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COMMUNIQUE



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UNITED THROUGH LEARNING

How new education centres are aiming to revitalise local communities



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RECESSION PROOF

BILLY HAYES
GENERAL SECRETARY



There has never been a more important time for ULRs to prove their worth. Having transferable skills helps to "recession proof" employment. Our members have been systematically denied the opportunities to do this - but ULRs can change that.

In a recession there is fierce competition over resources. ULRs will have to compete for learning resources for our members. Too often the Government's call for demand-led education has been interpreted as employer-led education.

If an employer offers an NVQ that

provides no new or transferable skills when they are threatening to reduce staff numbers, it is against the best interests of both our members and the national economy. We need to challenge such decisions.

Our ULRs are being trained to offer full and independent Information, Advice and Guidance to enable our members to make an informed choice on the training they need.

The current economic climate puts our ULRs at the heart of the struggle to protect our members. I am sure they will not be found wanting.

Billy Hayes

Communiqué Conference Special

TRISH LAVELLE
HEAD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The build up to conference is always a busy time for the whole union and this year the education and training department will be involved in a number of important debates. This is to be welcomed, of course, as it reflects how much the union values education and training, and it is hoped that these debates are informed, lively, constructive and progressive.

Outside the main conference, the education and training stall promises to be the usual hive of activity, offering useful information on branch training needs, a chance to meet regional project workers, book a training course, get advice and enter competitions.

One of the best things about the conference is seeing new delegates who have trained in the last year making their first speech. Hopefully, the education and training department has helped them develop the skills and confidence to take those first steps to becoming an active participant.

This year, the department will also be celebrating the work that has been undertaken with the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) to develop the next generation of trade union organisers and activists. As Marshall Ganz, the American civil rights campaigner and labour organiser, said: "Young people have an almost biological destiny to be hopeful".

So, whether seasoned conference delegates or first-time attendees, the departments hopes that all members have an interesting, rewarding and successful week.

T. Lavelle



BT is not immune from the economic recession

The housing market collapse has had an unexpected effect on BT. Gerry Robinson helps members reskill

[ECONOMY]

BT recently declared that it had redeployed dozens of members to other areas of the business due to the economic downturn.

The global and local recession is having an impact on companies like BT and members in the north of Ireland and those in other regions are not immune from its effects.

When housing activity grinds to a halt in this way, very few people move into new homes and the knock on effect is that they have little or no requirement for landlines.

In fact, conscious of the pressure on family budgets, many people decide to have their telephone lines cut off altogether and turn to alternatives such as mobile phones instead.

The allocation

by BT of dozens of members to what have become known as Career Transition Centres (CTCs) means that a large group of members require support from CWU ULRs. Some of those redeployed readily admit to being "rusty" when it comes to their IT skills.

The branch has a lifelong learning facility and early approaches have been made to BT management to see if there is a possibility it can be utilised to help retrain members, giving them new skills which will hopefully keep them in full-time

employment.

Work is also underway to explore what the union can do to identify and secure whatever learning opportunities may exist, in order to help improve the prospects of members.

● The sessions will be delivered in the CWU Learning Xchange in BT's Telephone House, in May Street, Belfast. For more information please contact Gerry Robinson by emailing him at: rgerrybelfast@hotmail.com or calling: 07711 762 684



LEARNING LOOKS FINE IN 2009

The first Scottish CWU union learning representatives (ULRs) training course of 2009 was attended by eight newly appointed ULRs.

The course, which was held between March 23 to 27 at Stow College, in Glasgow, was attended by representatives from Scotland No1, Glasgow & District Amal and Grampian & Shetland Amal branches.

For seven of the students, it was their first union training course. Four ULRs were trained from the Glasgow Mail Centre and joined the existing ULRs working in the Key2Learn Centre. One of the new ULRs works only on a Saturday and was trained after many requests for part-time weekend staff in the Glasgow Mail Centre.

Two ULRs from the BT Call Centre at Alexander Bain House, in Glasgow, will assist the four existing ULRs currently organising courses being delivered by Stow College. A further ULR from Parcelforce's depot at Cambuslang, and one from Aberdeen Royal Mail Centre, have also been trained to assist with the proposed introduction of Learning Centres. The course was also attended by two new ULRs from the Prison Officers Association Scotland.

This joint course worked very well, especially where reps from sites with Learning Centres were able to pass on their experiences to others. Regional secretary John Brown says the newly trained ULRs will help CWU Learning Centres develop over the next year, with the hope of further centres being opened in the future.

