

In this newsletter

1. Branch meetings.
2. Welcome to members.
3. Meet the Secretary.
4. National Pensioners Convention.
5. UCU Equality Conference.
6. People before Profit.
7. News from France HE sector.
8. Support for the Creative Arts.
9. Book Corner.
10. Campaign against Climate Change.
11. UCU Congress 2020.
12. Teachers Pensions.
13. TUC Congress 2020
14. Editor's note.

1. Branch meetings.

The branch committee has re-visited the guidance.

Democratic continuity: advice for branches, regions/devolved nations HO advice received 30.4.20.

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10879/Democratic-continuity-advice-for-branches-regionsdevolved-nations/pdf/ucu_covid19-democratic-continuity.pdf

Though we are not considering scheduling any face-to-face branch meetings at present, the committee are considering an on-line meeting in November. This will

enable branch delegates and reps to report to us on the UCU Congress, from TUC Congress, various Trades Councils, NPC and any other meetings we have attended for the branch. We hope that we can arrange for this on-line meeting to be open to branch members and more details will be sent nearer the time.

We will continue with the minimum requirements in the guidelines by keeping in regular contact with our members by email.

All branch members can contact officers and reps by the emails listed in this newsletter; the general branch email address is ucu.swest@gmail.com and members are welcome to contact us anytime.

Summary: we are now considering scheduling an on-line meeting in November 2020.

Tony Staunton chair SWRMB

2. Welcome to members new to this branch since the previous newsletter.

Tony Rea.

Only those wishing to appear in the list are included. If you have any suggestions for the newsletter we are happy to hear from you.

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

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: Tony Staunton tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk

Vice Chair: John Daniell john.daniell@btinternet.com

Secretary: Mike Farmer mikefarmer84@hotmail.com

Treasurer: John Daniell john.daniell@btinternet.com

Regional reps: Margaret George mmargaretg@gmail.com

Liza Sentance lizasentance@hotmail.com

Charles Henderson charles.henderson@btinternet.com

Membership: Jo Corke ucu.swest@gmail.com

Returning Officer Alan Cousins a.cousins345@btinternet.com

Environmental Rep Tony Staunton

tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk

TC Exeter Tom Murray tom.murray2@blueyonder.co.uk

TC Torbay & SD Liza Sentance lizasentance@hotmail.com

TC Gloucester: Ruth Amias ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

TC Bristol: Barbara Segal barbara.segal@phonecoop.coop

TC Taunton & W. Somerset: Charles Henderson

charles.henderson@btinternet.com

TC Plymouth: Tony Staunton: tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk

SW NPC GAS Ruth Amias, ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

and Barbara Segal barbara.segal@phonecoop.coop

SW NPC D/C Liza Sentance lizasentance@hotmail.com

3. Meet our Secretary, Mike Farmer.

I joined the ATTI (Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions) in 1966 when I started teaching History and Complementary Studies at Carlisle College of Art. In 1968 I moved to Gloucester Technical College to teach Liberal Studies, and I spent the rest of my working life in Gloucestershire. In 1972, the ATTI Branch officers persuaded me to do some

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.

research Branch there on the implications the forthcoming local government reorganisation in 1974, which involved the demise of the old Gloucester County Borough and the transfer of the college to Gloucestershire County Council as the Local Education Authority. It became clear that the branch officers' dastardly plan was to inveigle me into the work of the Branch and become Branch Secretary.

During my time as Branch Secretary one of my proudest achievements was our success in recruiting part-time lecturers into the union, and



arguing for their contracts to be converted from hourly-paid to fractional full-time posts, which brought several benefits, not least membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (which at that time was not open to hourly-paid staff). ATTI had a 'league table' of Branches with the highest percentage membership – which it calculated by reference to the official published number of full-time staff in each college, and because of the number of part-timers we recruited into membership, Gloucester Branch regularly topped to table with over 100% membership.

