

Unite National Retired Members Plus Newsletter

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Editor & National Committee Lay Coordinator – Mike McLoughlin

Unite Retired Members Residential Education Course Held in Eastbourne at the View Hotel from October 14th/18th.



The Retired Members Residential Educational Course this year was unique in that all the attendees who were expected on the course actually turned up. This successful course Consisted of many first time attendees. The Course Tutor was Gareth Griffiths, the course facilitators from Left to Right: - Alan Sidaway, Mike McLoughlin, Monica Taylor (National Committee Chair) Elain Smith, and Brenda Irvine.

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Unite Retired Members' School - View Hotel, Eastbourne 2018

Tutor's Report

This year's Unite Retired Members' school went well in general, despite the rather late arrangements made concerning the school content and its contributors and the rollercoaster of Sunday travel, by train especially, and was well received by its participants. Major contributing factors to its success were the good offices of its facilitators and the quality of its speakers - Dot Gibson, in particular, meriting mention. Andy Mitchell also made a valuable contribution - off his own bat on the Tuesday and in combining effectively with Liane Groves on the final day to send the students home on a positive note.

The View Hotel staff, as ever, were a pleasure to work with and made their valuable contribution to the school's efficient running, overcoming the inevitable, occasional, technological hiccup.

Rather than provide a roll call of this year's successes, it would be more valuable, in my view, to focus on some relatively easily achievable improvements for the year ahead. In that context, I would suggest consideration of the following points for adoption next year to make sure that the school runs still better again.

Decisions regarding the main themes of the school and, consequently, the speakers best able to kickstart a positive debate on key issues need to be made earlier in the year. Discussion concerning this year's school could usefully take place at the imminent meeting of the URM National Committee, leading to a framework for the 2019 school being put in place at the next scheduled meeting early in the new year.

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If the current course format of Sunday through Thursday is to be maintained next year, the opening session would be usefully moved to the Monday morning at 9.30am, with the first keynote session and speaker getting the discussion under way at 10.00am. This year, as last, it proved impossible to run the session at 5.00pm on the Sunday, as, due to innumerable transport problems, less than a dozen of the attendees were present at that time. The later start, if handled sensibly, would not eat too greatly into the overall course programme.

The earlier booking of speakers and their better direction as to the subject matter they might be raising for debate could also lead to better documentation being available - either in the run-up to the school or at the school itself, for inclusion in the education department folders. The Unite Political Department representatives, for example, spoke to a Power Point presentation. Its availability to the attendees, in handout form, would have been of use, as was a two-page social media handout from Andy, which needed to be photocopied at the hotel. A list of students in attendance at the outset, providing **their** full names and regions was also felt to be of possible value.

On the course itself, the use of microphones should be the default position for tutor, facilitators, speakers and questioners alike. One of the school attendees correctly pointed this out, but not until poor practice had had time to get established. The school tutor must shoulder his responsibility for this and commit to good practice in future.

Whilst it is always pleasant to renew acquaintance with retired Unite retired members one has already met, it is doubly so to be introduced to and to be able to get to know new members. This year, as in previous years, there were fewer new attendees than was originally intended – for a variety of good reasons. Every effort should continue to be made to promote the presence of new members at the school. Easier said than done, of course.



Gareth Griffiths Course Tutor

Photo Mike McLoughlin

Gareth Griffiths

The report of the Educational Course Facilitators

On the Monday morning Dot Gibson National Pensioners Convention Deputy General Secretary addressed the school on the issue of **“Intergenerational contracts”**. We must take on board our responsibility for the younger generation, we are all individuals who are also a part of society. Dot spoke about the adverse effect that the “anti union laws”, have on up us as trade unionists, We must whenever possible support the younger generation. It is essential that we look at what we have won and what we have lost. Our young members need to be informed that we are on their side and will fight for their rights, they need our support in helping

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them to build their lives and careers. Tell them we are a proud movement. The tactics of the present government to develop discord between the young and older generation by putting the blame for the youth joblessness and lack of opportunity on the older generation are malicious. We were all disgusted at the unremitting vilification by the press of Jeremy Corbyn the Labour Party leader. The question was asked what support will our intergenerational campaign receive from Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party - the view expressed was that Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonald were committed to addressing this problem when they are in government. Dot Gibson stated that **“if**



Dot Gibson NPC Deputy General Secretary who was previously the General Secretary. Photo Mike McLoughlin

you don't fight you'll lose, but if you do fight you might win” She also recommended a book that we would find of interest **“Dear Granny Smith”** A letter from your postman written by Roy Myall ISBN number 978-1-906021-97-5.

Tuesday October 15th

Social media as a valuable campaigning tool:-

The speaker Andy Mitchell is a member of the Somerset Community branch who addressed us on the issue of how to use the social media effectively and sensibly to get ones issues across to the public. Andy has had major problems after being put on universal credit, if they are not satisfied with your interview you get penalised by having your money stopped, if you fail to turn up for an interview, even if you never received the notification you are penalised, he was frequently penalised and was without money for four weeks last Christmas. His position was not unique as many people on universal were in the same boat, once the money has been stopped as a penalty it is never recovered. Andy did stress that it would be difficult for us to understand the stress and mental problems that is being caused by the way in which Universal credit is being administered. Andy has considerable computing skills and is an expert on the use of the social media. Unite has given him considerable support in his campaign to highlight the harsh way in which the Universal credit is being carried out and the misery caused by it to many people.



Andy Mitchell - Somerset Community Branch Photo Mike McLoughlin

Andy stressed that Facebook and Twitter are good tools when used sensibly for making people aware of important social issues, developing understanding and

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support for ones ideas. He spoke at length about the technicalities of setting up ones own website, and he gave several illustrations about how you go about it. Andy indicated that in his opinion the Retired Members National Committee should have their own Facebook and Twitter account, but that if they are set up they need to be updated on a regular basis, at least every three days. After discussion it was established that if the Retired Members National Committee are interested in setting up both a Facebook and Twitter account, they would require one person from each region to form the social media group, plus one person who would coordinate the work of the group, Andy would be prepared to give the necessary training.

Privacy is most important on Facebook when using this social media to have two accounts one closed for dealing with membership and political issues and an open account for dealing with the public. Both Facebook and Twitter are good vehicles for winning Labour for working people, winning people for the Labour movement; building a broad alliance to defeat the Tories, and winning a Labour government in the interest of working people. Unite has 154 Labour MP's, who are supported by our union, so that we can make our voice heard in the corridors of power, you have a legal right to meet your MP in Westminster, to lobby and build support for our campaigns. Finally it has to be said that Andy spent the whole day on the subject, of the social media and many of the ways in which it can be approached and used, it was very interesting and he never lost his audience, it was a great session and much appreciated.

URM FRINGE MEETING

The Speaker was Mike McLoughlin who in his presentation of how do we build our sector of Unite concentrated on three issues. Campaigning on issue that concern our members, to look at possible amendments that we might believe are necessary for us to put to the 2019 Rules Conference and how we would need to go about it, and the need to develop good communications with retired and future retired members. He indicated that quite a lot of campaigning was now taking place in some regions on the issues of saving the NHS, care homes, care in the community, mental health, bus pass. There was also many instances where our members turned out to support members on strike, and to support campaigns against cuts and job losses by local authorities. This is a good development and as we concentrate on building and expanding the number of our branches this type of activity will increase.

The speaker stated that although some retired members were of the view that we were the forgotten section of the union with little or no rights, this was true back



Mike McLoughlin Photo Ian Dann

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When Unite was formed but the saving grace that he and many others fought for was that the retired members were included in the Unite rule book and were no longer an association on the periphery. The original Rule 10 had only three small sections and now has ten sections, and although we tried and succeeded in getting some amendments put through to the 2011 Rules Conference for us by workplace branches, we made no gains whatsoever. At the 2011 summer school there was much discussion and dissatisfaction expressed, with the result that a delegation of 4 members of the National committee had a meeting with the General secretary to discuss the situation. In November 2011 the General Secretary met the full national retired members committee - there was a long discussion during which we found Len McCluskey to be supportive, and gave us advice which we followed in the years ahead.

In 2014 the National Committee after much discussion decided on a number of amendments that they believed should be forwarded to the 2015 Rules Conference on their behalf. We then asked in work place and geographical branches in various parts of the country to submit amendments for us, including area activists committees. We received support from 48 branches which was brilliant, we also make great gains at the 2015 Rules Conference. We are now in a position where we can send amendments to the Rules Conference, also motions and amendments to the Policy Conference on issues relating to Retired members, We also have Observers at these conferences with the right to speak, move and second motions or amendments relating to retired members issues. We have indeed come a long way as a Retired Members Plus sector of Unite since 2011, we are in a position where we are now thinking of developing some amendments for the purpose of fine tuning Rule 10, we will be contacting the Regional Coordinating Committees in due course to enable the process of submitting amendments to the 2019 Rules Conference to commence.

Information and communication are absolutely vital, without out which, there can be no organisation, there are many methods by which we can communicate with members and future members which include emails which can be effective when trying to contact fellow activists. Using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and RCC Blogs where they exist are much more problematical in their use as not all members have computers or go on line, therefore you can never be certain that you are getting your message over as widely as possible. In 2016 the National Committee having got fed up with their inability to get any letters or articles printed in the Unions Publications decided to publish our own electronic national newsletter for the purpose of raising our sectors profile, making our members aware of events and the campaigns taking place in other Regions. The response of members in the Regions to our newsletter has been very good, it contains much information and articles aimed at both Pensioners and future pensioners. This newsletter needs to circulated to all branches and Regional Committee members, you colleagues here today some of you who were unaware of its existence can when you get home make sure that your RCC and Regional Committee circulate it.

Mike finished by stressing that care in the community and mental health are among the most pressing issues of our time, how to pay for it, training for the care workers and providing them with sensible working conditions, He asked that when members return home that they participate in and if possible help to initiate campaigns in their areas on these issues, in conjunction with Community branches.

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Wednesday October 17th

Our colleague Terry Renshaw a UCATT member who was one of the Shrewsbury, 24 Pickets" back in 1972 gave us a very lucid and passionate presentation on how these people have been treated by all governments. He was one of the pickets during the 1972 building workers strike, none of the pickets broke the law, nor was anyone charged with an act of violence, throughout the strike the police had been very friendly and even helpful on occasion. Robert McAlpine was the Tory Party Chair at the that time and he clearly was going to make an example of the building workers involved in the dispute. So the powers that be dusted down from an old law from the early 19th century and accused the 24 with conspiracy. When the Court appearance took place 2000 police



were utilised on the day, when the judge was later questioned about the massive police presence he claimed that it was just an ordinary day at court dealing with criminal activity. When before or since have we had a court hearing requiring 2000 police on duty.

Terence (Terry) Renshaw one of the Shrewsbury 24. Photo Mike McLoughlin

Of the 24 only three of them were imprisoned, Des Warren received 3 years, Ricky Thomlison got two years and a third man received a one year sentence. Des Warren was constantly moved and served in 17 prisons during his three years in prison, his family were also badly treated as his wife and children turned up on one or more occasions to visit him to be told that he had been moved. The way in which he was treated whilst in prison had a very profound effect on his health and he died at a relatively young age. Ricky Thomlinson was also held in 12 different prisons whilst serving his sentence. Terry was not charged with any crime, he has been active in the Labour Party for most of his life, has been a Councillor for 20 years and served 2years On the Police Committee and has campaigned vigoursley for justice for the Shrewsbury 24. In recent years he wanted to go to the United states for a holiday but was refused entry. Terry travels all over the country to put the case for the Shrewsbury 24 and will come to your branch or RCC meeting if invited. He is truly an excellent speaker and well worth a listen.