ULRs and branches will continue to be supported through the regional education and learning committee, which has the full support of the Scottish regional committee and its officers.

Another ULR course is planned later this year to meet the growing demand created from ULR recruiting events.



More funding secured to polish up PC skills and bridge the digital divide

Funding success in the North West

FUNDING UPDATE

The CWU has been successful in securing more than £52,000 for nine projects across the North West region.

The funding has been made available through the North West unionlearn's Learning and Skills for All Fund, and will see the continuation of the Solve project, with new six-month projects starting in Skelmersdale Delivery Office,

Stockport MDEC and Carphone Warehouse in Preston. A 12-month project is also planned for Chester Mail Centre, and four projects are taking place for Learning at Work Day, during Adult Learners' Week. These projects are in addition to the Digital Divide and Collective Learning Fund projects that are currently running and will offer a wide range of learning opportunities to

members and strengthen the work already taking place in the region.

52^k ... number of pounds for NW learning

The union has also secured funding to run a three-day Redundancy Support Course for ULRs and IR reps, with money from the LSfAF. The course will enable reps to get an overview of money management and

pension issues as well as an understanding of interview techniques, CV writing and job searching.

The success of CWU funding bids reflects the trust it has built up over the last 10 years as a union which "delivers the goods".

● For more information contact Ray Atkinson, regional worker for the North West, by email: ray.atkinson3@blueyonder.co.uk, or on 07946 759 583

Learners say Buenos Dias!

COURSES

Glasgow's Key2Learn centre has begun its second batch of Spanish Level 1 courses.

The classes, which run on Mondays until the end of June, have attracted a lot of interest and have been well attended.

Stow College tutor Lorraine Mullen said: "In a short space of time learners have developed a good grasp, and understanding of the language. Most importantly, everyone has had fun while learning and built up their social skills."

Learners Gerry Carr and Christine White say they would thoroughly recommend the course.

"Lorraine is an excellent tutor and the only negative thing about the class is that it will finally have to come to an end!" said Gerry.

This is very pleasing news for staff at the Glasgow centre as it was one of the first courses to be run, and they hope to continue with more classes next year.

New London regional project worker

APPOINTMENTS

Vic Paulino has replaced Simon Crisford as the London regional project worker.

As the lead ULR at

the Croydon & South London branch for 3 years, Vic says he is really looking forward to the challenges of the job.

"Since becoming a ULR I have a gained

a hunger for learning. Getting members back into learning is what drives us at the education and training department."



Vic Paulino

➔ More on page 13

CWU leads from the front in community learning

COMMUNITIES

A CWU activist in Cannock has been instrumental in promoting the trade union ethos in his local community by helping a Sikh temple set up a Learning Centre.

Midlands ULR, Steve Hackford, was inspired to set up the centre after the success of the Learning Centre at Wolverhampton Mail Centre.

His CWU branch introduced the Sikh community to its education provider, the City of Wolverhampton College, and the

College is now delivering courses such as English, Maths and IT. In addition a gym has also been set up at the temple, and is running wrestling classes tutored by a gold medallist wrestler.

“I invite anyone who lives or works near a Sikh temple to have a look”

“My first visit to the temple was overwhelming and the hospitality is second to none,” said Lee. “I have

formed a great friendship with its members, evidenced by the support on the recent national march and rally at Bilston. People gave up their own time to prepare meals and drinks at no cost.”

He continues: “The links the branch has established with the Sikh community through the learning agenda has assisted the CWU in raising the profile of the national anti-

privatisation rally and has given us a base from which to organise.

“I invite anyone who lives or works near a Sikh temple to have a look around – the generosity and respect they have for everyone is unbelievable. Even if you go in as a stranger; you will come out a friend. That’s a true cultural exchange.”



Marching at the Bilston rally

Union skills for ULRs

COURSES

New courses for ULRs have been developed to help teach new skills and refresh existing ones.

The Union Skills for ULRs courses are primarily for new ULRs, but they will also be useful for more experienced union learning reps.

Designed to show how the CWU works, the courses look at union structure and how and where ULRs fit in, with sessions on developing meeting and conference skills, writing, note-taking and public speaking. They also look at how to plan a learning campaign or learning event, such as Learning at Work Day.

It is planned the courses will be run regionally so interested members should speak to their regional learning secretary or regional project worker.

