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COMMUNIQUE



THE MAGAZINE OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT **CONFERENCE 2011** WWW.CWU.ORG

MEMORIAL GARDEN OPEN

CWU Workers' Memorial Day 2011 saw the official opening of the memorial garden



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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

BILLY HAYES
GENERAL SECRETARY

Annual Conference is the time when we see CWU democracy in the raw. Any member can take their idea to their branch and, if their case is argued well enough it could end up becoming CWU policy.

That's all well and good for those of us who are long in the tooth but for those who are new to union activism it can all be quite daunting. Education helps overcome that.

Be it a new reps course, informal education through mentoring or briefings, or the Skills for Life or IT courses that enable

them to formulate and present their ideas, it is education that gives them the confidence to share their ideas with others. That is why the ruling class have always sought to limit educational opportunities for the working class - and it is one of the reasons why trade unions have always placed high importance on education.

As we face the current challenges, participation of our members and the new ideas they may bring with them have never been more important. Neither has education.



The struggle for Education

TRISH LAVELLE
HEAD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Conference is the time when the union reviews the way we do things and decides what our future priorities should be. This edition of Communiqué very much reflects that theme. In this issue, we are looking at how we can deliver the best training and development to the growing number of our activists working in the non-recognised sector. These representatives have fewer opportunities to train than activists in our traditional areas of organisation, and it will be necessary to find new ways of delivering the skills and knowledge that they need. Decisions we take this week will determine how effective we can be at reaching all our activists with effective training, whether in unrecognised companies, in remotedelivery offices or as a roving engineer without a designated workplace.

Amid the current cuts and political attacks on education one of our fringe meetings this year will deal with the political and industrial struggle for working class education and our battle against the marketisation of the education sector. For the first time in over 50 years the doors are being closed firmly against working class students and we see a return to education as a privilege rather than a right. Our own education and training programme is steeped in the best working class educational traditions and encourages activists to think for themselves, to apply logic to decision making and to question everything. These factors will no doubt underpin the quality of our debates and decisions over the next few days. I wish you all a successful conference and look forward to some healthy and no doubt lively debate.

T. Lavelle



Can we allow history to repeat itself?

Education and representation can stop us from making the same mistakes as our ancestors, says **Fra Martin**, ULR

[ACTIVISM]

Education is not just confined to academic study. For us, education is also keeping our members politically aware of the dangers of the far right. We must not allow the current economic debacle to become a political vehicle driven by a right wing Tory Government, and lead to a foothold for the BNP or EDL. Therefore, we must be more proactive in developing our educational strategy to counter their divisive agenda, which is being fuelled by the cuts in the public sector coupled with the lack of job opportunities for our youth.

The N. Ireland Combined Branch, as part of its campaign against this agenda, has developed its own educational programme designed to raise members' political awareness of the dangers of the far right when left unchallenged. Therefore, the branch is

“They who forget the past are condemned to repeat it”

formulating a series of visits, one of which is to Auschwitz later this year, demonstrating to the members the consequences of what can happen when fascism is in power.

We are also looking to visit Ypres and the Somme both of which have

significant local interest to our members, particularly in light of the recent political developments within the region. We believe it is now more important for our union to work with all organisations committed to the democratic path to ensure we do not return to the past.

It is the aspiration of the branch to ensure this issue is at the top of the political agenda for our union. It is imperative that all our members are given a platform to ensure they are not left in a political vacuum. In the absence of such a platform being established, our members may become disillusioned, and fodder for the political trenches of BNP, EDL or in the extreme, become involved with paramilitary organisations.



Fra Martin

PROGRESS IN SOUTH WEST



As part of the CWU's commitment to continuing development of our ULRs, a wide range of education and training is currently taking place around the South West.

Sixteen new ULRs recently completed the ULR 1 course held in the CWU Learning Centre at the Branch office in Exeter. A further two have started a ULR 2 course at New College, Swindon.

Further development of existing ULRs continued with a Website workshop run by CWU Project Workers, Andy Sorton and Phil Sutton. PTTLS tutor courses have been arranged for ULRs to assist them in delivering courses, and another group of six ULRs are taking an NVQ Level 4 in Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) with an additional ULR signed up to take Level 3 IAG in Plymouth.

In addition, ULRs in Exeter have participated in a Running Committees course as part of a joint union initiative with PCS, RMT and the FBU. This is due to be followed up with further Unionlearn funded courses in the near future.





