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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 Tuesday 7th February.

It is yet to be decided if this will be a zoom meeting. 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.

No.31 January 2023

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 and members are welcome to contact us anytime.

Tony Staunton chair SWRMB

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

Hilary Lappin-Scott, Bangor University;
Morris Williams, UWE;
Eddie Cullen, Central;
Tony Whiteley, Worcester University.

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.

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.

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SW NPC D/C Liza Sentance

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3. National Pensioners Convention

Ruth Amias, our NPC Gas affiliated delegate, arranged for Keith Evans to speak at the October branch meeting.

This is Keith's report:

What is the National Pensioners Convention? The NPC is essentially an umbrella organisation. NPC was founded in 1979 and has had strong Trades Union links from the start. Although at that time some trades unions had retired members' sections, and there were various pensioner organisations and charities in existence, there was no umbrella body that could co-ordinate and lead the campaign.

With the initial support of the TUC in 1979, Jack Jones, recently retired as general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, worked on a blueprint for an umbrella organisation, made up of affiliated groups. The federal structure promotes the principle of delegatory democracy; local pensioner groups and forums and local branches of retired trade unionists are encouraged to affiliate to their NPC regional body and that body has representation on both the NPC Executive Committee (EC) and National Council (NC). They can also join the NPC directly as individuals. NPC Gloucestershire, Avon and Somerset (GAS) is such a regional body.

NPC GAS has affiliates from Trades Union branches, Trades Councils and Pensioners Forums as well as individual members. NPC GAS members by their very nature tend to be active in other campaigning organisations such as Protect our NHS and Transport groups and can be encountered at various meetings and demonstrations

as well as picket lines. NPC GAS holds general meetings of members and affiliate delegates; Regional Council 4 times per year and holds regional forums such as *Dignity for the Many* which included sessions on dignity in age, dignity for claimants and dignity for young workers. The forum planned for November 2022 is *The State Pension is a Workers' Issue* with sessions on State Pensions and Trades Unions' position on retired members.

Nationally, NPC has a set of policies supported by NPC Working Parties and additionally responds to issues as they arise; full details of policies and campaigns can be found on the Convention's comprehensive website.

<https://www.npcuk.org>

Recent issues to which NPC has reacted are (as of October 2022):

Commissioner for Older People in England: "Lord Foulkes to ask government at Parliamentary Questions about a Commissioner for Older People in England".

19.10.22 update. Department of Work & Pensions' Minister Baroness Stedman-Scott replied that while the government does not have any plans at the moment, she is, "very happy to meet" Lord Foulkes and a deputation to discuss the proposal.

Right to Buy. "Apart from the properties being lost from the stock of vitally needed social housing, and whilst this proposed policy furthers the Governments ideology of home ownership, it is prejudicial for older people, particularly older women, and those from BAME and LGBT communities, as the policy will in the main only benefit the median to higher earning working population."

Urgent request for Equalities and Human Rights Commission intervention: Rail network staffing. "Rail accessibility is in a state of national emergency, and we call for your urgent intervention. With widespread allegations of mass ticket office closures and nationwide industrial action over railway de-staffing, this could be our last chance to prevent an escalating human rights crisis on Britain's railways."

Standing policies are **DECENT STATE PENSIONS; NATIONAL CARE SERVICE; UNIVERSAL PENSIONER ENTITLEMENTS; THE NHS** (*should be all inclusive, free at the point of use and include dental, eye and elderly care services.*); **ENDING FUEL POVERTY; ACCESSIBILITY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT; SOCIAL AND DIGITAL INCLUSION; DECENT HOUSING; UNITING THE GENERATIONS** (*In recent years, there have been numerous claims that Britain's older generation has escaped austerity at the expense of the young. This view is both inaccurate and divisive. Today's battles on behalf of pensioners will benefit future generations, and equally, pensioners must stand alongside today's workers in defence of their jobs, pensions and the right to a decent period of retirement.*); **END FROZEN PENSIONS; ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE; DIGNITY CODE** (*All forms of abuse against older people should be recognised in law and carry appropriate sentencing, in the same way that there is specific legal protection for children.*)

Working Parties supporting the policies are: Digital; Finance; Health and Social Care; Housing; Pensions and Income; NPC Structures; Women's; LGBT Group; Minority Elder's Committee; Transport Group.

