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1. Branch meeting -

Monday 3rd June 2019

Time: 12.00 noon – 2.30pm

* Venue: Church of Christ, 298, St Johns Lane, Bedminster, BS3 5AY

Our speaker is **Mike Broussine**

Public transport travel expenses will be reimbursed and light refreshments will be provided.

Email addresses: UCU encourages us to use our home email when we retire.

For more information please contact:

ucu.swest@gmail.com

or contact the officers below:

Chair: Tom Murray tom.murray2@blueyonder.co.uk

Are you getting all the info?

If UCU HO has your email you should also receive regular updates on campaigns from UCU head office as well as occasional branch emails.

If this is not the case let us know and we can check with the H.O on your behalf.

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Newsletter: A termly newsletter for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses.

2. Given the media interest we are pleased to have a contribution from a student taking part in the Youth Strike 4 Climate campaign.

On the 15th of March, children from all over the globe stood up to raise their voices for a second time against the unjust that is how our planet is dying. Our planet is dying and no one will help the children save it. No one will help the children save their futures. After countries from all over the world held strikes and tried to get governments and rulers to listen to the cry of our planet's youth, the strike organisers and protesters alike were outraged to realise that people were turning a blind eye and replying with a simple 'go back to school'. The reason these strikes are happening is because children like me know what is happening.

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish child activist who cares. She cares for the future of the planet and the youth who live on it because she is one of the few people who can see clearly. She and I and all the other children who are raising their voices know that the sea level is rising. We know our planet is getting hotter. We know that people are dying. That people are losing their homes to forest fires and typhoons and floods and hurricanes caused by this problem called climate change and we are here to ask a simple question. The climate is changing so why aren't we? The reason Greta Thunberg is so inspiring is because she was the first child to actually raise her voice against the problem that no one is changing to save our futures. She was the first to decide that she would not go to school until her demand was acted on. Her demand was that the Swedish government reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement, and she protested by sitting outside the

Swedish parliament building every Friday during school time holding the sign Skolstrejk för klimatet. She was recently nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and she made a speech which she read to the United Nations. It is worth hearing, please watch it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/video/2019/apr/16/greta-thunbergs-emotional-speech-to-eu-leaders-video>



My opinion on it is that we children have been left with a problem. Generations above us have been ignoring the growing problem of how our planet is getting hotter and just assuming it will go away sooner or later. But we know. Greta Thunberg knows and to quote her, **'since our leaders are behaving like children, we will have to take the responsibility they should have taken long ago'**. We did not ask for this problem. The people who can do something will not. Some won't even acknowledge its existence but it is there and I don't see why I should study for a future I may not get if I am not one of the many raising their voices against the unjust we have been dealt. We children are the future but our future isn't looking bright. It's looking smoggy and hot and wet.

Amelia Spooner, Bristol

3. National Pensioners Convention

Some of you will already be individual members of the NPC.

<https://www.npcuk.org/join-us-and-get-involved>

In this branch we are affiliated to Western NPC and Devon and Cornwall branches.



The annual **Pensioners' Parliament** is widely regarded as one of the most important activities in the pensioner movement's calendar. The **2019 Pensioners' Parliament** will take place at the Blackpool Winter Gardens from 11-13 June 2019.

Your branch delegates to NPC are

Ruth, Tom, Barbara and Liza

4. May Day.



Many countries have produced postage stamps for May 1st, International Workers Day. This one, from Portugal where my pen-pal lived, is one of the most colourful. It dates, I believe, from early 1980s.

Jo Corke SW RMB

5. Trades Councils



Many tributes have been paid following the sudden death of Torbay & South Devon TUC secretary, Paul Raybould at the weekend. To many, Paul was the voice of the Trades Council and trade unionism across South Devon. He was dedicated to championing the rights of ordinary people and a relentless campaigner for social justice. Paul was also locally Secretary of the GMB union, where his commitment

had seen membership rise across South Devon.

<http://torbaytuc.weebly.com/trades-council-news/paul-raybould-1963-2019>

Trades Union Councils bring together unions to work and campaign around issues affecting working people in their local workplaces and communities. Our branch has delegates to Exeter, Bristol, Gloucester, Torbay, Taunton & N. Somerset and Mendip. The TC reps reports are distributed in the branch minutes.

Liza Sentence SWRBM

6. West Country Union Champions.



Nigel Costley SW
TUC looks back at
some inspirational
characters from

the South West. **John, George, Emma and Beatrice** feature in this newsletter.

On July 27 1836, the Loyal Sons of the Globe held its first meeting in the Old Globe, Christmas Street, Bristol. This was the start of the Bristol branch of the boilermakers' union. **John Allen** became secretary and later general secretary.

