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GENERAL

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Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs

The following meetings with CWU Group MPs have now been arranged and, for your information, listed below are the dates of the meetings and those nominated to attend:

8 May 2007

Andy Kerr, Graham Colk, Steve Jones and a representative from the London Regional Political Committee.

17 July 2007

PFMC Members to be nominated following Annual Conference, and a representative from the South West Regional Political Committee.

Billy Hayes
General Secretary

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Branch Magazine Competition

The annual awards rewarding the very best CWU branch magazines are up for grabs once again – and the competition will reach its climax next month at Annual Conference.

To enter, all you have to do is decide which edition of the magazine was your best of the last twelve months and send three copies to: **Marcia Murray**, CWU Communications Department, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London, SW19 1RX.

Deadline for entries is **Friday May 18**, so don't delay – not least because as in previous years substantial prizes are at stake.
Communications Department

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Your Voice Against Poverty – The World Can't Wait

We have been contacted by a joint agency of organisations which include amongst others the TUC, Action Aid, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children, Friends of the Earth and Stop Aids campaign.

This coalition are coordinating joint campaigning activity on the **run-up to the**

G8 summit at Heiligendamn (6th – 8th June 2007) and the European Council meeting in Brussels (21st – 22nd June 2007).

The aim of the campaign is to raise the awareness of international developments issues including debt cancellation, increasing aid levels, trade justice, healthcare and education.

On **2nd June 2007** the coalition are encouraging individuals to take part in a rally on the banks of the Thames near Parliament. Details of the demonstration and the campaign The World Can't Wait can be obtained from www.yourvoiceagainstopoverty.org.uk General Secretary's Department

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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Harassment Complaints Database: Union Policy

Branches are again reminded of the need to fill in the Harassment Complaints Database (HCD) Forms, as illustrated in LTB 450/04.

Please ensure that all reps have a copy of LTB 450/04 as it contains useful guidance as well as the form itself. Branches may also find LTB 289/04 useful which contains information on the Harassment Helpline and the Harassment Advice Network as well as the HCD. The completion of the HCD forms is part of our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission and is, therefore, CWU policy (the full agreement can be found in LTB 292/04).

The Equal Opportunities Commission has raised concerns with us regarding the completion rate, which we need to address, otherwise we will fall foul of the agreement. Therefore, please ensure that any complaint raised with branch reps by members that involves possible harassment should be notified to HQ via these forms.

We appreciate that this will add to an already busy work schedule for those reps that have the responsibility for completing them, but there is no scope for non-compliance. We must accept that this will become an accepted culture in terms of harassment reporting.

The data that will come through to HQ will

be vital in enabling us to analyse and identify any obvious patterns where problems exist.

We extend our appreciation to all those branches already complying with the policy and look forward to the co-operation of all branches in this matter.

Any enquiries regarding this paragraph please contact **Michèle Emerson** at CWU HQ.

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Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training

Branch secretaries are requested to ensure that any person in their branch who has CWU rep responsibilities and has not yet completed their mandatory Equality & Diversity training are enrolled in the courses that are planned throughout the regions in the forthcoming months.

All reps must do the training – this includes divisional reps, area reps, unit reps and branch officers. For clarification on dates please contact either your regional secretary.

The training has been running now for over three years and there are still a substantial number of reps who have not completed the training. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Equal Opportunities Department.

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Equality Conference Audit

Branches will be aware that those of you who have not sent a delegate to any of the CWU Equality Conferences over a three-year period have been written to asking for an explanation as to why this is the case.

The department thanks the many branch secretaries who have responded positively outlining plans to make progress in these areas. Those branch secretaries who have not replied to the letter will shortly be receiving a letter from the general secretary and we advise you all to get your replies in as soon as possible.

For your information the LGBT and Disability Conferences have been very well attended but there were still a considerable number of CWU branches who did not attend.

The Women's Conference and Black Workers' Conference have been advertised

via LTBs and the *Voice* and we hope to see an marked increase in branches attending these conferences too.

Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

196

York Containers Brake Bar Fault & Modifications (Progress Report as at 28 March 2007)

Further to LTBs 783/06, 845/06, 876/06, 50/07, BOB No. 7/07 paragraph 98 and BOB No. 8/07 paragraph 106, dated 2 March 2007, branches will be aware that Royal Mail identified a manufacturing fault with the new styled York Container brake bar handle.