Lobbying at Parliamentary Level & More Locally

We had two young ladies who came down from the Unite Political Department to address us on a number of issues. They have been involved for the past six years in the campaigning wing of Unite and are very experienced. They have been fully involved in the campaign against the Bedroom Tax and this battle still goes on and is unlikely to cease whilst we have this Tory Government. They stressed the need

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to develop good communications, to involve people in discussion, to develop an awareness of how issues affect people and to campaign on them. They stressed the importance of working with other members and developing contact with other branches, in particular community branches who have developed a strong campaigning tradition and also involves many younger members, which assists in developing intergenerational activity. It is essential to communicate and participate in the work of other organisations, such as Trades Union Councils, CLP's and the NPC.



Rosin & Jenny. Photo Mike McLoughlin

Universal Credits

Our Last Speaker was Liane Groves Unite Community National Organiser: -

Liane spoke about working together across the generations, campaigning together on community issues, such as social care, transport access, fuel poverty, universal credits etc - using social media as a creative campaigning tool. Universal Credits was discussed at some length and way in which it effects the most vulnerable people and is uncaring in its application. Duncan-Smith introduced social credit by merging, six benefits into one, he said that this measure will help all and make it easier for people to get back into work when he publicised his ideas back in 2008. He launched the project. It will cost £15 billion to get the technology for the scheme up and running, we are still waiting.



This has been a failure, many people have and are still losing their jobs and have been made redundant, the people are being told they have to wait at least 5 weeks before they receive any benefit. To make matters worse it's only paid to one member in the household, all claimants should be able to receive their benefit, it's the way in which it is paid that causes stress, some claimants do not have computers to submit claims, this makes claims late and cause further delay in payments, in many cases it leads to sanctions, in which claimants lose money and are often left penniless. The community branches and the Unite retired members have common ideas about issues that should be campaigned on, should communicate with and support each in action all over the UK. As trade Unionist we must work together to defeat this unfair system.

Liane Groves Unite Community National Organiser. Photo Mike McLoughlin

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In Conclusion We Offer The Following Comments

This was an excellent educational course one of the facilitators was of the opinion that some things were a bit rushed, and that we could have done with a further half a day to finish the school of comfortably. The majority view of the facilitators was that the time allocated for the educational programme was sufficient, but required that all speakers turn up on time and are fully prepared to start their presentation at the time stated on the programme, so that our time is used efficiently. What we did notice this year was that two of our speakers (Dot Gibson & Andy Mitchell) arrived on the evening before their presentation spent hours in conversation with the course tutor, the National Chair and the facilitators, which they found to be of benefit to them, in that they developed a better understanding of what required of them. We are not suggesting that all speakers should arrive on the evening before their presentation, but where it is practical it would be very useful.

This was another successful retired member's educational course which was very well attended and unique in that all the members on the final attendance list issued by the education department did attend the course, Travelling down to Eastbourne on a Sunday can be tedious and very long and for many travellers it involved two bus and train journeys. Many people arrived in Eastbourne up to 3/4 after their expected time of arrival. Starting the course programme at 5pm was not a good idea as most delegates found it impossible to arrive before that time and when they finally arrived they were tired from the journey and just needed to relax. The Facilitators met after Dinner and decided to make the introductions on the Monday morning at 9.00 AM and start the days programme at 9.30 AM as stated on the agenda, this went down well and we recommend this practice for future retired members residential educational courses at Eastbourne.

We are strongly of the opinion that the National Retired Members Committee needs to have a dialogue early in the year i.e. February meeting should form a view of what are the subjects that we want to see included in the course programme for 2019. We also need to avoid an overlap of subjects and speakers as happened this year. One of the points raised by the delegates was that there should be some handouts from the speakers, and of equal importance there should have been some information forwarded to the delegates prior to the course outlining what it was about and giving them some idea of what to expect. We should also consider placing the subject matter normally dealt with by the fringe meeting into the main agenda on the Tuesday afternoon, this year it was very late starting and delegates were very tired at the end. We did have many new delegates this year, but there were still too many of the old familiar faces, therefore the committee needs to consider ways to try and encourage each region to find new delegates as some delegates believe that it is their right to be there year on year, we need to work hard to try and change this culture. The National Chair thanked the Facilitators for their support and all the attendees

**Report: Monica Taylor, Alan Sidaway, & Mike McLoughlin
(who also edited this document)**

The Abortive Plot by the Rees-Mogg Brexiteers to Ditch The Prime Minister

In the last century the apocalypse was predicted. The faithful were urged to “stay alive until 1975”. So there must have been some disappointment that 1976 and all subsequent years have come and gone without any noticeable apocalypse, unless you count the misfortunes of Leicester City. Among Tory Brexiteers the new mantra is something approximating “We wait for the 48.” Like the believers of the last century, they are discovering their complete faith is not shared as widely as they imagined. But a worse fate has befallen Jacob Rees-Mogg and his band of monocled mutineers - they have become a laughing stock. It was always a slight mystery why Rees-Mogg was ever taken seriously in the first place, if he has a role in life it is to remind people how Brexit has a tendency to warp people’s judgement, yet he has now been undone by his own hubris. The threat of 48 names, the number needed to trigger a leadership challenge, is still possible but their cause has the credibility of promising the NHS may one day get an extra £350million a week.

The failed coup has also exploded the myth that the European Research Group (ERG) of Brexiteer Tories is a ruthlessly disciplined organisation that could brow-beat any leader into submission. Their menaces have been exposed as being as bogus as some of the arguments they made for our leaving the country. Theresa May has a more pressing problem in that the confidence and supply deal with the DUP appears to have collapsed. Now what did this buccaneering group of MPs have in common? Well they believe in the virtues of WTO (World Trade Agreements). This form of agreement would be the salvation for Britain when we leave the EU. Now I know I am risking my reputation for accuracy but I do doubt whether many members of the public have the slightest idea how they work and why do the ERG favour them. Well I think the ERG are living in a time warp. It used to be that developed countries would benefit from the WTO, as did a handful of mostly upper middle income countries. The rest, including the great majority of developing countries, do not. It is as simple as that. The benefits of the WTO go to a few powerful nations, under the guise of 'democracy', 'openness' and a 'neutral' Secretariat.

Even many supporters of globalization in developing countries do not see the WTO, as it currently operates, as benefiting them. What happens in the WTO is part of a broader pattern of neo-colonialism in the global economy. This has two strands. The first is the self-interest of the major powers; their close ties with multinational companies (through the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, 'revolving doors' between industry and government, etc.); and their willingness to use their political and economic strength to achieve their ends, where powerful commercial interests are involved, even their own populations. The second strand is a combination of ideology, paternalism and missionary zeal. The true believers in globalisation and liberalization feel sure that they know best, that markets work and globalization benefits all, but the poor benighted heathens of the South have yet to realize this. The Enlightened Ones, armed with the Gospel According to Adam Smith, therefore have a duty to spread the Word, and to do whatever it takes to bring the unbelievers to the Promised Land of the globalized economy for their own good, even if they don't realize they want to be there.

This second strand is epitomized by Robert Cooper, who was an official in the

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British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a key advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair: 'When dealing with the more old-fashioned kinds of state outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era, force, pre-imperative attack, deception. The opportunities, perhaps even the need, for colonisation is as great as it ever was in the 19th century. What is needed is a new kind of imperialism' (Quote taken from The Guardian 2002).

While this quote is unusual in its frankness, the mentality that underlies it is all too apparent in the functioning of the WTO and other international economic institutions. The 'rougher methods of pre-emptive attack and deception' that Cooper recommends are already widely used by the major powers in the WTO. Moreover, it seems inevitable that the powerful countries will stick to these tactics, which have served them so well, as long as they still have the opportunities and tools to do so.



Keith Clarke - Photo Mike McLoughlin

How will this affect the UK when we leave the EU? Most of the countries in the world have trade deals. There will be one country which will not. The UK. We will be approaching many countries to obtain free trade agreements. The ERG

are saying we will be able to save money with WTO deals. So every country in the world will know that we want numerous trade deals and I am suggesting this will not place us in a position of strength. Many countries will continue to operate from a position of strength. Is it likely that Trump and his policy of US first will give us a good deal? Will the Commonwealth Countries bend over backwards to accommodate our wishes or will they, for the first time in their history, be in a position to bargain from a position of strength? Even the EU will be able to extract a good deal. I do not think Rees-Mogg and the ERG have thought this scenario through.

Keith Clarke - Leicester Branch

In Britain's boardrooms, Brexit is already here. And the warning is stark

By Aditya Chakraborty - Guardian

On the one hand, you have the self-inflating chaos at Westminster, the fever dreams of Jacob Rees-Mogg's gang and the rehearsed rage of the Democratic Unionists. And on the other, you have the truth nailed by Philip K Dick. "Reality," he wrote, "is that which, when you stop believing it, doesn't go away." So let's remind ourselves of some reality. While Tory MPs jostled over a replacement for Theresa May the head of the Confederation of British Industry, Carolyn Fairbairn, warned that millions of pounds were **"flooding out"** of business investment and into preparing for Britain crashing out of Europe with no deal. Food warehouses said they were running out of space. And auto-parts manufacturer **Schaeffler announced that it would shut factories** in Plymouth and Llanelli, leaving more than 600 workers facing the dole.

Even as politicians and the press fantasise about how Britain will leave Europe,

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big business is already at the departure gate. For Westminster, Brexit is months in the future; for boardrooms making plans, it is the present. Big carmakers have this year **halved their investment in new models and factory machinery**. The consultancy EY records a 31% slump in the number of foreign businesses **setting up headquarters** in Britain. Boris Johnson certainly makes good copy – but money talks much louder. “The banks and insurers are moving, the big pharmaceutical firms are investing abroad,” says Paul Drechsler, who was CBI president until June and now chairs London First. “These trains are leaving the station, and when they leave, they won’t come back.” The country he describes is already shrinking, its job opportunities dwindling, its reputation abroad in eclipse.

This is the real national emergency. An entire rotten political-corporate regime is crumbling away – and its replacement threatens to be even worse. It will be worse, specifically, for those parts of the country, like Llanelli and Plymouth, that voted leave as the ultimate kick against the pricks of a hollow economy and a deaf government.

The succinct definition of our current model comes from the head of the Bank of England. The UK relies, said Mark Carney in 2016, on the **“kindness of strangers”**. The willingness of overseas investors to keep ploughing in their cash keeps us in the style to which we’ve grown accustomed. Out of all the 28 members of the European Union, the UK is second only to Ireland in its dependence on investment from abroad. Margaret Thatcher’s eagerness to sell off whatever she could get her hands on and her mandarins’ carelessness over ownership has turned us into one of the biggest foreign-capital junkies in the

developed world. Those investors don’t come here out of charity. Our government competes with others around the world to lure in cash from overseas. But look what inducements we offer. Just weeks before the **Brexit** referendum, David Cameron’s government published its Invest in the UK brochure, promising “the most competitive” Labour costs in western Europe, and “the least strict regulation in the EU.” Why buy Euros when you can have Poundland?

No other country does this. **Analysis by Kevin Farnsworth** at York University shows that, while all states assure investors they’re competitive locations, Sweden boasts of its “anti-corruption” and “good industrial relations”, while Germany highlights its “efficiency” and “training”. The UK, he writes, “uniquely competes for international capital by offering a package of a low-tax, low-cost, low regulatory business environment”.