Smiles from new BTMSL reps

First BTMSL reps have graduated

COURSES

The first essential skills course for reps at BTMSL saw all complete with flying colours.

The course, held earlier this year in York, and based on the CWU Skills 1 covered subjects such as legal framework relating the rep's role, discipline and grievance procedures and getting workers

involved in organising within the union.

"The reps certainly gained a great deal of knowledge and skills from the course, but equally important was the chance to meet up, network and discuss the issues that they currently face," said course tutor Tracey Fussey. "I'm sure it has equipped the reps with a collective

confidence which will make them even more effective."

CWU assistant secretary Brian Healy added: "For some time the reps had been chewing my ear over training and being able to meet up, as they not only come from different parts of the country but represent workers on different contracts. This session met both

objectives.

"As ever, however, things are not that simple and the course had to be tailored and agreed first with BTMSL management – BTMSL is here to stay and, in fact, is set to grow. As the company expands, the CWU must do likewise – and I've no doubt the reps who attended the first course will be pivotal in that process."

Practising what you preach

SKILLS

After discovering she had a skill for organising events like the National ULR Networking event Laura Wright, the CWU's ULF Admin Support, is taking a Diploma in Event Management. "I get a great sense of satisfaction and achievement when our event goes well," said Laura, "The course I'm doing is quiet intense but really enjoyable. Who knows I could one day be organising the Labour Party Conference or Glastonbury!"



The course I'm doing is intense but enjoyable
Laura Wright

New mail centre next on the agenda

PROGRESS

Since taking over as Lead ULR for South Central No.1 Branch, Richard Wilkins' main objectives were to recruit ULRs and open two learning centres.

He has now recruited 5 ULR's

but opening the learning centres has proved more difficult. However a Branch open day in Oxford proved the demand from members and with help from the local managers we have secured Oxon Learning Centre.

The ULRs personally stripped out the room to enable Royal Mail provide table and chairs etc. They hope to open Oxon LC in May and Richard is turning his attention to the new mail centre in Hemel Hempstead.



As good as new and it didn't cost the earth

TECHNOLOGY

The North East region recently began upgrading their existing computers, some of which are five or six years old, to ensure that their ICT equipment remains fit for purpose for a further five or six years.

It began when a Castleford Community Learning Centre asked the CWU if they were interested in taking on some old computers that were going to be discarded. The seventeen computers, licensed with XP Pro operating system

and Office 2003, had a decent internal processor but only had a small amount of memory and a number of the computers only had outdated CD-ROMs installed.

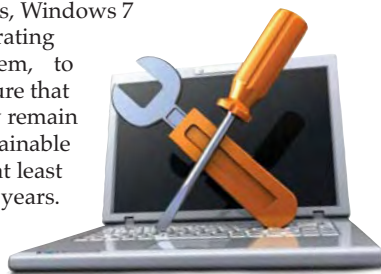
The North East regional project

“Upgrading hardware is sensible and cost-effective”
N. East CWU

worker decided to establish just how much it would cost to upgrade these computers with a satisfactory amount of memory, and DVD re-writers. In total, it cost just

£63.49 to upgrade all seventeen computers with 2GB of memory and DVD re-writers.

Following this, the North East decided to audit the rest of their equipment with the intention of upgrading ICT equipment, through the sustainability fund, to a minimum standard of 2GB memory, Office 2010, and, in some cases, Windows 7 operating system, to ensure that they remain sustainable for at least five years.



The exercise has proven to be a sensible and cost-effective way of using the sustainability funding to give learners access to decent equipment without purchasing brand new computers. It demonstrates how the CWU continues to use any funding that it attracts to the benefit of its members.

Recession beating with open source software

SOFTWARE

On tight budgets, many members are finding it difficult to fund software for their computers. As ULRs, it is important for us to make learning as accessible as possible – perhaps by introducing the fantastic world of free software.

OpenOffice is the leading open-source office software suite for

word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It works on all common computers and stores data in an international open standard format that can read and write files from other common office software packages. It can be downloaded and used free of charge for any purpose. OpenOffice is easy to learn and those

using another office software packages should take to it straight away. OpenOffice is released under the LGPL licence. This means you may use it for any purpose - domestic, commercial, educational, public administration. You may install it on as many computers as you like and make copies for family, friends, students, employees - anyone you like.

Many organisations use Open Source software, most notably Canada's federal government, and Barack Obama, who has commissioned a white paper on the benefits the U.S. government can derive from open source.

