

P6&12 A NICE LITTLE EARNER

UNISON research reveals huge pay rises for university vice-chancellors

P16 GAIL FORCE ACTIVISM

A force of nature who chairs regional women's committee

P30 HAVE A NICE DAY!

Peter Carroll rages against computers and call centres

UNISON ACTIVE!

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS IN YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE



SUMMER 2015 | ISSUE 21 | £3
WWW.UNISON-YORKS.ORG.UK

We Can Do It!

BLOODY BUT UNBOWED

The fight goes on,
says Wendy **P5**

We'll weather
Tory storm **P9**

UNISON
FIGHTING
BACK



there for you

supporting UNISON members
when life gets tough

- **Financial assistance**
- **Debt advice**
- **Wellbeing breaks**
- **Support & information**

Please make sure our members
are aware of the help that is
available in these difficult times.

UNISON members struggling
through an unexpected crisis can
get help from 'there for you' by:-

- ☞ Contacting their
Branch Welfare Officer
- ☞ Calling us on 020 7121 5620

You can also find out more
information by visiting our website

[www.unison.org.uk/get-help/
help-with-problems-at-home/
there-for-you/](http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-problems-at-home/there-for-you/)

Registered charity number 1023552


UNISON
the public service union

OurUnion**General Secretary**
Dave Prentis**Regional Secretary**
John Cafferty**Regional Convenor**
Wendy Nichols**UNISON**
Yorkshire & Humberside
Commerce House, Wade Lane,
Leeds LS2 8NJ
T: 0845 355 0845 or freephone
textphone 08000 967 968
W: www.unison-yorks.org.ukLines are open 6am-midnight
Monday-Friday and
9am-4pm Saturdays**Editor**
Barrie Clement**Consulting Editor**
Mary Maguire**Chief Photographer**
Jim Varney**Contributors**
Peter Carroll, Lorraine Fitzsimons,
Ryan Fletcher, Helen Hague, Mary
Maguire, Paul Routledge, Tristram
Serry**Cover Image**
Everett Historical / Shutterstock**Published on behalf**
of UNISON by
Century One Publishing Ltd.
Alban Row, 27-31 Verulam Road
St. Albans, Herts AL3 4DG
T: 01727 893 894
F: 01727 893 895
E: enquiries@centuryonepublishing.uk
W: www.centuryonepublishing.uk**Advertising enquiries**
David Murray
T: 01727 739 182
E: d.murray@centuryonepublishing.uk**Design and art editing**
Farah Jafarian & Minny Sharma
T: 01727 739 190
E: artwork@centuryonepublishing.uk**Printed by**
Unison PrintCopyright reproduction
in whole or part by any means without written
permission of the publisher
is strictly forbidden.
UNISON and the publisher
accept no responsibility
for errors, omissions or
the consequences
thereof.

© UNISON 2015

**DAVE**
PRENTIS
GENERAL
SECRETARY*Dave Prentis*

TURN UP THE TURNOUT

No-one willingly loses a day's pay, but sometimes when every attempt to solve a dispute has failed, there is no choice but to take strike action.

But with the Conservatives back, ministers have unions firmly in their sights. If they have their way, it will become much harder for workers to go on strike.

None of UNISON's recent national disputes - in health, the police service, local government or probation - would have passed the test of a higher turnout threshold (though local disputes, where the numbers involved are smaller, tend to

fare better).

And even if the 50 per cent box were ticked, those in essential services like health and education, would face the added complication that 40 per cent would have to vote yes before any action could take place. That means anyone who abstains counts against the strike.

But we'll take campaigning against the Trade Union Bill in our stride. We'll join civil liberties groups to protect the right of ordinary workers to have a voice.

We'll fight against the Bill wherever and whenever we can, even if it means we have to

take a legal challenge to the highest court in Europe.

The Government says it's on the side of working people, but not it seems if they are in a union and want a decent pay rise.

Of course turnout should, and could be higher. So let's get balloting brought into the modern age, with people voting via phone, laptop or secure workplace ballot boxes.

The Government might be using the language of the 1970s when it talks about unions, but we'll use every modern means to keep its spiteful Bill at bay.

Let's grab this opportunity

**WENDY**
NICHOLS
NATIONAL
PRESIDENT*W. Nichols*

UNISON members who gathered for our annual delegate conference in Glasgow showed they have now shaken off the huge disappointment of the General Election result.

In speech after speech, our members re-stated our profound commitment to improving life for our members and fighting to protect public services.

We know we face more Government attacks on local authority budgets and that more jobs are at risk.

And the future of the NHS as we know it is in severe jeopardy.

But as the delegates made loud and clear in Glasgow, there is no sense of defeatism. The fight for fairness and social justice did not end on May 7.

That is why it is so important for our members to play their part in electing the new Labour leader who we all hope will replace the Tories in 2020.

UNISON members who decided to be in the affiliated political fund will have a vote in the leadership election.

UNISON will be contacting them about how they will be able to cast a vote and any member who wants to register to the APF - it doesn't cost anything extra - can just make contact with their branch, or register at www.unison.org.uk/labour-leadership-vote-thank-you

I hope we will all grab that chance with both hands.



Stand together!

UNISON is bracing itself for fresh attacks on facility time in the region. Government guidance in the probation service for instance would ultimately lead to having only one steward for one day a week to cover the whole of North Yorkshire, Humberside and Lincolnshire – and any training would have to come out of that allowance.

“As with their counterproductive economic austerity, there is no practical need to do this,” said regional secretary John Cafferty.

“Employers, especially in the public sector, know that good facilities agreements free them from many needless hours of meetings with individual employees,” he said.

Employers also know that many potential disputes are averted through co-operation with activists. Such effective industrial

relations saved both time and money, said John.

UNISON was faced by a Government motivated only by a deep ideological hatred of organised labour in any form, he said. Warning that it was a sign of things to come throughout the public service, the regional secretary said: “If we do not vigorously oppose these new restrictions we will be picked off one by one.”

UNISON’S national delegate conference in Glasgow gave its full backing to campaign on the issue, and work with the police and UNISON’S national probation committee to challenge this new attack on trade unionism and gain as much public support as possible.



New office takes off

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis officially opened the new offices of the Bradford local government branch on June 8.

The branch bought the premises in Neal Street, near the Karachi restaurant after many years of renting accommodation in Manor Row.

Branch secretary Linda Crowther said members decided to buy the premises for the long-term security of UNISON in the Bradford district.

Linda said: “There is a lot of space in the building and we can also generate some income for the branch by letting conference and training rooms to outside bodies.”

“We are delighted that UNISON’S general secretary and assistant general secretary Cliff Williams were here because it was a proud day for our union. It shows confidence in our future and confidence in Bradford.”

● P22 - Following in mum's footsteps

**IT'S AN
ODDS-ON
WINNER**

WHY NOT COME TO UNISON'S ANNUAL RACEDAY?

There'll be plenty of fun for the whole family at Doncaster Racecourse.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 1, 2015

- '2 for 1' grandstand tickets total price £13 (2 tickets)
- PLUS live DJs - Vernon Kay and Jo Whiley

BOOK NOW: 01302 304200 (offer closes July 24)

Fight goes on, says Wendy



There's no doubt that the result of the General Election was a "body blow" to the Labour and trade union movement, says UNISON'S newly-elected national president and regional convenor Wendy Nichols.

But once the shock and disappointment fades, she believes the role of UNISON – along with our fellow trade unionists – has never been more important.

Wendy said: "Politicians see General Elections as being like a football match – the winner gets the cup and the loser leaves empty-handed.

"But in reality, the fight which UNISON has

always led against injustice, economic corruption and greed is continuous and never ending.

"Because we don't just fight against these grotesque injustices, we also stand for principles which resonate with millions of ordinary people who spend their lives improving life for others.

"The Tories are currently enjoying their lap of honour but the sneering and gloating will not last long.

"If they think their proposed anti-trade union legislation will finally kill us off, they will be in for a nasty shock.

"The trade unions were

born out of violent hostility from the wealthy and their agents, because we are democracy in action.

"If the Tories think we are defeatist, they are making a lethal mistake."

Wendy said the crucial challenges ahead will be to fight the imposition of austerity and the continuing privatisation of public services and assets. Poverty is now widespread in the sixth richest economy in the world, which would be a cause for shame for a government that had any commitment at all to civilised values.

Despite David Cameron's "one nation

Tory" claims, Wendy says it is clear his government will continue to attack ordinary working people to further enrich their billionaire backers.

"We are working very hard to make sure we are organised and prepared to do what we have always done to protect our members and to protect our services.

"UNISON and the values we hold dear were not defeated in May. The Tories conned, lied and cheated their way to power. We are still here, fighting for social justice, as always."

● Active! will carry a full interview with Wendy in the next issue following her election as president of UNISON.

Have your say in the **Labour leadership** election

If you're a member of UNISON's affiliated political fund, then you're eligible to vote in Labour's forthcoming leadership election. To activate your vote you'll need to sign up as a registered Labour Party supporter at

www.unison.org.uk/labour-leadership-vote-thank-you

It's free for members of the affiliated fund.



Massive double-digit salary increases are being awarded to highly paid university vice-chancellors across the region while wage increases to staff barely keep pace with inflation.

Deeply concerned about the massive and growing gap between university leaders and their staff – and the secrecy with which the VC's pay is decided at some universities – UNISON embarked on a nationwide series of Freedom of Information requests.

UNISON researchers found that top of the pay league in Yorkshire and Humberside was the University of Sheffield vice-chancellor on £378,000.

His colleagues at Sheffield Hallam and Leeds University

received respectively £260,000 and £259,000. The lowest paid was at Leeds Trinity with £147,833 a year. The average figure for the region was £244,221.

The highest VC's pay rise for 2013/14 were 16.7 per cent at Leeds Beckett University, 12.9 per cent at Bradford and 9.3 per cent at Huddersfield.

Where pay seems to have been cut there is often a compensatingly large pension contribution. The University of Hull reported a cut of 10.2 per cent, but the pension contribution was £49,000. Some showed very high rises in the previous year – most shockingly 39 per cent at Sheffield University – but have been less dramatic this year.

The notional hourly

rate for VCs (assuming a 37 hour week) amounted to an astounding £194 at Sheffield, £135 at Leeds and £134 at Sheffield Hallam.

