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### **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.

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](mailto:ucu.swest@gmail.com) and members are welcome to contact us anytime.

Tony Staunton chair SWRMB

### **1. Branch meetings.**

We are following National Guidance that most UCU meetings and events are currently taking place online. See <https://www.ucu.org.uk/events>

### **A branch meeting is planned for October 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 1.30 pm**

This will be a zoom meeting and papers will be distributed to members in time for the meeting.

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

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

**Newsletters:** these newsletters are 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:

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or contact the officers below:

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**SW NPC D/C** Liza Sentance

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### 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 with South West GAS and Devon and Cornwall branches.

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

### Annual Convention 21.09.22

The National Pensioners' Convention will host its first live conference in three years on 21s September 2022 in Birmingham.

Pensioner Poverty and Older People's Rights are the themes of the one-day event which will discuss the cost-of-living crisis that is affecting the lives of millions.

Tickets are priced at just £5 and includes a buffet lunch. Contact NPC to register <https://www.npcuk.org/post/annual-convention-21-09-22>



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### 4. SW TUC News

It's time for a new deal for working people. We need help with energy bills, a £15 National Minimum Wage and a real pay rise for every worker. And we need our rights as workers to be strengthened, not watered down. Only working people can deliver this change - so this Autumn, we're taking action:

**Holding town hall meetings in every region of England and in Wales.**

We are coming together to demand better. Join union leaders and local campaigners at a town hall event near you to discuss how we come together to win a new deal for working people!

RSVP to a town hall event near you

**Calling a national day of action on Friday 14 October.** We are delivering action on the cost-of-living crisis and workers' rights in every constituency in England and Wales. Join activists in your area to call for wage rises and a budget that delivers for working people.

**Organising a mass-lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 19 October.** We want every MP to hear from workers from their constituency about the reality of the cost-of-living crisis. Join the mass lobby of MPs in London and ask your MP to support a budget that delivers for working people.

**Holding a rally in Methodist Central Hall at 6pm on Wednesday 19 October**  
After we have lobbied our MPs, we'll be holding a huge rally in Methodist Central Hall. Join us to hear from frontline workers and union leaders about how they are fighting for higher pay and fairer treatment at work.

SW TUC <https://www.tuc.org.uk/>

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## 5. Enough is Enough!

After the past two years of intense and painful trade union industrial action by our members, it is unsurprising that the UCU is the first trade union to formally support the Enough Is Enough Campaign <https://wesayenough.co.uk/>

Representing the core issues faced by our members and the working class across the UK, the campaign has 5 demands:

1. A real pay rise, recognising inflation soaring at over 12%RPI as I write;

2. Slash Energy Bills, reflecting the anger at the record profits of gas and fuel companies while prices sky-rocket;

3. End Food Poverty, not only recognising the record profits from supermarkets but the increase to over 2 million people using foodbanks regularly, including our own members in casualised and zero-hours employment in colleges and universities;

4. Decent Homes for All, requiring more rights and protections for tenants, a cap on rents and a national home insulation campaign to renovate and improve housing stock.

5. Tax the Rich, acknowledging that the wealthiest in society ensure off-shore accounts and tax-dodging accounting to pay little or nothing towards our country's infrastructure, health and welfare needs. Let's be honest, the UK is in dire straits. Long working hours, low wage economy purposefully constructed through the past decades to ensure wealth accumulation in the hands of the super-rich. We have seen the marketisation of all education, the privatisation of the NHS by stealth, and the deconstruction of local democracy through cut-upon-cut to council budgets.

Our social infrastructure is visibly decaying, with access to support and help almost absent. Little wonder we are seeing a sudden and pronounced wave of strikes across the trade union movement. Class Struggle is back, although most of our working members have been experiencing that for years. UCU has been a front-runner in strikes for pay, protected conditions of service, pension rights ("it's our money!") and against management bullying (some semblance of democracy and fairness in the workplace).

Tony Staunton SW RMB Chair

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## 6. Book Corner.

