

# Communication Workers Union



**2015  
North West  
Regional Annual Report**

**#CWUNW16**

[www.cwunorthwest.org](http://www.cwunorthwest.org)  
@NWCWU

## Regional Secretary's Annual Report 2015

As always, I would like to begin by thanking the Regional and Branch Officials for all their hard work and support throughout the year. 2015 was a year that proved to be quite challenging, and at times, disheartening for us and the movement – and if the first month of 2016 is anything to go by, we are in for one hell of a scrap both industrially and politically.

All of the Regional sub-committees have worked tremendously hard on behalf of Branches and for their members, and I would again ask that all Branches make it a priority in 2016 to not only support the work of these committees, but importantly to ensure that they send delegates to the meetings.

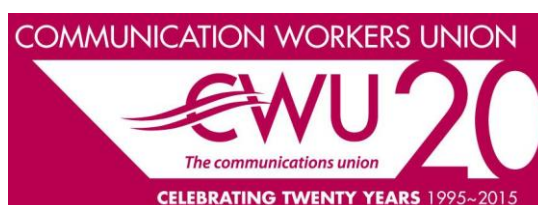
As you have come to expect, the North West Region was at the forefront of promoting and supporting the CWU's industrial and political campaigns. We should all be very proud of the fact that we are seen as one of the most effective and pro-active regions and I hope we can continue to build on this going forward.

I would like to pay special tribute to the 'Usual Suspects' who always turn out to represent the CWU at rallies and elections... you know who you are!

In 2015 the region actively engaged with numerous campaigns, attending conferences, rallies, organising stalls and publicity material for the:

- Trade Union Bill
- BT Openreach site rationalisation
- Peoples Post Campaign
- Peoples Post Rally at Manchester Cathedral
- Delivering superfast broadband
- General Election
- Labour Leadership Election
- Oldham By-Election
- TUC Demo Tory Party Conference
- Postal Workers Day
- Raising Awareness of Unfair Competition - Parliamentary Event
- NW Labour Conference
- NW TUC Conference
- The North West held the first ever CWU Regional Conference
- Organise appeal for CWU members effected by the floods
- Refugee Appeal

**In January** – The CWU Celebrated its 20th Anniversary.



**In February** – The CWU welcomed BT's acquisition of EE as good news for workers.

“It's a move which asserts BT's position in the market and cements its position as the leading telecoms and mobile company in the UK. The CWU expect this to strengthen job security for workers at both BT and EE.”

**In March** - The North West Region hosted the union's first one-day regional conference at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester - the birthplace of the TUC.

The event placed equality, campaigning for Labour and mental health at the top of the agenda, and the one-day event drew over 100 CWU reps and activists from across the region to debate key priorities for the year ahead.

Attendees also highlighted the Region's need to further raise political awareness amongst women, as well as ensuring members sign up for postal voting and campaigning for a free National Health and Care Service.

This conference was truly something new for the North West and the union and proved to be was an excellent opportunity for local CWU members - some who may never have attended a CWU event before - to come and see how we all work together on issues outside of their particular industry.

This conference-style event allowed delegates to see the union in a broader context; to understand how we all fit together and how certain issues affect us all, as well as gaining a better understanding of cross-over between sub-committees, and the opportunity to discuss how we tackle these issues as a united region.



A question time session, with a high profile panel, concluded the day's activities. Panellists including James Frith, Labour PPC Bury North, Tony Kearns, CWU senior deputy general secretary, Lisa Nandy MP (Shadow Minister for Civil Society) and Tom Watson MP (former Vice Chair of the Labour Party) answered questions on zero hours contracts, scrapping Trident, the Living Wage, eliminating employment tribunal fees, employment rights, cuts and austerity and UKIP.

Also, the CWU welcomed **BT's announcement** that they would be creating **1,000 new apprenticeships and graduate jobs**.

### **In April - Dave Ward Elected as CWU General Secretary.**

Dave said: "It is a great privilege to be elected as General Secretary of the CWU by our members. In this role I will stand up for workers and aim to raise the profile of the union within our industries, the media and public life. I will continue the fight against austerity and ensure that protection and enhancement of jobs, pay and terms and conditions is at heart of everything the CWU does."

### **In May - Whistl suspended delivery services in Liverpool & Manchester.**

**whistl** Our Union's first reaction on hearing this news was to raise concern for the workers who have lost their jobs. However, Ofcom must understand that the impact of competition in the postal market not only causes job losses, but plays a leading role in driving terms and conditions downwards and threatens the USO.

### **The General Election - Labour lost and how we are now paying for it....**



Five years of a Tory/Lib Dem coalition saw a rise in student fees, Education Maintenance Allowance Cut, and the launch of the bedroom tax, but now we have a majority Conservative Government the austerity measures, harsh cuts and inhuman attitudes are out in full force.

Royal Mail has been fully Privatised, The Trade Union Bill published, Junior Doctors forced to Strike, mass NHS privatisation, a huge rise in Food banks, growth in child poverty and an increasingly unequal country.



But for our part, the region received funds from Head Office and Branches to run an excellent campaign - winning 3 of our 4 key seats and massively slashing the Tory majority in the other seat.

The highlight of the election was seeing Tory MP, Esther McVey lose her seat. Her 2,436 majority in Wirral West was overturned and with the CWU's support Margaret Greenwood won the seat for Labour with a 417 majority.

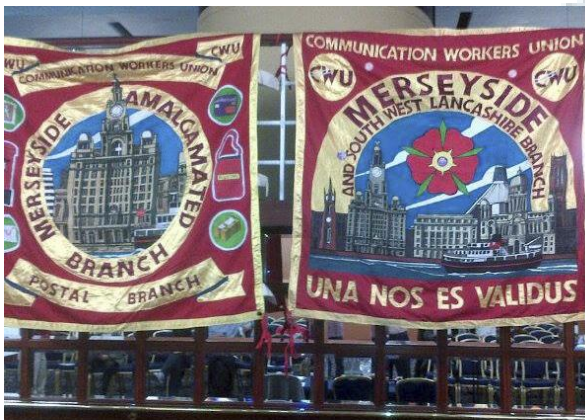


The North West and North East Regions remain Labour strongholds but the Party was unable to make any gains in the South East, South West and Eastern Regions, plus they were decimated in Scotland, winning only one seat resulting in their worst defeat since 1993.

## In June

**Ofcom launched a review of postal market regulation....**

## The Birth Of The First Merged CWU Branch On Merseyside...



Two branches with history on Merseyside - engineering and postal - make history!  
United to form the 1st merged CWU Branch on Merseyside:

Greater Mersey & South West Lancashire Amalgamated Branch

CWU members from two separate branches, Merseyside Amal and Merseyside and South West Lancs; made history at their inaugural meeting of the newly formed Greater Merseyside & South West Lancashire Branch.

The first merged CWU Telecom & Postal branch in the CWU.

I had the honour of attending and chairing the inaugural meeting.

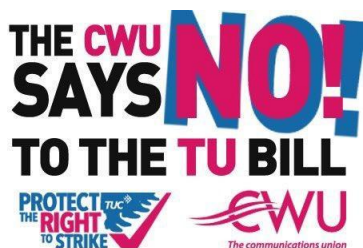
The meeting consisted of engineers, postal workers, and clerical workers and the new branch brings with it a wealth of experience in fighting for worker's rights.

## July - New DGS Postal Elected

Terry Pullinger was elected Deputy General Secretary (Postal). Terry said that he was "absolutely honoured to be elected to the position of Deputy General Secretary Postal, and outside of my family's special moments and achievements this is my proudest moment."

## The Government publicises the Trade Union Bill...

The TU Bill is not just an attack on trade unions but the rights of all working people.



This is a Government elected with the support of less than a quarter of the electorate pushing through legislation that goes further than what

they published in their manifesto.



Although, the Tories laughingly proclaimed themselves to be the 'party of the workers' this Bill demonstrates their attempt to undermine the main voice of the workforce in our country. However it doesn't take a genius to work out, on reading the Bill, that in fact this is just the start to the complete removal of workers' rights and their ability to lobby in parliament and to force their employer to negotiate meaningfully on pay and terms and conditions.

### **Standing up for the 'People's Post...**

CWU Representatives from the North West join Hundreds of CWU members in central London at the launch of the union's People's Post campaign. After the rally, protesters marched on to the nearby national headquarters of the Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) offices.