● If you have any suggestions for other ULR courses then please do not hesitate to contact the Education Department on 0208 971 7340 or email TLavelle@cwu.org

Study reveals computer savvy union

TECHNOLOGY

As part of the CWU’s learning and organising project a major study of activists has been undertaken to see how, when and why they use technology.

97% of activists use computers daily and consider them vital. 80% have broadband and consider e-mails to be vital. However, all bar 17% consider they further computer training. If it was offered, 47% would be

interested in learning via phones/handhelds and 82% would be interested in training online.

87% ...of CWU activists are IT savvy

Simon Massen the Learning & Organising Project Worker said “applications such as Google Maps offer opportunities to target members in the unrecognised and emerging areas

and offer them the learning opportunities they want.”

Google maps for instance can be used to visually depict the locations of each Branch Office or Learning Centre, including the level of access.

Simon went on to say “the linking of Learning & Organising activities is key to the CWU, especially as we recruit & organise members in the emerging areas of membership.”

Learning knows no borders

INITIATIVES

A delegation of newly-formed Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) project workers from the south of Ireland recently visited their counterparts in the north.

During their visit they went to the Learning Suite at the Royal Mail and met with the branch and ULR for the site.

Discussions included funding arrangements, and how to engage workers.

[WWW.CWU.ORG]

THE FIRST
YOUTH SKILLS
FOCUS GROUP
ALVESCOT LODGE



ALVESCOT LODGE

The weekend of April 25-26 marked the first Youth Skills Focus Group at Alvenscot Lodge

YOUNG VOICE CHOICE

The Education & Training dept have

hosted a youth skills focus group which produced interesting findings that could influence future development of the project.

The event, organised in conjunction with the Youth Advisory Committee, looked at whether assumptions made about younger workers were valid.

Young members, employed by Royal Mail, BT and Manpower, participated in a number of debates and challenged many conceptions.

Preconceptions

Firstly, young members suggested that the concept of the "digital native" – the idea that young people have grown up surrounded by new technology and are completely comfortable with it – is not necessarily true.

Some suggested it all depended on the

opportunities people were given. Manual workers might not have access to technology, and if they left school with certain skills they would soon lose them

“Even though I sit in front of a screen every day, I need permission to access email”

– or their skills would become outdated – if they were not utilised.

Another young member said: "Even though I sit in front of a screen every day, I need management permission to access something as simple as email. I can't even access the company's e-learning system, without getting my manager to grant me access."

Interview ideas

It was also suggested that young people suffer more in interviews as

qualifications are not valued as much by employers as experience.

It was suggested unions might want to develop "Into Schools" projects to organise events that develop inter-personal skills and experience that make school and college leavers more attractive to employers.

Apprentice isolation

Experiences of apprenticeships also varied widely. One member said: "The Royal Mail apprenticeship scheme doesn't really teach you a trade or a skill. They have a very high level of drop outs."

One of the notions to come out of the session was that apprentices can feel isolated, as the work experience element means they keep moving from one site to another. It was felt that they might benefit from a union mentor to

support them, perhaps the local ULR.

Closer working links

Finally, it was suggested that the role of the ULR itself was an ideal development route for young activists who might now be getting too old for their Youth Officer role but were being frustrated by the lack of opportunities to become workplace reps.

Commenting on the whole event, organiser Paul Dovey – from the education and training department – said: "This was a really useful event. Our young activists have come forward with a number of good suggestions, which can only benefit the development of union learning in the CWU."

"The suggestion of closer working links between regional learning committees and regional youth committees offers us the ideal way to develop this further."

[REPORT]

THE ARK IS RE-LAUNCHED

Gurdav Sidu and **Dave Condliffe** worked hard to reinvigorate a Coventry Learning Centre and help Parcelforce employees achieve their aspirations

The All Round Knowledge (Ark) Learning Centre at Coventry Parcelforce Hubs has been re-launched by Terry Pullinger, assistant secretary CWU, and David Smith, managing director of Parcelforce.

The Ark opened in 2002 and several hundred learners attended courses there until recent IR issues brought learning to a halt. Coventry area branch rep, Gurdav Sidu, and the Midlands regional project worker, Dave Condliffe, worked tirelessly with local managers to re-open the Ark and get learning back on the agenda.

Learning agreement

A Learning Agreement was reached, encompassing full-time release for a lead person to run the centre and the recruitment of a team of

ULRs to assist them. Parcelforce contributed accommodation and matched the funding sourced by the CWU from Advantage West Midlands, to create a state-of-the-art Learning Centre.