Keith Evans Secretary NPC GAS

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 & Cornwall NPC. However In January 2023 the Devon and Cornwall branch will be closed. The Motion to be taken at the SGM: *That this Special General Meeting of Devon & Cornwall National Pensioners Convention agrees to close the branch from the date of this meeting and donate remaining funds in the Branch Account to Gloucester, Avon & Somerset Branch.*

Dave Francis, VC, Devon & Cornwall NPC.

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



4. SW TUC News

Nigel Costley, who has been the South West TUC Regional Secretary for the last 26 years, retired in November. He broke the news at the Annual Conference in Croyde Bay.

Delegates paid tribute to his work over the years. Our branch has sent a card.

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

5. An autumn of discontent.

Throughout the South West Universities and Colleges took action in the two main UCU campaigns.

Here are some photos from those of us who were able to join the picket lines and demonstrations.





SW RMB members joined the picket lines at Gloucester, Bristol, Bath, Plymouth, Brunel Tec.

6. Enough is Enough!

Crowds attended the rally in Plymouth on 1st October 2022 to highlight the effects of the rising cost of living on families.

Speakers included Tony Staunton, chair of our branch and president of the Plymouth Trades Union Council. "We've got major homelessness, people are very scared for their rents and mortgages, inflation is over 12%," said Tony Staunton. "People are suffering, enough is enough. "There will be more strike action right through the autumn and the winter."

There is a full report here:

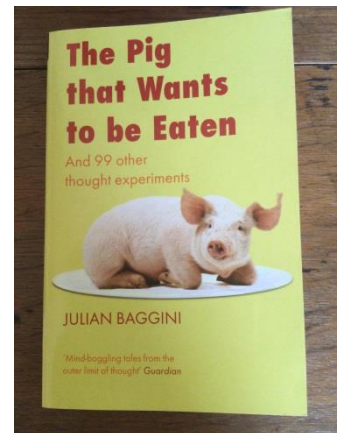
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-63101787>

Tony Staunton SW RMB Chair

7. Book Corner.

The Pig that Wants to be Eaten. And 99 other thought experiments.

Julian Baggini
2005. Granta Books, London.



In the preface

Baggini says the purpose of 'thought experiments' is to strip away the things that complicate matters in real life in order to focus clearly on the essence of a problem. In 2022 going on 2023 we have plenty of real-life ethical problems.

The scenarios in the book are inspired mostly, but not always by the arguments of philosophers. For me, 'Bursting the Bubble' experiment 19, had resonance. *Source, the allegory of the cave in The Republic. Plato (360 BCE).*

Making it personal, I paraphrase as follows:

I may not isolate myself in bricks and mortar, but do I confine myself in subtler ways? If I only read one newspaper, am I severely limiting the intellectual space in which I inhabit? If I only discuss politics with people who share my broad opinions, have I erected a fence around my own little world? If I never try to see the world from another's point of view, let alone walk a mile in their shoes, then am I refusing to look beyond the walls of the small, comfortable world I have constructed?

Yet how do I distinguish between the deluded fools who have mad worldviews (i.e disagree with me) and those who have genuinely discovered another dimension

to life that has so far eluded me. Here's the thing; since they all claim contradictory things, they can't all be right.

As Baghini says "Many lines of thought can be started from this book. But none ends in it."

Jo Corke SW RMB

8. Ken Childerhouse

Here is a picture outside the Lucas Arms of Erik and Anna, the children of Asta and Ken Childerhouse, together with some ex-NATFHE, ex-AUT and UCU members at the memorial event held for Asta and Ken on Friday 9th September.



Photo fb. The event was sponsored by London Region UCU. Vicky Blake, Immediate Past President of UCU, came to bring greetings on behalf of the presidential team.

Liz Lawrence
Yorks and Humberside RMB

From the Archives - I have featured Asta's home in Sweden as it has an interesting trade union history.

Jo Corke SWRMB

9. From The Archives.

In the memorial piece to Ken & Asta Childerhouse in the September newsletter I quoted, from Liz Lawrence:

'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'.

