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Please inform us of change of address or email

We encourage retired members to use their **home** email when you give up your work email address.

3. Sign the petition to save adult learning

If you have not yet signed this petition, please think of doing so. It is supported by the TUC, many trade unions and other organizations. In the election run-up none of the parties are highlighting this serious issue.

"We note the decision of the government to cut the English adult further education budget for 2015/16, once funding for apprenticeships is excluded, by 24%. This enormous cut in funding will decimate further education provision, leave millions of the most vulnerable adults without access to any opportunity to improve their education or retrain and put thousands of FE jobs at risk. We call upon the government not to implement these cuts and to instead invest properly in lifelong learning opportunities for all."

Find the petition to sign at:

<http://fefunding.org.uk/sign-the-petition/>

4. Take action: USS and weapons

You may be interested in objecting to USS investing in companies that make cluster bombs. The committee of the UCU retired members branch recommends that members consider taking action to ensure that our USS savings are not invested in controversial weapons. All you need to do is tell USS that you, as a member, do not want your savings invested that way. The more of us who get in touch with our pension provider, the more USS will know that it has to listen to us. Use the link below to tell USS to divest our savings from controversial weapons:

<http://action.shareaction.org/page/speakout/stop-controversial-weapons>

Your pension fund, the USS, invests in companies making highly controversial weapons that have a long term effect on civilian populations. Over 3000 USS members made it clear during the recent *Listen to USS!* campaign that they want the scheme to take ethical concerns into consideration. USS agreed to listen

1. Branch meeting

Monday 8th June 2015

12.00 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.

Philippa Davey is our speaker

Prison Education –

Giving Hope Behind bars.

Venue: UCU Office. Labour Party Rooms

26b Clifton Hill, Exeter EX1 2DJ

A buffet lunch will be provided if you let us know a week in advance.

ucu.swest@gmail.com

2. More information and news can be obtained from these websites. We suggest you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention (NPC): <http://npcuk.org>

5. At The Office.

The regional office is at Exeter; we have our meetings there and we often see the staff on our visits. I asked if they would each provide a piece for our Newsletters. There are several staff and here are the first three.

Becca Richards, Regional Administrator South West Office

I am the first port of call for reps/members when they ring through to the office or email to our Exeter email address. One of my roles is that I assist with organising meetings and arranging the papers and catering for them. I also assist with ensuring the reps are trained to deal with issues at their work and we have a very successful training programme in place. We have run the courses at this office during this academic year which has proved to be a great success – the reps like to see where we live during the week and I certainly prefer running them here so I can ensure the courses run smoothly! All in all it is a great office to work in, we are a good team and we all support each other.



Here is the South West Region website.

<http://southwestregion.web.ucu.org.uk/>

David O'Toole.

I am the region's **Branch Development Organiser**. I was a lay UCU member for about nine years and branch secretary of a large FE College in the North East. My role is in developing and organising branches and this can range from helping branches to communicate effectively with their members to organising a picket. An organised union is a strong union so whether I am recruiting a new member or turning members into activists or facilitating the involvement of branch officers in the regional and national union structures my aim is always to increase the strength and capacity of the union to best support its members.



Philippa Davey. I am a **Regional Support Official** and provide support, advice and guidance to the Branches I cover in the Region. I cover HE, FE and Prison Ed and I love the variety this brings. I work closely with my colleagues so we can identify trends and share knowledge and good practice and they provide me with lots of support and encouragement. I am proud to work with colleagues, Reps, and members who share my



passion for equality and fairness for all and stand up for workers everywhere.

Philippa is our guest speaker on June 8th 2015

6. Life expectancy

The [National Association of Pension Funds \(NAPF\)](#) has looked at the difference in future life expectancy between the national population and members of [Defined Benefit \(DB\)](#) pension schemes, this is the first analysis of its kind and is based on data from 2.5m live pensioners and over 1m deaths. No one has done this before. Rather than using aggregated life expectancy figures the NAPF divided the pensioner group into three categories: “hard-pressed” with a pension up to £5K pa, “making do” on £5 to £7.5K pa, and “comfortable” for those on greater than £7.5p.a. The majority of UCU pensioners, whether they believe it or not, will be classed as “comfortable”.