“The Ark is perfectly placed to assist our members in achieving their aspirations”

Terry Pullinger said: “A company’s success should not be judged by its profitability alone but by how it values its employees.

“The Ark Learning Centre is perfectly placed to assist our members and Parcelforce employees in achieving their aspirations.”

Service level agreements have been negotiated with Henley and Wolverhampton Colleges to deliver

17^K

... number of courses provided to members by CWU ULR's since April 2006

first-class education for members. Trained ULRs are available to offer information, advice and guidance (IAG) on learning options and courses across the region. The IAG is sub-contracted to Nextstep and draws funds, for the CWU nationally, while offering a professional service to members.

Jewel in the crown

Dave Smith said: “The Ark is the jewel in the crown regarding working with the CWU on the shared passion of developing people’s skills both for work and in life.”

Since re-opening its doors the Ark has enrolled members on ITQ and literacy courses and is making preparations to run Spanish and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses.

Future aspirations

Ray Yip, lead ULR, said: “A great deal of work has been done to get us to this point. However, it has always been our aspiration to get the employer to offer time off for those members to attend courses in work time. I hope the ‘right to request time off to train’ legislation will help us reach this goal.”

Left: CWU and Parcelforce get behind the ARK Learning Centre



[FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO]
WWW.CWUEDUCATION.ORG

Dave Condliffe (third from left) and Wallace Centre regulars are fighting fit for change





UNITED THROUGH LEARNING

Communities in the Midlands have been working in partnership to set up new Learning Centres. Regional project worker **Dave Condliffe** is one of those who is helping local people get advice, free educational courses and a new lease of life

Big changes are afoot in Staffordshire this year, as two new Learning Centres get the go-ahead.

The first, in Stoke-on-Trent, is being redeveloped from an existing education room.

The CWU is working in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent Council and College to redevelop a room at The Wallace Sport and Education Centre into a vibrant community Learning Centre.

Originally opened in May 2004 – set up with funding from both the city council and Sport England – the centre’s aim was to provide sporting and educational opportunities, to the local community. But the centre’s staff have not been able to achieve everything they wanted.

Struggle for education

Kingsley Marshall, manager of the centre, said: “The venue has been a complete success on the sporting

front but we have struggled to establish educational opportunities.

“However, after a few meetings with regional project worker, Dave Condliffe, and Stoke-on-Trent College, I feel confident that by working together we can set up a sustainable centre.”

Leadership by example

The project has been kickstarted with a successful sustainability bid, submitted by the Midland No 7 branch, and this funding will be matched by the council. Importantly, Paul Malyan, ex Burslem rep and volunteer community ULR, will lead the project for the CWU.

“The fact that Paul is taking the lead will make it a success, and the professional information, advice and guidance (IAG) he will deliver on site will enhance the opportunities for the wider community,” said Dave Condliffe. ►



► Paul Malyan, CWU volunteer ULR, said trade union drive, together with local college partnerships, would provide a broad range of free courses.

“Industry has been decimated in Stoke and any assistance trade unions can give to the local community helps enormously,” he said.

It is hoped a three-day event planned around LAWD will get the project started.

CWU+ Unite = Port Vale
Big steps have also been made in Burslem. The local MP, Joan Walley, got together local unions to establish a Learning Centre at Port Vale

football club. The CWU teamed up with Unite (the manufacturing, technical and skilled persons union) to meet with Port Vale officials and help move the project forward.

“As a lifelong fan this is a stimulating project to be involved in,” said Dave Condliffe. “We aim to build upon established local community links through the trade union lifelong learning network. The next step – signing a skills pledge between the club; CWU and Unite – will cement this exciting partnership.”

[FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL: DCONDLIFFE@CWU.ORG]

Above (from left to right): Jim Cooper, PV in the community project manager; Ian Bayford, Unite regional project worker; David Condliffe, CWU regional project worker; and Bill Loadey, PV secretary, kick into action

Course information

- Three-day specialist course for union learning reps: CWU Learning in the Community Course
- This course is designed to help build links with other organisations in the local community and work together to deliver learning
- For more information regarding this course, please contact regional project workers or email Trish Lavelle on: tlavelle@cwu.org

[REPORT]

CWU SHARES ON SCREEN SOLIDARITY

A simple click of the mouse and a broadband connection was all it took to bring two unions from different continents together for support and solidarity

CWU activists have taken part in the first video conference with comrades in the Philippines.

