

& briefly...

Overstocking

Good to see that Royal Mail (RM) remain in for the long haul. At a recent meeting RM procurement director Ninian Wilson revealed that the company had enough delivery pouches to last 15,000 years.

"We reckon this means they must have 90 million pouches stuffed away somewhere," said Bob Gibson, assistant secretary. "Enough to take their bonuses home in no doubt."

Cash in transit pay success

The successful implementation of major depot revisions has resulted in Cash in Transit members at 27 depots receiving increases resulting in a new weekly basic pensionable pay rate of £393 and other benefits associated with this year's pay agreement.

Arrangements for implementation have been made for the remaining depots and over the next few weeks members at these sites will also gain from increased pay.

The agreement is designed to secure the long-term future of Cash in Transit.

Fred Binks passes on

Former general treasurer and national honorary member Fred Binks died in September at the age of 77. During his long and distinguished career in the union Fred held many positions of responsibility in the union.

Former UCW deputy general secretary Tony Clarke – now Lord Clarke of Hampstead – said: "The union has lost one of its outstanding members; many of us have lost a good friend who will live long in the



memory of those who had the privilege of working with him."

■ A full obituary can be viewed at www.cwu.org/links/fbinks or in Branch Officials' Bulletin no 039/06

Postwatch to become bigger watchdog

The Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Bill will bring together the National Consumer Council, Energywatch and Postwatch into one large watchdog to cover the three areas. The move is intended to strengthen consumer representation.

Quick thinking postal worker saves pensioner

A quick thinking postman out on his round in Newcastle has saved the life of a critically injured elderly woman.

CWU member Jason Cassidy spotted a youth running away, from the scene, leaving a pensioner with stab wounds to her neck. Jason went to assist the woman and called the emergency services.

"I would like to thank the postman who helped my mum. If he hadn't seen this person running away and realised something was wrong, I don't know what would have happened," said the daughter of the victim.

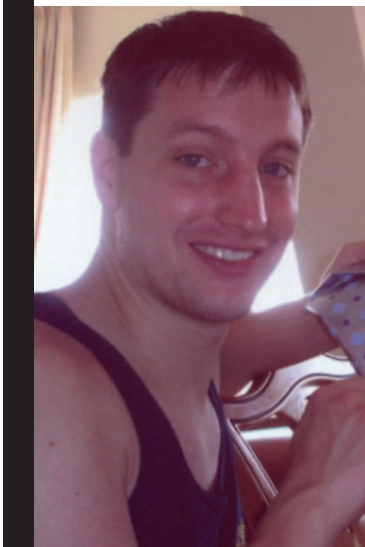
Postman pipped to the Mastermind post

West London mail centre member Ray Eaton was just pipped to the post in the finals of the BBC's Mastermind.

In the initial rounds Ray answered questions on British track and field athletics and Andrew Johnson.

For the finals he answered questions on comedy television series.

UNION WINS £56,000 DISMISSAL PAYOUT



A man wrongly accused of stealing from Royal Mail has won £56,000 in compensation from a Liverpool employment tribunal...

Mark Ward (left) had worked for nine years in a number of different locations for Royal Mail before arriving in Warrington. He had an exemplary employment record not taking any sick leave for some three years.

None of this was taken into account when RM management set up a surveillance operation to try and find out why materials were going missing at the Warrington depot.

The man working alongside Mark was found to be stealing materials. It was then claimed that Mark had knowledge of what was going on. "It was a case of being caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was in the trailer with that lad but couldn't see what

he was doing. I wasn't even looking at him working," said Mark.

Mark believes there is something of a hidden agenda at work with Royal Mail just trying to get rid of staff where and when they can. He asked for his job back after the tribunal had ruled he was unfairly dismissed but this was rejected.

Mark recalled a witness being called who said there wouldn't be a Royal Mail in 31 years time when he was due to retire.

It took Mark a few months to find a new job but he is now working as a support worker with mentally disabled people.