The son of a Cornish miner, **George Odger** became a shoemaker and was one of the 'junta' that led unions before the TUC was formed. He represented London Trades Council at the first TUC Congress in 1869 and became one of its first secretaries. He stood in Bristol in the 1870 by-election for the Labour Representation League, set up the year before to promote working class MPs. He wore the silk hat made for him by the Hatters' Trade Union during the campaign in Bristol, coming a close second, winning 4,382 votes to the Tory's

4,686. The hat is now in the People's History Museum in Manchester.

Emma Paterson founded the first women's trade union: the Women's Protective and Provident Association in 1875 in Bristol. The union represented a wide range of workers including dressmakers, upholsterers, bookbinders, artificial-flower makers, feather dressers, tobacco, jam and pickle workers, shop assistants and typists. She went on to become the first woman member of the TUC General Council.



Beatrice Webb.

Bournemouth was one of the first towns to have a Fabian Society and the most famous early member – **Beatrice Webb** – was born in Standish House near Gloucester, the grand-daughter of radical MP Richard Potter. After she moved to Bournemouth her letter on unemployment was printed in the Pall Mall Gazette and seen by Joseph Chamberlain, a leading Liberal. She had an infatuation with the ageing widower and it stirred her political writings. During work on co-operative history, Beatrice

met Sidney Webb. In 1890 she noted in her diary: "At last I am a socialist." Sidney came to Bournemouth to recover from scarlet fever and in 1891 they were married. The couple wrote a book on the history of trade unions that is still used as a key publication for scholars. Sidney Webb wrote Clause IV of the new Labour Party constitution calling for collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. In 1910 Beatrice spoke in Bournemouth on her Minority Report on the Poor Law Commission. Organised by the Poole and Bournemouth branch of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, the meeting heard the Fabian case for public spending to relieve poverty. Beatrice appealed to those living comfortable lives in the town to help.

Nigel Costley SW TUC

7. What are you doing now?

In our May 2018 newsletter was a letter from Terence Bickford, a SW RMB member suggesting that, in addition to specific union matters, we include information about educational opportunities that abound for retired members.

We know that there are branch members who have continued in retirement to explore not only their own subject, but branched out into other interesting areas.

The AGM 2019 agreed that we ask our members if they would like to write something for the newsletter and/or give a presentation to a branch meeting.

Mike Broussine has agreed to speak at our June 3rd meeting and Peter Burkill at the October meeting.

Peter Burkill here. I live on Dartmoor with my wife and two Springer Spaniels.

Background: My professional training is as a biologist and I am an Emeritus Professor at the University of Plymouth. When I retired I transferred from UCU Plymouth to the SW RMB. I continue, in a voluntary capacity, to work for the International coordination of large scale projects in Ocean Science.

Retirement for me now allows me to spend longer on my passion – photography. My photographic interests stretch back some 50 years and during this time it is fascinating to consider how photography has changed. Decades ago, I recall the excitement of watching images appear in the developing tray in the dim red light of a darkroom; it seemed like alchemy. Since retiring recently, I now spend more time photographing, exploring and demonstrating the beauty of the living natural world. My main interest is birds but I photograph any aspect of the natural environment. I enjoy lecturing - reflect on my professional training - and relish sharing my views on the natural world. To me, I enjoy both the beauty of the living things but I also find that photography allows me to reflect on the adaptation, the behaviour, the ecology and the evolution of the natural world. It is "art meets science" and working across this interface that gives me a huge buzz!

<https://www.peterburkillphotography.com/index.html>

I hope to meet you at the October 2019 SW RMB meeting in Exeter, Devon.

Peter Burkill SW RMB

8. From the Archives.

The Glasgow cotton spinners dispute

The Bristol Mercury of 20 January 1838 was one of many newspapers throughout the British Isles to carry details of the trial of five cotton spinners of Glasgow who had in common that they all belonged to the Association of Cotton Spinners. The trial attracted so much interest that to this day an archive version of the full proceedings can be found by a computer search for The trial of the Glasgow Cotton spinners.

Thomas Hunter, Peter Hackett, Richard McNeil and William Maclean were all members of the Association of Operative Spinners; other than Maclean, they were the office holders. They were tried for “illegal combination, assault, fire-raising, and murder”. The purpose of the combination (an early form of trade union) was to keep wages up or to get them increased. What made a difference was that “in order more effectively to attain the object members of the combination administered to one another a secret oath” binding them to do any task which the majority might impose. The newspaper report goes on to say that they formed a so-called Guards committee to watch the local mills if on strike, and by means of “menaces, molestation, and threats” to deter men from working in factories which had been called on to strike. Membership of the association was compulsory in order to obtain employment.