Regional head of higher education Leonie Sharp pointed out that most vice chancellors also have grace and favour homes, chauffeur-driven cars, gardeners, chefs and cleaners, all for their private use. "This is paid for by public money and the lack of accountability and transparency is scandalous. Other public bodies such as local authorities and hospital trusts all have to be transparent in how they pay their staff including those at the very top, but universities seem to think they are not publicly accountable.

"UNISON has long been campaigning for the Living Wage for all our members many of whom hold down multiple low-paid jobs just to make ends meet. This is all the more vital now when we know how people are struggling and turning to food banks and increasingly using our 'There For You' welfare support. The vice-chancellors' salaries uncovered by UNISON are eye-watering and just cannot be justified."



Leonie Sharp

● P12 - Nice little earner

Leeds gets our charter

Making sure there are minimum standards for care at home for both the people who receive it and the workers who provide it are priorities for Leeds City Council after they became one of the largest local authorities to sign up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter.

The charter commits the council to a system in which carers do not have to rush from client to client and that people will keep the same carer wherever possible. It also commits employers to provide guaranteed hours as the norm rather than zero hours contracts, to pay for travel time and to target a situation in which workers are paid at least the living wage of £7.85 per hour.





THE ADDED VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP

UNISON members are entitled to a range of exclusive deals and discounts that we have negotiated with a number of suppliers. These **UNISON Plus** deals add real value to UNISON membership, and over time members can save the cost of their UNISON contributions many times over.

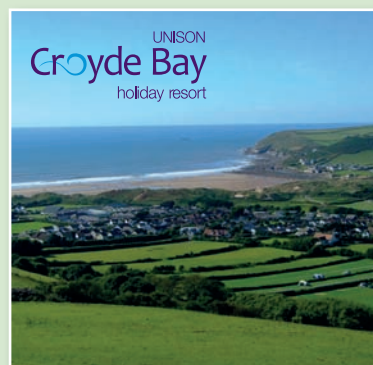
Find all the details here:-

www.unison.org.uk/for-members/member-offers-and-entitlements/exclusive-deals-and-offers/

Croyde Bay Holiday Village

Owned and operated by UNISON for more 80 years, the Croyde Bay Holiday Village has become renowned for its comfort, choice and hospitality. Croyde Bay is a popular addition to the benefits of UNISON membership, and offers a range of competitive rates, with special discounts for UNISON members and families.

www.croydeunison.co.uk



THE BIG BEASTS



Potential leaders of the Labour Party are at large in the region. Active's media correspondent **Mary Maguire** will keep her eyes peeled for the press coverage

There's only one thing worse than losing an election. And that's losing two elections. But worse than that, is having to listen to or read the sanctimonious, I-told-you-so, know-it-all claptrap from the nation's self-appointed pontificators and as for those pollsters – they're enough to make you want to boil your head.

The election campaign was just one big, fat, tedious flop. It seemed to start off about 100 years ago, moving glacially with as much momentum as a sloth at rest.

ABDICATION

The newspapers didn't really bother with it much until a certain part of the British Isles looked as though it was going to raise an army to march on Westminster, eating first-borns and molesting maidens en-route.

"Worst crisis since the abdication" declared the Daily Mail, clean forgetting how its owner had supported Hitler. And the day before polling, it screamed: "For sanity's sake don't let a class-war zealot destroy our economy". (That's enough about Cameron - editor).

The Sun went into overspin with that bacon sandwich picture under the caption "Save our Bacon" – if he can't



NICK CLEGG WAS HECKLED AND BOOED AS HE SPOKE AT HIS COUNT AFTER A NARROW WIN



eat a bacon sarnie, how can he run the country? A pragmatic publication, it supported the Tories in England and Wales and the SNP in Scotland. The UKIP-supporting Express whined on April 28: "11 days to save Britain", and then promptly lost count.

I got a bit excited at a stream of links to TV and radio broadcasts and newspaper articles on the union. Alas, on closer inspection, it wasn't the trade union they were banging on about, but the threat to the United Kingdom of a Labour-SNP alliance.

SHOWDOWN

Those pesky opinion polls, engaged in daily hand-to-hand combat with the don't-knows, came up with a hung-Parliament scenario that the media then played out relentlessly.

Come election night, Scotland was a foregone conclusion. But Yorkshire and Humberside bravely woke folk from their torpor.

"Night of high political drama in Leeds" was how the Yorkshire Post set the scene. It went on: "The last big showdown Leeds arena hosted was Josh Warrington's victory against Dennis Tubieron – but it has been playing host to a potential knockout drama of a different kind". The boxing metaphors continued.

The "big beasts" of Yorkshire were doing battle (BBC). And the biggest beast to fall was Ed Balls – a symbolic scalp for the Tories. George Galloway's "knock-out blow" at the hands of Labour's Naz Shah was small consolation to Labour on a bad night (ITN).

Nick Clegg was "heckled and booed" as he spoke at his count after a narrow win (Sheffield Gazette). Of course, both he and Labour Leader Donnie's Ed Miliband, dominated the post-election news – in a bad way, as they kissed their political careers goodbye.

The sedate Hull Daily Mail seemed positively relieved that Barry Sheerman was the "one thing that remained a constant". Although I can't help thinking that YEP got a tad carried away when it declared that Hilary Benn had "stormed to victory" in Leeds. And, the idea that "tension was mounting" at the Harrogate count with fears of an upset, was on the outside of credible (Harrogate Ad).

I will watch the Yorkshire & Humberside space because there are still big beasts in the region vying to become Labour Leader.

But, forgive me if I decline the Halifax Courier's invitation to relive, via video, the 2015 General Election count in Calderdale. ■



Mary Maguire, former head of press and broadcasting at UNISON



Images: Mark Harvey

BLOODY BUT UNBOWED

UNISON's regional officials believe the union has what it takes to weather the storm whipped up by the new Conservative Government. **Peter Carroll** reports

It is time for UNISON members to lift up their heads and declare "business as usual" after the General Election shock, says regional secretary John Cafferty.

In the wake of the crushing result, John held a meeting of his regional office staff at the union movement's Wortley Hall in Barnsley (above) to address the challenges UNISON faces in the years ahead.

John said: "The election result has caused many of us to feel defeated and despondent, and that is entirely understandable. It was a huge shock.

"But there are beacons of light even in this desperate

political climate. We have shown consistently that when UNISON is organised and motivated, we can be the most effective force against injustice in the country.

"Despite the relentless central government attacks on public service jobs, which we know will continue in the years ahead, our recruitment has held its own.

"In Yorkshire and Humberside in 2014 we recruited 18,000 new members. And we have recruited new stewards and branch officers, which is vital if we are to be really effective in the workplace.

"But we are losing members because of job cuts and we need to increase the density

of our membership in many areas."

John said that a survey of UNISON members had been commissioned to find out what their main worries are in terms of their employment.

And it is clear that the biggest concern by far is about redundancy.

Of those interviewed 60 per cent said job losses were their main worry and that was especially the case in services that had been or were facing outsourcing.

And the survey showed that most people (up to 77 per cent) joined UNISON in order to get support at work.

Other reasons for joining include the threat of change at work (59 per cent) and to ►



John Cafferty



Chris Jenkinson



Tony Pearson

- help improve pay and conditions (24 per cent).

John said: "We know what we have to do to deal with the challenges we know we face in the years to come.

"But we have shown we can recruit successfully especially in very difficult circumstances when people need to be in a union more than ever."

Regional head of local government Chris Jenkinson agreed there were big changes ahead for members working for local authorities.

In particular the Secretary of State for Cities, Greg Clark was committed to introducing combined authorities based on the biggest cities.

There will be moves for elections for "Metro Mayors" in West and South Yorkshire, Humberside and North Yorkshire.

Chris said: "That will obviously be a major change to how councils are run and we of course will closely examine how democratic changes will affect our members.

"But one thing we are not going to see is any council putting up a 'closed for business' sign. Their spending has been set for two years.

"Local authorities are still going to employ many thousands of people. All that we need to do is increase our membership and improve our density.

"We know that as a union we are able to do just that."

Chris said there will be more academy schools in the system as so-called "coasting schools" will be forced to



THERE ARE
BEACONS
OF LIGHT
EVEN IN
THIS
DESPERATE
POLITICAL
CLIMATE



John Cafferty

Below & Right:
The staff meeting
is serious ...
but fun as well

become academies.

That will mean UNISON will have to deal with thousands of individual schools rather than 24 local education authorities.

CONSISTENT

Again, this will be a challenge which will require good organisation and a commitment to recruiting more members.

Chris said: "We are dealing with this challenge and we have shown time after time that we are better at dealing with these problems than any other trade union.

"We are the union which is at the negotiating table and reporting back to our members.

"We have the structures and the organisation in place to do this and we should now be looking at the opportunities it represents rather than the threats.

"When we get it right, we do it better than anyone else. But we have to be more consistent and we are determined to be so. It is the lay activists who will take us forward.

"Working people are going to need trade unions in a way they have never needed them before. Trade unions were born out of the very same hostile political circumstances we are in now.

"Our activists are great people who do so much hard work in their own time to improve life for others and that gives me great confidence. The Election was, of course, a terrible result but we have got to lift our heads up and I know we will."

SUCCESSFUL

Regional head of health Tony Pearson agreed that UNISON was not just good at standing up to changes like the Health





and Social Care Act, it was “magnificent”.

Tony said the long-running and successful strike by members at Care UK in Doncaster had taught us a great deal about how to organise in the current political climate.

He said: “At the point where services are being tendered we have to look at what our organisational strengths are, at how many members and activists we have.

“Do we need to send assistant organisers and local organisers into workplaces to speak to people?

“Jim Bell (the regional organiser in charge of the Care UK strike) built up from two stewards to 10 by the time the members were transferred to Care UK. He tried to get the branch’s support at an early juncture and ensure the organisers were the link between branches and workers in

dispute.”

And he said the lessons learned from Care UK would be very valuable in an increasingly fragmented employment world.

He said: “We couldn’t have done what we did in Doncaster just through an industrial strategy.

“You cannot have all-out strike action in these circumstances because people could die and our members could never do that.

“The company bussed in people from all over the place to fill the gaps.