Here, whether Conservative or Labour, successive governments have marketed us as the open-all-hours, bargain-basement landing strip off mainland Europe. Until, that is, Britons vote in a referendum to kick away two of the three legs of the post-Thatcherite economic model, namely openness and closeness to the continent. What’s left then is our cheapness – in taxes, in wages and in regulation.

This is Britain in 2018, paying the price for decades of underinvestment and cut-price competition. We have a highly skilled workforce, with almost half of Britain’s young people holding a university degree. And yet in 2014, Charlie Mayfield, former boss of John Lewis and then head of the UK Commission on Employment and Skills, pointed out that over **one in five British jobs required only primary-school education**. We have a world-class car-manufacturing industry, yet over half of the components in the

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cars that roll off the lines in Sunderland or Ellesmere Port come from abroad.

This is the point at which the kindness of strangers starts to get rather strained. In a survey this spring, well before the chaos of the past few weeks, EY found that 30% of foreign investors now expect to move money out of the UK after Brexit. The current value of foreign direct investment in the UK is estimated by the government to be over £1 trillion. If even a quarter of that were to move abroad, then £75 billion of assets are already at risk. No wonder the Welsh government is offering sweeteners to Ford to stay at Bridgend. No wonder when Nissan made noises about scaling back at Sunderland, May immediately opened the door of No 10 and offered some kind of deal – although precisely what, the voting public was never told.

You can expect a lot more of this over coming months and years: panicky politicians paying your tax money to grumpy-looking corporate executives. You can expect other countries to try to poach our businesses, just as after the 2016 vote Paris began advertising itself as the ideal post-Brexit corporate headquarters. Their posters read: **“Tired of fog? Try the frogs”**

You can also expect this government to press even harder the case that Britain is the low-tax, low-wage capital of the rich world. But ministers will get a disappointing response from businesses, believes EY's chief economist in the UK, Mark Gregory. He thinks multinationals will shift away from using Britain as a stepping stone into Europe and the rest of the world – which is logical, given that any new trading arrangements will take years to settle and will almost certainly not be as smooth as the regime Britain currently has. Instead of building factories to make things to sell to the world, big businesses will instead put their

money into storage and showrooms to sell things to Britons. The UK will become, Gregory says, “a warehouse economy: low skills, low productivity and low growth”.

That projection was already a reality for lots of people I met who plumped for Brexit in 2016. They were on minimum wage and had minimum rights and minimum prospects. If Brexit is to be radically changed now, it is those voters – the disenfranchised Laborites', the sod-them-all brigade – whose support is needed. A second referendum, in which well-meaning metropolitans offer those in the Rhondda the status quo, probably deserves to fail. Instead, any remain option will have to come with a worked-out argument about rebalancing power in this country. And that means reshaping the relationship between capital and the rest of us.

Aditya Chakraborty - November 22nd 2018

Report of the ‘Reclaim our Social Care Conference’ Held in Birmingham on the 17th Nov 2018

The conference was organised by ‘Health Campaigns Together’ which has been campaigning over the last 3 years. They issue a quarterly bulletin and can be contacted at www.healthcampaignstogether.com, and hard copies can be purchased. The organisation is an alliance of organisations which includes trade unions, political parties, NPC, KONP and other community bodies.

The meeting was attended by over 100 people and in the Chair Brian Fisher. There was a platform of some 14 speakers. Can I observe at this instance that the conference hall did have very poor acoustics, even though there was

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Amplified speakers and roving mics. The workshop was even worse. There was power point facility but only one speaker used it. Therefore my below commentary may not be totally accurate. I also missed the report back of the workshops because I left to catch the 4.30 train. Therefore I would recommend we affiliate to this body, because they will be making a report of this conference in the next bulletin issue. Can I observe that I found the conference atmosphere to be emotive, full of hurt, anger and frustration.

The preview slides said that some 1.2 million people are in care at any given time. There are some 1.5 million workers employed in the social care industry. Yet government core funding has been reduced by £16Bn. Brian Fisher then went on to say that he hoped the outcome of the conference would be a force for justice and action resulting in a free and publicly provided social care system.

John Lister said; we have to develop a process which brings a national campaign to put right the deficiencies in social care. In being a singular approach we have to reject the integration with the health service, and that personal health budgets are not appropriate. Government has deliberately starved social care of funding. In some areas systems are on the verge of collapse. Currently there is no consensus in the Labour Party on how to proceed. The TU's are divided because of members working in private care companies.

Following the Griffiths report 1988 Social Care was taken out of NHS in 1993, when nursing homes were funded by the State, we have been subjected to charges. The Financial Times promotes that the elderly should liquidate their assets. All this has happened because in general people are unaware, ignorant. Our campaign should be that funds are taxed

from the wealth of the nation and free at the point of use. Tory policy has introduced the 'eligibility' factor and now nowhere is social care free. There are 500K people needing care of some sort, the concept of 15 minute visits is crazy. The practices given by 'Home Help' have been removed leaving behind chaotic systems of private care.

So I hope conference will say clearly what we want from a Labour government. Ask for a clear qualification of what is Integrated Health Care. And what are our common points to mount the campaign around.

Eleanor Smith Wolverhampton MP said; that representatives of Local Authorities would welcome social services removed thus making their life easier. We have been receiving suggestions that social care funding should be ringed fenced taxes. Overwhelmingly organisations are saying there is a need for a new system. But there is some resistance in parts of the LP and TU movement.

Conference was then opened up for questions. This was when I noticed the angst when delegates aired their grievance. I wanted to ask, but not picked, whether the outcome of the Local Government Directors of Social Services conference in Manchester was known.

Platform Contributions

Birmingham Care Workers Dispute – Stop cuts to the Homecare Enablement Service. Leaflet available.

Relatives & Residents Association – you have rights to care home assistance, see Mental Capacity Act. Unfortunately assessment has been passed on to Care Home managers. Leaflet available.

Unison Worker NW region – worst worker pay & conditions, principally because private care homes look for 13% profit. Need strong legislation which enforces

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correct pay and conditions. Unison leaflet available

Being the Boss – capitalist system undermining social care. For a full article refer to International Marxist Journal, Lee Hudson.

Sure Start Services – decimated in the West Midlands which indirectly causing significant problems in their communities. Contact GMB

Jan Shortt Gen Secretary National Pensioners Convention – we are now in the third reform of social care and deep in crisis. Should another care home crash happen, like Southern Cross, local authorities will not be able to bail them out. Of course care is complex, care is there from cradle to grave. NHS Trusts don't want to talk about integrated care. For example cancer care is totally free, but dementia care is by assessment, and then care home formula is unfair. Care should be free. If it comes to system of funding, then close the tax loop holes and there would be no problems. NPC will be issuing a policy paper in March 19 it will be needed because of the high degree of public ignorance, therefore engagement is necessary.

Setting the Themes

Banner Theatre – have made a production called 'Free for All' which is approximately one hour long which presents an analysis of our care system. Followed by a Q&A session. Leaflet available.

Peter Beresford – 'Social Policy first hand' is a social policy text from a participatory perspective and presents a new service user – led that addresses challenges in welfare provision. It is not possible to challenge social care decisions. All care is means tested and

significant amount is dependent on LA budgets. It is crucial that these issues are tackled for a modern society. Leaflet available.

Simon Duffy Challenging Integrated Care – social care should not be just about reducing bed blocking, but be about how to lead a life of citizenship. Since 2015 the state data system details have disguised the problem the data released only refers to long term care. The current crisis is caused by long term policy failure locked in a poor law paradigm. There is an inadequate system of rights and advocacy. Currently we have no collective and organised social pressure to challenge for a correct social care policy.



Alan Marshall Nottingham URM Branch - Photo Mike McLoughlin

Social Care is a public need. This talk of integration, which has been mooted since 1962 is a distraction. Social care should be individualised, in neighbourhoods, communities and universal. Social Care needs deeper constitutional protection. National charities, eg Age UK, are enmeshed with government dictate. We want a universal, united, self - directed, positive, separate tax funded social care body.

Workshop

The position of the gathering of workshop delegates in the conference centre was

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totally inadequate. This did not help the person who acted as Chair, though the facilitator did not seem to have a problem she wrote commentary on at least 4 flip chart sheets. *(I had to leave before so did not hear the report back)*

Contributions

Someone said we all have Social Care needs and I thought, do I? A common theme of community voice delivering the same message. But if we join up with other groups how do we know our voice will be part of the decision making process. Distrust of authority from bodies like CCGs, NHS, LAs and charities was expressed. Nobody listens to us, yet we should be the ones empowered.

Observation

At this point I had run out of steam, my ethos is based on representative democracy and majority decision, with the right of the individual to still say I oppose and a right to put the alternative. These people in the workshop would give the anarchist movement a rebirth. We need to see the report of collective opinion made by

'Health Campaigns Together'

I recommend to the Branch and the Regional Coordinating Committee that we consider the report at our meetings in the new year, and if we support it determine how we can progress it in Unite the Union and other bodies, including trade unions and community organisations.

Alan Marshall Unite Nottingham
URM Branch

Labour Party Liverpool
Conference Report 2018
Emergency Motion from – Unite
Build Our Royal Liverpool Hospital

Conference notes that on the 17th September 2018, the Liverpool Echo reported that the 'longstop date' for the stalled Royal Liverpool Hospital is the September 30, 2018, meaning that the entire hospital construction project could be declared in default, likely to be followed by a complete termination of the current contract. Conference further notes the reporting on the 12th September revealed that some of the cladding installed on the new building did not satisfy fire regulations. Conference notes that the complex fallout from the insolvency of Carillion PLC could take years to resolve. Conference states its anger and frustration that Government has left its citizens using facilities that are not fit for purpose for the health requirements of a modern city.

Conference therefore believes that the only remedy that will succeed is: - The Government takes direct control of the project and ensures that the construction of the site is completed as swiftly as possible with the necessary public funding. The Government ensures that, so far as possible, any losses arising from the collapse of Carillion PLC are born by the private sector (relevant insurers and investors in the project who accepted the commercial risks of the project) and not the public purse.

Finally, Conference welcomes the unified support from the Mayor of Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, unions including UNITE, UNISON and GMB, the city's Members of Parliament, the Metro Mayor, patients groups and local campaigners such as Keep Our NHS Public on this campaign.

Composite Motion 5 – Brexit

Conference welcomes Jeremy Corbyn's determined efforts to hold the Tories to account for their disastrous negotiations. Conference accepts that the public voted to leave the EU, but when people voted to 'take back control' they were not voting

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for fewer rights, economic chaos or to risk jobs. Conference notes the warning made by Jaguar Land Rover on 11.9.18, that without the right deal in place, tens of thousands of jobs there would be put at risk. Conference notes that workers in industries across the economy in ports, food, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, energy, chemicals, in our public services and beyond are worried about the impact of a hard Brexit on livelihoods and communities.

Conference believes that we need a relationship with the EU that guarantees full participation in the Single Market. The Brexit deal being pursued by Theresa May is seen a threat to jobs, freedom of movement, peace in Northern Ireland and the NHS. Tory Brexit means a future of dodgy trade deals and American-style deregulation, undermining our rights, freedoms and prosperity. This binds the hands of future Labour governments, making it much harder for us to deliver on our promises.

Conference notes Labour has set six robust tests for the final Brexit deal. Conference believes that the Labour MPs must vote against any Tory deal failing to meet these tests in full. Conference also believes a no-deal Brexit should be rejected as a viable option and calls upon Labour MPs to vigorously oppose any attempt by this Government to deliver a no-deal outcome. Conference notes that when trade unions have a mandate to negotiate a deal for their members, the final deal is accepted or rejected by the membership.