The increases in life expectancy differ but in a way that is initially surprising. Life expectancy change at 65 was established for the various categories over the period 2000 to 2010. For hard pressed males the increase was 2.5 years thus increasing pension liabilities by 2.0%. For hard pressed women the figures are 2 years and 0.5%. The comfortable male had figures of 2.3 years and 0.5% whereas the comfortable female registers 1.6 years and 1%. The gap between the differing groups has decreased. Extrapolating these trends into the future is, however, a risky and uncertain exercise.

Almost all trustees of British [DB](#) pension schemes make assumptions for how life expectancies will change in the future that are based upon a single common model and approach. These are based upon recent changes in life expectancy in the England & Wales population: they are not calibrated to the experience of [DB](#) pensioners who represent a distinct sub-group of the population. The figures at present suggest that the liabilities associated with the [DB](#) pensions of UCU members are increasing less than the average.

EM

7. Care in Crisis

Ostensibly the funding of the NHS has been “protected”. However, even Simon Stevens, head of the NHS, admits that the ‘flat funding’ on offer ignores population growth, and will result in a reduction in real funding per head. Spending on social care has not been this partial protection. There was a 16% cut in real-terms net expenditure on social care for older adults between 2009/10 and 2013/14. These cuts have had the largest impact on community-based social care, with almost 300,000 fewer older adults receiving services in the community over the same period.

AgeUK (11 March 2015) found that over the past 10 years spending on social care services for older people had plummeted by a third from £8.1bn in 2005/6 to £5.46bn in 2014/15. Community care services have been hardest hit with a huge drop of 25% (£560m) since 2010/11 alone.

In addition, there has been a sharp drop in the number of community nurses who help keep older people out of hospital. Between 2009 and 2014 the number of district nurses plunged by 28%, community matrons dropped by 17% and nurse consultants in the community fell by 40%.

Not surprisingly there were knock on effects in the NHS. Between 2007/08 and 2013/14 the numbers of people aged 65 and over attending A&E rose by 66% from 2,642,939 to 4,378,459 and the numbers of people aged 75 and over

between 2005/06 and 2011/12 readmitted to hospital within 28 days rose by 34% from 152,287 to 204,709.

Even the very conservative and cautious Nuffield Trust (“What’s behind the A&E ‘Crisis’” March 2015) argued that “More social care might have an impact on health services. Several studies have suggested a ‘substitution effect’, for example each additional £1 spent on care homes reduces hospital expenditure by £0.35.” They also point to the other role that social care may play in relieving pressure on A&E – getting people out of hospital who need social care support to go home. Delays in doing this can create problems throughout the whole of a hospital.

Paul Burstow, a former Care and Support Minister, released the “Key to Care” report (Dec 2014). The report warns: “If home care is not in crisis yet, it soon will be. More people need care and there is less money to pay for it and not enough people willing to do the work. “It is not organised nearly as well as it could be and it appears designed to keep caring professional relationships from forming between workers and those they care for. “We are probably lucky there has not been a major home care scandal yet. If things do not change, it may only be a matter of time.”

Burstow made a comment equally applicable to home and residential care: “We must make care work a career of esteem, where a living wage is paid, staff are trained and recognised as valued key workers who contribute a huge amount to society. This will inevitably come at a price, but the cost of doing nothing will be even greater.”

The systematic starving of the care system of adequate funding has been the major factor in the series of scandals affecting care homes. Unison has launched an “Ethical Care Charter” designed to remedy the situation:

(<https://www.unison.org.uk/catalogue/22014>).

Rather than just fearing the future we need to pressurise local authorities, care providers and politicians to support the charter.