● OpenOffice can be downloaded from www.openoffice.org. Other useful open source software can be downloaded from www.mozilla.org and www.gimp.org.

InBrief

First Click

First Click is the BBC's computer skills site for older people who have never used a computer before. It goes from how to move a mouse through to browsing and deciding what sort of PC you need. The site is easy to use and is supported by student and teacher's packs. > See more on <http://www.cwu.org/using-bbc-first-click.html>

May Day

May Day celebrations date back to pagan times and have traditionally been "people's celebrations". On May 1st 1886, the Chicago Haymarket Massacre saw police fire on workers who were striking for an 8 hour day. 4 years later, in 1890, the first congress of the Second International called for international demonstrations on the anniversary of the Chicago protests. It has been celebrated as International Workers' Day ever since. May 1st is a national holiday in 82 countries around the world. The UK holds a Bank Holiday on the first Monday in May.

CHANGING TIMES AT SOUTHEND

Though Southend Mail Centre will soon cease to operate as a mail centre, its workers will receive tailored advice and training to prepare them for the changes

Like many mail centres, Southend is changing and will cease to be a mail centre. To prepare for this, the local Lead ULR, Rob Wilcockson, proposed bringing in outside expertise to help members prepare for the future. His Branch Secretary, John Hunt, fully supported him and negotiated with Royal Mail to allow Rob to co-ordinate the support for those members who were considering taking EVR.

Adele Rogers from South Essex College, who have been the main provider for the Southend Learning Centre and had worked with the Rapid Response to Redundancy team, put Rob in contact with Seetec, a national organisation that specialises in supporting individuals facing redundancy (amongst other employment and training expertise) and who work in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions, and Jobcentre Plus.

The project begins

Rob had four weeks full time paid special leave to start the project and he liaised with Seetec to organise Open Days in January for those who completed the preference exercise in December. These were held in the Learning Centre on two days in order to reach all those involved, regardless of shift time, and Royal Mail gave each

individual time off to attend.

Once Royal Mail offered individuals the EVR, Seetec came back to discuss skills and retraining options with individuals, accompanied by a DWP advisor who could provide information on benefits and pensions.

Advice and training

Ruth Langham, Seetec local Centre Manager explained "Seetec are helping those at risk of redundancy by holding 1-2-1 meetings to complete Skills Training Analysis which help Seetec advisors to identify current skills and experience and any training needs which would help members improve their chances of employment. Part of the service is a one day course to help pass on skills and knowledge including; production of CVs, completing on line application forms, interview techniques and self-marketing. Seetec are also able to identify short training course which members need to enhance their employability."

As Rob points out "Our members are getting impartial advice both on their future work options, training and entitlements without any outside pressure. Members' more specific training needs can be discussed and courses arranged via government funding of up to £1000."



New learning centre

With six offices going into Premier Park, Gerry Owens, Lead ULR for West London Postal branch, was determined that members had to have access to a learning centre on site. 18 months of negotiations have delivered a fully equipped learning centre, paid for by Royal Mail. The branch now intends to train more ULRs for the site and forge links with the local community and library – helping to sustain this project for many years to come.



MEMORIAL GARDEN OFFICIALLY OPENED

CWU Workers' Memorial Day, April 28th 2011- saw the formal opening of the CWU Workers' Memorial Garden – “Remember the dead, Fight for the living”

The recently constructed CWU Workers' Memorial Garden was formally opened on 28th April this year at the CWU national residential education centre, Alvescot Lodge, and will stand as a tribute to all CWU workers, and other workers, who have lost their lives or been injured at work.

Trish Lavelle, the union's Head of Education & Training explained, “The garden is an ongoing project around a living pond and will provide a place for reflection for groups and individuals who wish to remember anyone who has ever suffered injury or loss at work.”

Workers' Memorial Day originated in Canada in 1985 when the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

commemorated those killed, injured or made unwell by their work. CUPE's symbol for the day is a caged canary as used to detect poisonous gas in mines, with the slogan “Remember the canary”.

Trish told *Communiqué*, “Workers' Memorial Day takes place every April 28th, as an international day of remembrance of workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their work. We have used the day to highlight these issues with the help of our Health, Safety & Environment Department and we have been overwhelmed and delighted by the donations, contributions and assistance that has come from our branches which continues to make Alvescot Lodge and its grounds a truly integral place for every

member within our union.”