### **CWU comes out for Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leader...**

The CWU announced its endorsement of Jeremy Corbyn MP to be the next leader of the Labour Party. In doing so the union was rejecting the belief that Labour needs to move to the centre ground of British politics. Dave Ward in explaining the decision stated “we do not see arguing for fairer wealth distribution, decent jobs with good pay, terms and conditions and a substantial increase in affordable housing for the next generation as a left-wing agenda.”

Jeremy also supports the renationalisation of Royal Mail and the repealing of the anti-trade union laws, besides offering a real alternative to austerity.

### **In September** - CWU Welcomes Jeremy Corbyn as Leader of the Labour Party.

The 12th of September saw the announcement that everyone expected – and Jeremy Corbyn was elected as the Labour Party's new leader.

The Union supported Jeremy's bid for the leadership, and shortly after the result was announced, Dave Ward, CWU General Secretary reacted with pride that the Union had come out early to support Corbyn and said he was “looking forward to the new 'socialist movement' that Jeremy's success was about to be brought to life.”

He added that “whilst the Union endorsed Jeremy's win, the CWU would not be giving Labour something for nothing, but expected to play its role in further developing Jeremy's aims for the Labour Party.”

Tom Watson was elected as Deputy Leader of the Party in a ballot that had a 76% turnout. Corbyn received 59% of the leadership vote.

**In October** the Government's announced that it was to sell off the remaining shareholding in Royal Mail.

The union responded by making it clear that any attempt to undermine our legally binding agreements, terms and conditions, job security or the six day delivery Universal Service Obligation would be defended by all means possible including, if necessary, strike action.

### Trade unions deliver defiant message to Tory Party conference...



More than 100,000 took to the streets of Manchester to deliver the strongest possible message to the Government that its austerity agenda and its dangerously anti-democratic attempts to shackle the trade union movement will be defied every inch of the way by working people the country over.

Hundreds of CWU activists from across the North West were joined by General Secretary **Dave**

**Ward**, Deputy General Secretary (Postal) **Terry Pullinger** and scores of members from as far afield as Scotland and the South West.



Extending the CWU's "fraternal greetings" to marchers of every union present, our own General Secretary **Dave Ward** pointed out that Jeremy Corbyn himself would be in Manchester tomorrow, sharing a platform with the CWU "in defence of the Peoples' Post."

### Thousands attend People's Post campaign at the home of the Conservative Party Conference...

The People's Post Rally at Manchester Cathedral with over 1,000 in the



Cathedral and over 7,000 outside was by far the biggest CWU event in our 20 year history.

To a standing ovation and cheers, and a media scramble of photographers, Jeremy Corbyn entered the large Cathedral to speak to an audience of some 1,200





people, who also heard the cheers for him outside during the speeches of Dave Ward, Terry Pullinger, Jane Loftus and other guests including; Mark McGowan, Owen Jones, Natalie Bennett, Lucy Powell MP, 17 year old student Abby Tomlinson, a Labour Party activist, and me!

Speaking at this event was one of the most amazing things I have ever done in my 36 years as a union representative.

The North West definitely knows how to put on a show and special thanks must go to Divisional Rep, Ian Taylor, and all the stewards who made sure the whole thing went without a hitch.

**CWU Bootle Branch Political Officer Dan Lewis** proudly held up the union's People's Post campaign banner when he received the 2015 TUC Youth Award at the Brighton Congress.

Dan, who has served as a workplace rep at our local Santander site for the past three years, said that he was "amazed" to receive the accolade. "I decided to become a CWU rep because my fellow workers needed a voice," adding that "Young people are getting used and abused, people are really struggling and its unions who are standing up for people day in and day out."



As he received his award on stage, Dan took a 'selfie' with TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady, saying afterwards: "I do love a selfie - and Frances didn't mind at all."

Well you wouldn't expect anything else from Dan!

### **North West Labour Conference....**



Our motion on the People's Post was carried unanimously, Ian Moran was re-elected onto the Conference Arrangements Committee and I was elected on to the National Policy Forum. We had a stall that promoted the People's Post campaign and our CWUHA

refugee appeal. The conference had more people attending than ever before with over 700 at the main conference and 300 at youth conference. Jeremy Corbyn came along and made a speech to a packed hall. Tom Watson spoke about how to build campaigns and mobilise our new members. MPs from across the North West gave speeches, took Q&As and held policy forums covering topics such as health, economy, transport and refugees.



## **November - By-election candidate backs CWU's People's Post campaign.**

The need to defend postal services from commercial vested interests and the regulator was highlighted by Jim McMahon, Labour candidate in the first Westminster electoral showdown since the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Party leader.



Jim paid tribute to the "excellent service to the public and business" provided by postal workers. The CWU endorsed and actively campaigned for Jim who won with an increased majority.

The by-election was called after the sad death of Michael Meacher who served as MP for Oldham West and Royton for a remarkable 45 years - first winning the seat in 1970 and securing a 14,738 majority in the General Election.

## **North West representatives deliver aid to refugees as part of a CWU supported refugee mission.**

The CWU responded to the refugee crisis engulfing Europe by launching an aid appeal to send a convoy of much needed supplies to Hungary and Turkey.

The six-lorry convoy full of donations was driven from collection points around the UK. Four of these went to Budapest and two went on to the Turkish border, from where local Bulgarian trade unionists continued the mission.



The appeal for aid mushroomed, with CWU branches, the Labour Party, MPs and MEPs being joined by trade unionists from Unite, Unison, GMB, CWU Ireland, International Trade Union Conference, Europe TUC and Uni Global as well as Bury Council and Manchester City Council. Scottish group, Massive Outpouring of Love, galvanized support in the Dumfries and Galloway area and donated 300 boxes of aid, thus filling a whole truck.

A special thanks to Heather Park and Lenny Crook for taking the lead in the project.

Drivers included: Angela Teeling, Ian Young, Steve Rowlands, Cllr Chris Webb, Elaine Taylor, Alan Taylor Lenny Crook, Steve Park and Heather Park.

## December - Postal Workers Day.



### MEP Backs Rights For Local Posties On National Postal Workers Day

North West MEP Afzal Khan called on the public to support the campaign to



protect the working conditions of postal workers following the privatisation of Royal Mail.



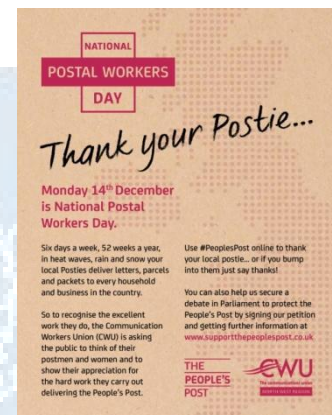
Monday, December 14th marked the celebration of National Postal Workers Day – a day to recognise the hard work that post men and women do year round to keep the postal service running.

As part of the day Afzal Khan, Labour MEP for the North West, visited Stockport mail centre to help out local posties during the busy Christmas period.



Afzal was joined by dozens of North West Labour MPs and Council Leaders visiting Delivery Offices and Mail Centres across the region.

Special boards were produced for photo-shoots and the region easily generated the most social media activity on the day.



The Region also placed an advertisement to publicise the day in the Metro and MEN.

### CWU launch Appeal for Members affected by the Floods in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Over 900 CWU members have been affected in some way, but over 30 members have been directly affected with a small number losing nearly all their possessions.

Reports received from the North Lancs & Cumbria and Lancs & Cumbria branches suggested the majority of members impacted were from Carlisle,

Kendal, Lancaster, Appleby and Cocker mouth, all of which saw unprecedented levels of rain and up to 7 foot flooded areas.

Thank you to those CWU Branches and members in the region who responded to the appeal.

**In 2015** we once again ran an ambitious training programme in the NW with over a hundred reps attending regionally ran courses. Targeting training for new reps, is, has, and will always be, a key priority for Branches and the Region.

**The North West Regional website** - Chris Ingram continues to do a sterling job hosting the Regional Website, which is a good source of information for our reps and members. The site highlights national and regional campaigns that you will not see on the national website.

Chris is always looking at ways to improve the site, so if you have any ideas, please do not hesitate to contact him at: [kris.ingram@berlin.de](mailto:kris.ingram@berlin.de)

**Social Media** - 2015 saw an upsurge in the use of social media to promote the union's campaigns and candidates standing for the union's top jobs. Social Media certainly got the message out, leading up to, and during, the very successful Peoples Post event in Manchester. It was also used to good effect to promote Postal Workers Day.