Julian Atkinson EM

8. Ethical Care Charter

UNISON has produced an excellent which we reproduce.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/catalogue/22014>

Stage 1

📌 The starting point for commissioning of visits will be client need and not minutes or tasks. Workers will have the freedom to provide appropriate care and will be given time to talk to their clients.

📌 The time allocated to visits will match the needs of the clients. In general, 15-minute visits will not be used as they undermine the dignity of the clients.

📌 Homecare workers will be paid for their travel time, their travel costs and other necessary expenses such as mobile phones.

📌 Visits will be scheduled so that homecare workers are not forced to rush their time with clients or leave their clients early to get to the next one on time.

📌 Those homecare workers who are eligible must be paid statutory sick pay.

Stage 2

📌 Clients will be allocated the same homecare worker(s) wherever possible.

- 📄 Zero hour contracts will not be used in place of permanent contracts.
- 📄 Providers will have a clear and accountable procedure for following up staff concerns about their clients' wellbeing.
- 📄 All homecare workers will be regularly trained to the necessary standard to provide a good service (at no cost to themselves and in work time).
- 📄 Homecare workers will be given the opportunity to regularly meet co-workers to share best practice and limit their isolation.

Stage 3

- 📄 All homecare workers will be paid at least the Living Wage (as of November 2013 it is currently £7.85 an hour for the whole of the UK apart from London. For London it is £9.15 an hour. The Living Wage will be calculated again in November 2015 and in each subsequent November). If Council employed homecare workers paid above this rate are outsourced it should be on the basis that the provider is required, and is funded, to maintain these pay levels throughout the contract.
- 📄 All homecare workers will be covered by an occupational sick pay scheme to ensure that staff do not feel pressurised to work when they are ill in order to protect the welfare of their vulnerable clients.
- 📄 When homecare services are well run they can help to ensure that people are able to live with dignity and in comfort. But when they are delivered poorly they can have a devastating impact on the lives of care recipients and their families.

The over-riding objective behind the Charter is to establish a minimum baseline for the safety, quality and dignity of care by ensuring employment conditions which:

- a) do not routinely short change clients.
- b) ensure the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce through more sustainable pay, conditions and training levels.

9 Celebrating Other Lives

Grace Everson, RMB Eastern & Home Counties, died 15.1.15

Many of you will know Grace even though she was not in this region. At UCU Congress in 2013 Eastern RMB had a motion on Insurance 'disallowed' because it was not Congress business. Grace appealed and stood at the podium with the Congress Proceedings in her hand. She turned it over to show us the logos of the sponsors of Congress – Endesleigh and Aviva, two insurance companies! Motion re-instated.

We wrote as a branch and received this from the family.

"Thank you so very much for the thoughtful card that you sent and the kind words.

We are overwhelmed by all the thoughts, tributes that so many have voiced for mum. She was a special person and we were proud of her and her many achievements, now we are both even more proud of her and miss her terribly.

It was clear from Wednesday, the number of family, friends, colleagues that attended mum's funeral, all the tributes, cards, emails, that there was so much mum was involved with that made her 78 years jammed packed - they truly were. Mum is going to be a great loss to all of us and I have to say we are still struggling to come to terms with her leaving us. Knowing that she was respected, admired, valued from the many conversations we have had has helped us both. Thank you again for your card and thoughts. Kind regards, Alison and Heather."

My friend, **Sue Habeshaw** died 1.3.15

I met Sue at a NaTFHE meeting at Bristol Polytechnic in the 1970s, and we served together on branch and region for many years.

Some of you will know her from the books, the '53 Interesting W

ays to Teach' series. Here is an anecdote, written by a colleague, typical of a situation which many of us can relate to, but which Sue handles so well. *A student came to see her at the Poly on Friday evening just as she was heading home with a bag full of essays to mark, and asked her to read and comment on the first five chapters of her thesis, over the weekend. She didn't say "I'll do what I can" or apologise because it was impossible. Instead she said "I don't have time to do that but suppose I'd spent the whole weekend reading it and saw you on Monday morning. What would I tell you?" and the student said "Well the first chapter is a bit flabby and needs shortening and tightening up..." and went on for 10 minutes like this, at which point Sue said "Well off you go then!"*

I thought it illustrated her honesty and wisdom and empathy and empowerment, all at once.