The day highlights the preventable nature of the majority of workplace accidents and ill health, and promotes campaigns and union organisation in the fight for improved workplace safety. The slogan for the day is “Remember the dead - Fight for the living”.

Lee Wakeman, Policy Assistance in the CWU Education & Training Department highlighted the day's world-wide importance explaining, “Trade unions in the USA, the UK, Asia and elsewhere have organised events on April 28th since 1989. The Scottish TUC adopted Workers' Memorial Day in 1993 and the TUC formally adopted it in 1999 and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2000. This is all progress but what is needed most is action to involve all workers at grass roots level in this important event”.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) estimates 500 workers are killed at work every day and some 65-165 million a year contract occupational diseases.

● For more information on Workers Memorial Day and how to continue the development of the CWU Workers' Memorial Day, contact Lee Wakeman in the CWU Education & Training Department. For more general guidance call the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department

Below: The transformation of the memorial garden



ALL CHANGE

Liz Philips takes over from Kevin Murray as lead ULR for Maidstone

LIZ REALLY DELIVERS IN MAIDSTONE!

We look at how Liz Philips is getting on in her new role, and hear from her and her colleagues about how she's tackling the challenges facing her with courage, resourcefulness and tenacity. Read on to find out about the difference she's making already



It was a baptism of fire for Liz Philips of the Kent Invicta branch when she stepped in whilst her lead ULR Kevin Murray was off sick in January. Liz, who supported Kevin behind the scenes, dealing with paperwork and keeping files, stepped in when Kevin hurt his back in January. However, Liz soon found out she needed to be extremely tenacious and resourceful in her new role.

Kevin went off sick while in the process of arranging courses with different colleges, leaving arrangements at a crucial stage. Over the next four weeks Liz, who

had not had any training or experience as a ULR, proved her effectiveness by setting up courses for CWU members in Maidstone Mail Centre. Liz also hosted two dissemination events in the Mail Centre to raise awareness of the branch's learning agenda and sign people up for the course. Liz soon had enough people signed up for an ITC with literacy course to begin in March. The course helps those with basic to intermediate IT skills – and it has proved so popular that Liz is hoping

to run another later in the year!

Things took a further turn when Kevin Murray left the CWU and Royal Mail to pursue a new career path, leaving Liz to take over the learning agenda for the branch in Maidstone.

Success story

Joe Showler, South East Project Worker, said "Liz is extremely resourceful and effective as a ULR – as her success with this course proves. Liz is extremely approachable and friendly, so people trust her and value her

advice and guidance. I have witnessed first-hand how well Liz interacts with our members and I think she should be commended in the way she has dealt with the huge task of filling in for Kevin with only a small amount of training and preparation. Liz is a natural ULR and this is a real success story!"

“People value her advice and guidance, Liz is a natural ULR”
Joe Showler

Liz said "Being a ULR is hard work but great fun and extremely fulfilling. Initially I thought oh my God what have I done?! But now I love every minute of it! It's certainly challenging and very thought-provoking. I really enjoy interacting with the members and helping them with their learning journey."

[WWW.CWU.ORG]



Liz is full of bright ideas in her new role

[REPORT]

ROBERT TRESSSELL COMMEMORATION

W. Butterworth, North West Regional Learning & Education Secretary, attended the event held to commemorate the life and work of the impoverished author

On Thursday 3rd February 2011, the CWU's North West Regional and Learning and Education Committee Chair and Secretary, Paul Newsham and Billy Butterworth, attended the commemoration of Robert Tressell, author of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (TRTPh). Robert's real name was Noonan but he wrote under the pseudonym Tressell to avoid being blacklisted. He died on 3rd February 1911, in the Liverpool Infirmary (Workhouse). He was looking for work in order to fund a new life in Canada, and was buried in a pauper's grave at Walton Park Cemetery. The grounds now form part of an inner city farm and education centre for youngsters.

Noonan didn't see his work published. His novel about a group of painters and decorators, is considered to be the jewel in the crown of working-class literature. Some learned 'not only would they have to strive to change the system that was robbing them of any dignity of labour, but that their poverty was "neither natural nor just."' R. Noonan (Professor

Ron Noon of Liverpool John Moores University).

Expecting a handful of activists, we were pleased to see around 250 people, including school children who had come to lay red roses at Robert's grave.