*At the MayDay 2022 march in Bristol I was given a leaflet by the Bristol Radical History Group; their website had this review by Steven Carter of **Again with One Voice: British Songs of Political Reform, 1768 to 1868.** Dick Holdstock. Ed. Patience Young.*

Stephen Carter is happy for us to use his review in our newsletter.

At the heart of '*Again with One Voice*' are the words and melodies of a remarkable collection of one hundred and twenty British songs from the turbulent hundred years that culminated with the Second Reform Act of 1868. The collection charts a century of working-class struggle for democracy and political reform and brings to life important movements and people, like Wilkes and Liberty, the anti-slavery movement, Luddites, Captain Swing, and Chartists.

The songs 'have an energy and commitment fuelled by anger, despair, humour and wit'; and open a way of meeting 'the ancestors who fought and improved our lives' (Frankie Armstrong, Godmother of the Natural Voice Singing Movement).

The book's chronological structure 'gives the reader a sense of how this fascinating era unfolded and the introductions to each chapter provide an overarching narrative, invaluable to the reader who may be unfamiliar with this period.'

Including the 'tunes to all of the songs is a real strength'. (Alison Morgan, in *Folk Music Journal*).

This was the Golden Age of the broadside ballad, the inexpensive songsheets sold on the street, at a time when almost everybody sang – and sang a great deal. Oral tradition was especially effective for the common people, but printed material helped a song's circulation. A shocking

event, such as the Peterloo massacre, could be reported quickly and effectively. When tavern-goers sang of the good life, temperance societies about the drunkard's road to ruin, conservatives of patriotism, and religious groups about the glories of the Lord, song was a glue that kept a community together, enhancing solidarity and cohesion in performance. Street performers included songs promoting radical reform of an archaic political system, still controlled by landed aristocrats.

History may be written by the victors, but songs tell a different story. They 'shine a new spotlight on people's everyday lives' and helped to bring home the lived experience, the excitement and commitment to a social and political movement: 'Every inch of progress was partly achieved, or at least accompanied by, vocal dissent, agitation, protest, against powerful forces which could turn brutal' (Steve Roud).

Thirty years in the making, this unique collection was gathered by civil rights activist, performer and author Dick Holdstock. A veteran campaigner, Holdstock's credits include joining 'Martin Luther King on the March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama', and many substantial campaign involvements since. His comments on this collection incorporate contributions and insights from numerous academics, librarians, folkies and performers. These songs 'all spoke of workers' lives and their growing commitment to amending the class-dividing political system' and motivated British workers to achieve political reform. They "revealed the complex sentiments of working people who became more and more resolved to obtain a truly representative government. Evident in these lyrics were the depths of

humiliation, strife, and hardship suffered by the working class of Britain... These were more than just political poems; they were all part of a singing tradition, and singing these songs today can bring us closer to those who wrote them.” (Dick Holdstock)

Each of the ten chronological chapters begins with a succinct but informative historical introduction. The following excerpt illustrates how such times still resonate today:

Following the Napoleonic wars, working class discontent was manifest throughout all of Britain. Realizing the enduring needs for decent housing, safe water, better working conditions, lower food prices, fair pay, lower taxes, equal justice, and the right to vote, the large working class knew that it had gained nothing from twenty-two years of war. Many felt that they could have been better off if Napoleon had won, which might have ended their unbearable lives controlled by Britain’s aristocracy. p.177

Similarly, with the songs, like in ‘The Tradesmens’ Complaint’, set in the 1819 trade depression:

*If you go to a shop and ask for a job,  
The answer is no with a shake of the nob,  
'Tis enough to make a man turn to and rob*

*Oh! the dead time of Old England, &c.*  
p.200.

I noticed an emotional impact imprinted by the songs, after a mere reading, even without the actual singing that this songbook facilitates.

Dick Holdstock explains,  
“Following each song is my commentary, shedding light on the context, feeling, intent, and circumstances of the song, as we understand it today.”

He has taken care to indicate any adaptations, seeking to preserve the original wherever possible.