Social media is just one of many communication tools that can be used to communicate with our members, but you still can't beat face to face meetings and having well informed representatives in all of our workplaces.

With more and more Branches opening social media accounts via Twitter and Facebook training will inevitably become more of a priority going forward. I personally ran one of the regional training events on this subject and realised, that I myself, had not been using these tools to their full potential. We all need to learn how to use social media to our advantage.

The **CWU Regional Mini Bus** was kept busy in 2015 - ferrying candidates and campaigners during the General Election. Transporting placards, banners and flags to TUC rallies and guests to the CWU Peoples Post Rally event that took place in our region. The NW is the only region to own a vehicle and it is proving to be an excellent campaign tool for the region.





The vehicle can be used by Branches and regional sub-committees for political, industrial campaigning and organising, such as; ferrying officials, banners and placards to street stalls, rallies & marches and festivals like the chain-makers as well as charity events.

If you wish to use this vehicle, please contact Kathy at the Manchester office on 0161 8604 067. There will be a small fee to help cover the cost of the insurance and ensure the vans upkeep.

**Finally, I would like to personally thank Angela Teeling my Assistant Regional Secretary for all her fantastic support and encouragement. I would also like to pay tribute to Richard Morgan our Regional Chair who is standing down after 15 years loyal service to the Region. Have a long and happy retirement, you deserve it.**

**Carl Webb**

**Regional Secretary**

## **NW ASSISTANT REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**



As always I will take this opportunity, on behalf of the North West CWU Region, to thank our secretary, Carl Webb, for all his hard work, dedication and enthusiasm that he has given throughout the year. With the general election looming, we all hit the ground running, Carl was relentless in his push to get us all out there to make sure our Labour MPs and prospective NMPs were elected: this as with everything, Carl led by example. Proof of the pudding is the high number of Labour MPs we have in the North West area: many returning to their position with an increased majority. But Carl gives every campaign, task and issue the same level of commitment, walk a week in his shoes and you will be shattered – the heels are killers!

We start/end, depends how you view it, every year with an AGM meeting. Our 'new style' AGM was run as a conference, this was a great success, a huge thank you to all the branch secretaries and officers for securing release so people could attend. It was quite nerve wracking, in case it flopped miserably: but the feedback was positive, or people are just so polite they wouldn't criticise. So we are doing it again, in the hope that we fill the Mechanics in the same way as 2015.

Conference 2015 was dominated by motions relating to stress: that of members and of the branch officers and reps. Much work has been done in



making people aware of this, and what to look for. The next step is what to do about it when it is recognised. As a community we work well together but this does not make any of us immune, but we are a community and always do our best to look after each other: you are never alone, especially in our North West Region.

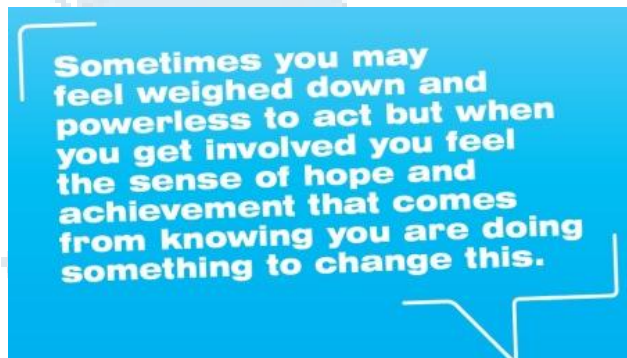
No doubt the CWU Annual conference will cover similar issues this year as it did last year: a lot of this is down to management style which mirrors the changes in the law and the ongoing undermining of our member's working terms and conditions. We have campaigned against the TU Bill, again as a region we are quick to move on our MPs for support and work with other trade unions. If passed it will affect us all, but we should not lose heart, we should remember our roots and how the unions were born: not out of facilities agreements but out of justice – whoops a little soap box moment there.

Sometimes we do get caught up in our struggles, so much so that it can feel lonely as rep. Then an email drops in off one of us, and it's great.

So on a personal note: I would like to say “thanks” to the region for supporting me, you are all great: even the banter between us all is supportive. When Carl is away on holiday, (those times when his commitment wavers lol), if I am stuck, I know I can ring anyone from any of our regions branches for help. When the refugee crisis hit the news it did not take long before you were all donating items so we could take them to



Hungary for the refugees: not only were the items helpful, but the manner in which everyone was pulled together was overwhelming.



Upon my return I put a loose message on Facebook and a quick mention at a regional meeting, regarding doing

something for the homeless in our area at Christmas: again not only did you send well wishes but once again you acted on it. I received donated items and money. Purchases were made of ground sheets, underwear, food, toiletries, hats, and gloves – indeed all sorts of items.



32 bags were made up to be handed out to people in the street. There was so much, that on behalf of the region



clothes and toiletry items along with boxes of paper, pencils, toilet rolls, bottles of juice etc were donated to a homeless shelter in Liverpool: 'The Whitechapel Centre'. Items were also taken to a Women's Refuge in Halton and a couple of local foodbanks.

After Christmas, with the help of Sandra Walmsley and my kids, some other donated items were taken to Radcliffe: for people who had been victims of the floods.



Anyone who speaks up on behalf of something or someone makes a difference: you all made a difference throughout the year to people's working lives but also beyond our workplaces, you changed their personal lives in some way. I think you are all ace!

I am sure Carl's report covers everything else, so I will leave it there: not wishing to just repeat it all.

Take care, good luck to all in the coming year: if we only do what we did last year as a region, then we will once again achieve great things, if we take the opportunity to build on last year, then who knows what we may achieve.

## Telecoms & Financial Services 2015 Annual Report



### NORTH WEST ROC

**Regional ROC Meetings** – the North West continued to run monthly Regional Organising Committee (ROC) meetings throughout 2015. Focus for the meetings have been on communications with the development of the North West app almost complete we will be looking for the support of branches to identify people to trail the app over a period of 8 months to identify what works, what doesn't, what changes we may need to make before we roll out to the wider membership in the region. We have also produced an organising focused electronic newsletter that we aim to produce on a quarterly basis that shows where branches have put particular focus into organising members and recruiting non-members in workplace's they have responsibility for.

Training has been another area that we have focused in on during 2015 with Paul Newsham the North West's regional learning chair designing an Excel training course for branch officers to support branches with membership data and linking this into branch communications. Discussions have also

taken place during the ROC meetings that during 2016 we should look at how we can run sessions on particular campaigns and share ideas on how we can as a region progress the campaign's we have, support or members, identify new activists and recruit new members.

An annual regional organising forum is due to take place in York on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of February with particular focus at this meeting to look at how the regional organising committee meetings in the different regions will put their focus for the union. Key elements that we will be looking at are how we take action on communicating with members and non-members, how we can engage with and encourage participation from our youth and women members and finally we will also be looking at how we can build on the great work done through the various call centre action month events that have been run, what if anything we can do better and how we can share ideas and resource.

The next North West regional organising committee (ROC) meeting will take place on **Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February** in the Bootle Financial Services (BFS) branch office commencing at **10.00am**. It is asked that all Telecoms branches look to send at least one representative to these meetings and to particularly encourage their youth and women's officers to become involved.

**Call Center Action Month (CCAM)** – The telecoms department ran two very successful call center focused action months where events during 2015 where recruitment and organising stands materials where handed out to members and non-members in our recognised contact centers and outside of our non- recognised call center buildings. The T&FSE department will be running again during 2016 a series of call center action months where we will be focusing on recruiting members and identifying activists in our recognised and non- recognised call centers. Last year's events where extremely successful and with the support of branches and members we are hoping to make this year's even better. If any branches have any ideas for events that can be run in any of their call centers if they can contact Mark Norris or raise at our regional ROC meetings for discussion.



**SANTANDER HALLOWEEN  
CCAM EVENT**



**MANCHESTER CLERICAL H&S  
CCAM EVENT**

**Virgin Media** – Progress in Virgin Media has continued to be slow throughout 2015. We have managed to gain a small number of members particularly from the Wythenshawe site which along with Baguley we have continued to leaflet throughout 2015. Alongside the Manchester Combined officer a call round of our Virgin members was undertaken to try and identify any issues that members may need support with as well as passing on information about events and opportunities that the branch and region had for VM members. We will be looking to replicate this a number of times throughout 2016. Virgin has just announced that they are to make 900 redundancies nationally across the business a proportion of these will take place in the North West particularly from the Wythenshawe site. We are in the process of contacting our members to see if and how they might be affected by the changes also to get a sense of what the feeling is on the sites and if there is any desire to do anything about it.