“But we had a public relations strategy and we had to make this a national issue because this was about the future of all care services throughout Britain.

“Eventually the co-ordinated media strategy got the message over in the regional media as well as the Daily Mirror and the Observer.

“So we must make sure our PR strategy is right when we go into future disputes.

Unlike in other industries, any industrial action our members take directly affects the public and not the employer.

“That is why we have to do all we can to make sure the public know why we are taking action, and that it is always because our members care as much about the quality of services as they do about themselves.

“The Care UK strikers are to be applauded for their courage and self-sacrifice. They will act as an example of how good we are when we work together.

“We have learned a great deal from that dispute. Most important is the knowledge that, in the disputes which undoubtedly lie ahead, UNISON has the strength, experience and commitment to fight for our members everywhere.” ■

“
WE ARE
BETTER AT
DEALING
WITH
THESE
PROBLEMS
THAN ANY
OTHER
UNION.
”

Chris Jenkinson



Image: Lorraine Fitzsimons

NICE LITTLE EARNER VICE CHANCELLOR!

Local organiser **Lorraine Fitzsimons** on how UNISON is mounting a concerted campaign to get to grips with a scandalous pay gap at the region's universities

Huge salaries and eye-watering pay increases enjoyed by university vice-chancellors in the region has led to a campaign by UNISON to promote a culture of "Fairness, Transparency and the Living Wage" across the sector.

Shocking figures discovered by UNISON's research, based on nationwide Freedom of Information requests (page 6), has mobilised members into action over pay and strengthened negotiations with employers. UNISON branches in the region have already been active around the key campaign themes:

FAIRNESS

While staff in higher education were being offered one per cent in the national

pay negotiations for 2013-14, UNISON found that the salary of the University of Sheffield's own vice chancellor had risen by a whopping 39 per cent to £370,000, with an additional £4,000 benefits in kind.

At the same time the university had still not agreed to pay its staff the Living Wage, and implemented the one per cent offer before the dispute and pay negotiations were settled.

The UNISON branch at the university swung into action mobilising for the pay campaign, working with the other unions on the campus and stepping up negotiations with the employer, including a sustained campaign for the Living Wage.

▲ **Above:**
Reps and officials
make their point
at Sheffield
University

Members in Sheffield, and around the country, supported three days of strike action which led to a two per cent rise in 2014-15. UNISON locally negotiated a payment matching the Living Wage to the university's lowest paid staff.

Around 400 employees were affected and agreed a reduction to their contractual hours, achieving an increased hourly rate and access to overtime payments. While the University of Sheffield still has the highest paid VC in the region, his pay rise the following year was only 1.1 per cent.

A combination of constructive negotiations, campaigning and effective communication with members resulted in the branch making some positive



Lorraine
Fitzsimons

moves towards fairer pay at the university.

LIVING WAGE

Some universities paid at, or slightly above, the Living Wage at the time of the research. They were Leeds Trinity, University of Leeds, University of Sheffield and York St John. The University of Huddersfield paid the highest. The Living Wage goes up each autumn and pay negotiations aim to secure that level for the bottom grade. However when the Living Wage is increased – and employers fail to fully sign up to the scheme – staff can fall back below that level.

The UNISON branch at the University of Huddersfield has a well-established constructive relationship with the employer, with some successful negotiations under their belt. In fact the university made additional payments to staff on top of the nationally agreed pay rises. To date Huddersfield is the only university in Yorkshire & Humberside which not only pays the Living Wage, but is an accredited Living Wage employer. The university will also be making it a condition of future outsourcing contracts that staff are paid at least the Living Wage. Higher education financial information shared in the region last year showed a very generous VC salary at Huddersfield together with a substantial income, operating surplus and assets. This was also the case at other institutions. It proved the affordability of a decent pay rise for all and the implementation of the Living

Wage. In Huddersfield's case there has been a willingness to sign up to the Living Wage and positive industrial relations with UNISON have helped achieve it.

Branch secretary Shaun Beckingham said: "It's good to see that the university values its staff and their dignity, aiming to motivate its key resource. Payment of the Living Wage will help lower paid staff avoid becoming reliant on benefits and food banks."

TRANSPARENCY

Like many branches, Leeds Beckett University (LBU) UNISON want to see greater openness on pay-setting. Despite sitting on several negotiating bodies and having an active role in many university matters the branch is unable to influence some of the highest salaries in the region, as there is no representation of staff or students on most remuneration committees dealing with senior posts.

In 2013/14 LBU's vice chancellor received the largest pay rise in the region of 16.7 per cent, while eight staff at the university were paid more than £100,000 each year. These decisions are made by remuneration committees which meet privately and without transparent criteria for how huge salaries are reached or accounted for. There is no consistent approach across higher education, and in many cases UNISON is not even aware of the process.

Meanwhile spending on agency staff was also

“
THE LIVING
WAGE
WILL
HELP
LOWER
PAID
STAFF
AVOID
FOOD
BANKS
”
Shaun
Beckingham

alarming – well over £3m a year at the University of Leeds and over £1.3m at Bradford and Leeds Beckett.

Many universities contract out cleaning, catering or security services, or operate wholly owned subsidiaries. These employers can set their own terms and conditions, and pay as low as the minimum wage.

As Liam Byrne MP, Labour's shadow minister for universities, said when he met the branch before the general election: "It's unacceptable that unions have to use Freedom of Information requests to get information on salaries." ■



Highest Paid Vice-Chancellors in the Region 2013/2014

Sheffield	£378,000
Leeds Uni	£259,000
Sheff Hallam	£260,000
Hull	£254,000
Leeds Beckett	£251,000
Huddersfield	£247,000
York Uni	£232,378
York St J	£220,000
Bradford	£193,000
Leeds Trinity	£147,833
Average	£244,221

MOBINA'S MISSION

Mary Maguire interviews a respected UNISON activist who experienced injustice in her own life and wanted to tackle it for the sake of her colleagues



Images: Andy Paraskos

Mobina Begum is a woman on a mission. Not an impossible mission, but an ambitious one. It's a mission to move society to a more equal, fairer place, starting with Leeds Beckett university, where she works, and the Yorkshire & Humberside region. And who knows where next?

Recently elected chair of the region's higher education group, Mobina has spent her life trying to help people in desperate need. She's seen a lot of suffering, injustice and inequality and that shaped her desire to do something about it.

SUFFERING

Bradford born and bred, Mobina moved to Leeds at the age of 19 and volunteered at the Citizens Advice Bureau, later becoming permanent. She recalled: "It quickly

became clear to me the huge inequalities that people are subjected to. My eyes were opened by the suffering of women fleeing domestic violence, problems facing those recently released from prison, the homeless and the desperate plight of refugees and asylum seekers.

"Asylum seekers are absolutely destitute. They have nothing but what they stand up in. They can't acquire refugee status. They are effectively on the streets – homeless. And instead of blaming them for their plight, we should be helping them. A civil society should support everyone regardless of background or situation. That, I believe is humanity's moral responsibility".

It was this passion for fairness that moved Mobina to find UNISON. She was looking for a union that shared her principles of

“
ASYLUM
SEEKERS
ARE
DESTITUTE.
THEY
HAVE
NOTHING
BUT WHAT
THEY
STAND
UP IN

“rebalancing inequalities in society”; one that helped people gain access to services, advice and support.

A woman with Mobina's drive couldn't be a passive member for long and when she started work at the university, she got stuck in, first as a rep, then women's officer, later chair of the branch and now deputy branch secretary. She advocates active recruitment to ensure a "strong voice" for the union and members.

Mobina's day job at the university involves advising and supporting students on a wide variety of matters from how to manage their money, advice on benefits, to personal issues, including counselling. And her personal experiences have helped her understand what many of those students are facing.

Brought up in an Islamic household where "women didn't have the same rights", she left home at 17 as a result.

She said that going through the school system here gave her the courage to do that because she knew there was an alternative. Although reluctant to talk about that time, she told me:

"When I left home I felt that I had broken free. I am independent and make my own decisions in life. I faced the same struggles that a lot of young people now face – no money, lack of opportunities and lack of support in order to live independently.

"Working here at the university, I have come across students who have had to leave their parents in order to come to university. I find I am able to mentor, support and help them. I know what they are going through."

PROGRESS

For Mobina, race equality is long overdue – and working with other BME staff through the race forum, she is helping push the diversity agenda and a change of culture through the university.

Still dominated by white males, Mobina says there has been some progress in gender equality, but there's still more to be done. Importantly, race equality lags behind and she is critical of those universities that are not reflective of the student and local communities.

"Universities need to do more than pay lip service to race equality by having in place measurable goals that make a difference to the experience of BME staff." And if she had a magic wand, she would start by strengthening the equalities legislation to give it more teeth.

Pay inequality is just as important, she believes.

Having seen poverty and want, campaigning for the Living Wage is very much a priority in the sector. She cites education institutions making "huge profits" who pay staff below the Living Wage and operate a two-tier workforce. She wants them all to become accredited Living Wage employers.

"It's not right that you can have a cleaner for example who can only get 15 hours work at the university but then to make up her hours, has to go to an agency, employed by the same university, to clean at the same university, for worse pay and conditions. That and the drive towards shared services is creating a two-tier workforce and it has to end".

Mobina is respected and admired by friends and colleagues for her conviction, dedication and commitment and her determination to speak up for other people.

Regional head of higher education Leonie Sharp, said: "She's a tireless campaigner. And she is passionate about equalities. Her work on behalf of BME members and higher education members is brilliant. She wants to put higher education firmly on the UNISON map by giving it a higher profile. Mobina is someone who doesn't just talk. She listens. And she has set about making the service group something that members want to take part in by making it more engaging and active."

It's obvious that Mobina has little time to herself, but when she does she likes to spend it with friends and in visiting family in South Africa. ■



GAIL FORCE COMMITMENT



Reporter **Ryan Fletcher** interviews the livewire chair of the regional women's committee – someone whose friends never know what she's going to do next...

Gail Andrews' sense of adventure is infectious. The 57-year-old advanced healthcare assistant

from Belton, near Doncaster, once chained herself to the railings at Parliament during a protest against draconian child support policies.

"I put the key down my bra so they had to get the bolt cutters. The chain was that thick it broke them. In the end they had to get a blow torch to get me off. I'm a bit of rebel really. I'll have a go at anything," Gail laughs.