Conference does not believe that such important negotiations should be left to government ministers who are more concerned with self-preservation and ideology than household bills and wages. Stagnant wages, crumbling services and the housing crisis are being exacerbated by the government and employers making the rich richer at working

people's expense, and not immigration. Conference declares solidarity and common cause with all progressive and socialist forces confronting the rising tide of neo-fascism, xenophobia, nationalism and right wing populism in Europe.

Industrial Crisis in the Car Industry - Unite

Conference notes with alarm the announcement from Jaguar Land Rover on the 17th September that 2,000 workers at Castle Bromwich will be put on a three-day week. This move follows unprecedented warnings from JLR CEO Ralf Speth about the existential danger a 'no deal' Brexit poses to the automotive industry. It follows concerns raised by Honda and BMW, which plans to shut down the Cowley Mini factory in the month following Brexit to minimise disruption if no deal is reached. Combined with concerns raised by Unite's 90,000 automotive sector members it is clear the Tories' political mishandling of Brexit is already having a severe industrial impact.

This uncertainty is compounded by the Government's disastrous approach to transitioning the industry from combustion-powered to electric vehicles. Their *Road to Zero*, published a year late, fails to provide a serious strategy for electrification that protects and sustains employment in this country. This is having an immediate industrial impact on the sector and wider supply chain, including the loss of 1,000 jobs at the JLR plant in Solihull.

Labour should continue to make the impact on workers central to the party's opposition to the Tory's Brexit. Conference believes Labour must work to pressure the Government to engage with unions and industry to develop a strategy for the automotive industry to transition to electrification and remain in the UK. This should include public policies such as talent retention schemes and positive procurement strategies for investment in UK manufacturing, including battery

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production to sustain employment.

Composite Motions

The following subject groupings were selected for debate in the contemporary motions priorities ballot.

- ☐ An Economy for the Many
- ☐ Brexit
- ☐ Government Contracts
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ In-work Poverty
- ☐ Justice for the Windrush Generation
- ☐ Palestine
- ☐ Schools System

NEC statement on the Democracy Review

The NEC would like to thank all those members and affiliates, from the breadth and length of the country, who participated in the Democracy Review by attending meetings and submitting views. Your contributions have been very valuable. The NEC also thanks Katy Clark, Andy Kerr and Claudia Webbe for their hard work in conducting this review and compiling the narrative which underpins the proposed changes. This document can be found online at www.labour.org.uk/democracy-review-report.

The NEC welcomes the opportunities that the Democracy Review presents to reach into communities to help to reconnect people with politics, to develop a people powered policy making process, to remove the barriers in our Party to participation and to ensure that all sections of our diverse society are involved in our structures.

The General Election showed what can be achieved when more members participate but we aspire to transform ourselves into a social movement, a mass movement for the many not the few. The NEC has met and discussed recommendations arising from the Democracy Review and is proposing seven sets of

rule changes covering everything from individual member's rights through to local, regional and national structures. We have also agreed to conduct a full review of policy making and local government structures.

The NEC would like to stress that this is a first step on the road to enhancing our democratic structures. Many of the recommendations in the Democracy Review fall outside the scope of our rule book but require changes to our internal policy and guidance, or require sharing of best practice, documentation or training and support. Some of the recommendations require additional planning and preparatory work and in some cases the running of pilot schemes.

To deal with these, we will introduce a standing item on the NEC agenda and tackle these in a series of papers. This will enable us to engage with stakeholders, look at financial implications and develop the necessary detailed delivery mechanisms. The NEC will report back to the 2019 Annual Conference with a further set of rule changes and report on the progress made in areas where a rule change was not required.

CLP Structure

Any proposal to change from an all member meeting to a delegate method of organisation or vice versa may only be initiated by resolution of a Party unit or affiliate branch. Upon receipt of such a proposal the CLP Secretary shall declare the next-but-one scheduled meeting to be a special all member meeting, which shall decide by a simple majority whether to adopt the proposed new method of organisation. The NEC may make guidelines setting out limits on the frequency at which CLPs may be asked to initiate this process and on the minimum requirements for consultation with local affiliates.

Regional Conference

The NEC shall lay out rules and

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standing orders for Regional Conferences, in line with the recommendations of the Democracy Review and on a basis broadly mirroring the composition and procedures of Annual Conference. The NEC may immediately incorporate these rules into this rule book, subject to approval at Annual Conference 2019, when this sentence shall expire.

Scope of Democracy Review

A. Unless otherwise stated, all rule changes proposed by the NEC in order to give effect to the Democracy Review shall, if passed by Annual Conference 2018, have effect at the close of Annual Conference 2018 and be incorporated into this rule book.

B. The NEC may authorise consequential amendments to be made which result from the primary objective of any rule changes proposed by the NEC in order to give effect to the Democracy Review shall, if passed by Annual Conference 2018.

C. The NEC shall report to Annual Conference 2019 on its progress in implementing the recommendations of the Democracy Review.

D. All rules giving the NEC temporary powers to amend this rule book in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Democracy Review shall only be used for such purpose and shall not be used for any other purpose whatsoever.

E. Any use of NEC temporary powers to amend this rule book in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Democracy Review shall be reported to Annual Conference 2019, whereupon such amended rules shall be incorporated into this rule book if approved by a card vote.

F. All bodies subject to this rule book shall without delay bring their rules and standing orders into compliance with rules created in order to give effect to the

Democracy Review, and their rules and standing orders shall immediately be read as if such amendments as are therefore necessary have been made.

G. This sub-clause 6 A-G, and any rules conferring temporary powers on the NEC in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Democracy Review, shall automatically expire at the close of Annual Conference 2019 and shall be automatically removed from subsequent editions of this rule book.



Bill Moores North East Region & National Committee - Photo Mike McLoughlin

Election of Labour Party Leader

i. In the case of a vacancy for leader or deputy leader, each nomination must be supported by 10 per cent of the combined Commons members of the PLP and members of the EPLP and either:

a. 5 per cent of CLPs; or

b. At least 3 affiliates (at least 2 of which shall be trade union affiliates) comprising 5 per cent of affiliated membership.

Nominations not attaining the thresholds under either a or b above shall be null and void.

Reformed Trigger ballot

Chapter 5 Clause IV.5. Delete sub-clause A and B, and replace with:

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A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election, a trigger ballot will be carried out through Party branches and affiliated branches according to NEC guidelines.

B. If either one third or more of Party branches, or one third or more of affiliated branches, indicate that they wish a selection to take place, a selection shall proceed. The MP shall be included in the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection shall be made. Where neither one third or more of Party branches, nor one third or more of affiliated branches, indicate that they wish a selection to take place the MP will, subject to NEC endorsement, be selected as the CLP's prospective parliamentary candidate.

Bill Moores - Delegate from Unite

Unite Education Course 14Th - 18th October 2018 Report From an Attendee.

Dot Gibson of the National Pensioners' Convention was the first speaker. She kicked off her talk on Trade Union organisation of solidarity - "standing up together, sharing information on the laws, also sharing information on the history of wars". There was much talk on Trade Unions' experience mainly on the Transport and General Workers Union. She also talked about this year's experience at the Tory Party's conference "to hear them agree that they stand up for the capitalist system" to be followed by the Labour Party announcing that they "stand up for Socialism". I was a little disappointed that she did not mention the fact that austerity is hitting us a lot harder and that the debt is still on the increase, maybe because this is outside

her terms of reference. She never mentioned that there are two types of organisation: the Socialist systems of bottom up and the Capitalist systems of top down, the latter operating in the former General Workers Union then in Unite the Union, although Socialism is mentioned in our rule book.

We received a full page introducing us to Unite's Organising strategy and the Three Pillars which are briefly as follows: Organise, Educate, Action

1. Organising and the 100% membership campaign are at the core of Unite the Union activities. Without dynamic organising we are unlikely to grow our membership. As workplace reps and activists we should always aim to get 100% membership in each workplace and promote grass-roots activism.

2. Only through strong collective workplace organisation which unites workers around their common causes can make Unite not only maintain but also bolster its position as Britain and Ireland's biggest and best Trade Union

3. So organising is key. In order to fight to defend public services and our members' jobs we will need to educate and politicise our members. International agenda – these make up the three pillars of Unite.

“A strongly political union which lobbies and campaigns for its members with a strong commitment to international solidarity is what they wish for now and in the future- that is what Unite stands for”. I think number 2 needs some qualification as “to bolster their position as Britain

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and Ireland's biggest and best Trade Union" is not a comradely gesture for solidarity. For a strong collective workplace, a closed shop is required of which there are two types: a direct closed shop meaning a worker seeking employment in a 100% membership in the workplace or an indirect workplace where a worker can be employed without being a union member providing they are willing to join the trade union on entering the company. The latter one is preferred as migrants entering the country are less likely to already be trade union members thus failing to have the opportunity to gain employment.



Jim Tolton - East Midlands.

Photo Mike McLoughlin

The Engineering section of Unite had the three pillars: Educate, Organise and Control.

Finally we were introduced to Universal Credit which is fuelling the Homeless crisis. Government welfare reforms are fuelling a rise in homelessness in towns and cities across the country. Interviews with Homelessness charities across Eng-

to the roll out of UC and reduction in local housing allowance rates according to the Observer. It put even basic accommodation beyond the means of many. One shelter said UC was a factor in a third of its clients ending up in its care.

Universal Credit. The following could be considered 1. Who is to be targeted? 2. Who would we involve? 3. What information would we need? 4. What resources? 5. What would be the action plan to get the result necessary to give us a victory?

Jim Tolton - East Midlands

Report of the NPC Trade Union Conference Held on November 27th in London.

This was a well attended Conference, with a considerable number of unions having sent delegates to represent them. Norman Jemison, Chair of the NPC Trade Union Working Party introduced, Paul Nowak, TUC Deputy General Secretary, some of the main points are given below. This year is the 150 anniversary of the TUC and ten years since we have had a stable majority Government. The Cabinet is split on the issue of Brexit. The Labour Party did well in the 2017 General election with the Tories losing their overall majority in Parliament and having to go into partnership with the hard line DUP. The economy is in a bit of a wobble, with some good areas, some growth - working people have been squeezed very hard.

1 - 9 workers are on zero hours, 2/3 of those living in poverty are people who

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are in work. It is a worry that Tommy Robinson is now an advisor to UKIP and that they recently had 15,000 people on the street in one of their rally's.. We need to get the best Brexit deal possible for our members, the current deal is unlikely to get through Parliament because they are presented with false choices which is the Teresa May deal or no deal. The deal must be put back to the people either in the form of a referendum or a general election. There is a need to protect the Irish border, and we want a cast iron deal on Jobs.



Paul Nowak - TUC deputy General Secretary. Photo Mike McLoughlin

The years of austerity has hit the working population very hard, there has been a real shift in transferring wealth from the poorer elements in society to the wealthy, through the severe clamp down on wages. A new deal is required bot for workers and pensioners. Teresa May has stated that austerity has ended, that may be but so far there is scant evidence that this is actually the case. We need a deal on workers rights to reset the balance of power, we need to develop an Industrial

Strategy, we also need to tackle companies like Melrose who are asset strip-pers.

If we want to influence the government we will need to build the trade union movement, there are 32 million workers in the UK and we represent only 1 in 5. We have a problem with the recruiting young people in private Industry. This government has created inequality, many people are not benefitting from the economy. The Labour Party has promised that if they form the next government that will repeal the existing anti trade union legislation.