From Gloucester I started becoming active in the ATTI Western Region. In 1976, when ATTI merged with ATCDE (Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education) to form NATFHE (National Association of Teachers in Further & Higher Education) I was elected Chair of the Region. The term of office for Chair was a year, and I was later to serve twice more. In 1980 I was elected from the Region to NATFHE's National Executive Committee, and was re-elected each year until I stood down in 1991. During my time on the NEC I was a member of the national negotiating team that negotiated the 'Silver Book' (the first scheme for national pay and conditions) and I chaired the NEC's Education sub-committee for four years. I never served as President (although I was asked to stand a couple of times).

During my time on the NEC there were two major reorganisations of further education in Gloucestershire (story of my life!). Firstly in 1980 the merger of various colleges to form Gloscat (Gloucestershire College of Arts & Technology) and then in 1990 the hiving off of its higher education provision and merger with the College of St Paul's and St Mary's to form the Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education (CGCHE), which later became the University of Gloucestershire. I was very pleased to be able put to good use the knowledge and skills which I was acquiring as an NEC member to help negotiate good deals for the transfer of staff in both sets of mergers.

At the University there were some excellent NATFHE branch officers, and I was able to take more of a back seat locally. The University established a Joint Negotiating Committee with the staff and

I represented senior staff on this committee (I had by this time become a head of department). I remained active at regional level until NATFHE merged with AUT to form UCU in 2006. 2006 was my last NATFHE Annual Conference – I attended every one from its formation in 1976. I was immensely honoured to be made an Honorary Life Member of NATFHE (and now UCU) in 2006. My last conference speech was to argue (unsuccessfully) against UCU's proposed new regional structure, which would put the University of Gloucestershire in the West Midlands region.

I'm afraid that in my somewhat curmudgeonly way I then took my ball away, having no affinity with the West Midlands region to which my UCU membership had been allocated. However, I've not been hiding away. I have remained an active member of Cheltenham Labour Party, and I'm Secretary of a Trust set up by the CLP to manage a building bequeathed to it in 1959. From 2016 to 2019 I was Secretary of Cheltenham for Europe, a local cross-party pro-EU campaigning group. I'm also active in the Fabians Education group, and I'm working on their further education policy.

But the union wheel turns full circle. Jo Corke, who I remember from my days in NATFHE Western Region (and, just as significantly, remembers me), very kindly arranged for my membership to be transferred to the South Western Region Retired Members Branch, with which I have much more affinity. And Jo it was who repeated the history of 1972 and suggested that I might like to fill the vacancy of Secretary of the Branch which Tom Murray's standing down has created.

I look forward to doing some service again for the union and meeting up again (virtually or even in person) with old colleagues from NATFHE (and even ATTI) and new colleagues from UCE.

Mike Farmer SW RMB

4. 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 with Western NPC and Devon and Cornwall branches.

The NPC website is <https://www.npcuk.org/>

The NPC's main objective is to promote the welfare and interests of all pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security in retirement. The NPC organises rallies and lobbies of MPs, leads delegations to parliament and makes submissions to government on policies affecting older people.



The NPC represents around 1.5 million members in over 1,000 different organisations across the UK. The NPC campaigns for both today's and tomorrow's pensioners, and uniting the

generations in defence of the welfare state and public services is an important part of our work. Unsurprisingly the NPC Annual Convention 2020 in Southport was cancelled.

5. UCU Equality conference.



UCU's Equality Groups Conference 2020 will be held on line from Thursday 3 - Saturday 5 December 2020. This is an annual event that includes individual conferences for each equality strand (i.e. women, black and minority ethnic, disabled and LGBT members) and a plenary session for all those attending. UCU members who identify with one or more of the equality strands are entitled to attend the conference and they do so on their own behalf, rather than as representatives of branches or other bodies.

More information and registration at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/membersannualgroupsconference>

6. Responding to COVID-19: People Before Profit

The COVID Spring and Summer has been a period of deepening separation and isolation for many. As a retired worker, I can only look at the young at large, and my children and grandchildren in particular, with anxiety as well as love.