Next year she is going to visit her 36-year-old son, Mark, when he gets posted to Kenya during his duties as a helicopter pilot in the Army Air Corps. It seems like Mark is a chip off the old block: Gail enlisted in the RAF when she was 18 as an air traffic communications operative. Her daughter, Katie, 16, is also joining her for the Kenya expedition.

However Gail isn't just content with family time in the safari capital of the world. She is laying plans to visit more remote parts of Africa during the trip; to see for herself the work carried out by the maternal health charity she helps support: Life for African Mothers. "I'm hoping to leave my daughter with my son and get a flight to Sierra Leone or Chad and spend a few days working with the midwives over there. I think it'll be a life changing moment for me," Gail explained.

Her friends never know what she's going to do next.

Whether applying for TV gameshows, helping to organise community activities, protesting for

change or fundraising - Gail's enthusiasm for getting involved is endless.

Her passion for active pursuits extends into her leisure time; whenever she gets the chance Gail will travel to Hull, Leeds, Bradford or even London to go to the theatre.

"I love going to the theatre. There's something about it that's different to the pictures. It's the atmosphere. You just feel good. It's as if you're part of it," she told me. "I love socialising and I love that sense of being part of something. When I get involved I like to think I can make a difference."

When it comes to others Gail has always had an innate sense of justice. Like many people willing to go the extra mile for a good cause, at one

time Gail found it more difficult when it came to standing up for herself. It was the very personal realisation of how easy it was to fall victim to unreasonable circumstances that led her to take a bigger role within UNISON.

"At my old hospital I was bullied by a senior staff member and I didn't go to the union. I forgot I was in the union actually. I needed to get out so I applied for a job somewhere else and got it," Gail said, "During that time I cried every day at work making beds. I cried and I'd be agitated before I went to work. She would do things like ball me out in front of patients and staff for things I hadn't done." The final straw came when Gail called work after a family tragedy had left her

“
I'M A BIT
OF A
REBEL
REALLY.
I'LL HAVE
A GO AT
ANYTHING
”

▼ Below:
Gail on her rounds

distraught.

She said: "I rang her to tell her I was poorly and upset. I was depressed. She swore at me, she said she couldn't talk to me when I was upset. She said she was going to put the phone down and not to bother calling back until I'd finished crying."

"Because I have suffered at the hands of a bully I have an understanding. I knew I didn't want anybody to feel the way I felt, so when I started at my new job I decided to do something about it."

Since starting at Scunthorpe Hospital in 2002 Gail has become more and more involved with UNISON. One of the things she learned from her previous experiences was the necessity for good communication between colleagues and the need for a ►



► better way for people to express their feelings and concerns: whether those who bottle everything up, or those who might not always consider how what they say may come across to others.

"Nobody should ever be bullied. So when I go into disciplinaries I say 'no I'm absolutely not accepting that it wasn't your intention because look at the impact it's had on that person,'" Gail told me.

"I'm not going to say I'm an angel. I've actually taken someone to one side and really bawled them out. And then when I thought about it I thought 'oh my god'. So I went back and said 'I stand by what I've said but I apologise for how I said it.' I've learnt a lot and I wouldn't do that now."

Her interest in resolving problems without undue conflict and giving people the tools to get things off their chest properly led Gail to put herself through a counselling course.

When the counselling services for staff at Scunthorpe Hospital were under threat three years ago Gail fought for their continuance. She pointed out



AT MY OLD
HOSPITAL
I WAS
BULLIED
BY A
SENIOR
STAFF
MEMBER



that with the growing pressures on workloads and living standards staff were in need of a confidential shoulder to lean on. Thankfully the service was kept and although Gail doesn't take credit for it she says she definitely made her voice heard.

CHILDCARE

Gail is also raising her voice when it comes to the issue of empowering women. As the only female rep in her hospital she has taken on the role of women's officer and is chair of the regional women's committee. Unfortunately she feels there is still a long way to go before other women like her find their voice too.

She said: "Women are proportionally disadvantaged. More of them are in low paid jobs, they're the ones that more often than not sort out childcare. Many women suffer from low self-confidence. So it's about empowering women, convincing them they can do things they might usually rule themselves out of and getting them to come forward."

Nowhere is this issue more apparent than the NHS, where a mostly female army of healthcare assistants and

support workers provide invaluable care in return for low-pay and uncertain working conditions. Gail says there needs to be more recognition for the services they carry out - both from others and the women themselves. There is a lot of good work going on, but worries over job security are stifling enfranchisement.

"Anyone will say these workers are the backbone of the NHS. Yet they are treated so shabbily. We've got a predominantly female workforce - a lot of them are the main breadwinners for their families, a lot are single parents," she explained.

"They're so frightened for their jobs these workers won't rock the boat. And it's not just women who are worried. That's why bullying will carry on. Anyone who's got a job at the minute feels that they're lucky."

Nevertheless Gail feels positive about the future and could not speak more highly of her colleagues at the hospital and within UNISON. True to form she is even thinking of her next adventures: Visiting an elephant sanctuary in Sri Lanka and a European camper-van road trip. ■

Why not give us a go?

Every branch in the region is allowed to nominate up to five delegates to the regional women's group. The group holds four meetings a year plus a training day. Expenses should be met by each branch so women should not be out of pocket, and crèche facilities are provided for youngsters up to the age of 16. The meetings take place on Saturday mornings from 10am until around 1pm.

The group is made up of women with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Says Gail: "We have a break and have a chat with each other, it's not all work so why not give us a go. Get your branch secretary to nominate you and other women, I look forward to seeing you."

SATURDAY
MEETINGS

10AM
-1PM

We GUARANTEE to beat your current home insurance premium!*



WIN YOUR POLICY FOR FREE

UIA Insurance will be giving away a FREE Home Insurance policy every day for the rest of the year†. Simply take out a policy with us over the phone for a chance to win.

- **87% of customers would recommend us****
- **Interest-free monthly Direct Debit payments**

Call us now to beat your renewal quote:

0800 66 88 55

Or from a mobile dial: 01438 761 790

Quote reference: ACTIVE215

Lines open 8:30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat.

**'Price Guarantee' is an introductory offer and applies to new customers only for first 12 months of policy. Min premiums apply. Max discount £150. Offer is available if you have been claim-free for 5 years or more, is subject to our usual acceptance and underwriting criteria, and is only available when you call us quoting reference 'Active215'. We reserve the right to verify your home insurance renewal premium. A quote must be requested by 30.9.15. Quotes valid for 45 days. We reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time. **Research carried out by UIA (Insurance) Ltd, April 2015. †Terms and conditions apply, visit www.uia.co.uk/terms-conditions. UNISON is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd, which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

Every UNISON member receives our full range of products and services including:

- A hotline for help and advice on workplace issues
- Legal services for you and your family for injuries and accidents at work and outside work.
- Unrivalled protection and representation at work
- Help with pay and conditions of service
- Welfare services for you and your family
- PLUS hundreds of member discounts

From
£1.30
a month



JOIN NOW for essential UNISON cover

Call 0800 0 857 857
www.joinunison.org





Image: Mark Harvey

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Sharon Simcox was failed by management, but her anger turned her into an activist. Two years later Sharon is a branch convenor. **Mary Maguire** reports

Two years ago, Sharon Simcox was suspended from her job. It was a job in the care sector that she loved. A job caring for vulnerable, elderly and disabled people, across Rotherham. A job she had done for the best part of 25 years. The experience left her angry, but stronger.

At the end of a seven week suspension, she was fully reinstated, without sanction or

correction. This proved to be a watershed in Sharon's life and a change of direction followed. She told me: "I was very angry. I spent those seven weeks wondering what I had done wrong. When I got back to work, it was difficult to hold back that anger. I felt that management had failed me, that the process had failed me."

But that anger prompted Sharon to act. She explained: "I also spent those seven weeks looking at ways of getting

myself out of the mess. I examined the council's policies, procedures and guidelines. I worked out what I could do, how I could support myself and others facing similar situations".

Almost immediately, Sharon was hammering on the Rotherham branch office door, determined to become a UNISON steward. Soon she was representing members, but was eager to do more.

Sharon soaked up training



Mary Maguire

opportunities. A quick learner, she took on more complex cases and developed the experience and knowledge she needed to do the best job for her members.

A year down the line and Sharon had to face a tough choice. Did she stay in a job that she loved and remain a steward or did she stand for full-time branch convenor? After a "mental battle", Sharon decided to take the UNISON path.

COURAGE

With 4000 members, Sharon finds it's full-on, but she isn't complaining. The job of convenor, she says, is all about "empowering members to fight for their rights and to give them the courage and inspiration to believe that they can do it".

She adds: "Yes, the job is about representing members, but it's also about getting them to realise that they can say enough is enough. They can stand up for what they believe in. They don't have to stay in the shadows. They are the union and they should stand up and speak out against injustice and inequality."

Sharon stresses that she couldn't do her job without the branch secretary / administrator who is the first point of call: "As soon as she picks up that phone, she's ready to reassure and support troubled or distressed members."

Sharon, 48, was born in the mining village of Thurcroft where she's lived all her life. Her dad was a miner and an active member of

the National Union of Mineworkers.

Sharon has school age children, a son of 18 and daughter of 15, and an elderly disabled mother to look out for. She will soon be a grandmother herself as her eldest daughter is due to give birth in October.

At the age of 16, she left school. Her first job was in a shop, organised through the then Youth Training Scheme. She recalled:

"I was quite a good artist at school, but I couldn't be bothered to go through three years of college. I wanted to be out earning money like my mates. So I took the path of least resistance, left school and drifted through different jobs. I had some passion for working in the care sector and that's eventually what I did".

Her son wants to be a tattoo artist and uses his mother as a guinea pig for his designs. On her 45th birthday, Sharon had her back tattooed with a compilation picture of her children, designed by her son. As a friend joked: "Your kids will always be on your back".

Her youngest daughter is showing a keen interest in fighting discrimination and inequality and is often at Sharon's side at rallies and demonstrations. Sharon proudly says her daughter has the "potential to do a lot of good in the future".