I had not heard of this before; maybe it is news to you too. There's more on the net in Swedish, of course, but here's something to get you started

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%85dal%C3%A4n_shootings

The Ådalen shootings occurred around the sawmill district of Ådalen, Sweden, in May 1931.

As a response to a drawn-out industrial conflict over pay reductions at the pulp factory at Långgrör, workers at other plants went on a sympathy strike. The owner company hired around 60 strike-breakers, who arrived in the village of Lunde in Ådalen on 12 May.

On 14th May the unions held a rally during which they decided to stop all work in the timber and pulp industries in Ådalen. After the meeting, several thousand participants marched to the strike-breakers' quarters in Lunde, where the troops had been ordered to defend the strike-breakers. When they arrived in the village, a patrol of mounted troops tried unsuccessfully to stop them. In the confusion that followed, at least one man fell off his horse and another drew his pistol and fired warning shots while the patrol withdrew. The military commander said later that he believed the demonstrators carried weapons, since he heard shots as well as seeing some of the mounted patrol bleeding. At a distance of less than 100 metres he, in accordance with orders from the present policeman in charge, ordered his troops to fire, which they did, aiming as planned at the ground halfway between the line and the demonstrators. However, ricochets hit the gathered demonstrators, who scattered, and the captain ordered the machine gun

fired. Five people were shot to death: Oskar Berggren, Erik Bergström, Evert Nygren, Sture Larsson and Eira Söderberg, a 20-year-old bystander. Five people were injured. An inquiry later concluded that there was no evidence that the workers were in fact armed. The leadership of the Social Democratic party banned members from attending the funerals of the killed protesters as they were regarded as collaborators with the revolutionary communist party.

In 1969 a film "Ådalen 31" was released. Partly thanks to the film and partly through the persistent use of the events in political debate, the Ådalen shootings are still well known in Sweden, and are sometimes referred to in connection with violent clashes between demonstrators and police such as the 2001 EU summit protests in Gothenburg. My Swedish niece hadn't heard the Ådalen story but her mother had.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Minnesplats Lunde Kramfors kommun 02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Minnesplats_Lunde_Kramfors_kommun_02.jpg)

This memorial, to commemorate 50 years, (1981) is by the artist Lenny Clarhäll from Södertälje. Photo CC



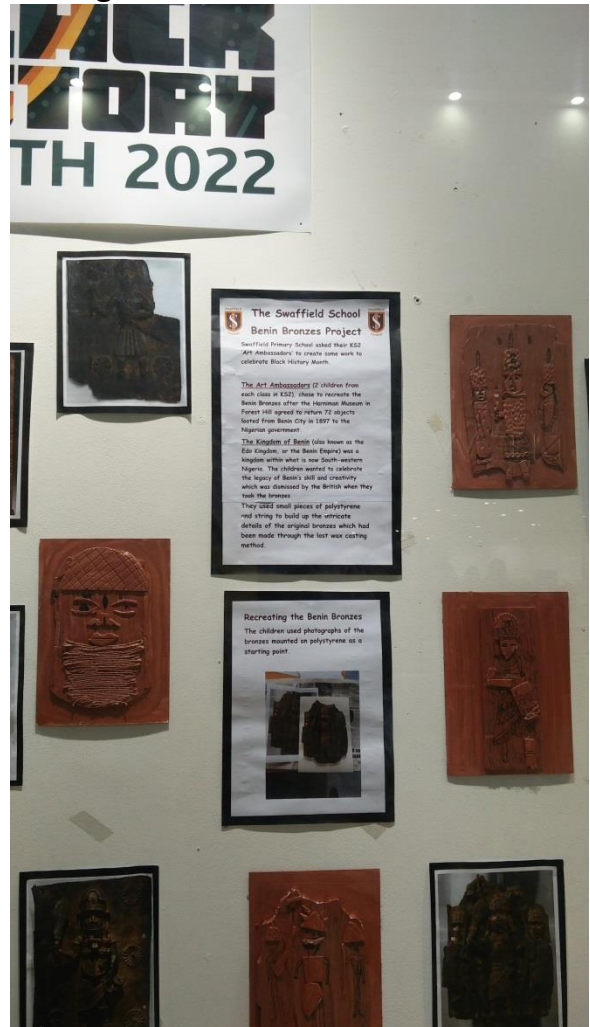
Jo Corke SW membership

10. Black History Month. Oct 2022

Many schools, colleges and universities had events throughout the month.