The Welsh Assembly has done sterling work in working to combat the practice of blacklisting trade unionists in Industry and construction workers. We also require to develop intergenerational activity and bring them together as much as possible. When we have intergenerational campaigns they need to be developed as community campaigns and not just trade union campaigns. If you work 1 hour in ten days when you are on zero hours contracts, you do not appear as unemployed. We should seriously consider whether it is possible to develop links with the Students Union as one of our options and thereby get access to young people.

Bridging the Divide Between Health and Social Care - June Clarke, RCN Retired Network.

June stated that you had to unwrap many layers in the social care package

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and play the music before you arrived at the truth - the truth is about politics and some of the professionals in particular continue to put politics ahead of the requirements of their patients who are in need of care. The NPC are presently engaged on producing a pamphlet on social care and the need for a national care structure, This pamphlet concentrates on the funding of social care, where is the money to come from, should it not be funded from taxation and free at the point of delivery. It will also highlight the need to provide adequate pay, training and decent working conditions for staff, we need to end the situation when they do not get paid for the time spent travelling between their clients and end up with being paid significantly less than the minimum rate for their day's work.



June Clarke - RCN Retired.

Photo Mike McLoughlin

Social Care, we need to be sure what we mean when we use the term social care, there are a wide range of services available. Care in the community is social care as distinct from personal care such as GP's give retired members and supply 6 different types of medication. Care requires skill and control, all care does not need to have nurses involved, but if a nurse is not involved then there would need to be a doctor on call. The need for multi care requirements in the community requires careful planning, including the involvement of planning departments in gaining planning permission for extension to properties for handicapped people, who require toilet and walk in shower facilities on the ground floor, adequate housing is a big issue. We are worried about the number of companies that are making huge profits from the



Norman Jemison - NPC Vice Chair - Chaired the Conference -

Photo Mike McLoughlin

NHS, and steadily increasing their share of the cake, companies should not be making vast profits out of people's illness. USA companies are itching to come into our NHS and to make massive profits out of it, some of their company's are already and have tried their hand at running care homes with disastrous results. Many contracts are being given to the wrong people. Some private company's have given their care homes back to the Local Authorities because they were unable to make sufficient profit, some local Authorities when the contracts run out are beginning to haul them

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back. Whatever model we go for we will require more funding, building partnerships is crucial.

After June's presentation there was a general discussion, Bill Moors spoke twice and Mike McLoughlin once during the discussion. One of the main issues that kept surfacing during the discussion was the issue of Loneliness amongst older people, and the important role that day centres played in the lives of many older citizens. The day centres have been

hit quite severely by austerity. 428 day centres have closed in recent years, in the Whitney area the number of day centres have been reduced from 22 to 8. These closures have undermined the promise made by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary. This is a betrayal of lonely people. Neil Duncan Jordan NPC National Officer made several very succinct and powerful contributions to the debate.



Neil Duncan Jordan - NPC National Officer - Photo Mike McLoughlin

Jack Dromey MP the Shadow Pensions Minister was due to speak after lunch, but was unable to appear as he had to attend to an industrial dispute

In the absence of Jack Dromey we had a general discussion during which a whole number of resolutions were debated and agreed upon. **"Intergenerational Solidarity"** was moved successfully by UCU after a very good presentation. The following motion was successfully moved by Unite **"The Generations must work Together"** : - This NPC trade union conference believes that this government in pursuing its goal of thrusting years of unnecessary austerity measures on the population has come up with the idea that the plight of the jobless young people is caused by the older generation. It is essential that these ideas are rebutted at every opportunity. It is therefore resolved that all the unions represented here today send appropriate motions to their NEC's on this issue and ask that it be raised with the TUC and the Labour Party to put pressure on the Government. We want an end to austerity and the pension age reduced, coupled to a decent pension that removes the need for people beyond retirement age having to work out of necessity, thus making it easier for young people to find work. **"Digital Exclusion"** This motion was submitted by TSSA, after a good discussion it was carried. **"Loneliness"** submitted by UNISON and carried, **"TUC Matters"** Submitted by PCS and Carried. This was a well attended and very good conference with good lively debates on a number of issues.

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Unite was represented by Dave Samuel, Brenda Irvine, Bill Moores, and Mike McLoughlin.

National Pensioners Convention Advice on how to Respond to the BBC Consultation on the Free TV Licence for the over 75 year old pensioners.

We wanted to update you on the progress of our campaign on the above issue in order that you can participate. The consultation document from the BBC is now live and will last for 12 weeks. However, the document does not include in its options for the current scheme to remain – it only gives a range of alternatives that mean pensioners will pay something towards their licence fee. The NPC have joined together with Age UK and 9 other older people's organisations in a campaign to restore the responsibility for the free TV licence back to the government. It should never have been given to the BBC in the first place.

The ways in which the campaign will take place:

Age UK has launched an online petition in the name of all 10 organisations signed up. Please sign and ensure that all your members who are online do so and share with everyone they know. The petition is at: www.ageuk.org.uk/tvpetition

1. There will be a model letter printed for individuals to add their name, address, why the TV licence is important to them, sign and send to the BBC. This will be a self-sealing document, freepost for those not online.
2. This same letter will be sent out on email for individuals to do the same. There will be a pre-determined email address that the letter should be sent to. The NPC will be considering in the new year a lobby of either the DWP, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, or both in an effort to draw their attention to the biggest shift of welfare responsibility to an unelected corporation. In the meantime, we have drafted a letter for forwarding to your MP. It is vital that all MPs understand the importance of free TV licences for over 75s and how it enables those who are lonely,

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isolated, or disabled to access information – a basic human right. You can access the BBC consultation document at: <https://bbcconsultation.traverse.org.uk/>

Please go online and complete the consultation form questions in the following way

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|------|--------|-----|---------|-----|---------|------------|----|------|--------|---|
| 1. | The | BBC | should | be | copying | the | current | concession | – | tick | number | 1 |
| 2. | | | a) | | Tick | | None | | of | | these | |
| 2. | | b) | Tick | I'm | not | in | favour | | of | this | reform | |
| c) | | Tick | | I'm | not | in | favour | | of | this | reform | |
| 2. | | | (d) | | Tick | | None | | of | | these | |
| 2 | | | | (e) | | | Leave | | | | blank | |

3. Other comments – include any or all of these points as you wish:

- For many years the free TV licence has been part of the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) remit, and quite rightly has been seen as part of government's wider welfare role in tackling social isolation among the older generation.
- Successive governments have avoided improving the state pension, and instead have offered older people individual concessions, such as the free TV licence for the over 75s. According to the OECD, the UK state pension is the least adequate in the developed world. Removing this concession, without addressing the value of the state pension is therefore grossly unfair.
- ♦ In any democracy, access to information is crucial to enable citizens the opportunity to be informed and make decisions.
- Loneliness among older people is now regarded as a growing problem. 1 in 4 pensioners view the TV as their main form of companionship.
- The provision of such a concession should therefore be seen as playing a vital role in tackling this problem. However, the BBC has no such obligation or responsibility to tackle such issues. This is the responsibility of government.
- As such, the concession is clearly funded from general taxation by society as a whole. This correctly reflects the obligations that we all have – including tax paying pensioners – to make a contribution towards benefits and services which we deem to be worthy.
- Around 6.5m older people have an income of less than £11,800 a year. The TV licence – as a proportion of income, therefore represents quite a considerable amount, and I have no doubt that if the concession were to be removed, many would simply be unable to pay.
- Means-testing a benefit costs ten times as much as it being paid universally,

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and experience shows that those who need it most, tend to be the ones who don't claim.

The BBC also needs to look at its other areas of expenditure, such as the salaries paid to some of its top employees and on screen talent, before it makes a decision to cut this concession. We hope that you will encourage your members to participate – not only in the consultation, but by making sure everyone you know is informed of the risk the BBC options pose to vulnerable older people.

Yours sincerely

**Jan Shortt - General Secretary National Pensioners
Convention**

Report of the URM Campaign Team (October 30th) and National Meeting Held on October 31st 2018.

National Meeting held on October 31st

1. The meeting opened with a 1 minute silence to remember absent friends. Chair (Monica Taylor) then welcomed everyone to the meeting, giving apologies for absent delegates and introducing substitutes. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2018 were agreed as a true record.
2. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:** – Ronnie Morrison reported that the venue for the Pensioners Parliament 2019 Social was now in doubt as it was rumoured that the British Legion might be closing. It was agreed that he should try and find another venue that would be suitable for people who are handicapped and keep the National Committee informed.
3. **Retired Members Residential Education Course:** - This course was held in October 2018 in Eastbourne: – some regions sent more than 4 delegates because other regions were unable to fill their allocation.
4. **Motion from the North East Region:** - This motion dealt with what they regarded as a lack of respect towards the RM Section at the 2017 Sector Conference. The motion had been referred back to the region but some members still felt that we had been effectively side lined. Steve Turner (AGS) said that we had the same treatment as the Industrial Sectors who also met on the Sunday. Retired members conference was held in the largest room. All the Sunday meetings had a cold buffet lunch. The organising committee would be asked to look into the possibility of a hot lunch next time.
5. **Regional Reports:** - We received an update on the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon Project. It has been put on hold but the Welsh Government are still trying to find sources of funding for it. The knock on effect is such that the GE Turbine facility at Rugby is to be relocated to France. Under Regional Reports it emerged that retired

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members in the Channel Isles were not able to take part in the Retired Members Groups – this issue is to be investigated further. Steve Turner reminded us that 30th November is the date when 'Winter Deaths' for the last year are announced. Derick Roberts (Wales) told us that the Holtham Report proposes an increase in Income Tax for a 'Ring Fenced' social care fund.

6. Under Any Other Business: - There was considerable discussion about the 'Bus Bill' – a delegate from West Midlands had previously reported how pensioners had become involved in local issues, but delegates felt that we needed a 'National Transport Bill'. In Scotland, the government takes responsibility for transport issues.

7. Assistant General Secretary's Report: – Steve Turner had submitted a very full report. He highlighted work in the hospitality sector where unionisation

is giving members a voice, the young members campaign in GLL Tower Hamlets which highlighted the non-payment of the living wage - which they are now being paid, Unite in schools - is a very active movement educating young people of all ages (now engaging with year 6 at Primary Schools) about the Trades Union Movement and how it can help to bring about democratic change. Collective bargaining/trades unions are no longer on the syllabus so it is important that speakers go into schools and spread the word. Are also looking at FE and apprenticeships. He also highlighted the 'Unity over Division' strategy, which is a co-ordinated response by Trades Unions working together to combat the dangerous growth of the 'Far Right' and its associated groups.

8. Blackpool 2019 Pensioners Parliament: - The following Delegates were elected to attend the 2019 Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool Ronnie Morrison, Brenda Irvine, Maggie Roberts, Dave Samuels, Mike McLoughlin, Lorene Fabian, Bill Moores, Phil Wiseman, Roy Rix, Alan Sidaway, Tony O'Brien (UCATT) + An other UCATT delegate.

9. National Strategy Meeting Held on 30th October: - Mike McLoughlin (Coordinator) gave a brief report of the meeting and distributed a list of proposed amendments to put forward to the 2019 Rules Conference. After further consideration by the Strategy Group, the amendments will be circulated to Regions for them to put an amendment to conference. The December NEC meeting will set out the timetable for conference.