We are privileged to have a newspaper description of these men – which makes them live rather than being just names in history. Hunter is described as slender and tall having a high full forehead and a countenance remarkably expressive of

firmness and concentrated thought: Hackett as having a strong thickset person light by dark sparkling eyes; McNeil is full and fair and has rather a placid expression of countenance: Gibb as being of diminutive stature: Mclean who is the youngest is probably the least reserved and thoughtful and presents the appearance of a soft lad although good looking. Maclean was allegedly given the task of assassination of John Smith, one of the so-called nobs working in a factory which had been called on to strike (nearest translation is I think blackleg labour) for which he was to be paid £20. It was also alleged that they collected money to reimburse the people who stood as bail for some of the spinners, who then fled Scotland to avoid their trial.

The murder charge was found not proven, but according to the newspaper report, Hunter, Hackett, McNeil and Gibb were sentenced to be transported for a period of seven years.

The dispute was set against the background of a difficult period in the cotton industry and the anger of the men at what was happening to their jobs is understandable. However, allegations of fire-raising, intimidation in the homes where working employees were lodging, and stoning of employees by mobs of men in their capacity as “guards” is difficult to understand in the twenty first century.

These men on trial were deemed to be running the organization, but there were many others involved. Research is continuing, and I hope to produce a follow on article in the near future.

Verna Hardingham Rugby

9. Tolpuddle 2019

This year the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival is 19-21 July 2019.

<https://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival>

In the 1830s life in villages like Tolpuddle was hard and getting worse. Farm workers could not bear yet more cuts to their pay. Some fought back by smashing the new threshing machines but this brought harsh punishments.

In 1834, farm workers in West Dorset formed a trade union. Unions were lawful and growing fast but six leaders of the union were arrested and sentenced to seven years' transportation for taking an oath of secrecy. A massive protest swept across the country. Thousands of people marched through London and many more organised petitions and protest meetings to demand their freedom.

Verne found this for us in Hansard:
1834. Mr Hardy, 1773 – 1855,
Constituency Bradford. *"Of all curses, that of the Trades' Unions was the most abominable—not merely as affecting the masters, but more especially the poor unfortunate people who were compelled to join these unions. He had witnessed, in too many instances, the lamentable effects produced on those unfortunate persons who were compelled, by a system of the most horrible tyranny, to join unions of this description."*

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1834/mar/26/trades-unions-dorchester-labourers>

Sounds like Mr Hardy wasn't a fan of Trade Unions. (Ed)

One of the earliest organised commemorations was in 1875 when the Agricultural Workers Union presented an engraved watch and illuminated address

to James Hammett, the only one of the six Martyrs to return to Tolpuddle.

Every year in July, thousands of people enjoy the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival. It is a weekend of family entertainment, stalls, political debate, comedy, music and a grand procession through the village.



The Festival is a good place to see Trade union banners, here erected in front of the main stage in front of the TUC Martyrs Memorial Cottages.

<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/892149>

This may be of interest... National Trust celebrates protest

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/17/national-trust-targets-new-audience-with-celebration-of-protest>

A year-long programme of events will explore history of revolt linked to trust's sites. The programme includes the Tolpuddle Martyrs' tree in Dorset, the artist [Bob and Roberta Smith](#) will examine how ordinary people achieve change, inspired by the six labourers who were transported to Australia for forming a union to protest against their poor working conditions.

Jo Corke SW RMB

10. In The News.

In the News is a regular post on the UCU website. <https://www.ucu.org.uk/news>

11. UCU Equalities Conference



The 2018 UCU Equalities Conference was held in Manchester in November. As far as we know, no-one from this branch attended the conference. Judy Wills and Margaret Davies attended representing East Midlands Retired Members Branch; they have kindly shared this report.

Report from the Women members' session. Women Fighting Back against Oppression, Violence and Discrimination.

This session gave us the opportunity to hear a range of speakers, beginning with **Lynmarie O'Hara from Unison** discussing the Glasgow women's equal pay strike comprising more than 8,000 council workers, overwhelming low paid women in Unison and the GMB. The mostly male council bin workers also refused to cross picket lines and joined with the women in solidarity. Lynmarie passionately outlined the nature of the dispute, telling us that she had never before been on strike, let alone a picket line, but the twelve-year dispute for equal pay for women care workers, council workers and cleaners had finally galvanised her into action. The historical underpayment of women, firstly by the former Labour administration and then by the SNP council, after they took control in 2017, saw women paid on average £3 per hour less than male counterparts in similar jobs. Although the Court of Sessions in Scotland had ruled in favour of the women, their claims were still unresolved, with Susan Aitken, SNP

Council Leader stating that the women of Glasgow would never strike! This comment drew rapturous support from the conference delegates.

Nita Sanghera, set to be UCU's first BAME Vice-President and Stand Up to Racism activist, drew our attention to the disturbing growth in racist and extreme right behaviour on university campuses. She highlighted a particularly disturbing example of this – the infamous Snowsports Club 'event at Lancaster University which saw students wearing white t-shirts scrawled with slogans mocking murder and rape victims, some inscribed with swastikas. Nita said that this should have been reported as a hate crime and reported to the police; however both the university and the Students' Union were slow to take action and in fact, the Student's Union suspended their BAME officer Chloe Long for exposing this behaviour.