Actors depicting characters from the book, spoke to the crowd, culminating in the apparition of Tressell himself, at his graveside, addressing those gathered. He told us "it was no good standing around his grave reminiscing or preaching to the converted" but to "get out there, like he did, and educate the doubters," and he "was aware of what was going on today and about us 'all being in this together' and called on us to "fight back and stand up to the Con-Dem cuts." After the performance, a clarinettist played 'The Red Flag.'

2011 marks the centenary of the Liverpool transport strike where Churchill deployed troops and police officers to contain the city. He had ships with guns trained on St George's Hall plateau, where people had gathered to listen



Above: Roses laid at the site of his grave

to union leaders speak.

As part of the Liverpool Radicals' season, events will be taking place around the city from now until October 2011. Organisers are holding readings of TRTPh at libraries across the city and are sending copies of the book to all secondary schools; this drew my thoughts to the CWU's Education & Training slogan, 'Justice is the goal, Solidarity is the tool, Education is the key;' may our union never lose sight of these principles.

We have arranged with the organisers of the farm to let us use the facility for a forthcoming Education

Regional Forum. We have also asked Professor Noon to give a talk on the 1911 strike and the importance of education and organising. We hope to also lay a wreath on Robert Noonan's grave on behalf of the CWU.

Below: Children gather at the commemorative event





EDUCATION MEETS THE FUTURE

Adapting to reach the unrecognised: meeting the needs of everyone

Ensuring every CWU rep has the skills and knowledge to support strong workplace organisation and representation is our mission in the Education Department. Last year, over 2,000 activists came through our education programme. The vast majority were new reps from traditional areas of organisation. But we are seeing a new breed of activist. UK Mail, Vodafone, Colt, Cable & Wireless, and Orange are all companies where we have reps and growing membership but limited or no recognition of the CWU. The CWU has a diverse membership covering over 40 different employers. These activists need support and training but are not granted the paid release for courses that companies like Royal Mail and BT offer.

Above:The future is bright for CWU reps

Head of Education and Training, Trish Lavelle, is absolutely clear on the position the department has to take. *“At its heart this is a question of equality and fairness. What we are seeing is CWU reps who cannot attend the standard union training model because their employer will grant them neither paid nor even unpaid release to do so. These reps do the majority of union work in their own time and their level of motivation and commitment is such that they carry out a whole host of union activities in the evenings, at weekends and using annual leave or days off, often in the face of a deeply hostile employer who does not wish to recognise a union in the workplace. We have to adapt to their needs to find ways of delivering courses that are both flexible and accessible but still of the high quality that we provide to other reps.”*

Knowing what works

Of the 2,000+ reps we trained last year, only a handful came from the unrecognised sector. While there is evidence of bespoke short courses meeting the needs of such activists, they only reach a small proportion of these reps.

We have started offering blended courses (where some learning takes place online) but online learning cannot replace the interaction you get from group learning. We have the flexibility to fit our existing courses to the needs of all reps. Most of our courses are delivered over a five day period but they can be adapted. If there is not an existing course that fits the bill, we can design new courses quickly. A good example of this is the new Health and Safety course specifically for reps



from unrecognised companies, designed to be delivered in a weekend.

Training the Activists of the Future

At a recent CWU event for reps from the unrecognised sector, the Education and Training Dept listened to the views of reps whose needs are plainly different. For many of them, it was their first chance to quiz the department about the support we can provide to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence – and also to challenge us to provide courses which suit those who don't work for companies where full recognition rights are given.

Trish was impressed with the dedication of the reps present, "These activists have no access to release, facilities

or the other things that many of our reps take for granted. I would like to think we have learned as much from them about their specific needs as they have from us about what is available for them."

John East, National Organising Secretary, was optimistic "The conference of activists from companies where we don't yet have recognition demonstrated a real desire for the training to enable reps to build the union. The Education and Organising Departments need to work together to develop relevant courses, capable of increasing participants knowledge, but also with an organising perspective, which can be delivered in innovative ways to enable reps without release time to attend. I am confident that we can rise to the challenge."

Next Steps

Trish and John wasted no time in planning the next steps: The two departments are working closely on Postal Organising strategy, including our emerging reps network in UK Mail and are already adapting and designing short modular and online courses targeted at new reps. We expect to be able to pilot and deliver these courses over the Summer and Autumn this year. If you want to set up a course regionally or are interested in attending a pilot course please contact Trish at tlavelle@cwu.org or to find out more visit www.cwueducation.org or catch up with us on Facebook by joining our CWU Education and Training group.