Nine CWU activists, attending the CWU Trade Union and Labour Studies Diploma at the CWU education and training centre at Alvescot Lodge, took part in a solidarity video conference with members of the MKP – the sister union in the Philippines with whom they have long-standing links.

Cross border debate

All the CWU activists were impressed with how straightforward it was to set up the conference through a free Open University service, and they enjoyed an hour-long discussion with their Manillian comrades.

There was a discussion about how the global economic crisis is affecting workers both here in the Philippines, and about how CWU members can support trade unionists in the Philippines, who face enormous struggles such as police harassment, detention by the authorities and possibly kidnap.

Great experience

Ray Atkinson, from the North Lancashire and Cumbria branch, welcomed

the initiative, saying: "It was a great experience talking in real time to Harold and Tony from the MKP. In my view, anything that brings grass roots trade unionists together can only help us do more for all workers worldwide."

“This can help make a real difference to exploited workers in the telecoms industry”

Bill Dixon, from London South West Thames branch added: "This link-up is especially important now as the reality of the economic downturn is hitting workers all around the world. A click of the mouse and a broadband connection can help make a real difference to exploited workers in the telecoms industry on the other side of the world. This is certainly something I would do again."

Success story

Trish Lavelle, head of education and training, was enthusiastic about the possibilities the technology provides. "This link-up was really a test to see if the technology would work and whether we could use this to support our trade union education and solidarity work," she said. "But it really surpassed our expectations and it was fantastic to see

Below: CWU activists were impressed with how easy it was to set up the video link

and hear conversations about how we can understand and support each other's struggles and campaigns.

International Solidarity for the CWU has now become much more accessible for all our activists, and we will certainly use this facility again. The added bonus is that branches now know how to access this service to improve their own internal communications and organisation. A success all round!

● To donate to the CWU International Development Fund please contact John Baldwin in our international department at: jbaldwin@cwu.org. Or cycle for solidarity and take part in the CWU Cyclo-Sportive for Trade Union International Solidarity on September 26, 2009. Contact Trish Lavelle at: tlavelle@cwu.org

[FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL]
TLAVELLE@CWU.ORG



BT WORKERS SECURE SKILLS PAY

A forward-thinking manager has allowed British Telecom staff to learn IT skills during work time, says **Tracey Bent**, benefiting them, the business and the CWU

A group of BT workers and CWU members based across the south have been granted full-time paid release from their jobs to attend an IT course, which improves their computer and email skills and leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

The team of Plant Protection Officers meet one-day-a-week over eight weeks at Skyport Telephone Exchange, near Heathrow, where a qualified tutor from West Thames College, delivers a free IT course.

Par for the course

The full-time paid release was agreed by BT acting manager, Nic Budd, who contacted the CWU last year requesting information about the CWU's lifelong learning project. Nic was concerned that his team had been issued with work laptops but had received very little training on how to use them.

Tracey Bent, CWU regional project worker, accompanied by Nick Bury, London regional learning committee secretary, met with the team to give a presentation on the CWU lifelong learning project and to assess the possibility of setting up a course that might help.

The team confirmed that they wanted an IT course but



Above: Pamela Singer, a tutor from West Thames College, with Learners at BT's Skyport Telephone Exchange

also indicated that it would be impossible for them to do such a course in their own time due to the long travelling distances involved in their work. The group covers Swindon, Gloucester, Oxford and the Thames Valley area.

Fortunately, Nic Budd recognised the benefits that such a course would bring to their work for BT, and agreed that the course could therefore be run within work time (one day per week for eight weeks) at Skyport Telephone Exchange, near Heathrow.

The CWU South East regional project worker,

arranged for West Thames College to deliver the free computer course, which provided the group with new IT skills and a recognised qualification.

Tracey Bent commented on the importance of paid release, saying: "Thanks to a forward-thinking manager we have been able to provide an important learning opportunity. Improving the skills of these workers/union members will have a direct benefit not only to the learners themselves but also to BT and the CWU."

● For more information contact Tracey Bent, CWU regional project worker on: 07803 609 511, or email tbent@cwu.org

LIFE LONG
LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES
LEICESTERSHIRE



LEICESTERSHIRE BRANCH

The Leicestershire branch of CWU officially opened the doors to their first Learning Centre in February

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Friday the 13th might be a bad day for some but for the CWU's Leicestershire branch it marked the end of 18 months of hard work.