Of our five children, three have lost their jobs and one found new employment. Their treatment at the hands of their employers has been clinical and impersonal, if not inhuman.

It is difficult to remember a period when trade unions were more vital to the protection of the workforce. The most essential workers have been brought to the fore of our thoughts as being responsible for operating the basic systems of survival. Yet mostly they have been some of the least well-paid and most taken-for-granted.

As UCU advice states, Covid-19 poses a serious and imminent risk to the health of employees and the wider community and is having a disproportionate impact on those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Covid-19 did not create health inequalities, but rather the pandemic exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting BAME groups in the UK.

The risks of COVID are very high amongst the members of UCU struggling through 2020 to support students in further and higher education despite college closures and trying to keep the value of education alive through online contact, webinars and “Zoom” tutorials.

Prior to the COVID-19 Lockdown, our union was in dispute because 54% of all academic staff and 49% of teaching staff were on insecure contracts. Short, fixed-term and zero-hours employment has made it easy for Universities to shed staff under the pretext of the pandemic, and our colleagues face an Autumn of intensified workloads as well as job insecurity.

It's been good to see the strike fund reaching the required target through member contributions, including many retired members giving generously and voluntarily. The potential for collective challenge to job cuts and attacks on employment rights in this period of global crisis is the subject of debate.

Nevertheless, retired members have an important role to play in supporting and defending our younger colleagues, and we should be committed to offering full and active solidarity support to any UCU Branch or membership group standing-up for their employment rights during this new academic year.

On a micro-level, my five grandchildren have experienced 6 months of “uneducation” where school teachers have struggled to set them individual work at home and parents have equally struggled to become unpaid and untrained educators. Within 2 days my 11-year old grandson was sent home with high-temperature and vomiting, his mother struggling for three days to secure a test for the virus.

At a societal level, 2020 will have a delayed but significant impact on not only educational attainment of our children but the very process of learning over the next few years. The A-level fiasco will only add to the pressures on our members caused by government failures to respond positively to protect the people rather than the employers.

The liaison between teaching unions such as the NEU and the UCU in lobbying government for safety and recognition during the pandemic has been vital. You tend to know you're having an impact when the Tory government and its media turn on teachers as the enemy of

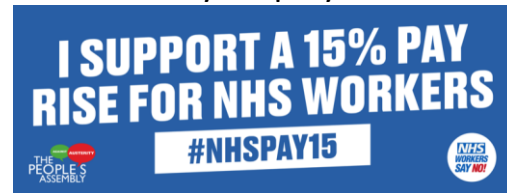
progress! And the return to colleges and schools, despite our warnings, are already experiencing the infection-rates, sudden closures and general confusion we warned would occur should the government fail to meet our five safety tests:

1. Much lower numbers and an “R” rate well below 1;
2. Full provision of Personal Protective Equipment and social distancing measures in schools and colleges;
3. Comprehensive access to regular and routine testing to track, trace and quarantine COVID outbreaks;
4. Whole College strategies agreed with trade union representatives; and
5. Full protection of vulnerable staff, without loss of pay or contracts.

As I write in mid-September, none of our conditions have been met, yet colleges have reopened. Opening the colleges to 1 million young people this month, travelling all around the UK to move into compact halls of residence and congregate in large numbers, is, as our General Secretary suggested, “sleepwalking into a disaster”.

“This could lead to universities being the care homes of any second wave of COVID-19”, said Jo Grady in an interview with the Observer Sunday newspaper. A chilling thought for retired members as well as the employed. Already, university cities such as Birmingham and Manchester have emerged as Autumn hotspots, and the testing system crashed as the demand has, predictably, risen sharply with the return to education and work. It is the job of trade unionists to put workers’ rights and safety before the business profits of corporate schools and

colleges, and to stand together, on picket lines if necessary, as the next few winter months see mounting attacks on jobs and conditions by employers.



I think we’re heading for an Autumn of discontent, with campaign groups calling for action across trade unions and social organisations nationally. Watch out for the “**People’s Assembly**” protest on 17th October, and before that, do attend the launch of the **People Before Profit programme** on Tuesday 29th September – Facebook bit.ly/ProgLaunch – supported by John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn.