Sharon is devoted to her family but committed to her work. Music helps her cope and she can often be seen ear attached to i-pod when

“
THEY CAN
STAND UP
FOR WHAT
THEY
BELIEVE IN.
THEY DON'T
HAVE
TO STAY
IN THE
SHADOWS
”

pondering a problem. Her big motivation is to see people treated more fairly. A fair day's pay for a fair day's work. She is particularly passionate about care workers.

"The big cats get massive pay rises. Yet the people who are always there at night, early morning, weekends, bank holidays, doing a fantastic job looking after vulnerable people, are paid a pittance. It's as if the bosses say 'keep them down there, keep them low paid. Make them do more and more each day for less and less'. We are paid way below what we are worth and I just wonder with this Government, how will that get any better".

Although Sharon says she's not politically minded as she finds politics "difficult to swallow", she's alarmed at the Tory Government and its "hostility" towards trade unions. That, she says, will make life more difficult for union reps like her. But I doubt that will stop her. ■

Never Too Late

Sharon took the opportunities made available through UNISON's regional education programme and so could you. It endeavours to offer courses to suit everyone.



The education programme is designed to help both individuals and their branches. UNISON needs more, better equipped and motivated activists. The courses are aimed at building confidence and developing abilities. Courses are available for potential, new and more experienced activists seeking to improve their knowledge and skills. It is never too late to learn.

Contact your branch education co-ordinator or branch secretary for details.



FOLLOWING IN MUM'S FOOTSTEPS

At 23-years-old adult support worker Rachel Crowther is one of the region's youngest shop stewards and mother Linda couldn't be more proud.

Helen Hague reports

Leeds adult support worker Rachel Crowther loves her job – helping vulnerable adults live independently and get the most out of life.

So she was happy to spend most of Christmas day and Boxing day 'at work' – joining people she helps care for celebrate at the supported living bungalow they share in the city. "We had a great time and lots of fun", says Rachel.

Helping ensure residents have fun and 'get out and about' is an important part of her job. And Rachel's very glad the days of shutting people away in big institutions are long gone. With the right care package and support, they can thrive. "People with learning difficulties and additional needs can be underestimated", says Rachel. And it's not simply about where people live. "Adult day services and transport play a massive part in helping people live their lives independently and enjoy what's out there."

There have been many trips out for Rachel and the people she helps support – from bowling in Leeds to days at the seaside – and even a live 'X Factor' event at Leeds Arena.

Like many care workers, Rachel has more than one job. She works 25 hours a week with people in the bungalow. Additionally, she looks after a six year old boy and acts as a PA for a 19 year-old young woman with learning difficulties.

At 23, Rachel - who switched from hairdressing to care - is one of UNISON's

youngest shop stewards in the region. She took up the role in November, and is keen to offer her colleagues union support when they need it.

You could say it's in the blood – especially down the female line. Rachel's grandma was both a care worker and a union activist – and still goes to meetings for retired members.

Rachel's mother Linda, now UNISON local government branch secretary over in Bradford, got active in the union at 25. She'd just returned to work after maternity leave with three children under four. She was able to do that with much-needed support from the council's day nursery, now sadly shut. Juggling childcare and work 'is a lot harder now for many women' says Linda.

The union was very male-dominated back then, even though women made up most of the workforce. A steward, usually male 'handed you a form on the first day and virtually everybody signed up'.

SOLIDARITY

But change was in the air. Soon Linda, and other mums newly returned from maternity leave, began turning up to union meetings and making a difference. Linda's appetite for getting involved was well and truly whetted. Before long she was a steward and has served as branch secretary in Bradford since 2008.

And she's obviously chuffed – but not surprised – that Rachel is actively involved in the union. She

knows first-hand the importance of recruiting new members and nurturing young activists.

Rachel and her siblings grew up steeped in the importance of solidarity and fairness at work – not to mention the impact public services have on people's lives. Their mum has acted as a powerful role model.

Bradford local government branch – represents not only 9,000 members employed by the council, but other organisations delivering services to the public – from Bradford Community Housing Trust to parts of further education and the voluntary sector.

Linda is proud that despite the cuts, the branch – and the eight strong team released from their day jobs full or part time – has managed to exceed recruitment targets set by head office over the past two years. "When we meet one target, it means we have to

“
ADULT DAY
SERVICES
AND
TRANSPORT
PLAY
A MASSIVE
PART IN
HELPING
PEOPLE
LIVE
THEIR
LIVES
”

recruit more the next year, which is fair enough," says Linda.

She says the council and the union work well in partnership most of the time – a working relationship, underpinned by a unique agreement, which can help solve problems before they escalate. "If we can sort a problem rather than taking it through formal procedures, everyone benefits" says Linda.

But she is certainly not afraid to clash with employers if that's what it takes to get a fair deal for members. "That's what we are here for – to get the best for our members. We have a great team of stewards and convenors and we are trying to make the union deliver what our members need."

Now Linda is keen to represent members – and the region – at national level after being elected to a women's seat on the national executive. "I'm really grateful to the people who voted for me. I'll use the mandate to make sure members' views are taken into account at national level".

Her daughter is keen to recruit more members where she works. "Some people sign up on the spot, but there can be a bit of hesitation if they are not sure what UNISON can do for them. It's my job to explain. Nowadays it's always a good idea to have someone there to back you up." Let's hear it for solidarity... ■

Rachel Crowther



OLD OWL TAKES FLIGHT

Roger Hutt went from playing football in front of thousands to making speeches to even bigger crowds in his role as a Care UK activist. **Ryan Fletcher** reports

Roger Hutt's sense of fair play stayed with him even after he left Sheffield Wednesday. His teenage career as a professional footballer came to an end, Roger says, after he 'discovered beer and women'. It would take more than 30 years before he appeared in front of thousands of people again - but he was ready to throw everything he had against his new adversary.

This time however the stakes were much higher and the opposite side weren't just intent on ignoring the rules; they wanted to change the game. The 52-year-old Care UK worker was fighting against those who wish to turn one of our country's crowning glories - that all members of society are cared for regardless of their economic standing - into a zero sum calculation of profit and loss.

“WE'RE FIGHTING FOR THE SOUL OF THIS COUNTRY”

Roger's part in one of the longest running strikes in the history of the NHS would see him tour the country, speak to 50,000 people at an anti-austerity rally and address a crisis meeting in parliament.

"It was madness. Complete and utter surreal madness. If someone would have told me what was going to happen two years ago I wouldn't have believed them," he said.

CHANGES

Roger has spent nearly his entire working life supporting people with special needs, and has seen a lot of changes along the way. After leaving The Owls he spent eight years from 1982 working at St Catherine's long stay mental healthcare hospital before moving into care in the community around Doncaster.

Community care is only effective, Roger says, when support workers can 'give the time to chew the fat with and get to know' the people they're assisting. From 1990 Roger worked for the NHS content in the knowledge that he and his colleagues were contributing towards a common good.

In April 2013 things suddenly went backwards: NHS care in the community services were sold off to Care UK, owned by private equity firm Bridgepoint - whose business model required stripping services to a minimum to provide investors with a hefty profit. The company welcomed its newly acquired employees with the news that they were facing wage cuts of up to 35 per cent.

"They categorise it as a business. When has healthcare ever been a business?

Everybody becomes a commodity. The most vulnerable people in society are perceived as a commodity," said Roger.

BELIEFS

The 90 day strike that followed Care UK's take-over caught the public's attention because it wasn't just about an extreme attack on pay and working conditions, it was also about our country's fundamental principles. Roger, who played a pivotal role in raising awareness in the national consciousness, says this is because dearly held beliefs about helping those in need had come second fiddle to cash.

"There was a guy in his late 30s that came to us at the sheltered housing complex I worked in. He was always getting locked up and was very confrontational. His entire life had been fight or flight," Roger said.

"But we spent so much time with him that we got him to the point where he became a really nice character. That's why I remain in the sector. But I don't think we're in a position where that is going to be possible anymore. There isn't that continuity of care with a private company who want a transient workforce - they're just interested in making money."

Early on in the hard-fought and bitter conflict Roger put forward the idea of branching out from the picket line and touring the country. The response the striking workers received nationwide was overwhelming. In Hull Roger was handed a collection of £3000 in support of the strikers after spending the



WE'VE
PASSED
ON THE
MANTLE
TO OTHER
PEOPLE



day in the city spreading the message. In total the strikers received around £150,000 for the hardship fund from members of the public.

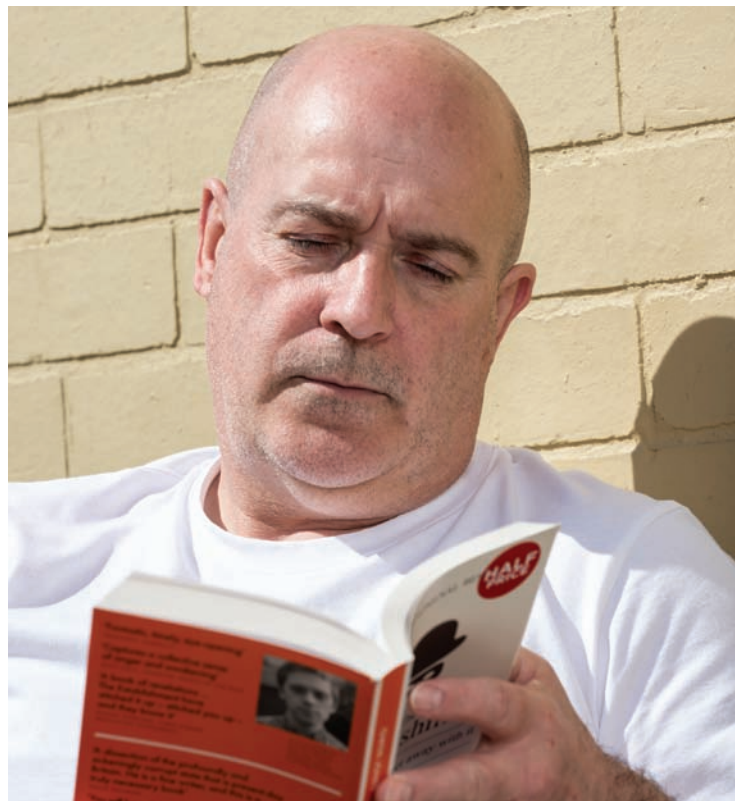
As momentum grew Roger joined comedian Russell Brand, Guardian columnist Owen Jones and Green Party MP Caroline Lucas in speaking at the 50,000 strong People's Assembly rally in Parliament Square on July 11, 2014. In October the same year he addressed the Crisis in Social Care meeting at Parliament. At events across the country he went down a treat. His popularity is due, in part, because like the other Care UK strikers Roger was a working man risking his livelihood for the good of everybody.