"Brilliant !" as she would say.

Once retired, Sue had more time to demonstrate and march.



10. This UCU Newsletter's hot tip ... Avoid TTIP

So, what is TTIP?

It is the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership**, currently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. (There is also a parallel EU-Canada deal : CETA, signed in 2013 and planned to go ahead this Autumn). Those in its favour suggest that it will improve trade between the US and Europe – boosting employment on both sides of the Atlantic. British American Business – a body which sponsors the group of British MEPs (from all parties) interested in TTIP – have said that “... *the right to invest should take precedence over the right to regulate.*”

It is a deal which aims to remove trade barriers between the EU and the US. It would open public services to privatisation by US investors. It includes a mechanism which allows foreign companies to challenge government policies which reduce the value of their investments; this would make it difficult to regulate companies operating in our public services.

It represents another shift in the balance of wealth and power, giving multi national investors additional new rights. For example of the 560 meetings that the EU Trade Department held in preparation for negotiations, 520 were with business lobbyists and only 26 (4%) were with public interest groups. For more details, see:

http://www.corporateeurope.org/international-trade/2014/07/who-lobbies-most-ttip_

UNISON (Scotland) has defined TTIP as :

- 📖 leading to further liberalisation of markets;
- 📖 making it harder for governments to regulate private companies providing public services;
- 📖 preventing future governments bringing back already privatised services ‘in house’;
- 📖 providing an opportunity for corporations to sue governments (thus threatening the ethos of public service and democracy); and
- 📖 unleashing a further stage in the ‘rush to the bottom’ for workers’ rights.

There is a Buzzfeed from campaign organisation 38 Degrees which summarises 10 key points about TTIP at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/38degrees/the-10-ways-a-four-letter-word-could-ruin-your-lif-ipzz>

The major areas of concern in the UK currently are in health care and, for UCU members, education. In health the TTIP is set to ‘prise open’ our NHS. American companies have long wanted to dismantle the centralised NHS procurement of drugs and enjoy ‘unfettered access to NHS services put out to tender. TTIP could make privatisation of the Health Service irreversible. It will give global investors ‘special new rights’. It will let these global investors “... *sue any future (UK) government that tries to bring privatised services back in to the public sector – and for unlimited billions, in unaccountable tribunals, with no right of appeal.*”

What price multiple local and national campaigns and a General Election fought substantially about the future of our NHS?

Closer to home, education is ‘equally vulnerable’ to the TTIP deal. The “... *removal of market access barriers in education, particularly higher education ...*” has been

identified by the current Tory / Lib Dem government as a priority for EU Trade negotiations. We have already seen the effects of UK ‘liberalisation’ on Further and Higher Education in the UK and the further opening up of UK education to global providers is even more at threat if MPs (and potential MPs) are persuaded that ‘protecting the NHS from TTIP’ is the limit of their responsibility. As Sally Hunt has written “*The main barriers between the EU and the US are the regulatory ones which exist to protect students and preserve the quality of our institutions ... I can’t see these standards being raised in the interests of the public when the primary purpose of the deal is to..*”

So, there is still time to do things. Look at the (web based) further details below and get involved in the UCU or 38 Degrees action. Contact MPs seeking re-election and prospective MPs (possibly) desperate for your vote and express your views. Contact your Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and be one of the few non – corporate lobby voices that they probably heard.