Swaffield Primary School Benin Bronzes Project.

In Wandsworth, London, there was a pop-up Black History Month exhibition where the work of the children of this school was on show. I visited the exhibition and asked if I might feature it in this newsletter.



Swaffield primary School asked their KS2 Art Ambassadors to create some work to celebrate Black History Month. The Art Ambassadors, (2 children from each class in KS2), chose to recreate the Benin Bronzes after the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill agreed to return 72 objects looted from Benin City in 1897 to the Nigerian government.

The kingdom of Benin, (also known as the Edo kingdom or the Benin Empire), was a kingdom within what is now South-western Nigeria. The children wanted to celebrate the legacy of Benin's skill and creativity which was dismissed by the British when they took the bronzes.

They used small pieces of polystyrene and string to build up the intricate details of the original bronzes which had been made through the lost wax casting method.

Swaffield Primary School

11. Bill Harvey.

Sometimes I hear of a branch member who had a big influence both in his chosen profession and in teaching. Bill Harvey was, by all accounts, a phenomenal Engineer and his generosity in Engineering education will be deeply missed.

You don't become universally recognised as the go-to person in your field without consistently demonstrating the deepest insight. That will be Bill's professional legacy for generations of engineers.

<https://twitter.com/billharvey2/status/1581618074393796609>

Bill was an Arch Bridge specialist, starting in Construction and then teaching from 1977-2000, first at Dundee University then at Exeter University. Though he fell out with Exeter University (not the first UCU member to do so) he remained a member of our union until he died in October 2022.

Bill Harvey produced 'Bridge of the Month'. Started in 2011 to guide engineers and students alike, the September 2022 Bridge of the Month is our very own, the Kennet and Avon Canal Bridge, 175.

<http://www.billharveyassociates.com/bom/141-kennet-and-avon>



The October entry says: *When you read this, I will be gone. Please celebrate a life well-lived and full of joy.*

<https://www.billharveyassociates.com/bom/142-bill-harvey>

The important thing about Bristol was my introduction to engineering. Paddle steamer outings to Weston, a visit to Filton with Uncle Frank to see the Brabazon, but most of all a visit to Clifton Suspension Bridge after which (at the age of seven) nothing else would do but to build bridges.

If you read the links you will see that he did what he set out to do.

Jo Corke SWRMB

12. Then and Now: 1987.

Mike Sheaff, our branch v.c, contributed the photo posted by Paul Mackney on the "NATFHE lives" facebook pages, of the 1987 National Joint Council negotiating teams. It includes our own Mike Farmer, Ken Childerhouse and others who you may remember. Some of those in the photo now have a Wikipedia presence; interesting reading.



This was a group photo, a larger version of which is on the last page of this newsletter. In practice the two negotiating groups spent most of their time in separate rooms, with just three people from each side doing the actual bargaining. At the time of the photo, in 1987, the three would have been Dennis Baker, Peter Dawson and Dave Triesman. Same on the employers' side. Now and then they would report back to their side on progress (or lack of it!), and seek advice. Eventually there would be a plenary session at which either a formal agreement would be approved, or a failure to agree/adjournment to another day.

Mike Sheaff, Mike Farmer SW RMB

13. Retired Members Branches Annual Conference. 27.10.22

The meeting was held as an in-person meeting at UCU Head Office. This was the first in-person meeting since before the start of the Covid Pandemic. Many delegates were happy to see their union colleagues at the meeting. Janet Farrar, UCU President, addressed the meeting at the start of the AGM and stayed to listen to the debate in the morning. I think the debate on the motions went better because we were all in the same room, rather than trying to amend motions over Zoom.

Retired Members' Committee

Congress 2021 voted to set up a Retired Members' Committee to give greater focus to UCU's work organising retired members. The Committee is now being established and standing orders have been approved by the NEC. There are six elected places on the Retired Members' Committee. Four nominations were received and these members were declared elected. Two more members will

be co-opted. Two meetings of the RMC have been scheduled for 2023.