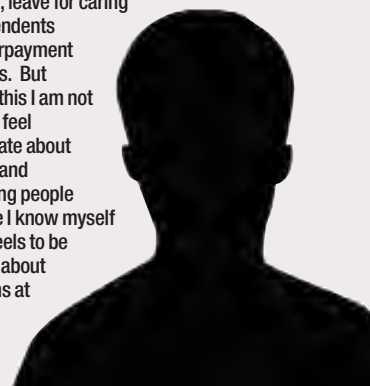
Meet the Pioneering Activist

Peter (not his real name), is a CWU representative at Orange, where CWU have members across the UK but are not yet recognised for collective bargaining. He has worked at Orange for over 10 years and is now an iPhone Specialist. He became involved in the union after having trouble at work. "There is a very overbearing performance management regime at work and having experienced it myself first hand, I wanted to help others who were going through this. Because the CWU helped me out I wanted to give something back." Peter is a trained rep who has undertaken the Equality and Diversity, Union Skills 1 and Disciplinary and Grievance courses so far.

He says the biggest barriers to training for reps in companies like Orange is time, "It is very difficult to get time off from the employer to undertake courses and I have had to do training on days off or book annual leave. In one case, I had to buy an additional week's leave from my employer. I'll also be attending Annual Conference during annual leave."

"I want to do Employment Law next because we use that a lot at work (I currently spend a lot of time on the internet researching things) and Union Skill 2. I could do with a handbook for all the basics of being a rep. Also, online courses would be easier to fit around work."

He says life as a CWU Rep can be stressful, "It's a bit like my garden; an uphill battle and it keeps me extremely busy. Last week I dealt with 4 personal cases – and we get no facilities to deal with these. We have regular issues with flexible working, leave for caring for dependents and overpayment of wages. But despite this I am not put off. I feel passionate about helping and protecting people because I know myself how it feels to be worried about problems at work."



DELIVERING SKILLS

Activist Development in the Postal Sector

National Vice President and Chair of the Postal Constituency **Jane Loftus** speaks to *Communiqué* for the first time about an important new project in the Postal Constituency to support and develop our frontline workplace activists



Jane starts by giving a bit of background. “The Recruitment and Workplace Organisation project has brought together, the DGS(Postal) Dave Ward, the Postal Executive, and the Organising and Education and Training Departments. Our starting point is that unit reps are the most important activists in the union and they need to be properly supported and recognised for the job they do. What is very positive is that everyone involved is committed to working jointly on generating increased union activity and a strong presence in every workplace. There has been a real focus on Royal Mail Delivery Offices where we often struggle to recruit or retain CWU reps.

A recent survey of new reps carried out by the Education

and Training department highlighted the sort of support that reps would find most useful to them in their role. Top of the list of the support they value most is a “workplace committee” and a “substitute rep” and this is perhaps indicative of how isolated some reps can feel when they are the only union presence in the office. In terms of training 93.7% had found the Postal Agreements and Procedures Course either “essential” or “very useful”. “Basic Employment Law, Negotiating skills and IT” were the top 3 training needs expressed by the respondents. The preferred form of communication of this group of reps was email and most rated “Support from the Branch” and “Training” as the best support they currently

Above: World Book Day is a great example of what activists have achieved



Jane Loftus,
National Vice
President



Kev Phillips,
ULR

receive from the union.

Jane is clear, “We need to ensure that every workplace has a rep but we understand how difficult the job can be. We recognise that we have to identify the barriers to people becoming a CWU rep in these offices and then overcome those barriers through carefully targeted encouragement, support and training. In terms of training we have now identified the key skills and knowledge that a CWU Unit Rep requires to carry out their role and are designing a training plan for every new rep that they should complete within months of coming in to post. Branches will be absolutely key to this work.”

The Project has already started to work with a group of Branches to identify reps

and set up small workplace committees in target workplaces. Jane is really pleased with the initial response. "But it doesn't stop there. The next step will be to make sure that these new reps get the right mix of courses from the Education and Training Department and support from their Branch and IR reps and the employer. We are also for the first time going to tap in to Branch ULRs who are a great resource to assist reps in developing IT skills too."

“Every workplace needs a rep but we understand it's a difficult job”

Jane Loftus

The project is in its early stages and the intention is that this will eventually be rolled out to all Branches but Jane is very upbeat. "Branches don't have to wait to get training as we have ULRs who can get our reps IT training and qualifications and we have an Education and Training Department who will provide regional and local courses for your new reps on demand. Get in touch with Trish Lavelle or Lee Wakeman if you want your reps trained and contact me if you want to know more about the work we are doing to make the union strong in every workplace."