For further information, see :

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/6868>

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/6974#.VQHginysUYQ><accessed 12.iii.15>

www.38degrees.org.uk/pages/ttip_home

<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/page/s/eu-ttip-petition#petition>

<http://waronwant.org/campaigns/trade-justice/more/action/18180-sign-up-to-say-no-to-ttip>

Mike Shuker EM

We have used quotes and information from the UCU website, Len McClusky, UNITE General Secretary, in the Morning Star supplement Feb 2015 and Polly Toynbee and David Walker, ‘Cameron’s Coup’, Guardian Books, 2015.

May Day Update from Scotland: that the campaign against the dangerous TTIP trade deal is starting to work.

“We couldn’t support a trade agreement with ISDS in it.” - Stewart Hosie, SNP deputy leader

ISDS is the part of TTIP that would allow corporations to sue our government in secret courts.

Getting the SNP to officially oppose this power grab by big business is a big step forward. And it comes just days after thousands of us emailed our local SNP candidates asking them to do exactly this!

11. Women’s Work in 21st Century Britain: TUC warns of low-paid jobs recovery for women

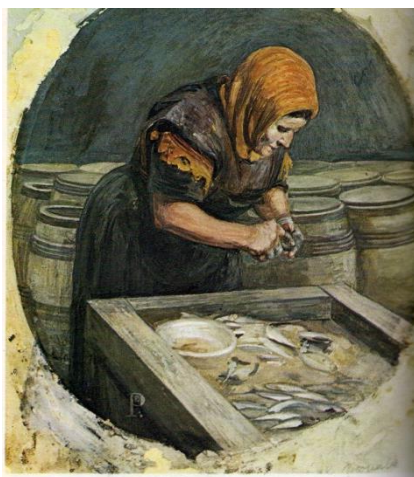
Ahead of the TUC Women’s Conference, a report was been published on the impact of the recession and austerity on women. This analysis suggests that while some measures of gender equality have continued to narrow, many women are still facing hardship as growth in available jobs varies between full time employment opportunities for women of 47% as opposed to 100% growth in jobs for men. Also it seems that half of the growth in ‘female employment’ came

from women moving into lower paid part-time jobs. Inevitably there has been a rise in women stuck on zero and short-hours contracts, who are unable to get enough work to make ends meet and who are also typically on much lower rates of pay than the women moving into full-time work. However, even they now earn on average 9% less per hour than men in full time work, while those in part-time work earn 38% less than men. The report suggests there are around 300,000 more women this year who would like a full time job but can't find one.

Most of the new part-time jobs are likely to be in clerical, cleaning and caring work, while at least half of those in full time work will be in managerial and professional occupations.

As TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said, "There is a big divide between women working full-time and those working part-time and far too many jobs are in low-paid sectors" and "the contrast in pay rates between full-time and part-time work highlight the lack of well paid jobs for women who do not work full-time and are still too concentrated in low-paid sectors". While single mothers apparently face greater obligations to find work and are at greater risk of having their benefits taken away.

Illustration: Painting by Sylvia Pankhurst "Scottish Fisher Lassie Cutting Herrings" approx. 1907 in Scarborough



Unfortunately these are not problems only faced by women working in low paid occupations today. Those working in Education are also involved as UCU campaigns currently highlight in statements on issues of casual and 'pernicious' zero hours contracts. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt says "We simply do not buy the lie that zero-hours contracts are good for employers and employees ... a third of people on these want more hours." "The use of zero hours and casualised contracts in education is one of the great scandals of our time. Without a proper contract staff cannot plan their lives (or prepare their work properly) on a month to month, or even a week to week basis." Also, "People on zero hours contracts are more likely to be women, in full-time education or working part-time. They are also more likely to be under 25 or to be 65 and over."

Articles in the press recently give examples of what this means in practice: "It is the precariousness that is so exhausting" says one lecturer. She explains it becomes difficult to set up regular childcare if needed, and to work out how available to be for students when only being paid for limited hours. "You never know what work you are going to get and whether it will be enough to survive" says another. One woman working in FE has been on a zero hours contract for eight years and claims Jobseekers Allowance over the summer, needs repairs on her house and has no heating.

