hyde
	Martyn Kay		Gary Holliday	587	Saqib Hussain
420	Roy Harrison	529	Marilyn French	594	D Lock
	Glen Wilkinson		Elizabeth Dinning	600	Ed Burke
	Paul Longden		Craig Olley		Gerry Eccles
423	Mandy Mason		Carol White		William Crean
	Jefferson Cook		Rachel Mullen		David King
	Sharon Innis	543	Paul Thresh		Dave Byrne
423S	Paul Worrall		Carlton Thorne	602	Gerry Corbett
424	John Wade	553	Timothy Daltry	701	John Halliday
429	Andrew McDuff	555	Chris Beckwith	703	D Creaney
430	Michael Egan	558	Claire Hinchcliffe		Noel Mullen
	John Fitzpatrick	560	Duncan Dale		G Whitten
432	John Owens		M Kelly	706	John Halliday
450	Phyllis Hession	561	David Suddards		Anthony Ellis
	Marilyn McCarthy		Peter Barszczak	711	William Watt
451	J Green	566	Joe Knapper	716	Ann McGothigan
	Anthony Taylor		Tharlochan Lal		Andrew James
452	Julie Summersgill			726	Peter Algie
	S Coulston				
	Mark Baker				
456	Stephen Ratcliffe				
458	Jeffrey McCarthy				

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