The affected Yorks are easily identified as those with the yellow oval shaped plastic brake handle mounted into grey plastic end pieces and a simple brake bar cover fixing modification kit has been produced to prevent the brakes failing.

The union has been assured by Royal Mail that the chances of brake failure occurring are very slight with only one incident reported so far and it is safe to continue using the unmodified Yorks whilst the modifications are being completed.

100,000 brake bar cover fixing kits have been produced and distributed fitted locally via a simple process in which a simple green split tube or 'brake bar cover' is 'snapped on' which prevents the components separating and in turn prevents brake failure.

Area Safety Reps are asked to continue carrying out spot checks of York Containers and all staff are being advised through briefings to ensure that before using an unmodified York, a visual check should be made of the York Container brake handle to make sure that all of the grey fittings are correctly seated. If not, or if in doubt, the York Container concerned should be brought to the attention of the manager and if appropriate the York must be removed from service until modified.

We are informed that as of 28 March, 77,500 York Containers have been modified from a total requiring modification of 84,000. The modification programme is continuing and Royal Mail have now obtained sufficient supplies to distribute to remaining offices with outstanding containers to be modified.

Would Area Safety Reps please check to ensure that the modifications are being carried out in their offices and where necessary please make representations to accelerate the completion of the modifications.

The following offices have completed their allocated fittings:

AB, B, BL, BS, CB, CH, CR, CT, CV, DA, DE, DL, DN, EH, EX, Gatwick, Greenford, HP, HWDC, IP, IV, JUB, LE, LON C, LON E, LON W, LON S, ME, MK, NDC, NE, NG, NHDC, NN, OX, PE, PL, PR, RM, S, SA, SE, WBC, SG, SN, SO, SS, SWDC, TN,

TS, WD, WR, YDC & YO.

The following offices have requested further supplies of Brake Bar Mods and are being supplied:

CA, G, LS & PE.

The following offices have been requested to report progress to **Ian McDonnell** The MHE Development Manager **Tel: 07711 892533** ASAP:

BD, BH, BT, CF, CM, CW, Dover, Farnborough, GL, HU, L, M, NR, NWDC, OL, PO, PRDC, RG, SDC, SK, SY & WV.

Incomplete offices based on last report to **Ian McDonnell** The MHE Development Manager **Tel: 07711 892533** ASAP:

Office	Allocated	Modified	%
BD	1000	950	95%
BH	500	450	90%
BT	2000	1850	93%
CA	1500	1000	67%
CF	500	339	68%
CM	1500	1070	71%
CW	500	300	60%
DOV	500	250	50%
FB	500	200	40%
G	4000	3000	75%
GL	500	420	84%
HU	1000	650	65%
L	500	250	50%
LON S	1500	1250	83%
LS	2500	1500	60%
M	1000	600	60%
NR	500	125	25%
NWDC	500	300	60%
OL	500	400	80%
PE	4000	3000	75%
PO	500	160	32%
PRDC	3500	2000	57%
RG	1000	500	50%
SDC	2000	1500	75%
SK	1000	710	71%
SY	1000	850	85%
WV	1000	750	75%

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce** National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. C25**

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Inspection, Testing & Certification of VS RTW Equipment (ODCP Duties) Performed by VS CWU Area Safety Reps

Over recent months questions have been raised at several CWU Regional Health and Safety Forums regarding the above and I have recently been given a note written by a non-VS Safety Rep which is circulating and suggesting that Conference Motions be submitted opposing the arrangement.

Having answered numerous questions on

this subject at Regional Health and Safety Forums in open debate and directly from VS CWU Area Safety Reps one to one, the fact is that the debate on this matter has been held in detail in the right place, that is within the VS IR Arena between the reps concerned and the National PTS Officer, Ray Ellis and PEC (PTS) Member, Billy Steel.

As a result I had hoped by now that matter was closed but it would appear not, so I'm writing to you hopefully now draw a line under the issue.

The background is basically this; VS as a small business unit, selling its services to the main businesses. With the cost of running one of the largest fleets in Europe being the biggest outgoing operating cost for RM Letters and Parcelforce WW, VS is under constant financial pressure to reduce costs wherever possible.

As part of the VS/CWU 2004/5 pay deal, one of the conditions agreed was that the ODCP work would move to CWU represented VS Technicians and a commitment was given to negotiate the arrangements for that to take place. Talks have dragged on for two years and VS insisted that it be concluded during the 2006/7 financial year.