2015 Telecoms Organising Report

Mark Norris T&FSE Field Organiser

## **North West Postal Annual Organising Report**

### Organising Strategy

In line with Conference/ Organising Departmental Policy, the organising strategy for the Postal Department throughout much of 2015 has continued to concentrate on establishing workplace committees in Delivery Offices, where the onsite Representative/ Branches have requested assistance in setting them up, and growing the workplace committee structure will continue to be a key aim in the coming year. However, as a Department we have also started to focus more of our efforts on developing recruitment projects in order to further strengthen our workplace organisation and increase membership density. This project has enabled us to build up a bank of leaflets to assist Branches with their own recruitment initiatives. We will continue to produce more literature aimed at tackling identifiable problems/ objections to joining the union going forward, but in the meantime, if any Branch has any special requirements please can you contact me directly so that I can assist with developing site specific literature.

Also, in relation to Conference Motion 70, the Organising Department – in conjunction with Education & Training – is in the process of developing a recruitment training course that will be rolled out in the coming months.

### TV Licensing – Capita/ Akinika

The Darwen Capita Branch has now been up and running for just over 12 months following the successful launch in December 2014 and I have



formally exited that campaign in order to focus on the Akinika site in Preston.

Akinika is a debt collection agency, based in Preston, and a sister company of Capita. We have launched a campaign on this site



because they currently oversee the cash payment system for the TVL contract. The business is split in to two parts, and although our main interest lies with those employees on the TVL contract we have also made inroads in to the Debt Collection side of the business.

Following the official launch of the Akinika campaign in early summer 2015 we have leafleted outside the building on a monthly basis in order to raise our profile and build contacts on site. We were able to identify a number of key issues, the main one being the withdrawal of their Annual Purse Entitlement, which we used to spearhead our campaign, and following the CWU petition that was signed by the vast majority of those affected, the company reneged on their plans to withdraw it completely by reinstating it for the final six months of the year. This industrial win resulted in a growth in membership and strengthening of our position on site, and although it has proved difficult holding group meetings because of the variety of shift patterns, we have generated a number of new activists.

However, this year we are anticipating some major structural changes in terms of how the business operates going forward, but we do not necessarily believe that this will be detrimental to CWU involvement. I will provide a further update once I can confirm what these changes will entail at the next Regional Committee meeting.

### Regional Initiatives

I have been working closely with the Women's Committee to look at the issue of proportionality across the Postal sector within the North West, and following some highly successful site visits last year, we will be looking to continue with these in 2016. We have also been looking at how we can practically put in to action the Women's Mentoring Course in the region once the national programme has been formally launched. It is also my intention to work more closely with the Youth Committee to



generate more workplace activity going forward. Again, if any other Regional Committees would like to strengthen their links with the organising agenda I would be happy to assist/ attend meetings to develop that strategy.

I have also worked closely with the Regional Secretary on a number of initiatives including the People's Post Campaign, which will be a key feature going forward, National Postal Worker's Day and I Heart Unions Week, as well as arranging the Organising Stall at various CWU/ external events.



### Next Steps

In order to better co-ordinate the work that we do in the Postal Constituency in the North West and to strengthen the link between IR and Organising I will be working more closely with Divisional Reps/Committee to look at membership density and identify areas where we need to concentrate our efforts. We will also be focusing more closely on new starters and stopped members.

The Organising Department nationally will also be looking in to whether it is feasible to increase the number of non-recognised sites on the Postal side.

I will be contacting all Branches in due course to agree projects for the coming year, but in the meantime, if any Postal branch would like to contact me regarding setting up a workplace committee, or would like to discuss any other additional support, please contact me on my mobile number below.

Elaine Taylor (07872 816746)

Postal Field Organiser

## **CWU NW Region Political Committee Report 2015.**

The Political Committee has worked very well throughout 2015, meeting the challenges which the Coalition and now Tory government has thrown at it.

At the outset of 2015, it was quite clear that the Coalition of Tories and Lib Dems were hell bent to follow up on their privatisation agenda and allow right wing rhetoric to outweigh public opinion to the final disposal of the final interests in Royal Mail, and to progress privatisation through many other government departments.

The CWU political committee contacted all Labour MPs in the North West and ensured that the commitments to Universal Service shall be a cornerstone of Labour Party values in opposition to the privatisation agenda.

This was very evident when several Local Authorities in the Greater Manchester area chose to outsource their mailing to Whistl; a process which was not unearthed except for the vigilance of the CWU in the North West.

Campaigning and reference to North West Regional Labour Party Conference propositions supporting public service mail remaining with Royal Mail won the argument, without support from other parties elsewhere.

Add to this the magnificent and well received campaign on the People's Post, we see that the support from grassroots Labour Party members up to MPs is with us.

### **The Labour Party – supporting CWU jobs in the North West.**

We went into the General Election of 2015, with the sure knowledge that the Right Wing C.L.U.B. – Conservatives, Liberals, UKIP and BNP, would not be on the side of the people we represent at work and in our towns and cities.

It was only the Labour Party which had policies to reverse and redesign the national budgets and wider economic strategy to halt the Austerity budgets, which are another name to cut welfare and other benefits which hard working, undervalued and underpaid families rely upon.

The CWU, working with all other TULO affiliated trade unions, was allocated target seats to unseat the sitting Tory or Lib Dem MPs who oppose our values.

It was a fine and warming sight to see the CWU Merseyside and North West branches in ridding the political landscape of Ester McVey. We wiped that sickly smile off her smug face and made the General Election result a little better.

We did not win the General Election, and it is now very clear that the arrays of vested interests, backed by a media more than happy to sugar sweeten the disaster that our North West communities face, are back with a vengeance.

The meddling and business marketisation of NHS services that support our very existence are under attack. We need an alternative government of Labour.

Needless to state – there is work to do. If there were just a 1.6% swing extra from Labour to Tory, there would be 100 Labour MPs; and a full 2% swing giving just 68 Labour MPs.

It is now that we can see the difference between the political parties and who supports the CWU in the North West.

### **The Tories, The Lib Dems, UKIP/BNP – all attack our communities and NHS.**

The committee sent a full delegation to the North West Regional Labour Party Conference, held in Blackpool. This was one of the first regional Labour Party conferences since the new leader, Jeremy Corbyn, was elected.

The Conference was addressed by Jeremy Corbyn and Tom Watson, with a full report of their respective speeches available on-line or in the conference report circulated by Derek Maylor.

It became clear to all delegates – MEPs, MPs, Councillors, CLP and Trade Union delegates, that the Tories have only just begun their programmes of Austerity. Indeed, propositions supporting Local Authorities against the cuts programme were carried, without dissent.

Also, the anti-Trade Union Bill was savaged by delegate after delegate, with Labour MPs determined to scupper Sections of the Bill in the House of Commons, and Euro MEPs leading the debate in the European Parliament, and within the Socialist and Democratic section of the European Parliament.

### **The Labour Party – supporting its Trade Unions in the North West.**

The Anti – Trade Union Bill was thrown at the trade unions in 2015. Not in its manifesto, but true to form, the Tories and Right Wing rhetoric surfaced. The CWU political committee took this challenge on-board.

All of the Labour Party affiliated trades unions attended the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation committee fringe meeting, held at the NW Labour Conference

Speaker after speaker, including CWU North West delegates, condemned the anti-trade union Bill as undemocratic, draconian and clearly designed to hamper legitimate funding of a political voice and alternate to the Tory Government.

All trades unions unanimously agreed, that a full lobby of Parliament – especially Tory MPs with single figure majorities – should be mounted. We did this work well.

Both Carl and myself joined the NW Trade Unions to Lobby the North West Parliamentary Labour Party on the Trade Union Bill, with this meeting being very productive in terms of working together to highlight the Bill as it passes through the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

### **The North West Parliamentary Labour Party – supporting and working with the CWU in partnership.**

After the General Election, and after Jeremy Corbyn was elected as Leader, it became clear that, the new Leader must get a grip of what the National Policy Forums debate from now onwards. We cannot return to the position where the NPF is side-stepped and policy is made ‘on-the-hoof’, such as that reflecting Child Benefits as announced by the former MP Ed Balls.



It has to be said, that many financially challenged families up and down the North West do rely upon the Child Benefit income to support them above the rising tide of poverty. How are we going to explain that on the run up to the next Election?