● To contact Jane email jloftus@cwu.org
To find out about courses for your reps visit www.cwueducation.org or email tlavelle@cwu.org or lwakeman@cwu.org
If you want to find out more about Organising and Recruitment in the Postal sector contact Lynn Browne lbrowne@cwu.org

EWU

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Come to our Fringe meetings:

"The Battle for Education"

Sunday 22nd May 1.00pm Tregowell Hall, BIC
Speakers: Paul Mackney - Vice chair Coalition of Resistance
Richard Ross - London Metropolitan Uni

"E-Learning - Reaching out to all"

Tuesday 24th May 1.00pm Meyrick Suite, BIC
Speaker: Roger Hammett - BBC First Click

Come and meet the CWU Education & Training team on our stand BL15 who will be happy to help you:



- Sign up for a CWU activist training course or organise a local course for your Branch
- Speak with a CWU Tutor about your training needs
- Find out how your Branch can get more involved in learning and organising
- Sign up to become a Union Learning Representative
- See the latest E-Learning resources
- ENTER OUR CAPTION COMPETITION TO WIN A KIDLE

MP VISIT TO
ISAMBARD LC
SWINDON MAIL
CENTRE MARCH 2011



SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AS VITAL AS EVER

Sandra Absalom, CWU lead ULR, takes the opportunity to show just how important access to learning is

EDUCATION IS KEY



Access to good resources is the key

The Exhibition project. This was inspired by the work of our ULRs in Northern Ireland, and aims to involve unions and workers from the Swindon area in a 'celebration of the creative talents of Trade Union Members'.

“In a mundane job, learning lifts people to thinking about interesting and new ideas”

Learning support

Mr Buckland was pleased to say that he would support in any way that he could and Sandra plans to hold him to his word. Helen Cole, Regional Unionlearn Manager, also said that she was keen for Unionlearn to assist where they could.

“In the present climate we need all the MP support for learning that we can get,” said Sandra.

CWU Lead ULR, Sandra Absalom grasped the opportunity to make her point when Robert Buckland, MP for Swindon, expressed an interest visiting the Isambard Learning Centre as part of his visit to Swindon Mail Centre.

Mr Buckland has stated that he is interested in learning and Sandra told him that her aim was to spread learning to other Royal

Mail sites in the area.

Sandra emphasised the importance of learning at work, “As some jobs can be quite mundane. Learning lifts people into thinking about new and interesting topics.”

Library access

One initiative Sandra was keen to promote was the Mobile Library visits. As a result of Royal Mail's

restructuring, some members have to travel from Reading or Oxford and work long, often unsociable hours. Having the library visit the site once a week enables members to access a library when they would not normally be able to.

Sandra asked the MP to prove his commitment to learning and support her another one of her initiatives,

NEW TECHNOLOGY VITAL TO SUCCESS

Over the past year a group of our ULRs and Project Workers have been working hard to develop a range of tools and resources for our ULRs

If we are to achieve sustainability, it is vital that we make the most of new technology to provide our ULRs with the tools they need to do the job. The development of web-based resources allows us to reach out to members in remote locations, and offer them the same opportunities as those in big workplaces.

Websites

The education and training web-pages have now been fully migrated onto the main CWU website. In addition to up-to-date information on our activist training programme, the site contains news, archives for Communiqué and a range of ULR resources. We have improved the site to include online learning for members, including Skills for Life, Computers & IT, Languages, Science, History, Higher Education and the Arts. There is also an events calendar which provides ULRs with ideas for developing promotional events.

In a sister project, we have developed a webpage for each learning centre and each region. The site is Matrix compliant and contains all the necessary best practice information and feedback forms. These sites will provide visitors with all the contact details for their learning centres and learning reps. If they wish, ULRs will also be

able to add timetables of courses, local news and events and other items of local interest.

The websites are connected to be easily navigable and work on a "no wrong door" principle.

EMU & Left Click

EMU (E-learning Machine Unlimited) and Left Click (its activist training counterpart) are pilot projects aimed at developing bespoke, good quality, e-learning resources. Members wishing to share their skills will be able to turn them into structured learning materials. The content will be uploaded onto a moodle site to maximise user-friendliness and learner support. The plan is to offer a combination of video, screencast, audio, slides and worksheets. Through moodle, we can also facilitate testing and portfolio building. It also allows us to offer those with specialist skills the opportunity to record briefings and for them to be seen across the country. It could even facilitate discussions via Skype.