Currently VS spend £100,000 a year on Lifting Equipment Engineering contractors to carry out regular lifting equipment inspections and load testing for general safety and because such inspections and testing is required by law. This work must be carried out to satisfy current legislation and must be carried out by trained, qualified engineers who can then provide all the documentation required by law.

A qualified engineer will carry out each inspection to check if any immediate work is required and to determine if any wearing items or parts will need attention or replacement in the near future. This is required to meet the requirements of PUWER and LOLAR where the equipment must be inspected and receive thorough examination by a competent person at suitable intervals.

Currently as part of their Workplace Inspections our Area Safety Reps in Vehicle Services, the ASR check this equipment on ensure it has been inspected, tested and certified by the contractors and general serviceability.

The Vehicle Services' Management proposed to Ray Ellis's department that as the ASRs already toured all the VS RTWs inspecting this kit, could the ASRs and Substitute ASRs not be trained up and qualified as competent persons to perform the testing and certification "in-house" because (a) it would save VS paying outside contractors £100,000 pa (b) their proven commitment to safety would ensure better quality and standards of testing and certifications etc. (c) it would not be sustainable for separate individuals to be touring the UK's RTW doing just equipment testing and (d) it was already agreed as part balloted pay deal in 2004/5 to do it.

Additionally, by taking on this work it would

take the pressure off the scrutiny of facilities time for ASRs. The current national agreement provides for six full time Safety Reps covering less than 1000 people, albeit geographically widespread. This is the best existing agreement we have.

On being approached by Ray Ellis, Assistant Secretary and Billy Steel, NEC I made it quite clear that any such duties must not affect or become part of the Safety Reps' duties or be seen as part of or affecting the Safety Reps' agreement. In other words it would be a separate contract of paid employment issue.

Vehicle Services accepted this and agreed to provide all the necessary training and qualifications for our CWU people plus they would get all overtime and/or travelling time paid which is currently unpaid for them. They would also be issued with laptop computers etc. to do the work and provided with transport.

When first proposed there was a "knee-jerk" reaction from some VS ASRs and the issue was raised at a number of CWU Regional Safety Forums where the whole thing rather got completely taken out of context on the assumption the work was to become part of the "Safety Reps duties" etc. which wasn't correct and likewise things were said like "conflict of interests" and "taking on managements responsibilities" etc. and a hostile reaction was generated. This is all way "off the beam" and ignores the reality of the situation explained above.

I have spoke in detail to the HSE's principle inspector responsible for Royal Mail and BT about it and he confirmed there was no conflict of interests and there was nothing to stop a person employed to do Workshop Lifting Equipment examination and certification from being a Safety Rep under the SRSC Regulations 1977 at the same time. In fact the HSE thought it was a good idea which gave the Safety Rep increased knowledge, authority and power when it came to representing members who used such equipment.

Let's also not forget that by undergoing the training and becoming a qualified lifting equipment tester has its personal advantages for the individual as well as fitting well with the union's policies of retaining as much work "in-house" as possible.

So far I am informed that four of the six ASRs and four of the six Sub/ASR have attended the training course and the collective view was that it was a fit purpose training course which they enjoyed and now have no qualms about now performing the ODCP role.

It should also be noted that there is only a limited number of items of equipment involved and all documentation and processes have been agreed and that list of equipment cannot be expanded with agreement.

I trust this now draws a line under the issue.
Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

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Preston & District Workers' Memorial Day Event: Saturday 28th April 2007 – 11.30 am Start

Further to BOB No. 012/07, paragraph 187 published on 30 March 2007, please note that the Preston and District Workers' Memorial Day event to be held in Preston City Centre commences at **11:30 am** (NOT 12.30pm) at the Flag Market, Preston City Centre, opposite the War Remembrance Cenotaph next to the Harris Museum.

Further info is available at:
www.prestonworkers.org.uk/ or from
graham.king@baesystems.com

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer, quoting **reference No. N4**

TELECOMS

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N&VM: H-IP Contact Centre Incident and Proactive Management

Network and Vendor Management has reported to the union of the urgent need to increase and upskill the capability of BT to respond to critical customers in IP Product base/platform service.

Early intentions are to create a Centre of Expertise within the Reading location. The proposed skills are limited if not non-existent in BT, the threat has been put that in the event of insufficient applicants, BT may both recruit externally and use contractors; the latter has been strongly rejected by the union.