10. Labour Party Report: - Bill Moores (North West) Gave a brief report of the Labour Party Conference. Starting with the Liverpool Hospital which was a casualty of the Carillion collapse. It has now been found to have structural problems. The contract to finish the building has been awarded to another anti-union company! There was a good debate on the Palestine and the Gazza Strip. Many thought that Anti-Semitism charges were trumped up. There is to be a 'Democracy Review' as not al



Jenny Foxon - (E Mids) URM Deputy National Committee Delegate.

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constituency parties are 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. The NEC are producing a new rule book. UNITE are unpopular due to involvement in the leadership and trigger ballots. In his summing up, Bill said it was the best conference he has attended with a lot of good debate.

11. Shrewsbury 24 Video: - Over lunch there was showing of a video made at the Eastbourne School. It was a speech by Terry Renshaw one of the Shrewsbury 24 alerting us to the fact that 30 years after the event they are still fighting for justice. Some of the papers which detail why the charges were made are covered by a 'gagging' order so Terry still doesn't know why he was/still is branded 'a subversive' and cannot get a visa to visit the USA even though he has served on the North Wales Police Committee for 20 years. He is an excellent speaker and travels round the country giving talks to union groups along with other members of the 24.

12. Unite Political Department: - Jenny Killen Political Organiser gave the meeting an overview of what her department does including involvement in the Labour Party Conference. Unite has submitted a paper to the Democracy Review. She spoke about how TU's participate in trigger ballots and reselection ballots. MP's receive briefings from Unite, with lobbies at Westminster and the councils network. Trying to build Unite Labour Groups on councils.

A questioner asked why labour is not having the impact it should be? Jenny's response was that most of the press is against us. Another comment/suggestion was that instead of sponsoring individual MP's we should sponsor constituencies.

13. Motions submitted for Discussion: - Two motions were put to the meeting, 1. Social Care Funding proposed by Mike Mcloughlin (East Midlands) it was passed unanimously. 2. Renationalise NHS Services without Compensation proposed by London & Eastern Region – passed unanimously.

14. URM National Facebook Website: - It was agreed that we should set up a National Facebook Website for Unite. Ideally we would need one member from each region to be involved. A small team of five volunteers has been agreed for the purpose of assisting to set up the website, it is hoped that this team can be expanded later. Steve Turner will arrange for the team to receive appropriate training. The meeting closed at 15.00.

Jenny Foxon - East Midlands

AGE SCOTLAND DUMFRIES NETWORK MEETING

This meeting was held on 13th November and the first item on the agenda was **“What's new with you”**. Lots of items and issues were raised during the discussion, a few of the campaigns pursued in the area were found to have been very successful. I mentioned the 18 month battle, with Stagecoach about toilet stops or toilets on coaches, especially the 101/102 bus that travels to Edinburgh from Dumfries, our branch fought hard to get it established, that we need a break at the service station, after two hours travel, and with the help of our MP, in the end we won the day and now we have a 10 minute break at Abingdon Services, built in to the time table.

The second item on the agenda was “The Food Train” this was started 20 years ago, with and led by Age Scotland representative, Heather Bailee, she explained the reason for the meeting and why the many groups within Dumfries and Galloway area had been invited to attend this meeting. Heather explained the work of Age Scotland and the many functions that they carry out, they have a helpline which takes 19,000 calls a year, in helping the members within

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Scotland. They have contacts with vulnerable people, the cost is £50 a year but there are limited spaces. This group was set up with support from the T & G and the Dumfries Retired members. They help with grocery shopping & delivery, household support, help with small jobs, a befriending service, neighbourhood meal sharing, this makes sure that older pensioners have one good, home cooked, hot meal a day. This is for over 65's; it's a good contact service. Also there is "Food Train "extra" this gives more than the ordinary service, i.e. cleaning inside windows, this saves on falls and trips, also going green, they also take stuff to be recycled, etc. Also the new service is "Meal Makers" This is an excellent service and needs all of our support.

The next item on the programme was "Dumfries & Galloway Advocacy Service" This service is designed to give people a stronger voice, they also support groups independently. They have a group gardener, they support issues: - NHS, local council, mental health, older adult is an important issue. To listen to and help pensioners to go for the services that they are entitled to, they also listen to the views of the clients, and also help them to understand their rights.

WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY, WE ARE THERE TO HELP YOU ALL.

The last issue to be discussed before lunch was the "Dumfries & Galloway Winter Warmth project". This project is for the benefit of older people, they provide free logs, to help keep older pensioners warm during the cold, winter weather, and they distribute 180 tons per annum. They also support 107 young people, 25 years old and younger, in Dumfries and in Galloway they support 305 older people, all these projects are means tested benefits.

After a very good lunch, the first session gave us the background of the "Dumfries and Galloway Handy Van Service" This is a charity that does lots of helpful things in the area for pensioners, such as old furniture collecting and disposing of it, drain and guttering cleaning, fitting new locks, key pads, bath rails, small jobs around the home, grab rails, on outside steps, taking down summer curtains and putting up winter ones. You can request two visits a year; this is a flexible service under certain circumstances. They are funded by the integrated board, they also get funding for Dementia sufferers. They get calls direct from carers, police, fire brigade and social services, they also provide smoke alarms and carbon dioxide alarms and fit them, and this is a very excellent service. All these services are free, except gutter clearing where a £20 charge is made.



Alan Sidaway - Scottish Region and National Committee: - Photo Mike McLoughlin

The final session of the day was on the issue of the "Dumfries and Galloway Telehealth Care, (this has been renamed from Telecare,) which it was from the beginning, this again is a good service for the older pensioner who lives alone and a long way from their families. Who else is there to help, if they fall and cannot get up, and just lying there on a cold floor perhaps banging their head as they fall, they are all given a pendant which they can alert the service day and

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night. It is now for all ages and also very much for disabled people, it costs the clients £3.60 per year and for this you get all the equipment you need, phones etc, batteries are also provided when they become exhausted, another excellent service provided locally. This was a very good meeting which left us well informed about issues and events that were taking place locally within the volunteering sector, this also makes a more pleasant life for all those who are being helped and we should support them 100%

**Alan Sidaway & Bill Hitchens. Dumfries Retired Members Branch
and supporting the Dumfries over 50s group.**

Report from the Unite National Retired Members Campaign Team

The Campaign Team met on October 30th and spent 4 hours discussing the suggested Rule amendments which had been submitted to them for possible forwarding to the 2019 Rules Conference. They concluded that 11 motions needed to be amended in the interest of achieving the changes necessary for the advancement of the Retired Members Plus section of Unite. This would mean that ideally each Region would submit one amendment to Rule and that the National Committee should be responsible for Amending Rule 10.

The listed proposed amendments were put to the full RM National Committee on October 31st, where there was a brief debate but there was insufficient time to have a detailed discussion. Some of the proposed amendments are controversial and will not attract unanimous support but they are included as a matter of principle. It was decided to accept the report and that all members of the National Committee should when they get home, have a thorough look at the proposals and let Mike McLoughlin, the Lay Coordinator, have their comments by the end of November. This timing is essential as the NEC will meet in early December and decide on how amendments and motions will be handled. It is expected that their decisions will be known just before Christmas and that we need to be able to advise our RCC's very quickly thereafter.

The National Committee took the decision that Rule 10 amendments will be dealt with by the National Committee, and the other suggested amendments should be taken up by the Regions. The final decision on precisely how to submit the Rule 10 amendment will be taken at the February National Committee Meeting. To ensure wider support, we would like RCC's to contact members of work place branches and suggest that they could forward amendments on Rule 10 on our behalf to the Rules Conference, unless they are submitting an amendment on their own behalf. This has the advantage of giving us cover in depth and gaining us broad support. For this campaign to be carried out successfully we need Mike McLoughlin, to be kept informed about what is happening to enable him to ensure that all the desired amendments have been sent to the Conference. It is appreciated that some Regions prefer to take their own independent course of action and choose not to communicate with the Lay Coordinator, but on this occasion, to ensure maximum impact, we ask all

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Regions to keep him informed of the Rules Amendments they put forward. Please forward your comments to Mike McLoughlin and copy Monica Taylor in to the email as well.

michaelmcloughlin1812@outlook.com

sisteract_mtaylor@hotmail.com

The Proposed Rules Amendments have been circulated to all the Retired Members Regional Coordinating Committees for the purpose of discussion and hopefully will forward an amendment from their Region to the Rules Conference. A Response has already been received from some Regions who have indicated their intentions to forward amendments to the 2019 Rules Conference

Welsh Region: - The Welsh Region at its November RCC Meeting took the decision to take on the responsibility for ensuring that the proposed amendments for Motion 12.4.2 & 12.7.1 will be forwarded to the Rules Conference.

South West Region: - The South West Region at its recent RCC meeting took the decision that they would accept any rule amendments that the national committee asked them to deal with and would forward them to the Rules Conference.

London & Eastern Region: - The London & Eastern Region at its RCC meeting yesterday indicated that they were happy with the Proposed Rule amendments as discussed by the National Committee on October 31st and would be taking responsibility for the proposed amendments to Rule 13.7.1 & 13.10.1 and will ensure that they are forwarded to the Rules Conference.

East Midlands Region: - The East Midlands RCC at its meeting yesterday decided that the issue of amendments for the Rules Conference would be on their February agenda and that they would take into account the requirements of the national committee. They would seek through the area activists committee's to find company or geographical branches who might be prepared to forward amendments for us on Rule 10 to the Rules Conference

The Irish Region: - Have now confirmed that their Regional Coordinating Committee have agreed that they wish to be responsible for ensuring that the proposed amendment to Rule 11.4 is forwarded to the 2019 Rules Conference.

The North West Region: - The North West Region have confirmed that their Regional Coordinating Committee have agreed to take responsibility for ensuring that the proposed amendments to Rule 6.1 & 6.2 are forwarded to the 2019 Rules Conference.

Mike McLoughlin - National Committee Coordinator

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Will you please publish this letter which Unite is supporting and has indicated that it will be publish in all its publications. Both the Unions HQ and my address is included so that members or their relatives have easy access to advice and help.

David Trigg.
26 Holyrood Close
Spondon, Derby,
DE21 7QB.

Unite,
Unite House,
128 Theobald's Road,
Holborn, London,
WC1X 8TN

Dear Colleagues, I am a retired Unite member and actively involved in the fight for justice for victims of asbestos related diseases. As such I receive news cuttings from around the country of appeals from family, or solicitors representing families, of victims of these terrible diseases. Almost all are for any former work colleagues of the victims to contact the claimants solicitor, and give any experiences of where the claimant could have been exposed to asbestos fibres during their employment. Upon close examination of these news articles it can be seen that the claimant, based upon his, or her, occupation, and the employer activity, business, could well have been a member of a trade union, possibly one that now forms Unite.

So, what is the problem, you may ask. It is that in the vast majority of these cases, the legal firms, acting on behalf of the claimants, are firms that are not trade union firms, they are 'High Street' or 'Television/newspaper ad' firms. Again, what is the problem? Well, most of these, if not all, also undertake work for employers, and the insurance industry, so who's interest's do you think that they



**David Trigg campaigning in
Geneva 2015**

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usually act in, think about it. If that is not enough to put one off using them, they can, in law, deduct up to 25% of the clients compensation, as a reward for succeeding with the case.

High street solicitors may only agree to take a claim on if a victim takes out expensive legal expense insurance to cover the cost of medical reports and other disbursements. The premiums for these policies are thousands of pounds. However, these insurance premiums can no longer be recovered from the unsuccessful Defendants. Instead high street solicitors deduct them from the victim's compensation. Is that what you want from your solicitor? No, it is not.