CWU Datalearn

Being able to track members' learning

experiences and needs, manage course programmes and plan ahead for future needs, is key to sustainability. CWU Datalearn has been designed to make this vital process as quick and simple as possible. It is a web-based database, running on a MySQL platform with 124-bit encryption to comply with data protection requirements. Every learning centre will have a password with which they can input, access and manage their portion of the database (but not those belonging to neighbouring centres). As the database works to a template, everyone will have compatible information, allowing us to collate information to assist with funding bids, negotiations with employers and providers, or compare fees charged for the same courses countrywide. This will make it a powerful tool for supporting learning in the future.

Below: Making the most of modern technology

Skype and Facebook

The CWU Education & Training Dept. have set up a Facebook group to share information on all aspects of education and training. We have also set up Skype accounts for all Regional Learning Committees. This cuts travel costs, enables cost effective conference calling and maximises ULR networking.



SKILLS FOR ALL

Tonbridge is creating a sustainable learning agenda which will benefit all its members

Shirley delivers something special in Tonbridge!

As a ULR of the Tonbridge mail centre, **Shirley Long** has been working tirelessly alongside lead ULR, Jon Weeks, to provide courses and training that meet their members' needs and expectations. Here's how they're getting on



Shirley Long of the South East No3 branch

is certainly creating something special in Tonbridge and working very hard to make sure that the branch's learning agenda is sustainable for a long time to come.

Shirley who has been a ULR in Tonbridge mail centre since 2009 has certainly made a formidable team with Jon Weeks the branch's Lead ULR. In the Tonbridge and St. Leonards Royal Mail centres the 'dynamic duo' has provided courses for their members and are working very hard to provide the sort of courses their members want in the future.

Skills for life

Through surveys and workplace mapping Shirley and Jon have provided Skills for Life courses in both centres. Shirley was also able to provide a French course free of charge in Tonbridge because of funding from the European Social Fund.

The French course was a resounding success and has led to a demand for further language courses with Spanish and British Sign Language being amongst the most popular requests from the members as well as further maths, English

and IT courses in May.

Shirley is already finalising her Adult Learners Week event in May. Shirley and Jon have been working with several other community groups and like-minded organisations to create an event themed around well-being and are offering learning and health checks for CWU members.

Through Information, Advice & Guidance Shirley and Jon will help members not only find the right learning for their needs and aspirations but also help find out about health and safety opportunities that are available to them locally.

Joe Showler said "Shirley and Jon work so well in partnership together and offer our members so much. Shirley is very innovative and hard working in her ULR role. Shirley has really established learning in Tonbridge and with Jon they have brought so many

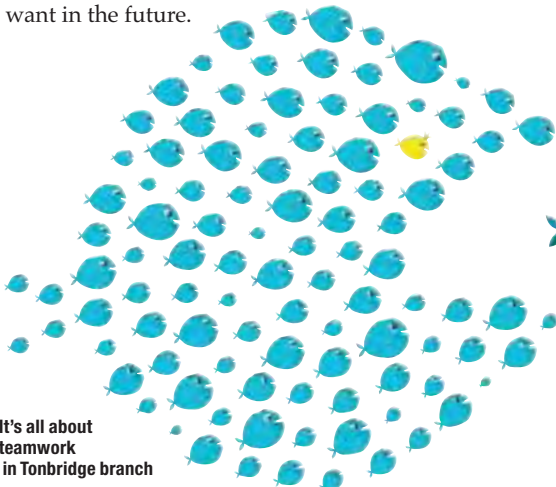
learning opportunities to all the members across the branch area."

“Everybody has the right to learning opportunities”

Happy to help

Although she's kept extremely busy as a ULR and on her Royal Mail deliveries, Shirley still has the energy to enjoy time with husband Ray, her five daughters from 15 – 26 years old and grandchildren Callum and Leah as well as having a passion for gardening and cooking.

Shirley says "I believe learning is for everybody and it's everybody's right to have learning opportunities. You are never too old to learn new skills or develop your existing skills. I am just happy to help and facilitate the opportunities for our members. If my raising learning awareness helps people realise their potential and develop their skills then all my efforts have been worthwhile and I have achieved something special!"



It's all about teamwork in Tonbridge branch