Tony Staunton
Chair, SWRMB

7. News from France HE sector.

Most of us will have watched the recent debacle regarding A level & GCSE Examination results for Britain and the knock-on effects for our colleges & universities with feelings of sympathy for students and staff in schools, colleges and universities.

I read this, 19.8.20.

Prof Sandra Lapointe @mslapointe Paris ENS is France’s top school and agregation there is highly competitive. This year, due to COVID they cancelled the orals, only had the (anonymous) written exam. As a result ~80% of successful candidates were women. 8-0. Eighty. Women usually represent ~40% of ENS agrégés.

Not an unfamiliar story to many of us, I suspect. I expect some of the people at ENS* always knew that and now they

have the evidence. Whether they act on it is another matter, of course.

The Book Corner, featuring **Storming the Citadel**, looks at similar gender bias in medicine in Britain from 1860s.

*École normale supérieure (Paris).
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89cole_normale_sup%C3%A9rieure_\(Paris\)](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89cole_normale_sup%C3%A9rieure_(Paris))

...

Jo Corke SWRMB

8. Support for the Creative Arts.

A presentation to Torbay & South Devon Trades Council.

Many think of the Creative Industries as an add-on to our lives rather than essential but I would stress that they are with us every day in one form or another. The books we read, the TV and films we watch, the theatre we go to, the performers in our clubs and pub entertainers, the architects who design our buildings, the internet technology we utilise (especially since the pandemic), the graphics we witness in our lives and on our daily journeys, all these fall under the creative industries.

Last year pre-COVID the Creative Industries were the second biggest sector in the UK economy contributing £111bn, more than the automotive, aerospace, life sciences and oil and gas combined. Within that arts and culture specifically contributed £10.8bn and the Treasury also received £2.8bn in taxation. In 2015 arts and culture were the largest contributor to gross value added (GVA) in the SW region, £564 million which was 45% of the areas GVA and the employment multiplier effects of arts and culture was the largest of any English

region. I imagine more recent figures pre-Covid would also reflect the dynamic nature of the sector. So the arts and culture are extremely important economically to the SW.

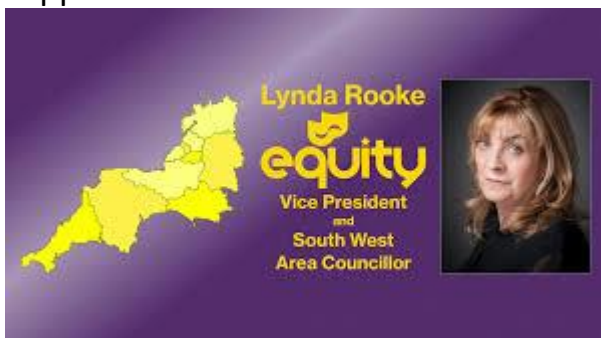
However due to the nature of much of the live performance work in arts and culture and the restrictions in social distancing now in operation, many of our arts organisations are in a critical situation. Plymouth Culture estimate that the current restrictions placed on arts organisations has meant that the city of Plymouth has so far lost £15 million as a result of Covid. This is not the whole picture because arts and culture suffered a good deal from the cuts in local government funding following austerity in 2008. Between 2009 -2019 more than £860 million in real terms was cut from annual council spending on arts and culture throughout the UK.

Every region felt an impact but the SW and NE of England experienced the worst hit with the SW having a 38.9% cut in local arts funding and the largest cuts were in councils classified as village or smaller. What Ben Cooper highlights in *Cultured Communities* (Fabian Society publication 2020) is the unequal distribution of Arts Council England (ACE) funding and how the rural communities suffer the most. Areas like Somerset have experienced a 100% cut in arts funding. ACE's distribution of National Lottery funding for community arts and culture is unequal, between 2009-2018; £50.40 was spent per person in London whereas in the rest of England it was £21.26 per person. Between 2018-2022 41.4% of ACE's national portfolio organisations (NPO's) is assigned to London based organisations.