Mark paid tribute to the support he received from Robbie Ayres, branch secretary of Giro Bank Bootle.

The number of postal worker cases he has to take on has struck Robbie. "I have five cases on the go at the moment and they are all postal workers. It is strange that there seem to be so many cases coming up at a time when Royal Mail admits it needs to shed jobs," said Robbie.

Customer Service members back pay deal by 85 per cent

Members in customer services have resoundingly, backed by 85 per cent, a new three per cent plus pay deal under the Pay & Rewarding Skills agreement.



Some 69 per cent of members in customer service will receive a 3.1 per cent pay rise with other members receiving a 3 per cent pay increase. All pay and overtime increases will be backdated to April 1 and paid in November salaries.

In line with union policy

the starting salary of £12,500 has been completely removed from the pay scales and replaced with a new entry point of £14,325 (current pay point two).

"This is a step towards eliminating low pay in customer services and places our members starting pay amongst the best in the UK contact centre industry," said Andy Furey, assistant secretary.

Members will also receive significant increases to London Weighting (up by 7.14 per cent to £4,203) and weekday and Saturday overtime rates are also to be substantially increased from £8.89 per hour to £10.38.

A good deal all round.

Royal Mail breaches agreements with mail centre closures

Royal Mail has gone against the terms of the national agreement by announcing two feasibility studies with a view to consolidating five mail centres into two in the western territory.

Members at Reading and Gloucester were informed that the option being considered was to transfer their processing operations to Swindon.

Meanwhile, Coventry and Northampton were advised that the proposal was to consolidate their work into a new mail centre to be built in Northampton.

"The union has a national agreement in place to deal with any proposals from the business to rationalise the mail centre network," said Martin Collins, assistant secretary. "The initiatives that management have outlined to our members had not been discussed or agreed with the

national union. No formal proposals have been received on the future mail centre network."

The business have since written to the union confirming that they remain committed to the Pay and Performance Agreement. They have recognised that their actions were contrary to the principles and objectives contained within the terms and no substitute for the detailed process that should have been followed.

"The attitude that has been adopted in this instance will have caused many of our members in the affected areas unnecessary distress and concern about what the future holds for them and their families," said Martin.

Meetings at national level have subsequently been attended by divisional and local representatives from the mail centres involved to receive

formal presentations on the studies. Further meetings will now be arranged in the two areas to enable local representatives to look in detail at the initial documentation e.g. traffic levels, arrival patterns, employee impact etc that shaped the business' thinking and to provide them with the opportunity to discuss alternative options.

Remembering Bill Fry

A plaque has been unveiled at CWU headquarters in Wimbledon in memory of Bill Fry – the first president of the CWU following the merger of the UCW and NCU in 1995.

Many of Bill's Postal Technical Services constituency comrades, along with members of his family and his many friends, attended the ceremony which was performed by GS Billy Hayes.

"No-one campaigned harder than him for the creation of the CWU. Bill epitomised all that is great about the trade union movement. The plaque will be a fitting and permanent testimony to a great man," said Billy.



BAG REVOLT ON 'SORTED'



Actors on the BBC drama series about the postal service Sorted came close to revolt over the weight of the bags they were being told to take on delivery.

Mark Womack who played the mysterious character Jack in the series told CWU North East regional secretary Paul Clays how the cast had complained about the weight of the bags. At one point Mark together with Will Mellor (who played Barmpot) formed part of a deputation that went to the shows' producers to complain about the weight. "Acting in the series gave me more respect for the jobs that postal workers do. It really is a hard job," said Mark.

Paul Clays felt the story shows just how important it is to have a union in the workplace. "No doubt Equity would have become involved had the dispute over bag weights on set escalated. Shame though that in the drama itself the BBC failed to show any sign of the union in the delivery office – maybe now we know why," said Paul

The series centred around the lives and loves of five postal workers and their manager.