The legal services provided by Unite are the best available to its members, and the members family, and it comes with the membership. Trade unions maintain Asbestos Exposure Databases. Memories fade and people lose touch with work colleagues. Unite's database alone contains details for more than 12,000 members. Unite's solicitors have access to this bank of crucial potential witness information. There is a wealth of support available from union witness contacts and union solicitors have decades of experience dealing with previous similar claims.

Colleagues, if you know of a friend, neighbour, somebody in the pub, or wherever, who, unfortunately, gets diagnosed with an asbestos related disease, then ask them if they are, or have been, at the time of any exposure to asbestos, a member of a trade union, then, if the answer is yes, tell them, or a family member, to contact that trade union immediately, and to inform the union of the disease diagnosis. Unite, and most other trade unions, have a scheme for reopening the membership of the client, so enabling them to make the claim for compensation through the solicitors working for the union. Unite actually operates an auditing system of its legal firms to ensure that the members interests come first, that the member is looked after, and receives 100% of the compensation awarded.

It is also useful to point anyone you know with an asbestos disease to their nearest asbestos victims support group. I am the Honorary Chair of DAST, hence my interest in the fight for justice and compensation. DAST is a member of The Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK (AVSGF-UK). Go to <http://www.asbestosforum.org.uk/> where you will find your nearest support group. These groups are the people to go to for advice on benefits, and support for sufferers of asbestos disease, and their families. Please, in the best interests of the asbestos disease claimant that you may know, tell them about trade union legal services.

Yours fraternally - David Trigg - Derby - East Midlands

Dear Editor,

Please publish my report of the latest meeting of the Leicester Save

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our National Health Service (SONHS) as it will help to bring people up to date. As for an update to the call for direct consultation on the removal of ITU level 3 at the Leicester General, this has now been stopped. It was felt that after a meeting with leaders of SONHS and UHL it was clear that no direct consultation would take place, as the decision to move the ITU, was taken 3 years ago on medical grounds. They did appear to recognise that the campaign had a strong voice. Also, they can't consult once finance has been approved, as any changes would mean that they have to reapply for finance and thus increase costs and delay projects. The UHL then decided to hold a series of engagement evenings. These were held though out the county, but due to lack of publicity they were poorly attended, in fact at most there was more members of NHS staff than members of the public. They mainly consisted of a power point presentation followed by a controlled Q &A session.

The UHL are moving forward with their project for the development at the Royal and Glenfield Hospital's and expect to present it to the Department of Health by the end of December for approval. They are following the Naylor report, which states that trusts must dispose of surplus assets, land, buildings etc, to finance new developments, with the sale of land at the Glenfield Hospital under way and we guess sale of land at the General Hospital will follow in time. Whilst SONHS is in favour of improvement in capacity, in fact it looks like the whole project will give a net gain of 3 beds. The design of the new building is not for cost reasons, as it will cost more than a standard build design, but purely to attract better staff, not even for patients. One of the areas that has not been covered by the proposals is social care. This appears not to be UHL's concern, but in their view that of local authority.



David Holloway - Leicester URM Branch & Delegate to the SONHS. Photo to Mike McLoughlin

The actions that the group are now focusing on is informing the general public of the situation on the lack of long-term planning for the increase in population, and the future of the General. This is hard on limited funds, when the other side has unlimited funds. To this end, they are going to engage further with the media, contact CLPs with a view to having a stall at county markets and finally a standard lettered sent to all SONHS members, so that it can then be sent to their local MP, so that they are aware of the situation. Lastly, encourage people to follow the progress of the campaign on Facebook and the SONHS web page.

David Holloway Leicester RM Branch

Dear Editor,

Its my belief that some of your readers might be interested in my views which are expressed below.

The ERG and WTO agreements

Now what did this buccaneering group of MPs have in common? Well they believe in the virtues of WTO (World Trade Agreements). This form of agreement would be the salvation for Britain when we leave the EU. Now I know I am risking my reputation for accuracy but I do doubt whether many members of the public have the slightest idea how they work and why do the ERG favour them.

Well I think the ERG are living in a time warp. It used to be that developed countries would benefit from the WTO, as did a handful of mostly upper middle income countries. The rest, including the great majority of developing countries, do not. It is as simple as that. The benefits of the WTO go to a few powerful nations, under the guise of 'democracy', 'openness' and a 'neutral' Secretariat.

Even many supporters of globalization in developing countries do not see the WTO, as it currently operates, as benefiting them. What happens in the WTO is part of a broader pattern of neo-colonialism in the global economy. This has two strands . The first is the self-interest of the major powers; their close ties with multinational companies (through the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, 'revolving doors' between industry and government, etc.); and their willingness to use their political and economic strength to achieve their ends, where powerful commercial interests are involved, even their own populations.

The second strand is a combination of ideology, paternalism and missionary zeal. The true believers in globalisation and liberalization feel sure that they know best, that markets work and globalization benefits all, but the poor benighted heathens of the South have yet to realize this. The Enlightened Ones, armed with the Gospel According to Adam Smith, therefore have a duty to spread the Word, and to do whatever it takes to bring the unbelievers to the Promised Land of the globalized economy for their own good, even if they don't realize they want to be there.

This second strand is epitomized by Robert Cooper, who was an official in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a key advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair: 'When dealing with the more old-fashioned kinds of state outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era, force, pre-emptive attack, deception. The opportunities, perhaps even the need, for colonisation is as great as it ever was in the 19th century. What is needed is a new kind of imperialism' (Quote taken from The Guardian 2002).

While this quote is unusual in its frankness, the mentality that underlies it is all too apparent in the functioning of the WTO and other international economic institutions. The 'rougher methods of pre-emptive attack and deception' that Cooper recommends are already widely used by the major powers in the WTO. Moreover, it seems inevitable that the powerful countries will stick to these tactics, which have served them so well, as long as they still have the opportunities and tools to do so.

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How will this affect the UK when we leave the EU? Most of the countries in the world have trade deals. There will be one country who will not. The UK. We will be approaching many countries to obtain free trade agreements. The ERG are saying we will be able to save money with WTO deals. So every country in the world will know we want numerous trade deals and I am suggesting this will not be a position of strength. Many countries will continue to operate from a position of strength. Is it likely that Trump and his policy of US first will give us a good deal? Will the Commonwealth Countries bend over backwards to accommodate our wishes or will they, for the first time in their history, be in a position to bargain from a position of strength? Even the EU will be able to extract a good deal.

I do not think Rees-Mogg and the ERG have thought this scenario through.

K. Clarke - East Midlands

All the media commentators are saying that parliament is not in a position to make any decisions on Brexit and that this is unprecedented.

This jogged my memory and I did a bit of research. I went back to 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. In that year they also conducted a census. Two facts captured the public imagination. For the first time, more people lived in towns - albeit often quite small ones - than in the countryside; a dramatic contrast with the past and with any other economy. The free-trade movement accompanied rather than anticipated the commitment of the British economy to manufacturing, transport, and service industries with an urban base. That dream of the Liberal Tories of the 1820s, that the economy could be somehow held in balance between agriculture and industry, was forgotten with the free trade dawn. Agriculture remained easily the largest single industry and indeed increased its competence and output markedly in the 1850s and 1860s. But the growth of population was in the towns, and labourers left the land for the cities.

When agriculture faced its crisis in the 1870s with the opening of the North American prairies, there were relatively few left to defend it. The 'Revolt of the Field' in the 1870s was a motley affair as out-of-work labourers struggled to organize themselves as wages fell and magistrates and farmers brought in the troops to harvest the crops. By the 1850s, Britain - and especially northern and midland England, South Wales, and southern Scotland - was thus, through the working of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of world trade rather than by any conscious political decision, committed to a ride on the roller-coast of international capitalism, a ride where the travellers could not see beyond the rise or dip ahead of them; no one had been there before. An urban nation had no precedent: perhaps that was why the British dwelt so tenaciously on rural images and traditions.

The other statistic of the 1851 Census that caught the attention of contemporaries was its revelations about religion. It was the only Census ever to attempt to assess

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main emphasis was indisputable and surprising: England and Wales were only partly church-going, and Anglicans were in only a bare majority of those who attended. Of a total population of 17,927,609, the church-goers were:

Church of England	5,292,551
Roman Catholics	383,630
Protestant Dissenters	4,536,265

Of potential church-goers, over five and a quarter million stayed at home. The Census was a triumph for non-Anglicans. Their claim to greater political representation and attention was now backed by the most potent of all mid-Victorian weapons, so approved of by Mr Gradgrind, Charles Dickens's manufacturer: 'a fact'. England in the 1850s was thus increasingly non-Anglican in tone. Mid-Victorian politics reflected these tendencies, all of which pointed towards Liberalism.

Between 1847 and 1868, the Tories (rump of the party left as protectionists after the 1846 split) lost six general elections running (1847, 1852, 1857, 1859, 1865, 1868). It is clear that the Tories lost these elections; it is less easy to say who won them. Majority governments relied on support from four main groups: the Whigs, the radicals, the Liberals and the Peelites (the followers of Sir Robert Peel in 1846). This support was always liable to disintegration. The classic mid-Victorian political pattern was as follows: a coalition government was made up of all or most of the above groups, comprising and bargaining until they could agree no more and a point of breakdown was reached: the government would go out of office without dissolving Parliament; the Tories would then form a minority government, during which the non-Tory groups would resolve their differences, defeat the Tories, force a dissolution, win the general election, and resume power. This overall pattern explains the minority Tory (Derby/Disraeli) ministries of 1852, 1858-9, and 1866-8.

The political system between 1846 and 1868 thus excluded the Tories from power, while allowing them occasional periods of minority office. During the same period, the majority coalition first formed by Lord Aberdeen in 1852 gradually fused into 'the liberal party', though even when it became regularly referred to by the name in the 1860s it remained fissiparous and liable to disintegration. At the executive level, the Whigs, the Peelites, and Lord Palmerston predominated. To a considerable extent they ruled on sufferance. That great surge of middle-class political awareness exemplified in the Anti-Corn Law League in the 1840s had made it clear to politicians that the old political structure could only be maintained only if it came to terms with middle-class expectations. The series of great budgets introduced by the Peelite Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Ewart Gladstone, in the years 1853-5 and 1859-65 went far towards meeting these expectations fiscally. The manufacturing classes wanted free trade: Gladstone saw to it that they got it.

'Free trade' of course meant much more than simply the abolition of protective tariffs. 'Free Trade' or *laissez-faire* were shorthand terms exemplifying a whole philosophy of political, social, and economic organization. John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, first published in 1848, the handbook of mid-Victorian liberalism, put the point in a nutshell; '*Laissez-faire*, in short, should be the general practice: every departure from it, unless required by some great good, is a certain evil.' The presumption was that the State should stand aside. The division which Mill and

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others made between 'the State' on the one hand and society on the other was based on the assumption that the individual could and should stand alone. Individualism, self respect, and the organisation of voluntary and co-operative societies, these were the keynotes of mid-Victorian liberalism. Thus the economy should be self-regulating, and the individual whether consumer or producer, holding his copy of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859), should be free to make what way he could in it.

Now the present European Research Group (ERG) are locked into this philosophy. They have no time for the sick, infirm, unemployed and aged. They should be able to look after themselves. Taxation is an abomination to them. The very fact that they give out tax for research and development and then let the same companies who have had this largess rip-off the National Health Service, is according to them, within the rules of free trade.