"Whether you're giving a speech to three people, 300 or 3000 you speak from the

heart. We're fighting for the soul of this country. It is still a great country, I know it doesn't feel like it at this present moment in time, but it is and we have to fight for it," he said

LEGACY

The strike ended in November last year with a pay deal. Roger has gone back to work for Care UK, despite his dislike of its ethos, and continued his role as a UNISON rep. "All differences are left at the door, so we can get on with what matters" he says. Outside of work Roger is still involved with providing support and solidarity to other struggling healthcare workers across the country "Our legacy is that we've passed on the mantle to other people who believe they can make a difference," he said. ■





WAR ON WORKERS

In an exclusive article for Active! The Mirror's **Paul Routledge** says there is a deliberate strategy to stop union members protesting against spending cuts

David Cameron declared a Whitsuntide war on workers as the first all-Tory government for nearly 20 years came to power.

He couldn't wait to launch an attack on rights at work. It was the highlight of the Queen's Speech within days of taking office.



Paul Routledge

From her throne in the House of Lords, the monarch proclaimed that "my government" will "legislate to reform trade unions and protect essential public services from strikes".

All services are essential, or they wouldn't be provided. Nurses, firefighters, transport workers – anybody this government decrees – will

have to satisfy new strike ballot majorities that most members of the Cabinet failed to win in their constituencies.

The use of agency casuals to break walk-outs will also be legalised – a "scabs' charter" if ever I saw one.

This is a deliberate strategy to prevent union members protesting against spending cuts and a £12 billion raid on the welfare budget that will cost jobs and pay right across the public sector – including the NHS.

The punishment will not end there. For those still in a job, but not earning enough to live on, in-work benefits will be cut. So will home services for old folk. Thousands more council staff face the axe. Police budgets will be hit, costing support jobs.

Young people will lose all benefits if they don't do as ordered under new "earn or learn" rules. And the homes waiting list will sky-rocket with the sell-off of housing association properties.

SEARCHING

It didn't have to be this way. If Britain had been as wise as Bradford, Ed Miliband would be Prime Minister today. If England had been as sensible as the voters of Leeds, Sheffield, Hull and Wakefield, there would be no Tory rulers in any of our town and city halls.

Labour performed pretty well in parliamentary and local elections in our region on May 7, largely bucking the trend that put Cameron back into Number Ten.

Now, the party is searching for a new leader after Ed

Miliband resigned. His successor might well come from Yorkshire, with Yvette Cooper, Shadow Home Secretary, one of the front-runners.

The contest will be held under new rules for union members, but they will still have a vote. We'll know the winner on September 12.

There were more highs than lows in the Parliamentary polls, with women candidates performing particularly well. Our region sent eight new Labour women to Westminster. Naseem Shah pulled off the best result of the night, ousting George Galloway and his Respect Party in Bradford West.

In Bradford South, Judith Cummins held on to the seat vacated by former Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe, and Jo Cox easily retained next-door Batley and Spen. Paula Sherriff triumphed in Dewsbury, taking the constituency back from the Tories.

UNISON's own Melanie Onn confounded pundits who thought her Great Grimbsy seat might be taken by Nigel Farage's Ukip Party. She trounced the Tories and the Ukipers with one of the biggest swings to Labour, giving her a majority five times bigger than the one bequeathed by retiring veteran Austin Mitchell.

The Tories poured resources into their bid to take Halifax, including visits by David Cameron and George Osborne, but to no avail. Labour's Holly Lynch held on with a slightly increased majority.

Another new name is

Louise Haigh, who took Sheffield Heeley with a thumping majority of almost 13,000 over Ukip – more than double the margin won in 2010. And in York Central, Rachel Maskell held the constituency with a comfortable majority over the Conservatives.

NEWCOMERS

The women didn't have it all their own way: Imran Hussein took Bradford East back from the Lib Dems – in fact it was a clean sweep for Labour in the city and Harry Harpham took over from David Blunkett in Sheffield Brightside.

These newcomers add to a strong phalanx of Labour big-hitters from the region, including Dan Jarvis (Barnsley), Rosie Winterton (Doncaster), Caroline Flint (Don Valley) and Hilary Benn (Leeds Central). Sarah Champion held off a major Ukip challenge in Rotherham, and Sir Kevin Barron stuffed Farage in Rother Valley.

But elsewhere the results were disappointing. Trade union lawyer Jamie Hanley failed to take Pudsey, John Grogan didn't make it at Keighley and Ilkley. Most stunning of all, Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls was defeated at Morley and Outwood by a Tory unknown.

His overthrow was largely due to a massive rise in votes for Ukip – from 1,500 to almost 8,000 – which dwarfed the Conservative majority of only 466. The "Nigel surge" garnered over 200,000 votes in the region, with Ukip occasionally

“
THOUSANDS
MORE
COUNCIL
STAFF
FACE
THE AXE
”

coming second. However, the Ukipers won fewer than twenty council seats across the county.

The biggest problem facing Labour local government in our region is: how to live with the horrendous public spending cuts sweeping down from Whitehall for at least the next three years.

The biggest problem facing the unions is how to adapt to draconian rules requiring a 40 per cent turnout plus a 50 percent "Yes" for strike ballots to be legally valid.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady says these so-called employment law reforms will mean workpeople have "as much power as Oliver Twist." And we know what he got when he asked for "More." ■

The Rundown

■ Labour won 33 seats in Yorkshire and Humberside, a net gain of one compared with 2010. Labour increased its share of the vote by 4.8 percentage points. The Conservatives won 19 seats, the same number as in 2010. Their share of the vote was broadly unchanged.

■ The Liberal Democrats won two seats, which was one fewer than in 2010. Party leader Nick Clegg narrowly held his seat in Sheffield Hallam, but the Liberal Democrat share of the vote in the region fell 15 percentage points, to 7.1 per cent.

■ The UK Independence Party won 16 per cent of the vote, more than double the Liberal Democrats, but failed to win any seats.

■ The Green Party won 3.5 per cent of the vote, an increase of 2.7 percentage points compared with 2010



ONNWARDS AND UPWARDS

Active! editor **Barrie Clement** interviews Grimsby's new Labour MP Melanie Onn, who comes from a long line of hard working local women



Image: John Jones / News Photo

When the young woman first approached the ornate gates it was a bit daunting.

As a UNISON regional organiser Melanie Onn had been to the Palace of Westminster before. But this time the girl who started out on Grimsby's Grange and Nunthorpe estates, was there as the town's new Labour MP.

"It felt like the gates to a very exclusive club. Rather than saying: 'You are not allowed in here!' I was almost surprised when I was welcomed in."

But Melanie had the people behind her. She was elected as Great Grimsby's first woman MP with a majority of 4,575, up from 714 in 2010, beating the Tories into second place and Ukyp into third.

The awe of the "new girl" quickly dissipated and the determination of the "Grimsby girl" took over. Within days Melanie had committed herself to the all-party group on fisheries and had been involved in a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party discussing the process of electing a new party leader.

"There wasn't a lot of time for reflection; for enjoying the election victory. It was a real dampener to realise that we were in opposition. A lot of the things we talked about; how we would make working people's lives better, it was so disappointing we wouldn't be able to implement them. Our task now is to campaign and lobby the government.

"In his first speech to the Commons after election, David Cameron made great

▲ Above:
Hard-won victory
for MP Melanie

play of the fact that he was going to govern for the whole of Britain, well that means he must get rid of such things as exploitative zero hours contracts.

"Another important issue is youth unemployment. In Grimsby around 25 per cent of young people are not in employment, education or training and unemployment generally is running at around 10 per cent. We need more jobs, but we also need better jobs."

Melanie's victory in the Grimsby poll was hard-won. Together with a dedicated band of volunteers, Melanie spent months building Labour's reputation and gaining people's trust. "I wanted people to know that I was normal; someone who could understand their concerns. Not everyone is born

“
WE NEED
MORE
JOBS,
BUT WE
ALSO
NEED
BETTER
JOBS
”

with a silver spoon in their mouths - and I certainly wasn't."

Born in the old Grimsby Maternity Hospital and growing up on Grimsby's Grange and Nunthorpe estates, Melanie saw at first-hand how local people had to be strong to get by.

TENSIONS

Melanie has a 'battler' instinct in her DNA, coming from a long line of hard working local women - her nan and great aunt were a big part of community life in the cress beds, cooking in school kitchens and pulling pints at pubs across town.

Her mother was "a bit of a hippy; a transient searching for inner peace". That search would eventually take mum and four-year-old Melanie to London where she went to a tough school riven with racial tensions. But at the age of six she returned to Grimsby to live with her great-aunt in Healing village, on the outskirts of town.

Despite having no father figure - she never met him and read about his death in the Grimsby Telegraph - she describes her early years as "a wonderful upbringing".

"We had a garden and stability and the local school was just behind my aunt's council house. I felt very loved."

Her teen years were a different matter. "That's when I became horrible," she admits. In particular Melanie struggled when her aunt's Polish lodger required round-the-clock care after a stroke.

"My great aunt became his carer; it meant that he couldn't

feed himself, wash himself, get himself to the bathroom, and it was very difficult for me to accept that I had to be involved in it. I'd be getting ready for my GCSEs and getting up in the middle of the night to change the bed sheets.

"I remember thinking 'I can't do this', which is really selfish, actually, but then teenagers are, aren't they?"

Soon after quitting school, she decided to leave the house she shared with her aunt after their relationship "broke down".

Thanks to local charity Doorstep, Melanie soon had a roof over her head and was able to complete her A-Levels at Grimsby's Franklin College and go on to read Politics, Philosophy and International Studies at Middlesex University in North London.

VOLUNTEER

Her first job after university was working the 5am shift at Tesco where she joined the shopworkers' union Usdaw. Her early starts didn't stop her heading over to South East London volunteering at Action For Blind People.