As regards to attendance arrangements, management have indicated that a 24 hour rota over 7 days will be required for the five initial posts, potentially to be in place for May. This will grow another two posts by September 2007.

There exists some doubt, if not indecision, where to map this role by management. They have, after initial representations, agreed to pitch this at D1 but would be the subject of an extensive review and would be bench-marked against the external market. Management have not ruled out this post being one which would fall within that of the Reward Framework.

Management have given assurances that they will immediately be contacting the local branch to discuss attendance pattern arrangements.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

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One IT: Effective Working Environment (EWE)

The attached slides are an update to Branch Officials Bulletin No. 6, paragraph 83.

Since that report the marked developments are as follows:

(a) The issues drawn out by the CWU with regards to the redeployment from London SE

(Croydon) to Sevenoaks have been accepted. It will be a requirement to continue with accommodation/site deployment in Croydon. However, this will have to take account of the long term estate strategy of BTP.

(b) Baynard House will be a likely site development for the concept of Agile Development Hubs. This concept is designed to support individuals from different teams, including external customers to test and develop programmes and systems. In many ways this will also be a "show case" site. This will also be the 'One IT' Headquarters, subject to the agreements of other Lines of Business on the accommodation moves and alterations required at that site.

(c) An unexpected development has been the flushing out of not only the number of agency/contractors using BT desks, but the third party suppliers picking and choosing where they work, often without any prior knowledge and agreement with BT. This issue is being addressed as well as claims for BT to pay T&S.

(d) Agile Development Desks only require one screen and keyboard. This is because two individuals whilst testing and developing code as a pair can only effectively change and work together on code in real time at the same desk. However, associated with this is the concept of white walls which is effectively using the room walls to map out steps or processes which often can be quite lengthy. In order to share the detail with other but remote teams, the intent is to use cameras which are a permanent and feature in that union. Management have agreed to produce a protocol to reflect the union's areas of concern with regards to the cameras being a permanent feature in such sites.

Branches will be further advised of developments during the course of this initiative.
Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

EVENTS BULLETIN

October 2006 – June 2007: London Socialist Film Co-op Film Season.

Screenings held on second Sunday of the month from October to June 10.30 for 11 am. Screenings showing at Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1. Nearest tube Russell Square. Tickets cost £7.00, concessions £5.00. Discount to annual members £1.00. Tickets on sale from 10.30 am on day of screening. To book in advance tel **020 7837 1177** (12 noon to 8.00 pm) or go to www.curzoncinemas.com or visit the Box Office (12 noon to 8 pm).

24 March – 7 April: 2007: Anti-Fascist Fortnight. Delivering Hope not Hate.

The CWU are pleased to bring to branches attention details of the Anti-Fascist Fortnight, which is a campaign to show our opposition to the BNP. The campaign is being orchestrated by Searchlight. For more information contact **Dionne Gittens** on **020 8971 7356** or **dgittens@cwu.org**

Thursday 12 April 2007: Trade Unions & the Muslim Community. To be held at Congress House, London, WC1B 3LS. The seminar will be chaired by General Council member Mohammed Taj and keynote addresses will be given by Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC and Dr Abdul Bari. Planned seminar topics include 'The Muslim community at work – socio-economic issues', 'The media and portrayals of the Muslim community', 'Countering the threat of the Far Right' and 'Good practice and examples from the work place'. For further information visit **www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article=announcement-614**

Wednesday 18th April 2007: National Pensioners Convention Eastern Region (AGM). Will be held at Moreton Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk at 1pm. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** on **07713 155575**.

Thursday 19th – Saturday 21st April 2007: Climate Change. Climate Outreach Information Network (COIN) and Ruskin College are presenting a two day residential course. It has been specifically designed for active trade union members who want an intensive course on climate change to cover all the basic science, social justice issues and actions that can be taken in relation to climate change. Speakers include Jo Hamilton, Climate Change Institute, Oxford University George Marshall, Climate Outreach Information Network and more. For more information contact **Tim Baster**, Climate Outreach Information Network (COIN), 16B Cherwell St, Oxford OX4 1BG, UK. Office Tel. **01865 727 911**, Mobile: **07906 187 873** Email: **tim@COINet.org.uk** – Website: **www.COINet.org.uk**