Holdstock’s song collection traces the history of this tumultuous period and will be of interest to historians and singers alike. What stands out to me, however, are the moments of insight this material provides. As Alison Morgan noted, in *Folk Music Journal*, Holdstock has correctly identified the importance of giving voice to history’s ‘marginalised and often overlooked witnesses’. Further, ‘the collection provides compelling evidence of the role played by ballads and balladeers, singers, musicians, and audiences in political reform.’

Steven Carter  
Bristol Radical History Group.

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## 7. From The Archives.

Verne Hardingham has been a regular contributor-to our SW RMB newsletters, writing articles under the banner From The Archives. She died in July 2022.

Bill Tampion who was a founding member of this RMB has died.

Jo Corke SW membership

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## 8. Congress 2022.

Climate and environment update from UCU Congress including SW & other retired branches motions.



Seven motions were carried at UCU Congress 2022 demonstrating commitment to progressing work to address climate and environmental justice. These motions provide priority action areas for the climate and ecological emergency (CEE) committee, launched as a result of motions carried at Congress 2021. See the link for more details.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/12299/Recruitment-and-campaigning-motions#59-levelling-up-post16-education-and-the-green-new-deal>

Jo Corke SW RMB

## 9. The TU campaign for Climate Jobs

Your UCU Branch Officer group are very proud to have had our motion on Climate Jobs, agreed at our Branch members' meeting, carried overwhelmingly at this year's national Congress, the annual delegate policy conference of UCU.

Specifically, amidst a stream of resolutions detailing concern and action surrounding the deepening climate catastrophe, we gained the full support of our trade union for the Climate Jobs book and proposals from the Campaign against Climate Change ( [www.campaigncc.org](http://www.campaigncc.org)). 2022 breaks global records as the hottest year since records began, and it isn't even over yet. The two hot spells this summer saw not only record breaking temperatures of over 41C (106F) but also the warmest night-time temperatures ever. Add to that the driest periods, requiring lengthy hosepipe bans to replenish our inadequate privatised water systems, and it is clear that climate change is not simply affecting countries in the Global South.

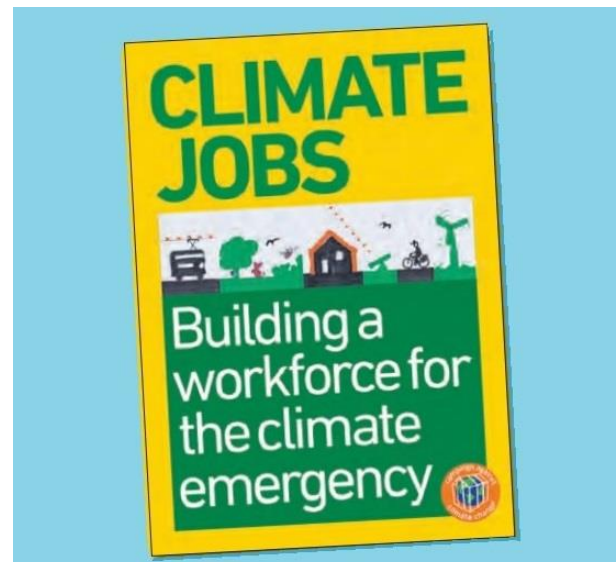
There is a need for concerted and immediate action. Governments engaged with the United Nations have supported the scientific 6th Report of the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stating we have 3 years to stop increases to global heating emissions of CO2 and Methane, and then the need to cut emissions by 40% by 2030. The governments who have agreed the Report have done little or nothing to act.

*Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the climate emergency* provides a detailed and in-depth practical report, demonstrating that there are three or four million good, well paid, skilled jobs that could be created if we get serious and urgently tackle the climate emergency, as the science demands.

But to do this requires us to break from the failed reliance on the market and instead to invest in a huge expansion of public sector jobs across all sectors from transport, energy and food to homes, education and more, which are essential to tackling the climate crisis.