To answer that question I have enclosed a mission statement from Tom Watson, which articulates the issue moving forward;

***“Coming out of conference there was a real sense that our party is ready to do politics differently. We are looking outwards, and we’re ready to move forwards. There were ideas about the way we involve new members, an appetite to change the way we work using new technologies, demands for greater equality and representation and suggestions about how we can most effectively revitalise our structures to make them modern, relevant and engaging”***

Add in the debate on Family Tax Credit cuts, and we see the austerity agenda being used at every turn to slow down any pace of change to assist folk like us and who we represent.

### **The Labour Party – holding the Tories to account.**

Finally in 2015, we had the excellent result and election of a new Labour MP in the Oldham West and Royton By Election. We worked well with the candidate and supported Jim McMahon throughout his campaign.

UKIP campaign hit a six figure sum in this By Election. We, the Trade Union and Labour movement attracted support from all committed trade unionists and socialist societies to ward off these Fascist and Neo Racists at source.

Labour values won the day and it is now clear that the UKIP presence in the North West is on the decline to that of merely being;

UKIP – vote less in the North West. UKIP – reckless in the South East. UKIP – legless in Europe.

### **Labour and Trade Union values winning in the North West.**

If there was ever a time where all CWU members in the North West can see what a full blown anti – working class, anti – hard working families, anti – trade union and unforgiving nasty party the Tories have become; then this is evident for all to see.

### **The Labour Party – the only credible alternative to the Tories.**

#### Future Strategy in the North West.

- It is a practical requirement that the CWU sits on the North West TULO committee (Trade Union and Labour Party Organisation) to promote our CWU campaigns and to get involved with other North West trade unions.

- We will ensure that we have CWU delegates from North West branches on Labour Party joint LCF (Labour Campaign Forums), so that there is a trade union voice at the heart of all we do within the Labour and Trade Union movement at a North West level.
- Engage on a regular basis with sitting Councillors and Leaders of Council, especially those who are CWU members, so that we protect the communities and cities where we live in the North West.
- Work with like-minded social societies and Labour Party affiliates to eradicate the UKIP/BNP threats in the North West.
- Lobby MEPs and MPs about their work and to promote our CWU campaigns.
- Work hand in hand with trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party where a trade union asks for, and campaigns for a single Universal Service, such as the People's Post and the NHS.
- Campaign for and present the Labour alternative to Austerity and ideological benefits caps wherever they exist, so that we protect the most vulnerable people in society.

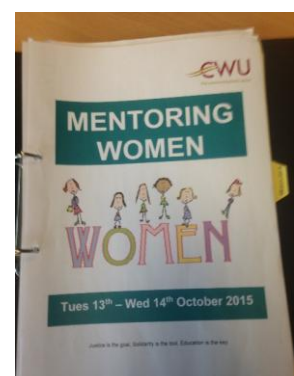
Ian Tomlinson  
 Political Secretary  
 CWU North West Region.

## North West Regional Women's Committee (NWRWC) Annual Report 2015

The NWRWC have worked to their plan as below and have welcomed a number of new committee members who have either been elected to or are currently covering the role of Women's Officer for their Branches.

- **To provide support and advice for Women's Officers & NW branches in recruiting and developing women activists**

The three Toolkits are available on the CWU northwest website to anyone as required. Paper copies are also available on request. A number of the committee attended the 'Mentoring Women' courses run by the CWU and the committee intend to use what has been learnt to look at how we can move forward with this point.



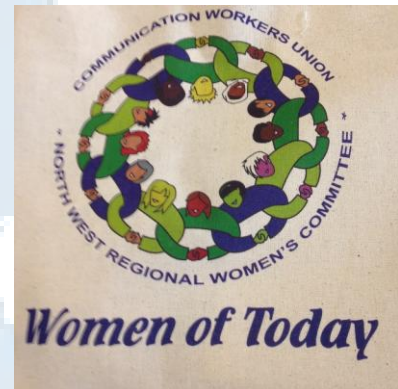
- **Interact with the NW TUC and other unions regarding women's issues**

I have been re-elected as one of the Co-Chairs of the NW Women's TUC Committee again and will hold the position through to 2017.

I took part in the pilot NWTUC Women in Leadership programme run over a 5 day period and this was very enlightening. The interaction with women from other unions is already creating a supportive and learning network that I believe will benefit our committee for the future. A motion has been put forward to the NWTUC Conference regarding the reduction of women's support organisations which was partly inspired by the news of the closure of Eaves and the Poppy Project.

- **Organise & run workplace visits and events for NWRWC and members**

Following the highly successful 'Women of Today' event we ran in January 2015, our next 'Women of Today' event in January 2016 is planned for Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January at the Mechanics Centre (now passed). The information was circulated via a Letter to Branches (LTB779/15). A report will be given verbally today. My thanks go to Gail Nicholas, the committee Vice Chair and the Northern and National Financial Services Branch for their help and support in organising this event.



- **Highlight the issues of women by utilising support networks and services available to women in our region**

We continue to signpost our members to the support services available to them both inside the CWU and externally. It is with great sadness that we learnt of the recent death of Denise Marshall the

CEO of the Eaves/Poppy project who deal with women who have been trafficked and the subsequent closure of the charity due to lack of funding.



- **Share knowledge & experience with other RWCs**

We attended the joint WAC/RWC meeting that coincided with International Women's Day in Manchester in March and the committee were active in helping to organise an IWD event at the People's History Museum.

We also attended the joint WAC/RWC meeting in Brighton in September and followed

this by attending the National Labour Party Women's Conference.



anged a joint NW/NE RWC led Women's Mentoring course in York during October. This was well attended by NWRWC committee members and gave the opportunity for people to network and share ideas as well as contributing ideas for future mentoring within the CWU.



**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2015**

**Women Making Things Happen**

In the five years that the Coalition Government has been in power, women and families have borne the brunt of their so-called 'austerity' cuts.

In the run up to what is the most important general election in our lifetime, and to celebrate International Women's Day 2015, we are gathering together to encourage women to make things happen.

Join us at the People's History Museum on 8 March 2015 from 2pm - 5pm to enjoy a programme of events:

2pm - 3pm Ending Apartheid in Palestine - Speakers: Sarah Coburne (PSC), Haya Al Fara (Palestinian Mission), Koral Adria (Knowledge and Socialist Thought Institute (KSTI) and Rana Mousa (UNISON North West) - Chair: Angela Rayer (Regional Convenor UNISON North West)

3pm - 3.45pm Solidarity - one woman's experience of the Spanish Civil War a short play

3.45pm - 4.30pm Keeping Our Girls Safe (KCSG) - workshop

4.30pm - 5pm Why it's important to vote - panel of female MPs to be confirmed

Throughout the afternoon you will have the chance to have your say on what you want to happen after the general election and to sound off in our 'Vote Box'.

More info is available from [teresa.smith@thompsonslaw.co.uk](mailto:teresa.smith@thompsonslaw.co.uk)



- **Update Women's section of Regional website at least twice a year**

This will be updated as soon as possible in 2016



- **Support CWU National and Regional campaigns e.g. Agency Workers, zero-hours contracts, living wage**

CWU women continue to be actively involved with all the campaigns held regionally and nationally.

- **Raise political awareness with women members in the NW and encourage women activists to become more involved in decisions affecting public life.**

The committee gave their support to many women standing for election this year in the local and General Elections. The Women of Today event held in January this year gave members and activists the opportunity to meet a number of female Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs), local councillors and women who had set up Charities in the Northwest and Nationally. Committee members also attended the NW Labour Party Conference and spoke to our NW MEPs.



- **Encourage branches to set up an informal Women's Group or committee to help branches with issues primarily affecting women.**

This is ongoing business as usual.

- **Share expertise and knowledge with CWU branches and Regional Committees.**

The committee continue to support other NW committees and branches as often as they can.

- **Encourage communication regarding industrial issues**

Branch reports given at each NWRWC now include more discussion regarding industrial issues and committee members are encouraged to raise motions locally, regionally and nationally.

The committee are looking forward to 2016; encouraging each other, arranging site visits and events as well as giving our support for campaigns and initiatives affecting women across our region.