A long hard path had been taken by branch members on the journey to fulfilling their aspirations to deliver lifelong learning opportunities to the membership. Finally, on February 13, the centre's doors swung open to a Spanish Language course and the official open day.

Closer ties

Dignitaries in attendance included Ronnie Hansarani, branch chair; Mark Greenhill, branch secretary; Mandy Palmer, Campbell Street Delivery Office manager; Dave Condliffe, CWU regional project worker for the Midlands; Lee Baron, CWU Midlands regional secretary; and Trish Lavelle, head of

the CWU training and education department. Also attending was Lorraine Broadaway from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College – who, on the day, signed a service level agreement with Mark Greenhill, ensuring close ties between the branch and a college provider.

“Any day that learning is on the agenda is definitely a lucky one”

Shining example

The arrival of so many people came as a bit of a surprise to the learners on the Spanish course, but it was felt it was not so unwelcome once the food arrived! In fact, it would be easy to write about the speeches made on the day, the inspirational words said, or the problems hanging the plaque. But, all that

pales into insignificance, when the real shining reason for the day was highlighted by the fact it coincided with an actual ongoing class.

Lucky charm

The day marked the reason many people become learning reps – having the ability to give opportunities to the membership. This is the overriding reason why so many people put in long days of work when a Learning Centre is still only an idea. It's the reason why so much effort is put into creating centres of learning for colleagues and people out in the community.

Some may suggest holding the opening on Friday the 13th was tempting fate and it could be seen as unlucky. But, in reality, any day that a member can walk into a Learning Centre and be

taught something they truly want and need isn't unlucky. On the contrary, any day that learning is on the agenda is a lucky one.



BBC RAW

A special partnership between the CWU and BBC South

SOUTH EAST BRANCH

BBC South's Roger Hammett and Raw Money Facilitator, Nick Nicholls, have teamed up with CWU's Tracey Bent and lead ULRs Barry Underdown, Phil George and Dave Thompson to provide financial workshops



To celebrate the launch of the BBC's new interactive website and promote its benefits for CWU members, Tracey Bent (South East regional project worker) and Roger Hammett (BBC South) teamed up with Nick Nicholls (CWU tutor, Solent branch) and a group of CWU ULRs on a special joint project.

Financial skills

In January, the BBC launched a new interactive website designed to encourage skills for everyday life. A section of the website is dedicated to improving people's financial capability and includes money skills such as saving, spending and budgeting. BBC Raw Money is at the forefront

of the website launch. (For a taster visit: www.bbc.co.uk/raw/money)

The BBC-trained Nick Nicholls, from the CWU, is an official BBC Raw Money workshop facilitator and aims to deliver Money Skills Workshops using the new BBC website. The workshops will take place in Learning Centres during April and May in the Bournemouth and Southampton area, to coincide with Learning at Work Day celebrations.

Steer clear

A steering group, made up of Dave Thompson (lead URL Solent branch), Barry Underdown (lead URL Bournemouth & Dorset

Amal branch) and Phil George (lead ULR Wessex South Central branch) was established to assist with the project and organise workshops for their Learning Centres.

Positive thinking

On attending the steering group the BBC's Roger Hammett said: "I found everyone extremely welcoming and was delighted with the enthusiasm from a really positive and clearly well-motivated group of learning reps. I also have great confidence in Nick being an excellent workshop deliverer."

Tracey Bent also congratulated Nick and the ULRs for their part in the project.

"Along with Nick, our ULRs have really made this project work," she said. "Not only have they helped organise something special for our members they have also been tremendous ambassadors in representing the CWU's union learning project to the BBC."

Discover your Raw talent

Learn important saving and spending skills:

Workshops are being delivered at The Learning Exchange, Winton TEC, in Bournemouth; First Class, Dorset Mail Centre; and The Teaching Post, in Southampton Mail Centre

For more information please contact Tracey Bent (South East regional project worker) on 07803 609 511, or email her at: tbent@cwu.org

To visit BBC Raw Money go to www.bbc.co.uk/raw/money or for the BBC Raw home page visit www.bbc.co.uk/raw

Keep an eye on this BBC website. Over time it is being developed to include further sections on improving computer literacy and maths skills

“ I WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE ENTHUSIASM FROM A REALLY POSITIVE AND CLEARLY WELL-MOTIVATED GROUP OF LEARNING REPS ”



HUNGRY MINDS AT CANTEEN SCHOOL

An unusual Learning Centre for South East No.3 branch was created in an empty canteen space. But, as **Jon Weeks** proves, it's still encouraging workers to learn



South East No.3 branch has started a new learning project for its members. The project has been organised by Jon Weeks, lead union learning rep (ULR), and Mark Deeprise, IR Rep, both based at St Leonards Delivery Office, with the full support of branch secretary, Steve James.