There was a Remploy factory alongside the Tesco stores and it was there that she saw the value of trade unionism. The GMB was the recognised union.

In January 2001 she became a receptionist at the Labour Party's London headquarters. While Melanie came from a Labour family and was sympathetic to the party, she knew "very little" about it.

She wanted to come back home so her son could grow up in Grimsby. Her job at UNISON helped her do that.

Now she juggles her parliamentary career with looking after her eight-year-old son Gabriel, a responsibility she shares with her ex-husband.

"Gabriel doesn't like change, so it'll take him a bit of time to adjust, but it's the kind of worry a lot of working people have." ■



Third place for Ukip

As a regional organiser with UNISON, Melanie Onn, the newly-elected MP for Great Grimsby, negotiated living wage agreements with councils in York, Doncaster and North East Lincs. Melanie campaigns tirelessly against the iniquities of zero-hour contracts.

Despite the pundits' prediction that Ukip would take Grimsby from Labour, they were beaten into third place. She was elected as Great Grimsby's first woman MP with a majority of 4,575, up from 714 in 2010. The Tories' Marc Jones received 8,874 votes and Victoria Ayling of Ukip 8,417.



Active reporter and technophobe **Peter Carroll** expresses his frustrations over the modern world of computers, call centres and endlessly repeated Vivaldi

It was being forced to listen to a tinny recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons for the eighth time in three hours that finally made me slam down the phone in despair.

In the spirit of embracing the modern world, I'd just had broadband installed at home and rang the company to get connected to the internet.

After six hours on the phone, over two gruelling days, they still couldn't connect me.

I spoke to six different people and each one promised me someone from a more senior level would call me within the hour. Not one of them did.

But at the end of every conversation I was asked, robotically, precisely the same question: "Are you happy with the service you have received today?"

As an opening message warns, all calls are recorded and I didn't want to land any of the workers in trouble.

I said something like: "I'm satisfied with the way you have listened to me but I am not happy with the service because I still cannot send important e-mails for work and no-one is doing anything practical to help."

This experience will be all too familiar to most people.

Almost every aspect of daily life is now controlled by voice recognition computers, call queues, multiple choice questionnaires and people you have never met not ringing you back when they say they will.

As a man in late middle age, I know some younger people regard me as at best a Luddite and at worst an idiot when it comes to technology.

But even technical whizz-

SOME
YOUNGER
PEOPLE
REGARD
ME AS
AT BEST
A LUDDITE
AND AT
WORST
AN IDIOT



Peter Carroll

kids complain of the stress caused by the grinding frustrations of automated communication.

A GP recently warned of people moving house or changing utility providers being "engulfed by an overwhelming tsunami". Symptoms including a racing heartbeat, sweaty palms, headaches and stomach upsets are all the result of hanging on the end of a phone.

So why is this seemingly unstoppable march of robotic, computer driven ("computer



says NO") tyranny happening so rapidly right across the world?

All the people I have spoken to about this issue most certainly do not believe it benefits them, so people assume the technology boosts productivity.

FRUSTRATED

Since the industrial revolution, employers have looked to mechanise production to reduce the number of people on the payroll, and call centres are part of that tradition.

But evidence that call centres really increase productivity is slim, and in many cases companies actually risk losing frustrated customers who yearn for a real human being to help them.

One reason for all this is the belief of many people that nothing is impossible to science and technology, which will ultimately solve the world's problems.

If something can be done with new technology, it will be done because progress is "intrinsically" good. The fact that it dehumanises people when implemented is not a consideration.

Professor Stephen Hawking, not a scientist known for sensationalism, has warned: "The development of artificial intelligence could

spell the end of the human race."

Artificial intelligence scientists say they will soon be able to make machines that can actually think and act independently. Prof Hawkins said machines would be able to take off on their own and re-design themselves at an ever increasing rate.

TERRIFYING

Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, wouldn't be able to compete and would potentially fall victim to the superior computers which have long been able to beat chess Grandmasters with relative ease.

And only recently a professor warned that humans could be left "utterly defenceless" by flying robots that think for themselves and are designed to kill. They could be deployed within a decade.

This terrifying prospect is a possible, even probable conclusion of the automated world now being imposed on us.

We are social animals, we need human contact as much as food and water to survive and be happy in our allotted time here.

The poor underpaid battery hens forced to work in call centres are human too. They

“WE ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS, WE NEED HUMAN CONTACT AS MUCH AS FOOD AND WATER”

like nothing better than having a good laugh.

I once rang a life insurance company after seeing yet another advert from Michael Parkinson touting his famous Parker pens.

I told them (they put you on a loudspeaker if they think you're eccentric for their mates' entertainment) that, like Michael, I was from Yorkshire and so would like a pen.

"Well you have to show an interest in taking out a policy to get one," she said.

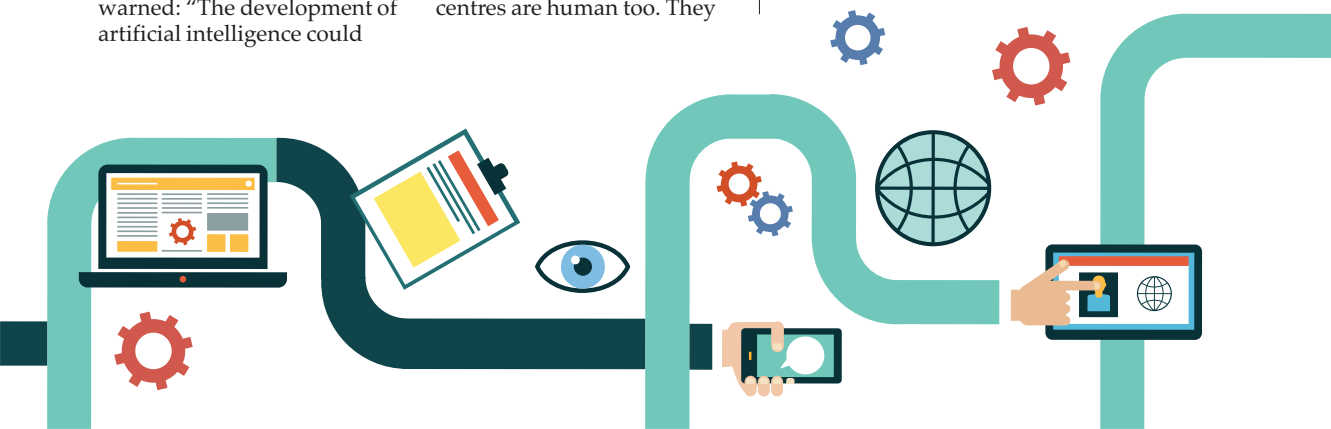
"Well if you send me a Parker pen I might be interested. Is Michael there, I'll have a word with him?," I said.

"No, sorry Michael isn't usually here in the evenings", she replied, smothering a giggle. "I think we have run out of Parker pens but we do have some carriage clocks if that's OK?"

"That will be fine," I said, and please give my best wishes to Pardy."

Two days later, not one but two Parker Pens arrived with a drawing of the great interviewer and a 'love from Michael' note.

So next time you're trapped in the labyrinth of the call centre, try having a laugh with them - you never know what might happen. ■





PAUL ROUTLEDGE

Political columnist on The Mirror

Not everybody's glass of Tetley's

Rambler Tom Stephenson had the idea of the Pennine Way footpath in the 1950s and yet it took 14 years of wrangling with landowners to make the dream a reality. Not everyone was pleased, especially a council official's wife who ended up in a bog...



I DARE
SAY SOME
PEOPLE
WILL
CURSE
ME FOR
THIS
PENNINE
WAY
BUSINESS



Rambler,
Tom Stephenson

Once walked the Pennine Way. Not all 250 miles of it, you understand, but the stretch between Cowling and Lothersdale in North Yorkshire. Or, more accurately, between the Black Bull and the Hare and Hounds, two handsome real ale boozers. The Bull is now a furniture emporium but the H&H is still going strong.

The Way is 50 years old this summer, and thousands are tramping across the tops. It was Britain's first national long-distance footpath, and it's still the most popular.

But do you know its origins? Rambler Tom Stephenson had the idea in the 1950s after walking up Pendle Hill in Lancashire, gazing at the hills of Wharfedale and the Pennines on the horizon.

Around that time, he had a letter from two American girls coming to England for a long vacation who wanted to walk something like the 1,500-mile Appalachian Trail in the USA.

Not quite enough room for that here, but Stephenson wrote a newspaper article suggesting a Pennine Way and the idea took off like a lark. Fourteen years of wrangling with landowners later, it became a reality.

It's not everybody's glass of Tetley's. Guiding a council official through a right of way in a bog, Stephenson said to the man's wife: "I dare say some people will curse me some day for this Pennine Way business."

The woman glared at him and snapped: "You needn't wait!"

DON'T RAILROAD US!

"The railroad runs through the middle of the house, since the company bought the land" goes the old American song. And now it could come true in rural Wakefield if celebrity naturalist Sir David Attenborough fails to stop the iron road engineers.

HS2, the high-speed rail connection planned between Leeds and London, is scheduled to run slap bang through picturesque parkland south of the city.

The route goes through the 250-acre Walton Hall estate, which includes Waterton Hall, now a hotel, but originally home to the famous 19th century plant explorer Charles Waterton.

Sir David has joined a local campaign to save the park from HS2 planners, pledging support for the estate to be made a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In a letter to Wakefield Council, the TV wildlife guru said: "Walton Hall is an extremely important site in the history of conservation worldwide – the first tract of land anywhere in modern times to be protected, guarded and maintained as a nature reserve."

Charles Waterton, who travelled the world in search of flora and fauna, welcomed visitors to his reserve, set up in the 1820s, provided they didn't carry a gun. And he gave sixpence to anyone who brought him a live hedgehog for release into the park.

HS2 spin doctors insist that "no final decision" has been taken about the exact route of the line from Birmingham to Leeds. That usually means they have decided, but won't tell for fear of hostile public reaction.

Incidentally, HS2 isn't even planned to stop in Wakefield, so more power to your arm, Sir David!

REED ALL ABOUT IT

Keighley, my nearest town, gets a bad press, compared unfairly to historic Skipton.

But it's a hit on YouTube after local boy James Reed, 28, wrote a comedy song about





the town that went viral. The song, that is, not the town.