Our top 3 priorities from the 2016 Campaign Plan will be:-

- **Organise and run workplace visits and events for NWRWC and members**
- **Support CWU National and Regional campaigns e.g. People's Post, Agency Workers, Pay before Assignment (PBA) contracts, zero-hours contracts, living wage and the Trade Union Bill.**
- **Encourage all Women's Officers to submit motions to CWU National, Industrial and Equality Conferences**

Karen Bosson  
NWRWC Secretary  
[karen@cwu-mancom.org](mailto:karen@cwu-mancom.org)  
07894 423892

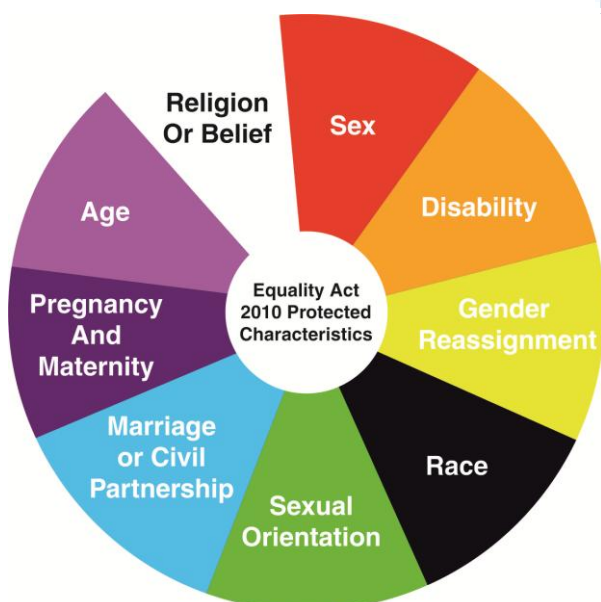
## Regional Equality Secretary's Annual Report

2015 has been a disruptive year for the North West Equality team due to circumstances beyond the control of the Equality Officers.

Our mission for 2015 was to take "Equality on the Road" and visit a number of strategic CWU sites and make a visible profile of the work that the NW Equality team do in the region. However, as stated above, this was not progressed, but, in 2016 the intention is to commence the "On the road" visits.

I have been given a mandate by the NW Equality team to raise our concerns over the apathy that has arisen over the Equality Agenda throughout the North West over the past few years. Dates for our meetings are presented regionally every year in January; however, the numbers of attendees for these meetings are from a strong core of 6-9 branches with no apologies from other branches.

In view of this we are intending to issue our agenda and minutes in a different format for 2016, with a theme from the "Wheel of Equality" to be the focus of the guest speaker. However, if other branches have any constructive thoughts in how we can improve our quarterly meetings, then these would be greatly welcomed.



November is an extremely busy time for the Equality Teams throughout the UK. We have a number of Equality Conferences in Glasgow, and the NW TUC Equality

Conference in the Mechanics in Manchester. Key dates have been issued via LTB's, however the dates are as follows:

18 <sup>th</sup> November	Women's Conference	(Glasgow Central Hotel).
19 <sup>th</sup> November	Disability Conference	(Glasgow Central Hotel).
21 <sup>st</sup> November	TUC Equality Conference	(Mechanics Manchester).

Could I take this opportunity to encourage all the NW Branch Secretaries to pass this information onto the Equality Officers and request time for them to attend.

I have spoken to Carl Webb on a number of occasions for a list of all the North West Equality Secretaries, in order that the NW Equality Team data base is up to date. As to date we have not had a response, therefore could all the attending branches at this Regional Meeting complete the detachable form and pass to the NW Regional Secretary at the end of this meeting. This would be much appreciated.

#### Updates to Equality Act 2010.

Below is the current position of the update of a Bill in transition through the respective houses (Reading 1 has been completed).

Amend the Equality Act 2010 to improve step-free access to public buildings for wheelchair users.

#### **1 Amendment to the Equality Act 2010**

(1) The Equality Act 2010 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 22 (regulations), after subsection (2) insert—

“(2A) The Secretary of State must make regulations specifying the circumstances in which it is reasonable for a person of a prescribed description to have to install a ramp suitable for wheelchair access.”

(3) In section 207(1), after “power” insert “or duty”.

#### **2 Extent, commencement and short title**

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales and Scotland.

(2) This Act comes into force at the end of the period of 2 months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed, subject to subsection (3).

(3) This section comes into force on the day on which this Act is passed.

(4) This Act may be cited as the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Act 2015.

Barrie Taylor MSc, BSc (hons).

North West CWU Regional Equality Secretary

Tel: 07532216169 Email: [barry-taylor2@sky.com](mailto:barry-taylor2@sky.com)

## Equality Officers Contact Details

Name	Branch	Telephone/Contact	Email

Please print.

### **2016 Key Strategic Initiatives**

- Organise & run 2 informative half day Equality Act 2010 awareness courses: “Back to Basics”
- Organise and deliver 4 Equality events during 2016: “Taking Equality on the Road”.
- Encourage all CWU North West Branches to attend the Equality Quarterly Meetings.

Barrie Taylor  
NW Regional Equality Officer

Jacqui Stewart  
NW Regional Equality Committee Chair

## **NW Regional Retired Members' Council 2015 Report**

### **Retired Members Council**

The Council continues to be reasonably well attended and met 4 times during 2015.

The return of a Tory government in May was a huge disappointment and is likely to result in increased pensioner poverty due to welfare cuts and attacks on local government funding. Issues that have been of most interest have included the NHS and Social Care, pensioner poverty, universal benefits, TTIP especially regarding the NHS, the inadequate Basic State Pension and the new Single Tier Pension.

Retired members have actively supported the People's Post Campaign, the Anti-Trade Union Bill campaign and both donated and collected aid for the CWU HA Refugee Crisis convoys to Turkey and Hungary.

### **General Conference**

It was unfortunate that the NW motion about pensions was listed No 4 but was behind 2 composite motions in a 40 minute section and did not get heard. North West No1's motion, however, moved by Ted Stead and seconded by me, calling for Professional Advice to be available for retirement planning was carried after support from Tony Rupa on behalf of the NEC.



The Retired Members Fringe meeting was really well attended. Tony Kearns spoke about the inadequate Basic State Pension and said the new, so-called Single Tier Pension was likely to drag more people into poverty. He also spoke of the demographic pressures on the NHS being exacerbated by the unnecessary reorganisation and privatisation being imposed by the government.

Guest speaker, Neil Duncan-Jordan, the NPC's National Officer made a wide ranging contribution on pensioner and social issues as well as highlighting the adverse effects on future generations.

Dave Ward who was our General Secretary elect at the time said we have lost the way of connecting sections of society and that we need to find common causes. Pensions is one of those causes. Dave continued that we must build strategies and re-assert trade union values in the wider society and not just in the Labour movement and finished by saying he wants a greater connection with Retired Members.

## **RMAC**

Allan Trotter serves on the RMAC which continues to work with the NPC to our mutual benefit. Delegates attend the NPC Executive, National Council, Trade Union Working Party and TUC Pensioners Committee. Brian Lee continues to attend the NEC as an ex-officio member as well as being Editor for The Link.

There Retired Members' Conference was held at the Britannia Hotel Manchester on 21st January. These notes are being written prior to that date but the first two motions on the agenda were from the North West. Greater Mersey and South West Lancashire branch and the North West Retired Members Committee composite motion was in defence of the Triple Lock for BSP increases and Lancs and Cumbria's motion seeks to increase contributions to the NPC.

## **National Pensioners' Convention**

I attended the Biennial Delegates Conference on behalf of the RMAC in March. This is where the NPC's policies are made. A wide range of issues were debated including funding of Social Care, TTIP and the NHS, Universal Benefits and welfare cuts. It was alarming to hear from the Treasurer that he is forecasting a deficit for this year of £45,500 in spite of economies already having been made.

The Pensioners' Parliament was the major event of the year. There were some excellent debates and contributions from guest speakers including Dave Ward who made his first public appearance since his election. Making a Keynote speech in the final session he spoke about the world of work, diminishing job security, low pay, housing, welfare cuts and continuing

austerity. The trade union movement needs to reassert trade union values. Trade union leaders have a job to do. We have to find a way to create a common cause to welcome good companies who look after and respect their workers. We need to re-nationalise the rail network and defend the NHS. We need to root the fightback in a movement founded in social values rather than in profiteering. We need to change the story and say what it could be like. We need to rally round the EU debate as a socially progressive movement. We need a strong Labour movement.

**Our strategy for the coming year is:-**

- To campaign for a National Health and Care Service free at the point of need and paid for through general taxation.
- To campaign for the Basic State Pension to be raised above the poverty level and made available to all pensioners.
- To support the policies of the NPC.
- To raise awareness of pensioner issues among all retired members.
- To play an active role in support of major CWU campaigns such as the Peoples' Post and anti Trade Union Bill.