This is estimated at £74.30 per person in London and £19.93 elsewhere in the UK.

A consistent lack of funding for arts organisations before Covid-19 left many fragile and reliant on earned income from bars, hospitality and ticket sales, when lockdown came it was an immediate cliff edge for many organisations. Plymouth Theatre Royal has announced redundancies and the prospect of future shows is some way off, Exeter Northcott Theatre applied for initial help from ACE to carry it through to proper government support, it was told like some other SW organisations that it wasn't eligible as it had some reserves. In other words an organisation had to be on its knees before Covid-19 hit for it to be eligible. The Northcott has announced a Christmas show and that is a sign of green shoots in an otherwise bleak landscape.

What is needed is a more consistent long term approach to arts funding with a proper 5 year plan and local governments in control of a tranche of grants. What is required is that local governments commit to a charter that would ring fence any funding received to create an effective support of the arts.



It isn't only the economic benefits of the arts that need to be stressed, the arts make our lives better they promote health and well-being, they help create a sense of community and offer opportunity to those who feel lonely and isolated, children who struggle academically are

known to respond to arts in education and it is inclusive and can remove social barriers that many young people face.

The other issue has been that whilst Sunak has announced a £1.57bn support package for arts buildings and organisations, a large proportion of the workforce are self-employed freelancers who during this pandemic have fallen through the cracks in terms of provision and support. Many have a portfolio career, working between the entertainment industry and then often supporting themselves in hospitality and part time educational work, as a consequence they have not been eligible to receive SEISS. The union has a benevolent fund but having supported 3900 members to date the funds are drying up and we are looking at ways to raise further funds. The worry is that many will leave the industry for good as they search for other long term means to support themselves and their families and those who are the most vulnerable will arguably be from poorer, working class backgrounds.

Equity has announced its Four Pillars Campaign to support the industry through this period; they are workforce protection, safe opening, protecting infrastructure and equality. We will fight to make sure that when our arts organisations re-open they will be safe spaces for both the workers and the audiences and that the workforce represents and reflects all members of our society.

Lynda Rooke
Equity Vice President and Equity SW Area
Councillor
SW TUC Women's Committee

9. Book Corner.

Storming the citadel. Bell, E. M.
1953. Constable.

*Nobody told me there'd be days like this,
strange days indeed.* Lennon, recorded 1980.

In these Covid days when zoom meetings have replaced many face-to-face meetings, there are lots of opportunities, if you have the time, to investigate new activities, hobbies & other interests.

I came across this book in a U3A online group where we are looking at the history of early women doctors. *

While many countries have had female physicians, modern systems of qualification have often been for men only, whether *de facto* or *de jure*.

"It might have been supposed that the accession of a queen to the throne of Britain would have a beneficent effect on the position of young women over who she was called to rule. (However) To the majority of her male subjects a chivalrous devotion to the young Queen proved perfectly compatible with a complete indifference to the rights and school for the intelligence of all other women."

Storming the Citadel is the story of such women and their supporters and opponents.

Some are well known. Elizabeth Blackwell, an American but British by birth, came from a Whig dissenting and reforming family. she was able to get an M.D in America in 1849.

Elizabeth Garrett heard Elizabeth Blackwell speak of medicine as a

profession for women in 1858/59. Her battle to get her name on the Medical Register was hard won, but her MD came later from Paris.

Sophia Jex-Blake took up the mantle. In 1869 The University of Edinburgh became the first university in Britain to admit women students into the medical course when Sophia Blake and six others were accepted.

"The women presenting themselves for examination at Edinburgh University had to pass through a dense crowd consisting of the lowest class about fellow students at surgeons Hall with many more of the same class and the university and a certain number of street rowdies and hundreds of gaping spectators the crowd was so great that the traffic was suspended for over an hour and the police were conspicuously absent it took considerable courage to face such a multitude that with head held high and an air of assumed indifference but with head held high and an air of assumed indifference Sophia said her party through it they did not falter as that and decaying vegetation was held at them but walked on ignoring all."