At the heart of this needs to be a National Climate Service which can organise, plan, train workers and deliver the jobs so urgently needed. The changes needed are ones which will improve our lives, ensuring among other things we have warm homes, a fully integrated public transport system and most importantly a safe climate and ecology now and in the future.



It's well worth a read, and can be downloaded free on-line (alongside detailed technical briefings) or bought for £5 <https://www.cacctu.org.uk/climatejobs>

The proposals for the just transition of workers in fossil-fuel and heavily polluting industries to climate jobs, with investment in retraining, direct transfer and protected pay and conditions, has been well received by many workers across the most polluting industries. The booklet has become a campaign focus across the environment movement.

Our Government is denying the degree of trouble we face now as a result of global warming, and are reversing the meagre policies previously agreed but stalled. Truss led her leadership campaign by promising to cancel the so-called "green levy" (GGL) which added £153 to household energy bills to fund research and development of "renewables: - wind, wave and solar – to pull down global heating emissions.

In this energy crisis, it makes no sense at all to rule out energy sources which are not only cheap and clean, but can also have a quick impact: a new wind farm can be up and running within weeks once construction starts.

Truss's promised "Emergency Budget" to address the crisis is an ideologically driven ploy, further weakening climate action. In the 'energy strategy' earlier this year, in the spring Budget, popular and practical policies like home retrofitting, wind power and solar were almost entirely absent. In their place, major tax incentives for North Sea oil and a return to the hopeless, dangerous and incredibly expensive projects of "fracking" and new nuclear power.

The coming winter will be one of crisis, with spiralling fuel poverty and industrial action as workers fight wage suppression.

We face the global reality in which gas prices are not going down any time soon and the window to avoid climate catastrophe is rapidly closing.

Public demand for action is not going to let up. In November the UN Climate Conference of interested Parties – COP27 – meets in the fortified police-State Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheikh and, as with all previous conferences, may fail to agree the actions needed to stop climate collapse. UCU members will be joining the demonstrations and rallies throughout the COP27 period, including 5th and 12th November, for global climate justice and emergency action to reduce emissions and invest in system change to prevent global social crisis. Heavy and immediate investment in Climate Jobs is essential. Now!

Tony Staunton  
UCU Green Rep, SWRMB

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## 10. Ken Childerhouse

Ken Childerhouse was NATFHE President 1986-87. Ken was a highly capable and energetic President, dedicated to the promotion of education and of workers' rights. He was an active member of NATFHE's Outer London Regional Council, as was his wife and long-time trade union partner, Asta. Ken appreciated the value of the Regions as part of the union's structure.

Asta came from Sweden and Ken was profoundly influenced by the example of Sweden's socialist movement. As Ken explained in his presidential address to NATFHE Conference 1987.

*'Asta is not just from Sweden, her home was and remains in Adalen- Red Adalen which was the cradle of that country's great democratic socialist movement. Just down the road are buried Trade Union*

*martyrs, shot down as they marched for freedom and bread in 1931’.*

Ken performed his duties as President with eloquence, compassion and good judgement and a socialist vision of how education and society could be so much better.

In his presidential address Ken spoke passionately about many issues facing NATFHE in the 1980s, including how to achieve higher levels of representation of women members within the union, how to achieve unity with the AUT, and how to navigate the relationship between training and education. As he said: *‘I could contemplate living in an educated society; I would not wish to remain in one that was merely trained.’*

Another memorable highlight of Ken’s presidential address was his strong denunciation of the poor quality of working conditions for staff in further and higher education.

*‘In visiting colleges one particular factor has made a deep impression – the sheer squalor of many lecturers’ physical working conditions.... Tatty classrooms, rundown laboratories and workshops, common rooms piled high with bodies and books. Is it too outrageous to ask for a study for every lecturer capable of hosting a small tutorial?’*

Ken was a President who was a credit to his union and to the world of post-school education.

Asta died from cancer on 29th November 2021. Sadly, Ken died of a heart attack the same evening.

Liz Lawrence  
Yorks and Humberside RMB

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**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>

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## 12. Editor’s Note.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

Jo Corke SW RMB

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