**Graham Wilson**  
**NW Retired Members' Secretary**

## **NW Health and Safety Forum 2015 Annual Report**

Last year The Forum met according to the regional calendar with all bar one meeting [when only 11 attended] having twenty plus attendees. We will go back to having guest speakers from external organisations as we no longer have the regular visitors from the solicitors; a CWU approved “guest list” was discussed at the national Forums Chairs & Secs meeting. We did not have any attendees from Head Office at the Forum but usually received a written report. Last year we committed to taking the meetings around the NW and that will continue, we have also attended other Forums to observe best practice.

Apart from sharing industrial issues that may have an effect across the membership the Forum discussed European Health and Safety week, environmental concerns, violence to staff and high risk areas, the continued growth in a lack of consultation on H & S matters, H & S structures across all our members businesses, HSE statistical data and so on.

We will move a meeting to a Friday to enable an MEP to attend prior to any Euro in/out referendum, many measures have been adopted on the basis of Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and

European directives are legally binding and have to be transposed into national laws by Member States. This is an area that the Government wish to “slightly” change and remove the legally binding bit. These European Directives set the minimum requirements and fundamental principles, such as the principle of prevention and risk assessment, as well as the responsibilities of employers and employees. Union safety reps time is not facility time and time off regulations mirror EU requirements and cannot be removed or curtailed, the employer must allow them as much paid time off work as is necessary or reasonable to perform their statutory functions. George McKee a USR from Lancs & Cumbria Branch has taken the BBDC presentation to several Forums around the country as well as the NEC down at Wimbledon Towers.

Jamie McGovern from Merseyside Amal continued with his work on Dangerous Dogs [in addition to that done by Head Office] alongside Merseyside Police who have been fully supportive.

Bev Kenyon from Santander organised a demonstration of the Sole Mate insert when we had the Forum in their Branch offices. There was a problem with their website but now the item is available to CWU members with a discount – use SOLECWU as the promotion code and the discount will be applied.

John Marsh from Manchester Combined Branch is partaking in the EU consultation on the evaluation of the Environmental Noise Directive; this will evaluate the Directive regarding regulatory fitness addressing specifically the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and the added value.

We also submitted a response to the consultation on Health and Safety Offences, Corporate Manslaughter and Food Safety & Hygiene Offences Guidelines. The main point was to emphasise that a company [or individual] must never be allowed to have taken a safety risk to workers or public in order to save money. For example, when considering the cost of implementing a safe working practice against the cost of a fine, it is unequivocal that no one should profit from a breach of the law. We would like to see the individual decision makers taken to task and not necessarily the corporation or body. Also when considering the harm of an offence - we would like to consider the possible harm of an offence. An offence has been committed, whether or not there is harm is the result may be pure luck or good fortune. For example, a diversion to respond to telephone call could remove a worker from the danger area by chance but the offence is still the same whether by design or negligence, the offence has been committed such as a pressure pipe exploding [lack of maintenance or poor quality etc.] in the area the worker has just left, had the worker had stayed he/she may be dead. The committed offence is the same irrelevant of the harm to the worker.

The Forum discussed the changes to the Road Traffic Act that came in last April, there has yet to be any effect on any of our fleets. According to the UK

Government we, the UK, have one of the best road safety records in the world “but more can be done to prevent deaths and serious injuries”.

They go on to note that collisions caused by drink and drug driving regularly result in serious injuries and deaths on our roads and that to reduce these incidents they now ensure that breathalysers are sophisticated enough give an accurate roadside reading without the need for a second blood or urine test and approve roadside drug testing devices.

At the national Forum Officers meeting it opened by noting that (*as the NW Forum has always advocated*) safety is political, the Forum was involved in the creation of the CWU safety manifesto which will have a huge impact on reducing the toll of death, injury and illness that is still an everyday part of working life for so many people in the UK. The Forum will request that the manifesto is updated to include issues such as the Trade Union Bill and the forthcoming referendum on membership of the European Union. The government want to brag how we as a country have the safest workplaces in the EU and in most of the world - but then say they don't need union involvement!!

Following lots of campaigning, and a realisation that it cost government money, the Spending Review announced an increase in £600 million investment to mental health services which if it stood alone would be welcome. However, following five consecutive years of cuts to mental health, services are stretched beyond any reasonable limit and demand for services continues to grow; cuts to other departments like social care alongside issues hitting ordinary people such as changes to the benefits system create further anxiety and mental health concerns.

The Forum has discussed the internationally-agreed ISO 45001 which will be out in 2016 with the companies' different lines of business. This aims to prevent injury or ill health by proactively improving occupational health and safety performance and businesses will be audited on both their leadership and worker involvement. As IOSH point out, senior management set the tone for the rest of an organisation and therefore if they are open and being seen to doing the right things then the rest of the workforce will follow.

A recent report by the Health Select Committee on childhood obesity called for strict controls on the promotion and advertising of unhealthy food as well, significantly, for a tax on sugary drinks. Currently one in five children are leaving primary school obese and the implementation of the recommendations is important to help reduce the levels of childhood obesity in the UK - the food industry must play a significant role in tackling this epidemic. This alongside working on childhood poverty is needed to offer children a long and healthy future regardless of their postcode.

Some time ago the Forum voted on five priority issues and they have not changed, namely;



1. The legal right to stop the job if a USB considers there to be clear and imminent danger without retribution.
2. A positive duty on Directors to make them accountable for health and safety in their organisations and hold them to account.
3. A legal duty for employers to respond to safety issues raised by USB's - at the moment they do not have to respond.
4. Free legal representation for families of those killed by work during investigation and inquest - they are victims of crime.
5. The promotion of the business case for healthier workplaces and healthier workforces - should be easier to get a positive response when prove good health is good business.

As mentioned, the Forum is for the NW and we will continue to move it around the NW. We will also use our own in house expertise from within the CWU, we have experts, who do work in the community that we can use.

It is crucial when looking to successfully implement safety and health management within our industries that everyone has a role, from the top of the CWU to the bottom, all members have a role to play - it is not solely the responsibility of our USBs. Members know best the hazards associated with specific jobs and it is important that a member believes that when they raise an issue that there is a benefit and return for what they are doing.

We have two of the biggest non-governmental fleets in the EU with BT and RMG and following the findings of a fatal accident inquiry into the crash of a bin lorry at George Square, Glasgow last year we would expect our employers to be considering their responsibilities. The recommendations contained Sheriff Beckett's report will have significant consequences for business whose employees had to drive as part of their duties. If there is another incident anywhere in the UK, arising from a faint or collapse at the wheel, the actions [or inaction] of those who could have avoided the incident will be taken to task and under the new sentencing guidelines individuals will be held responsible and not just the corporate body. There were also recommendations to ensure that individuals' information on fitness to drive that is provided to the DVLA is complete and accurate. This could include increased penalties for failing to notify the DVLA of any relevant medical conditions or disabilities when applying for a licence, in breach of the 1988 Road Traffic Act. So if the health of our member impacts on their ability to drive and they do not inform the DVLA they will be liable.

The Forum agreed to start a diary of general Health, Safety and Environmental events for next year so we can coordinate attendance and ensure that the Forum is represented wherever reasonably practicable; this will be updated throughout the year as events are brought to our attention. No-one can attend everything but where someone is available they can report back and share whatever information with colleagues at subsequent meetings.

Also with relevance to our fleets, at the end of December, and generally ignored, Ford shares went up 3.4% after an announcement that they are teaming up with Google to build self-driving vehicles. This is not space age technology but already being trialled in public streets in the US and legislation has already been passed in four states to allow driverless vehicles. Ford, BMW, Volvo and Nissan are all working on self-drive technology. Whilst it may be years before fully self-driving vehicles are available to the general public, with all the regulatory and legal issues to be sorted, both BT and RMG will have more than just a passing interest. The DoT report “Pathway to Driverless Cars” was issued last year and it said that the Government will commence work on amending legislation to facilitate the production and marketing of highly and fully automated vehicles by 2017 with an aim to finalise amendments to international regulations by the end of 2018 - this will be EU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Even though we are not developers, considering the possible impact on CWU members, we should be involved at the earliest stage possible, examining the vehicle type approval framework and its detailed technical standards to ensure suitability for automated vehicles.

The HSE latest strategy “Helping Great Britain work well” notes that 23.7 million days were lost to industry last year at a cost of £14.3 billion. It would be better launched with noting how many workers were killed, injured and made ill (some never to recover); these are the real costs, paid by workers not by business.