Saturday 28 April 2007: Workers' Memorial Day. International commemoration of all workers who died at work, or through work-related illness. For more information visit **www.icftu.org/** or **www.hazards.org/**

Wednesday 9 May 2007: New Labour – 10 Years On. To be held at Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton Street – 18:30 to 20:00. Many children approaching adulthood today will not remember anything other than a Labour government. So 10 years on from that sunny Friday morning, the new dawn of New

Labour, what has been achieved and how has Britain changed? What does it mean to be New Labour today, ten years on, and what big ideas will dominate the next ten years? Speakers include former MP Oona King, will assess the legacy of New Labour's decade, and debate its future, Rt Hon. Lord Neil Kinnock, Professor Lord Anthony Giddens, Ed Miliband MP, Stephen Twigg, Progress Chair and Director of the Foreign Policy Centre. For more information contact **Progress** on **020 3008 8180** or email **office@progressives.org.uk**

Monday 21st May 2007: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee Meeting. To be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DD at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** on **07713 155575**.

Tuesday 22 May 2007: First 100 Days: Constitutional reform – Labour's unfinished business? 18:00 – 19:30 – Committee Room 11, House of Commons. Confirmed speaker: Jack Straw. Devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Human Rights Act and reform of the House of Lords are seen by some as New Labour's proudest achievements. But could they have gone further? Debate with Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, Leader of the House of Commons; Jonathan Freedland, The Guardian; Chris Leslie, Progress Vice Chair and Director of the New Local Government Network; Stephen Twigg (chair); and more speakers TBC. For more information contact **Tom Brooks Pollock** on **0203 008 8180** email: **tom@progressives.org.uk**

Tuesday 19th June 2007: The RMT Annual Garden Party. Takes place again this year at Maritime House, Clapham, London commencing at 7.00 p.m. Tickets are £17 each and include a free bar, buffet and music. Anyone wishing to attend this event should contact RMT direct to purchase tickets on **020 7387 4771** or email **info@rmt.org.uk**

Saturday 30 June 2007: PCS/Words Short Story Competition 2007(closing date). For the 3rd year PCS/WORDS Magazine is running a short story competition open to members of all UK trade unions. Prizes are: 1st £300, 2nd £200 and 3rd £100. All winning stories and commended entries will be published in WORDS Magazine and in an online anthology. Entry forms/guidelines are available on the WORDS website **www.wordsmag.com** (on the trade union pages) and you can download a poster from the PCS website – **www.pcs.org.uk/learning**

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th July 2007:

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival. On February 24th, 1834, six farm labourers from the Dorset village of Tolpuddle were arrested on a charge of taking part in an 'illegal oath' ceremony. In the eyes of their masters, however, the real offence was that they had dared to form a trade union to defend their livelihood. For this they were sentenced to seven years' transportation to the penal colonies of Australia. The sentences provoked an immense outcry, leading to the first great mass trade union protest. The campaign won free pardons and the Martyrs' return to England. A historic episode in the struggle for trade unionists' rights in Great Britain. For more information visit **www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle**

Sunday 15 July 2007: Rise: London United 2007. Clapham Common, London SW4 (subject to licence). 12pm – 8:30pm. Free event. The Mayor of London Ken Livingstone is backing Europe's largest anti-racist festival. The event is backed by the Trades Union Congress, National Assembly Against Racism and diverse community organisations. Rise: London United 2007 will feature a wide range of music, performance and other activities. Past performers include Graham Coxon, De La Soul, Common, Buzzcocks, Roy Ayers, Sway and the Wailers, with stages featuring African, Asian and Cuban music, Dub and hip hop DJs, comedy acts and the annual Poetry Slam organised in conjunction with the Poetry Society. There will also be a children's play area, food and drink, exhibitions and arts and crafts. The Mayor said the venue for this year's event had extra significance in 2007 – the bicentenary year of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade: 'This year's Rise: London United is taking place in Clapham, which has strong historical links to the campaigners who helped bring in the legislation, which brought to an end the transatlantic slave trade in Britain'. More details will be announced shortly. Public information: **www.risefestival.org** or **020 7983 6554**.

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If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to:

Marcia Murray
CWU Communication Department
150 The Broadway
Wimbledon SW19 1RX
Tel: **020 8971 7497**
Email: **mmurray@cwu.org**

Details must arrive nine days before publication and must include a contact phone number, brief summary of the event, email and website address. Listings are free, but inclusion is not guaranteed.