The elected members are: John Carey Southern RMB, **Mike Farmer SW RMB**, Alastair Hunter Scottish RMB, Elizabeth Lawrence Y&H RMB. The meeting had some discussion about what members hoped to see from the work of the Retired Members' Committee.

Reports from Branches. Delegates were present from the following RMBs: East Midlands, London, Northern, Scottish, South West, Southern, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside. Some branches not present. This was maybe a result of the earlier date of the AGM than last year, when the meeting happened in November.

Reports indicated some branches were managing to continue activities during and after the pandemic more so than others. Some branches meet over Zoom and some are holding hybrid meetings.

Reports: Reps on External Bodies

NPC (National Pensioners' Convention) – Norman Jemison reported on how the NPC has continued its work during the pandemic. The future of the triple lock on state pensions is likely to be a major issue.

PSPC (Public Service Pensioners Council) – Philip Burgess reported. He has been elected Chair of the NEC of PSPC. Philip spoke about different ways of calculating the rate of inflation and the impact of this on pensioner living standards. This is quite a technical area, but is important in determining levels of indexation of pensions.

TUC – Norman Jemison reported from the TUC Pensioners Committee.

NPC Health and Care Committee – Pat Roche reported.

Motions. There was a good quality of debate on motions.

Doreen Magill moved the three motions from Y&H RMB. Recent changes in the

composition of the government meant that motions which sought to critique government policy were very much addressing a motivating target. The motion *critiquing the recent mini-budget* was debated. After debate, the first two paragraphs were removed as no longer relevant, but the final paragraph about the importance of alternative economic strategies was **carried**.

The Y&H motion on the *crisis of social care* was **carried**. The motion on *buses* post Covid was **carried** with deletion of the line calling for franchising of bus services, since franchising would represent a step forward in some areas, but a step backwards in others where there are already better forms of public ownership and control.

A motion on *indexation of pensions* from East Midlands RMB was **carried**, as was a motion on age discrimination in the workplace from Southern RMB. Scottish RMB brought a motion on *pension justice*. This was **carried** after some amendment. It dealt particularly with the threat to the triple lock and with women's pensions.

A motion for SW RMB and Southern RMB called for a rule change at Congress 2023 to permit *retired members to act as observers* for their regions or nations at Congress. This motion was **carried**. There was an emergency motion on *Falmouth University*, which was **carried**. At Falmouth University the employer is trying to establish a subsidiary company to employ academic staff and hence take staff out of TPS. This was strongly condemned by the meeting, which agreed to send a message of support to Falmouth UCU.

Liz Lawrence Y&HRMB

14. 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>

15. Editor's Note.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

Jo Corke SW RMB





These were the people present at the Association's Head Office for the National Joint Council meeting of 26 February.

On the Teachers side, left-hand table, from the near left (NATFHE, unless indicated): James Doran Admin Assist., Jim Munnelly, Asst Sec.; Paula Lanning, Information Officer; Sue Berryman; Glynn Bryon; Phil Thomas; Mike Farmer; R. Gallon, NEAED; J. Lever; APC; D. Ball, APC; David Triesman, Neg Sec; Dennis Baker, Chair, NEC Salaries Sub-Committee; Peter Dawson GS (Sec. Teachers Panel); Ken Childerhouse, President; Ken Thomas VP; F. Ibrahim; K. Fitzgerald; S. Crane, Admin Asst; R. Eves AAES; and R. Lancaster, AAES.

On the Employers side (Rt-hand table) from the near left: D. Tranter, Methodist Education and Youth Division; T. Garrett WJEC; Mrs M. Peart, Sutton; P. Calvert, Inner London Polytechnics; J. MacDougall, ILEA; Dr S. Cooper, ILEA; H. Barnard, ILEA; D. Whitbread, ACC; J. Fox, Nottingham; N. Fletcher, ILEA; C. Nolda, LACSAB; F. Riddell, Nottinghamshire; S. McNicholas, LACSAB; P. Blundell, Warwickshire; G. W. Terrans, Co. Durham; M. Bird, Humberside; S. Adamson, DES; Ms L. Hollies, DES, J. McLeod, AMA; B. Pratt, IOW; A. Harries, Dyfed; M. Power, Catholic Education Ccl. Centre; the Independent Chairman, Sir James Wordie, CBE.

End of newsletter.