Subsequently a legal case deprived them of their degrees and so their attempt to storm the Edinburgh citadel was unsuccessful.

Undeterred, these women and supporters, who included both women & some men, set up The London School of Medicine for Women established in 1874 as the first medical school in Britain to train women as doctors.

I am still reading the book, but I see that the final chapter of the book is on the implementation of the Goodenough report, 1944. *“Discrimination is unjust to women and in so far as it may result in the best qualified applicant not securing appointment is contrary to the public interest every possible step should be taken to secure at all hospital appointments are filled by open competition and that the sex of the applicant is not a bar to appointment.”*

Good idea, who could disagree with that?

.....
Goodenough W. Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Education [Goodenough Report]. London: HMSO; 1944.

*Membership with Trust U3A runs from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and costs £7.50. If you are a member of an existing U3A the fee is £4.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/groups>

Jo Corke SWRMB

10. Climate Change – the greatest threat to us all.



Whilst formal trade union duties have lessened to a trickle of online Zoom meetings, including this month’s Trades Union Congress fringe, wider campaigning has kept me busy throughout the COVID-19 Lockdown. Campaigners on all matters of human rights and progressive politics have developed ingenious and creative

ways of maintaining themselves despite the loss of physical meet-ups, let alone mass protests.

Despite having the identified if rather euphemistic “underlying health conditions”, I found myself having to join nearly 3,000 people in central Plymouth, gathered in May to proclaim “**Black Lives Matter!**” The ramping-up of institutional racism, with scenes of horror from the USA has been matched by general political and media discrimination here, best exemplified by the ghastly scapegoating of a handfuls of refugees seeking to cross the English Channel to seek asylum.

The rise of racism, and protests including flags of various UK fascist organisations, demanded I donned mask and gloves and offered solidarity with the **Black Lives Matter** movement, albeit at an angst-ridden distance. I’m damned if I’m going sit-by and watch racism and racists envelop our communities.

Similarly, when August heralded the 75th anniversaries of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as an elected and long-standing member the General Council of the **Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**, I demanded of myself to staff a CND commemorative stall in Plymouth City centre over 4 days, using a litter-picking hand-extension to dole out leaflets.

Then, by the end of August, the nurses, enraged by being exempted from a COVID-19 pay increase, took to the streets. Most other public servants, including Police, Doctors and Teachers having been offered an unexpected pay-rise, the nurses identified a 20-30% loss of real-value pay over the past 10 years due

to below-inflation pay deals. The Johnson Government chose to ignore nurses and ancillary staffs in the pay awards, despite being filmed clapping “NHS Workers” in gratitude for their sacrifices this year. I attended the protests and marches as President of **Plymouth Trades Union Council**, offering solidarity support from the UCU.

But most of my time has been spent developing lobbying work to stop runaway climate change. As a member of the national steering committee of the **Campaign against Climate Change**, to which the UCU is affiliated, I have been developing online activities for promoting key campaigns over the next period, including opposition to HS2 and aviation expansion, as well as promoting the **Greener Jobs Alliance** and our “1 Million Green Jobs”, campaign which I helped write and promote since 2008.

Nothing feels more important. In short, this year’s extreme weather and climate events have startled climate scientists and watchers alike. The world is warming far faster than any of the models predicted.

The ghastly wildfires in California, Alaska, the Amazon, Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa and through to Siberia are accelerating and amplifying the absurdly high global temperatures never known before in the history of humanity.