He jokes about the poor selection of shops and people being “slightly down-at-heel” and suggests they move to posh Ilkley or Harrogate (they’d never have the money).

“If you live here, you’ve got a right to laugh about the place,” says James. “And I like living here. I’d move away if I didn’t.”

Fine, but I wouldn’t strike up the ukulele with his ditty on North Street of a Saturday night if I were him.

ROUND THE BEND

It’s official. Women drivers are better than men. They outperform macho males in just about everything on the road, including observing speed limits, stopping at lights and using indicators.

Women are also likely to tailgate less, or cut into traffic, use a mobile phone while driving or cause an obstruction.

Men have more bad habits, such as talking or texting on a phone, cutting dangerously into traffic, cutting corners and obstructing the road.

These findings, from a study carried out by Privilege Insurance, confirm what I have known for years: that I’m safer in my wife’s car than with the editor of UNISON Active! at the wheel. He’s a nutter.

And everybody is safer on the roads for the fact that I don’t drive at all.

NOT ARSON

The mystery of the Bradford City football stadium fire that killed 56 fans 30 years ago may have been solved.

Australian fan Eric Bennett, now dead, admitted to police that he probably started the blaze by dropping a lighted cigarette butt that fell down a hole in the condemned

wooden stand at Valley Parade.

Police say his statement was submitted to the coroner, but after all these years this can’t be verified.

So, as one mystery appears to be solved, another emerges from the smoke. At least we can now be pretty certain that it wasn’t arson by the club’s chairman, as suggested in a new book on the tragedy by a survivor of the fire.

RUN ON THE BANKS

More than 60,000 people in Yorkshire used food banks in the past year, six times the number only two years ago. And one in three were children or teenagers.

Nationally, the figure was over the million mark, said the Trussell Trust, which organises many – but by no means all – the country’s charity feeding centres.

Problems with benefits are the main reason for the surge in demand, but the trust also experienced a rise in those on low incomes.

And with £12 billion welfare cuts coming down the track, things can only get worse.

IN COD I TRUST

We’ve had our chips. That’s if you want haddock, anyway.

Rising temperatures in the North Sea will sharply diminish stocks of haddock, plaice and lemon sole, say researchers.

Being a cod man myself, I can’t say I’m heartbroken, because I hear there’s better news on the cod front. But just like some (like me) prefer gin to whisky, some will mourn the demise of the humble haddock.

Austin Mitchell, former Labour MP for the once-mighty fishing port of Grimsby, changed his name by deed poll to Mr Haddock in protest at EU catch quotas.

The gimmick didn’t last long. Much like the fish itself, you might say. ■

Ferged Out!

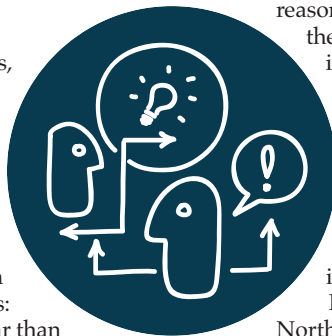
Sir Alex Ferguson, 73, finds retirement “more exhausting” than getting up at six every day to run Manchester United. Given the club’s underwhelming performance since he quit, I’m sure they’ll have him back, if he asks nicely.

Drunk As A...

Aristocracy is derived from two ancient Greek words meaning “rule of the best.” Lord Worsley, 24, son of the Earl of Yarborough, was caught driving almost three times over the drink limit and without insurance or a licence, after he crashed into a lamppost.

He was “blackled up” with boot polish on his face.

“I do feel I have been rather foolish,” he told cops in Grimsby. Foolish? Criminally barmy, more like. As well as a hefty fine, magistrates ordered him to do 120 hours of unpaid work. I hope he uses the opportunity to reflect on his folly, but I doubt he will. Aristocrat? Aristocrat.





MORE NURSES NOW!

Tristram Sterry, of Thompsons Solicitors' Leeds office, calls for mandatory nurse to patient ratios to avoid an increasingly dangerous working environment

The new government must make proper NHS staffing levels a priority, or else healthcare workers will continue to find themselves at risk.

In April UNISON carried out its annual survey of the cover in hospitals throughout the UK. The results were disappointing, if not surprising. Despite hoping to see a positive change, it is apparent that - yet again - the last government's claims to have ushered in an improvement in nursing numbers have no basis in reality.

The report found that 65 per cent of respondents felt that care was not being carried out to a consistent standard due to understaffing - an 11-point increase on the 2014 figure. On the day of the survey 70 per cent were unable to take all or some of their breaks, while 42 per cent found themselves caring for eight or more patients. Such staffing levels are clearly preventing committed NHS workers from carrying out their jobs to the standard they want, and nearly half of respondents felt there was insufficient staff to deliver safe, dignified, and compassionate care.

Unfortunately, Thompsons regularly sees examples of

nurses, paramedics and other healthcare workers who have been injured or attacked when inadequate staffing levels produce a more dangerous working environment.

Michael Martin, a UNISON member from Wakefield, was a nursing assistant at Mid-Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust when he was attacked by a patient while caring for a terminally ill patient on the neurology ward. The patient who attacked him had a mental health condition and was becoming progressively more agitated before he assaulted Michael with a chair.

The attack left Michael with fractured ribs and in chronic pain - ultimately he had to give up his job. Crucially, at the time of the accident, Michael's ward was badly understaffed: he was one of only three staff responsible for twenty-eight patients. Had there been enough staff on hand, the patient who ended up assaulting Michael may never have become agitated in the first place, or a colleague may have been able to intervene before Michael was struck.

The dangers of understaffing have profound implications for the safety of all healthcare workers. The pressures of providing care

“
PROPER
STAFFING
LEVELS
MUST BE
A PRIORITY
”

are magnified by an ageing population and a reduction in adequate funding from central government. In the long term, these pressures escalate even further when applied to a workforce of which, thanks to the last government's policies, 37 per cent are working overtime and 70 per cent are not able to take required breaks. This is an environment which is putting nurses and patients alike at risk.

Until a government takes this issue seriously and puts in place mandatory minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, nurses and other UNISON members like Michael Martin will continue to be put at a level of risk that would not be tolerated in any other workplace.

The cuts programme of the previous government left many NHS staff hamstrung in delivering the quality of care they want to achieve and which all care patients deserve. The new government must act now to make achieving proper staffing levels a matter of priority. ■



Tristram Sterry



The team is happy to assist Branches with recruitment activity and support recruitment events. We can also arrange:-

- A Branch visit or workplace visit
- Offer a presentation to or 'exhibit' at a Branch meeting
- Provide promotional literature and materials



UIA Insurance

UIA offers home, travel, and pet insurance at special rates to members. Please contact Sue Kemp for all promotional materials on 01438 761633.

Hilary Horobin 01438 761661
hilary.horobin@uia.co.uk



LV = Liverpool Victoria

Discounted car insurance for UNISON members.
www.unisoncarinsurance.com

Britannia Rescue

Cheaper breakdown cover from UNISON's official breakdown partner.
www.britanniarescue.com/unison

Ian Crabbe 07733 423 835
ian.crabbe@lv.com



UIB Family Protection insurance

FREE £2,500 accident insurance plus UNISONProtect low-cost income protection, personal accident cover and guaranteed acceptance life insurance.

UNISON Prepaid Plus Mastercard

This is a prepaid card, so you load it before using it and you can earn between 3-6% cashback at retail partners.

John Eccles 07833 450 067
jeccles@uibuk.com



UNISON Travel Club

Hassle free holiday planning service with exclusive holiday deals for UNISON members.

Dianne Jolly 07427 610 612
diannejolly@unisontravelclub.co.uk



TC Advertising Gifts

UNISON's only supplier of gifts such as pens, bags, clothing and USBs. For a copy of our brochure call 01844 275700 or visit www.TC-UNISON.co.uk

June Anderson 07921 037 425
june@tc-group.co.uk



Lighthouse Financial Advice

UNISON's chosen provider of Independent Financial Advice. Free no obligation consultations.

John Duffy:
07535 991722
john.duffy@lighthousefa.co.uk
(South Yorkshire and Humberside)



Gillian McGrath: 07887 788935
gillian.mcgrath@lighthousefa.co.uk
(North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire)



The Tax Refund Company

Are your members missing out on a possible tax refund? Use this NO REFUND = NO FEE service.

Lynda Dobson 0844 332 0004
lynda.dobson@taxrebates.com

Vision Express

Substantial savings on glasses and contact lenses for UNISON members and their families.

Nikki Williams 007940 169 557
nikki.williams@visionexpress.com

UNISON Rewards - Free £10 Bonus

Plus get paid cashback, loads of discounts and offers at over 2,500 online retailers.

John Eccles 07833 450 067
jeccles@uibuk.com



UNISONplus Health & Dental Plans

Low cost healthcare plans that give members cashback for their everyday costs not covered by the NHS. See www.youbenefit.co.uk for special offers

Wendy Freeman 0800 037 0753
unisonplus@protegroup.com

UNISONDrive

For all new and used cars, any make, any model.

Richard May 0845 122 6923
richard.may@autosave.co.uk

Union Energy

Gas & Electricity price comparison service owned by the TUC.

Mike Jones 07901 229204
mjones1275@gmail.com



UNISON Croyde Bay Holiday Resort and Conference centre

Self catering and half board accommodation, indoor pool, sauna, gym and jacuzzi and right next to the beach. Also ideal for conferences and training courses.

Simon Willis 0127 189 0890
s.willis2@unison.co.uk

**LAST
CHANCE!**

UNISON: PROVIDING ESSENTIAL
COVER FOR THOSE DELIVERING
PUBLIC SERVICES...

DONCASTER RACEDAY SATURDAY AFTERNOON 1 AUGUST 2015

**Exclusive special
ticket offer for
UNISON members**



Please note: there
will be a £2.50
transaction charge
per order except for
purchases of four or
less tickets.

‘2 for 1’ Grandstand Tickets Total price £13 (2 tickets)

On sale: from 1 February 2015

Offer closes: 5.00pm on 24 July 2015

To book tickets call **01302 304200** and quote
‘the UNISON raceday offer’, your UNISON
membership number or UNISON branch code.



PLUS! LIVE DJ's Vernon Kay & Jo Whiley