Workplace learning

Following requests for workplace learning from fellow workers at St Leonards Delivery Office, lead ULR Jon set about working out how to organise courses within a small delivery office, where no room could be allocated as a

designated Learning Centre. An empty canteen space in the afternoons provided the solution.

With the support of his South East regional project worker, Jon met with a number of colleges to see if courses requested by fellow-workers could be delivered at the times requested. West Kent College offered to assist by providing free courses backed by European Social Funding, and delivered by professional tutors.

As a consequence, the 'canteen school' has been able to offer free Holiday Spanish Courses and free Introductory IT Courses during the afternoons.

To assist getting the project

off the ground the college also agreed to bring in laptops for the first IT course. The courses are encouraging workers back into learning.

Huge success

The new courses were promoted during a special event at St Leonards Delivery Office on February 11, organised by CWU South East No 3 branch, with the support of Delivery Office manager, Jackie Piper, and tutors from West Kent College.

The event was a huge success with workers from Battle, Hastings, Bexhill and St Leonards Delivery Offices coming to learn about the courses.

Steve James, branch secretary, offered his support by attending the event, along with IR reps from Heathfield, Tonbridge, Battle, Hastings and St Leonards. During the afternoon, 30 postal workers registered for courses, all of whom spoke first to a union learning rep and then to a tutor from West Kent College. The first set of Spanish and IT courses began at the end of February. To meet demand, these courses were also repeated after Easter.

Above: Learning Event at St Leonards Delivery Office with tutors from West Kent College

15%

Workers are 15% more likely to receive training at a workplace that has ULR's

● For more information about any of the courses please contact Jon Weeks (lead union learning rep, based at St Leonards Delivery Office) on 01424 782 462. Please leave a message on the answering machine and Jon will call you back

LEARNING BENEFITS ALL IN BARNSTAPLE

Helping staff from local companies top up their skills and acquire new ones is the aim of a North Devon learning initiative. **Joe Dean** expresses his enthusiasm

A new initiative involving trade unions and the North Devon College, will give staff of various local companies in Barnstaple the opportunity to brush up on their skills or acquire new ones in a local centre.

Centre competition

A new Learning Centre will be able to offer numerous courses that will interest and encourage local people to take up learning – for some it may be the first time since leaving school!

The initiative will kick off with an open-day at the centre, in Learning at Work Week, on May 11. The plans include a photographic competition, open to all visitors who express an interest, with prizes that include photographic equipment – which can be used to support a course in digital photography.

Helping themselves

The event is supported by funds from the South West TUC and SW RDA, and the efforts of the CWU, RMT, and PCS trade unions. Local CWU representative, Joe Dean, has expressed his enthusiasm for the event saying: “this will

22^k

...number of ULR's trained by Trade Unions in the UK

allow local people to help themselves out of the recession, by making themselves better equipped in the job they do now, or getting new skills that make them better placed if they need to get a new one.”

Joe is one of a number of local union reps who are working hard to make the event a success. They hope that the event will lead to people taking a course and going on to develop a long-term relationship with the Learning Centre, and committing themselves to further courses later on. These can give national qualifications that are recognised throughout industry.

Engage and improve

The benefits to all are clear. For individuals; they will be able to attend a convenient local Centre and see an improvement in their skills and their employability. For employers, who will benefit directly from these new skills; they will be able to improve the chances of their companies weathering the current credit problems. For North Devon College, there is the chance to engage with a group of people who are difficult to bring back into education, with the prospect of further courses.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING CWU CONFERENCE 2009



Come to our Fringe meetings:

“CWU Youth & CWU Education – Working Together & Making a Difference”
 Joint with CWU Youth
 Sunday 7th June 12.45 Branksome Suite

“Educating & Organising - Strategies For Growth!”
 Tuesday 9th June 12.45 Tregonwell Hall (Back)

Come and meet the CWU Education and Training team on our stand who will be happy to help you