Even more chilling is the ice-melt at both poles. A total of 28 trillion tons of ice has disappeared from the Earth’s surface since 1994, according to our own scientists from Leeds and Edinburgh universities and University College London. If you spread all of that ice on the U.K. it would be 100 meters thick, that’s

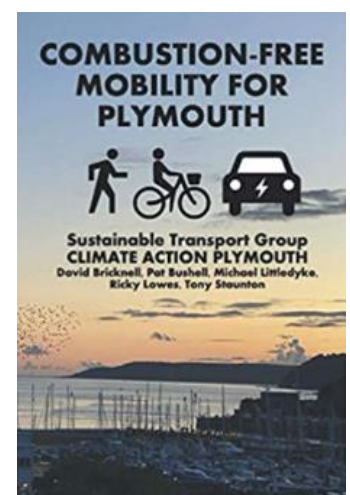
330+ feet deep (that’s twice the height of Nelson’s Column across the entire UK).

The rate of ice loss has risen by 57% since the 1990s. Scientists expect sea level to rise by an average of 50 centimetres over the next few decades, which increases the frequency of coastal flooding. We can expect an extra million people to be flooded once per year with every centimetre of sea level rise. Cities will be lost and hundreds of millions displaced as refugees during the lifetimes of our grandchildren. The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** now estimates on the current global heating trajectory, that the earth will see a warming of 3-4 degrees by 2100, with two-third of animal species extinct and global collapse of human society.

We need to see a 7% reduction in the emissions of global heating gases, CO2 and methane in particular, in each of the next 10 years in order to prevent such catastrophe by keeping warming to below 2 degrees centigrade of pre-industrialisation 1850 norms. Yet emissions globally, including by North Western countries, are increasing.

I have been working with colleagues from the **Friends of the Earth** Climate Action campaign to charge local politicians with the responsibility to meet IPCC carbon reduction targets.

Last month we published our book detailing how to end reliance on the Internal Combustion Engine, focussing on my home city of Plymouth as the



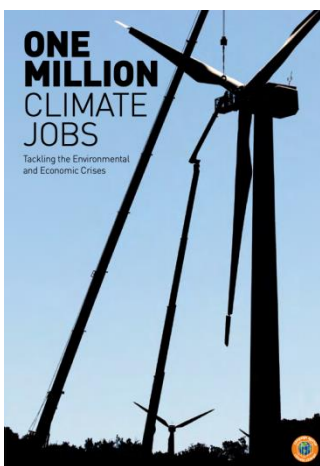
example*. We are seeking city-wide transformation to:

- Widening of pedestrian-only paved areas and walkways free from cars
- Priority for dedicated cycle ways restricting car use
- Incentives for electric-only vehicles

The headlines sound paltry given the challenge we face, yet the opposition is immense to these reductions in car use and pollution. A 20mph speed limit in towns and cities would reduce stress and accidents as well as emissions. The promotion of walking and cycling for all journeys of 2-3 miles (for the able-bodied) is damned as authoritarian, and the end of carbon-based energy sources by 2035 ridiculed as absurd.

With such responses, you'd think I'd be deflated. But there is always hope. Not least, the ghastly impacts of COVID-19 include enormous economic pressures, including unemployment rates and a deepening housing crisis.

The *Campaign against Climate Change*



has produced three editions of the “**1 Million Climate Jobs Now**” pamphlet detailing the practical demands for a Just Transition required to a Green economy, more pertinent now as

mass unemployment requires State investment in retraining and new jobs like never before.

Green manifestos including proposals for transitions to a green economy are now commonplace, with the **Build Back Better** campaign and the **Green New Deal** being just two of a huge range of like-minded campaigns, slowly but inevitably congealing into a mass movement. The time is now, and we all have a part to play.

The BBC documentary, “**Extinction**” hosted by Sir David Attenborough, currently available on BBC iPlayer, leaves no doubt about the imminent threats to all life on earth, even if it is light on identifying the system of Capitalism itself as the architect of our demise.

So I have joined with **Extinction Rebellion** to raise the issues through direct action and mass protest, in so far as my arthritis will allow! The more we join in activities the more alarming is the intransigence of politicians at home and abroad, and most dismaying is the outright denial against all scientific evidence, by those from the far-Right in particular who consider all mention of global heating and climate change as a communist conspiracy.