The day's final speaker was **Flavia Regina Bueno**, a Cambridge PhD student, who will be returning to her native Brazil within the next year. She talked about the election of Bolsonaro as President of Brazil and the effect of his right-wing programme. As a gay woman, Flavia is concerned that she will not be able to live her life openly in Bolsonaro's Brazil. She concluded her brief talk by drawing attention to the EleNãO protests – the largest to be led by women in Brazil's history – opposing the Bolsonaro regime.

The Women's conference finished with a number of workshops. The Menopause Workshop discussed appropriate policies in the workplace, referenced the TUC model policy and the example of policies put into practice such as at Leicester University. Delegates discussed that Women going through the menopause are sometimes treated as a capability issue by employers and their sickness absences are used as a Bradford factor in selection criteria for redundancy. The workshop members believed that this was not only indirect discrimination but also related to sexism and ageism.

Plenary session of full conference. On the second day of the conference the plenary speeches included **Moyra Samuels** from the **Justice for Grenfell Campaign**. Her speech began with a 72 second silence while the conference remembered the victims of the fire. She described Grenfell as representing a form of social cleansing and an intersection of race and class, where the emphasis is on profit not people. Of the 72 people who died, 50 were Muslim showing the impact of "the hostile environment". There are 40 families still living in hotels and justice has not been achieved. There needs to be a change in the narrative about decent and safe social housing. She also referred to the Nov 5th effigy of the Grenfell incident. She ended her speech with an appeal to the labour and Trade Union movement, **"If not now – when? If not you - who?"**

Dr Peter Purton, who was the TUC LGBT and Disability policy officer until his recent retirement, continued these themes and asked how we can win back support for a progressive agenda. He discussed the recession of 2008 and the ongoing period of austerity after the 2010 election and the coalition Government's policies which

created an easy scapegoat of the disabled and a moral panic in the media about scroungers etc. He criticised the TUC for failing to get its message across about how vulnerable groups were being blamed. The TUC did not provide a counter attack and the focus both in the TUC and the Labour movement should be about class. There is still a large underclass whose concerns are not being addressed. There is massive in-work poverty, a divided working class, increasing gaps in wealth, millions are left out in this wealthy world and politics doesn't care. This is a toxic mix reminiscent of the 1930s, which we can see in the Brexit debate and events in Hungary, Brazil, the USA and the general rise of the Right across the world. There is now more than ever a need for an economic agenda to end austerity, a restructure of the public sector, policies to deal with the pay gap and the housing crisis.

Trade unions should be the glue to bring about genuine solidarity and collectivity in the workplace and to make alliances with other groups. He ended with the view that there is a glimmer of hope and some popular opinion change about food banks and universal credit, the solidarity of students in the recent USS strike, the Windrush stories and the ME/TOO campaigns, movements among young people and their support for the Labour Party. These themes were taken up by speakers from the floor and inevitably the contributions revolved around the different positions on the current Brexit situation.

Judy Wills and Margaret Davies EM RMB

12. Trades Union Council campaign.

Update: NHS Co-funding and Co-payment Bill 2017-19.

Co-payment is currently used for dental treatments, eye tests and prescription charges.

MP Christopher Chope (Conservative) has introduced the NHS Co-funding and Co-payment Bill which perhaps because other business has been taking parliamentary time, has yet to be given a date for the 2nd Reading.

<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/nationalhealthservicecofundingandcopayment.html>

Jo Corke SW RMB

14. Directions to St John's Church Hall.

The church building is 15 minutes walk along Cotswold Road starting immediately at the Bedminster Station Entrance and there are steps down to St Johns Lane at two places on the right - use the second set of steps to St Johns Lane - the venue is 50 m on the left.

Alternatively take the No. 50 bus at the bottom of the incline to Temple Meads Station to Redcatch Road (where the bus turns off St Johns Lane) and continue walking along St Johns Lane to the venue on the right at the Littleton Road bus stop. A third possibility is to walk (about 15 Minutes) from Temple Meads to St Mary Redcliff Church and on the same side of the road as the church on Redcliff Hill take

13. Teachers' Pensions | For Members

My Pension Online is the Teachers' Pension online portal designed to help you manage your pension more efficiently.

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/members/faqs/my-pension-online/my-pension-online.aspx>

the No. 90 bus to the Littleton Road stop in St Johns Lane - which is adjacent to the venue.

If any member is in difficulty (and especially if it is a wet day) then ring 07599407145 - it will be easy to arrange collection from either of the 2 points Bedminster Station or Redcatch Road.

Branch members may ask a friend to accompany them.

Editors Note.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

END