The TUC noted the European Commission are concentrating on impact assessments of regulations on health and safety that are just looking at the impact on business and not on the health of workers. Cancer caused by work take the lives of 100,000 people in Europe every year and the biggest single cause of sick absence in the EU is musculoskeletal problems and these health issues should be looked at not and not just the headlining incidents.

Last AGM we raised concern over the ongoing exaggerated burdens of safety and manipulation of the real facts by the media and that remains, ongoing and we wish that the media would stop presenting negative health and safety stereotypes and help promote a mature safety culture where people take more accountability.

We have to look at the way we interface with other unions and bodies such as the HSE, both formally and informally. For example are meetings held with the HSE and the CWU that are almost secret with us never getting a report back from nor being able to get anything on the agenda. Locally we meet with other safety representatives in the NW, organised by Hazards these meetings are increasing useful and we have requested that they are more frequent even if less formal.

### **North West ASR Forum (Royal Mail)**

A couple of years ago it was decided that The nine ASRs from the North West would hold regular meetings. These would discuss the day to day issues that arise. It was felt that these day to day issues were taking over the main Forum business and as a result attendances started to drop. The Main Forum is only to deal with industrial issues that affect all or most constituencies that are entitled to attend, and not get bogged down on issues that two thirds of the Forum didn't understand.

The ASRs now meet on the last Friday of each month at North Lancs & Cumbria's branch office (75 Garstang Road, Preston). Attendance is good.

Royal Mail recently reorganised into three regions, North, West and East. In doing so they also split our North West Region, putting Crewe, Liverpool and Warrington into Royal Mail's West Region. All other areas of the CWU North West region were put into the Royal Mail North Region. As a consequence of this, ASRs in these three areas (Crewe, Warrington and Merseyside) find themselves in a unique position of knowing how both Royal Mail regions are dealing with safety and there are differences, some are not good.

Going forward the ASR forum has held two joint ASR forums with the ASRs in the NE region and these have been well received with guest speakers from both CWU and Royal Mail. In addition to this the secretary of the ASR Forum has also attended as a visitor the North East ASR Forum and the Chair and Secretary of the North West Forum have attended the full North East Forum. We have invites to attend the Midland ASR and Full Forums and an invite to the West Forum when time allows. As Derek has indicated these visits allow for experiencing and developing best practice.

The NW Forum Chair, being from the T&FS constituency has attended a number of the ASR forums and I as Secretary have attended one Co-ord meeting in Preston. It is hoped this will continue to help maintain an industrial link on safety.

Derek Maylor  
H&S Forum Chair

Tony Salt  
H&S Forum Secretary

## **Youth Committee Annual Report 2015**

Early 2015 started quiet as we had most of our committee left the union to go outside the businesses we represent in. So what was left was to me to take on the role of Regional Youth Secretary and Alan Bebbington, Cheshire No1 the Vice Chair. Towards the end of 2015 the North West youth started to regroup and we had a meeting towards the end of the year which was a great turn out and hopefully will continue into 2016.

The 2016 National Youth Conference was held in Manchester at the Mechanics in Manchester, which is a great venue with a wonderful history. Over 100 people attended. The North West Region organised a charity social which was sponsored by the Region, 1st Class Credit Union, NW Central, Manchester Combined, Manchester Clerical, Greater Manchester, Bootle FS and Cheshire No1. Pellacraft donated a top prize towards the raffle that raised nearly £500 for CWUHA. The idea of the social is to give everyone the opportunity to meet and greet everyone prior to the conference.



With the conference taking place in our region this should boost morale and get more people involved once they start to meet others. Many of the delegates took the plunge and spoke for the first time at a conference. Hopefully, this will give them a confidence boost.

Our aims for 2016 is to make sure that we get our committee back on track and have a full contingent of Regional Youth Officers. With the support of the region we would like to organise a Youth event later on in the year. We can discuss this at our AGM in February where we can all meet and list all the ideas that we want to bring forward for 2016.

Corita O'Leary

Regional Youth Secretary

## **NW Regional Learning and Education Committee**

This time last year we were hoping for a Labour victory in the elections, sadly this did not happen and we are faced with another five years of oppressive Tory rule, as part of our strategy for the year we promoted Postal Voting across the region, this did only have a limited success due to the limited time we had to prepare and implement the strategy before the election.

We carried on with the practice of moving the meetings around the region, to encourage better attendance, the first meeting after the AGM was held in Liverpool at the Cassa where Billy Butterworth was given a good send off with branch and committee members attending the presentation, it also allowed the members of the committee a chance to have a look at the brass plaque we had made which was displayed on the wall.







Ray Atkinson presents Billy with vouchers.

In July we had printed 10,000 double sided flyers promoting CWU Left Click and a digital photography competition that was being run by the education department, these were given out to the committee members to disseminate around the region.

The North East Education Committee invited us to attend a two day educational event they were holding in York, three ULR's attended from the North West region exploring a mining museum and a Victorian school room as part of the event.



**Peter Clarke and Jimmy Fitzpatrick down the mine**

We in turn invited the North East Committees secretary and chair to the event we held at the Rochdale pioneers museum in October; this was a resounding success with everyone who attended having a good day.



## **Rochdale Pioneer Museum**

The national ULR event was held in November in Nottingham, it was well represented by members of our learning committee, Dave Ward gave a good speech about the need for the union to change to reflect the falling membership and rising costs, making better use of our resources and leaving us financially secure for the future. We also had two interesting speeches from the Marxist educational viewpoint, looking at alternative ways of providing education that does not fall under the usual umbrella of educational establishments; Union Learn also spoke on how they see the future of trade union education.

Within the region we have carried on supplying free courses both formal and informal to our members, as well as a few LGV apprenticeships. The only problems we have seen is that there have been some regional representative courses held within the region, but these have suffered with the usual reduction in numbers due to problems getting the release for delivery representatives. In Manchester a Stage 1 course was setup with 16 people on the course, but on the Friday afternoon and Saturday morning 10 of the reps had their release pulled due to operational needs by Royal Mail Delivery Managers, this caused the course to be cancelled on the Monday.

This situation is obviously affecting the union's ability to train our representatives, as well as being frustrating for the Rep's some who have courses cancelled on more than one occasion.

Over the next 12 months we are looking to have four main strands to our strategy, engaging with hard to reach members, produce a resource of leaflets / flyers that are not time sensitive that can be used throughout the year, promoting informal learning, link in with local and national events / media campaigns to promote learning.

Duncan Healey Secretary

North West Regional Learning and Education Committee

## **CWU Humanitarian Aid 2015 Annual Report**



2015 WAS a hectic year for CWUHA, we have funded the renovation and equipping of a building in Moldova which is being used for the rehabilitation of children and young people with disabilities.



This project is ongoing because young people need support to overcome their difficulties. It is with the help of our Moldova



partners, MAD-Aid, that we hope to continue this support for some time in the future.

In May and September we sent two missions to Moldova where we delivered tonnes of aid direct to vulnerable families, orphanages, hospitals and the CWU supported disabled centre.



In addition to this and in response to an appeal from CWUHQ, CWU Ireland and support from various trade unions throughout Europe we sent two convoys, carrying much needed humanitarian aid, to refugee camps in Hungary and in Turkey. Without the fantastic help from Royal Mail, who loaned the vehicles and provided the fuel, this would not have been possible.



We continue to support a school in Tanzania, sponsoring the education of 50+ children throughout the year. Currently we are in the process of building a library and computer centre for the young people to improve their education.



In the seven years since CWUHA embarked on its “African Project” the charity has transformed a tiny school that had been set up by a philanthropic farmer to provide a rudimentary education to local village children.



During that time CWUHA has organised the building of three new classrooms, a toilet block, the installation of electricity and a much needed



rainwater collection and storage system.

In 2016, we will be once again be delivering aid direct to vulnerable children in Moldova where we will run our very own football tournament for children from the local villages. We will see the opening of our new library/computer room at the school in Moshi, East Tanzania. We will continue to help refugees fleeing war and persecution. We will keep developing the Phoenix Centre in Moldova that is helping disabled children. Without this centre their lives would be so much poorer.

As a charity, we are unique as we do not pay any salaries or have any overheads as all of our trustees are volunteers, no salaries or honoraries are paid. Greater Manchester kindly let us use their office as our Head Office, which means we have no office expenses to pay out. There are very few charities that can make that kind of claim.