Now in my aging years, I can think of nothing better than devoting my life to combatting climate change, and I hope you will join me. The **UCU** has a fantastic programme for Green Representatives to challenge college managers to reduce emissions towards Zero, and excellent in-house training for members. Everyone can do something – not just the recycling and re-use challenges from the 1980's, but direct pressure on politicians and corporations to change production and behaviours away from reliance on carbon-based energy and production.

The challenge is Massive but we are the Many – let's save the World (and ourselves).

- **“Combustion-free Mobility”** is available as a paperback - £5.95 – or e-book on Kindle - £1.75 – from Amazon! Please don't shoot the messenger – I know all about Amazon but it is now a significant public service that should be a not-for-profit public service, as should Universities and Colleges...
- **“1 million Climate Jobs”** pamphlet is available free to download from <http://www.cacctu.org.uk/climatejobs>
- UCU supports the **Greener Jobs Alliance**: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/greenerjobsproject>
- UCU is affiliated to the **Campaign against Climate Change**: <https://www.campaigncc.org>
- The **Build Back Better Campaign** is challenging any return to the “Old Normal” after COVID-19, with a broad-based alliance for an economic revival based upon a green agenda: <https://www.buildbackbetteruk.org/what-we-want>
- Read the **IPCC Reports** here: <https://www.ipcc.ch>

Tony Staunton SW RMB Env.

11. On-line interim UCU Congress 2020

An on-line interim Congress meeting will take place on 28-30 October 2020. This will include sessions of the HE and FE sector conferences on Thursday 29 October.

The first report of the Congress business committee was published in May as branch circular UCU/1010.

This event will be on-line, and is called an ‘interim Congress’ to emphasise the temporary nature of the measures being taken. The arrangements described have been agreed by the majority of the NEC's strategy and finance committee as Congress could not be conducted on-line without some significant departures from usual practice. The union is doing its best in difficult circumstances to deliver a productive and democratic interim Congress whilst being honest about the limitations. A move will be made away from the rapid progression through a large volume of motions, with procedural interruptions, to a smaller core agenda with the aim of taking decisions on key issues and priorities and setting the union's direction in key areas, not least its position on urgent matters relating to the Covid 19 crisis, including equality issues.

The key points are:

- The creation of a reduced, ‘core’ agenda
- The replacement of standing orders with temporary principles for conducting this meeting
- Advance notification of all delegates’ speaking requests. The on-line Congress meeting will include voting on motions.

A reduced ‘core’ agenda will be created by a meeting of the NEC's sub-committee chairs and the Congress business committee.

In addition to changes to the ordering of business, Congress will be asked to suspend its usual standing orders and adopt instead a temporary set of principles for the conduct of business. (Appendix 1: 3. No rule changes will be taken by this meeting of Congress).

Timetable

- 12 noon, Friday 2 October: Deadline for amendments and late motions.
- Friday 9 October: meeting of NEC committee “agenda group” to agree a core agenda for the on-line interim Congress.
- Tuesday 13 October: final core agenda published.
- Friday 16 October: deadline for registration of delegates.

Wednesday 28 October: Congress

Thursday 29 October:

FE sector conference

HE Sector conference

Retired members conference (tbc)

Friday 30 October: Congress.

Branches are allowed one delegate per 400 members or part thereof.

Our delegate this year will be our branch secretary, Mike Farmer

The agenda will include addresses from the President and General Secretary and an update report from the Honorary Treasurer on the union’s finances.

Extracts from branch circular UCU/1038 Sept 2020.

Jo Corke SW RMB

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>

13. TUC Congress 2020.

These are a few quotes from Congress.

‘Workers make Unions. Where the government will not act people and their trade union must’ **Jo Grady**

“Point to key workers and say, that’s what trade unionists look like.”

Matt Wrack FBU

“The virus does not discriminate, our society does.” **Ann Deane GMB**

“Women demand dignity and justice.”

“Flexible working will not destroy our

town centres, mass unemployment will.”

“Key workers kept this country going.”

Frances O’Grady

Liza Sentence SW RMB

14. Editor’s Note.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

Jo Corke SW RMB

END