Our parliament looks very similar to the 1850s. We have Welsh Nationalists, Scottish Nationalist, DUP, Liberals and the Labour Party all taking seats. The Tories do not have a majority. In 2010 they were in government with the help of the Liberals in coalition. David Cameron got a twelve seat majority in 2015 and then called a referendum. This back-fired and Theresa became the prime minister. With a judicious decision by Theresa to go for an early election in 2016, to obtain a bigger majority, she blew her majority away. She attempted to get the DUP onside but this does not seem to be working to well.



Keith Clarke - our political Correspondent . Photo Mike McLoughlin

The big change was between agriculture and manufacturing. Now we have to have plans for robotic production and artificial intelligence. Both threatening large sections of the work force. With the philosophy of the ERG there will be no planning for this shift in employment. There will not be training and there will be no sharing the proceeds of production with a shorter working week. So I contend that the philosophy and the composition in the present parliament make the present circumstances very similar to the 1850s. For further information visit the website below.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/deal-will-threaten-uk-workers'-rights> **Keith Clarke - Leicester RM Branch**

The Newsletter has now been with us for three years and been produced in 14 editions, this has been possible due to the enthusiastic support that has been received from the Regions. It is important that it continues to be well supported and continue to have a diverse amount of experience and reports of organised activity by our members. I particularly want reports of any intergenerational activity which has taken place with photographs. The next edition of the Newsletter will be published in February 2019. please forward all your materials on to me on michaelmcloughlin1812@outlook.com

Happy New year to all our Readers - Editor

The Entry of the Bright Sparks Long Alley Skittles Team Into the Trade Union Skittles League.

During the early 1980's our Test Department at Brush Electrical Machines (BEM) which at that time was part of the Hawker Siddeley Group, had a new Chief of Test appointed as a result of a retirement. One of his idea's to promote an outside of work interest was to suggest joining the well established long alley skittles league that was operating within Brush and the local area workplaces. This League was a trade union league initially set up in September 1960 by the Association of Engineering & Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (AESD) as an aid to recruitment. The league at its peak consisted of 20 teams split into two divisions of ten teams each.

In the late BEM Test Department assembled at a skittles alley in the centre of Loughborough called the Band Wagon for their introduction to long alley skittles, although the pin fall was not great, they all enjoyed the evening. During the following week at work, members of both day shifts agreed that we should join the skittles league at the beginning of the new season in early September. Two suggestions were made regarding the name of their team, the first was **"Bright Sparks"** (which appeared if a machine on test blew up) and the **"Flashers"** a term used in high voltage testing of machines. For sensible reasons the Name chosen for the team was **"Bright Sparks"**.

Because of the shift patterns worked originally on test we had in effect two teams and you were only able to play when you were on the early shift. Our early seasons found us languishing in the lower regions of Division 2. With the introduction of lady players into the team (those who were interested enough to play) which led to improved team performance, due to the fact that more of the team members were able to play every week.

Eventually we won promotion to the first division and even with having to contend with the front pin rule which operated only in the first division. This rule in effect meant that any pins knocked down whilst the front pin was still standing did not count, the aim of the rule was to improve standards which it did, however it took newly promoted teams quite a long time to adjust to life in the first division. We survived for a time within division 1 and the highest placing ever achieved by us was 4th, however we had some success in some of the knock out competitions, one of our ladies Jackie Cunningham won the singles KO twice, against many very good male players, this was a great achievement.

By now I had become the team organiser and was voted onto the league committee as the Vice Chair, and then Chair which I still am. As our team aged and some of them retired from the team, we eventually got relegated back into division 2 and we became more of a social team, content to remain in division 2 and just enjoy the game. Mike McLoughlin who played for the Motors Drawing Office team, who were in the league from day

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one and are still playing in the league, shortly after he retired from work felt that he was not getting sufficient game time and transferred to Bright Sparks. Mike was one of the four AESD social committee members who set up the league, he is still playing for us on a regular basis; he also wrote a comprehensive history of the league back in 2001 called the first 41 years.

In its earlier years and right up until 2003 the League was under the guidance of the Branch which at that time was MSF and did receive some financial assistance for the purpose of buying pins and cheeses, although the league was well on the way to being self financing. And have its own bank account. During the course of its life the league has had many titles due to union name changes. The last name change in 2004 was from MSF to AMICAS, when we become Unite, the league decided to remain as AMICAS. We were never successful in getting the shop floor to participate in our skittles league, the problem was that some of them were keen to play but did not seem to realize that someone needed to organise matters and availability of players prior to match day.

The league now reflects the industrial decline of our country i.e. mainly disappeared, Loughborough was a thriving Town with a large Electrical Engineering, Co, Brush, Herbert Morris, Cranes, Wm. Cottons Textile Machine Manufactures, and a host of other company's. The main employer in the town is now the University, they entered a team in our league, but they lasted only three years.

We are now down to nine teams, and have devised a system that gives each team 18/20 matches per season. Hopefully the remaining stalwart teams will hang in there for a few more years. September 2019 will see the league start its 60th season. We are always on the lookout for more new teams.



Roger Chapman, Skittles League Chair Photo Mike McLoughlin

Article by Roger Chapman - Leicester RM branch

A Nice Little Tale from Devon about an NHS Boss

From the Independent" Wednesday 19th December 2018 by Alex Matthews -King and Chris Baynes

An NHS boss who landed another senior role despite a fraud conviction and a suspension for "victimising **whistle-blowers**" has prompted calls for a review of systems to prevent unfit appointments. Paula Vasco-Knight was given a suspended sentence in 2017 after admitting abusing her position as chief executive of **South Devon** NHS Foundation Trust in 2013 to pay her husband out of NHS funds.

Vasco-Knight resigned her post in 2014 after an unrelated employment tribunal

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suspended her over her treatment of whistle blowers who raised misconduct concerns over the hiring of her daughter's boyfriend to a job at Torbay hospital. She was later employed at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in London and had been promoted to acting chief executive before the fraud investigation came to light in 2016.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report says that the case represents a failing by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to administer Fit and Proper Person Regulations (FPPR). These rules apply to director level appointments across the NHS and are intended in part to prevent those with prior record of misconduct getting another job in the NHS. Clare Sardari, a former nurse who, along with Penny Gates, lost her job after raising concerns over Vasco-Knight's conduct said it was "shocking" she was found fit and proper.

"I was concerned that Paula's past conduct was not given adequate weight in the recruitment process and that the **CQC**, when they received complaints, diminished the seriousness of her conduct," she told *The Independent*. "By passing her as fit and proper, the CQC have given a public message that those who victimise whistle-blowers can escape proper accountability and can be recycled." Ms Sardari, 61, was the main breadwinner in her family when she lost her job. Though she received a settlement in 2015 of £230,000 for legal costs, back pay and damages for the bullying and intimidation she faced, it did not cover lost future earnings and she has been unable to work since.

"The amount I was left with won't last until I'm 65 and get my NHS pension," she added. "I've been blacklisted, I've lost my career, I've lost my identity, I lost a lot of my work friends, who were told not to communicate with me. I have depression and I've had to sit by and watch helplessly as the person who put me in this situation was feted by NHS and the CQC." Vasco-Knight pleaded guilty and was given a suspended prison sentence in 2017, along with her husband Stephen Vasco-Knight, after paying his firm £11,000 for a leadership improvements document that never existed.

The ombudsman found the CQC's handling of the FPPR "was not transparent, fair or proportionate and it amounted to maladministration". The regulator was criticised for its poor record-keeping, and was found to have dismissed tribunal criticisms of Vasco-Knight, while giving her apology and references undue prominence. Rob Behrens, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, said: "This case shows that CQC's approach to making sure NHS trusts are employing the right people at director-level needs reviewing. "The public and NHS staff must have confidence that NHS leaders are fit and proper to do the job and that whistle-blowers will not be penalised for raising concerns.

The ombudsman partly upheld Ms Sardari's complaint, recommending that the CQC apologise and offer her £500 "in recognition of the injustice caused to her". It must also report improvements it has made within eight weeks. Ian Trenholm, Chief Executive at the CQC said it recognised its handling of the case "did not meet Ms Sardari's expectations" and said it was committed to **whistle-blower** protections. However he said this was a challenging case where the tribunal verdict was one of a number of contradictory pieces of evidence for the trust to assess. "We do have concerns about the approach adopted by the Parliamentary and Health Service ombudsman (PHSO) which led to some of the findings of maladministration," he added.

Submitted by the Editor for Publication.

Seasonal Greetings For Christmas 2018 And 2019 From Our National Chair.

The National Retired Members Plus Coordinating Committee is a voice for retired members and it is an honour and a privilege to have been elected as the first female Chairperson of the Retired Members Plus National Coordinating Committee.

We have developed a clear sense of purpose in our ambition to further develop the Retired Members Plus sector of Unite. I am proud to be the National Chair as we go forward to advance retired members participation, as our achievement over the past year and our agenda for the year ahead is to build and strengthen the links between the generations.

It is my firm intention with the help of my National Committee Colleagues to build strong links between our retired members and all future pensioners. My special concern is that we succeed in building strong links with the younger generation.

Monica Taylor - Retired Members Plus - National Chair.

Seasonal Greetings from the National Committee.

The National Committee sends seasonal Greetings to all Unite Members and hope that 2019 will have some bright spots despite the possible fallout from the mess that the present government has made of the Brexit Negotiations.



**Monica Taylor - West Midlands
RCC & National Committee
Chair**

**Seasonal Greetings to all
our members from**

Steve Turner AGS

**May 2019 be a good one
for our Members**

Editorial

We have come to the end of yet another year and we need to take stock of where we are and what has been achieved if anything. From the viewpoint of the national committee we have made progress in that we have quite a few new faces on the on the national Committee, including an additional female member gives us a total of 6 women. For the first time the National committee in 2018 voted in the first woman National Chair Monica Taylor from the West Midlands and also voted Maggie Smith into the Vice Chairs position. This has indeed been a progressive year on the National Committee.

At the end of January we said goodbye to Mike McCartney who had been our National Officer for four years and worked very well with us and also insisted that we should not be afraid to take the initiative when it mattered, thus making use of our experience. Mike provided much guidance on many issues and was always supportive. We wish him a long and happy retirement. Mike was replaced as our National Officer by Steve Turner Assistant General Secretary, who volunteered to take us in hand on a regular ongoing basis.

I wish to thank all of you in the Regions for the support that you have given me since the inception of this newsletter, by forwarding reports, articles, letters to the editor and in particular those with a view on the present state of our economy. The influx of material has been excellent and enables members who are either retired or are future pensioners to be aware of the issues to which we are confronted and have to campaign against. We also wish to thank the Regional Secretary's who take steps to have the newsletter circulated to all branches as well as to the RM branches.

During the past 12 months there has been much activity amongst our

members in supporting and participating in campaigns to save the NHS, Care homes, care in the community, mental health issues etc. Of equal importance is the amount of support including visiting picket lines and demonstrations in support of hotel and restaurant staff who have been on strike to secure better conditions and recognition. This support from our retired members has been particularly good in the London area and in Wales.

The Rules Conference will take place at the Brighton Centre from June 22nd to the 28th. This Conference will be of great significance to retired members as it will be the first Rules Conference where we have the right to submit amendments to rules that effect retired members. In addition we will have Observers (one from each region) who will be able to move and speak on those amendments that we submit to Conference. This major breakthrough for us has been possible because of the Changes that were made to the Rules that effect Retired Members Plus the 2011 Rules Conference. **Now forward to the new year and lets hope it's a good one.**