Meanwhile of course, university and college managers like using flexible contracts that enable them to respond quickly to uncertainty such as varying levels of student recruitment and funding. But surely they are overlooking the importance of the knowledgeable, skilled and motivated workforce that holds the key to their success?

It is shocking to read that it is nearly 130 years since the TUC first passed an equal pay for women resolution, and as most of us may agree, employment rights are as fundamental to equality now as they were seen to be then. "In a society that is organised around work, those who do not have paid employment lack status and power" said feminist academics in 1993. So are current working conditions taking us back to the dark ages?

Rowena Dawson EM

12. Campaigns and Causes.

All members for whom UCU head office has an email receive a weekly Campaigns update. One recent campaign was for two UCU members at Bolton. As HO requested, I wrote to the VC.

From: UCU SWest Retired

<ucu.swest@gmail.com>

Date: 28 March 2015 16:44:05 GMT

To: <g.e.holmes@bolton.ac.uk>

Cc: <campaigns@ucu.org.uk>

Subject: Losing the plot

I don't know how many of the emails that you will receive will be praising you for summarily dismissing a couple of your employees who are trade unionists - not many I suspect, and this is not one of them.

I am the chair of a Retired Members branch of the UCU. Our members have remained members of the UCU because we believe in Education and have benefitted from the role trade unions have played in improving the quality of life for all those working in universities. Think back a few years - you probably benefitted in your earlier career from the national union activism which secured your job then and gave you a base from which to progress to where you are now.

Where you are now is all over the newspapers with stories that do not make good reading for the university which provides not just your livelihood but of all the staff.

In the words of Oliver Cromwell (who used to be a hero in the Labour movement) 'Always consider you may be mistaken'.

Jo Corke Chair

.....

We were copied in to this:

From: Holmes, George
Sent: 28 March 2015 17:31
To: Sturgess, Sharon
Subject: Fwd: Losing the plot.

Sharon, please send usual reply.

Vice Chancellor:

Which Sharon duly did, and here it is:

Thank you for your email. The matter you refer to is personal in nature to the individuals and is subject to University procedures. It would be entirely inappropriate for me to comment.

Vice Chancellor



Charlotte Munro.

Good news from London RMB . A union leader sacked by the trust which runs Whipps Cross Hospital in East London is to be reinstated after a two-year battle. Unison rep Charlotte Munro was dismissed from her role at the hospital in 2013 after 26 years, after Barts Health Trust said she failed to disclose criminal convictions relating to historic political activism. Our branch, along with many other union branches in London UCU RMB supported her campaign, so we rejoice in a small working class victory.

Steve Cushion London RMB.

13. The Role of Retired Members -

An article in the Eastern & Home Counties RMB newsletter, summer 2014, by Tony Mitchell who has recently moved into our region.

It seemed to us that the experience and expertise of retired members could be effectively deployed to help colleagues in employment and working

full-time with some of the work which is needed for there to be an effective union, representing and championing members' interests and helping where appropriate with some of the myriad tasks which are the legitimate business of our union.

We have time and long experience working in the education sector to contribute. What we may not have is energy and up-to-date knowledge of current practice.

As a starter, those of us who are willing to volunteer could be put in touch with their nearest UCU branch. A meeting could be organised with branch members to explore the possibilities of those things they might value some help with. Head Office should also maintain a list/register of such retired members, with a list of those (verified) qualifications and experience which the contributor is willing to offer and which might be helpful, locally, regionally or possibly nationally.

Possible areas of help which spring to mind include :

- Helping to fight UCU campaigns,
- Joining marches,
- Helping local branches with routine administration, secretarial and office work and awareness raising,
- Leaving a legacy to UCU,
- Making donations to help with the work,
- Meetings with the media – preparing news releases, leaflets, speaking on radio or tv and Correspondence in local newspapers, after vetting by union officers,
- Leading historically informed debates on contentious or controversial issues
- Cultivating distinguished fellow-pensioners to persuade them to contribute nationally – eg Professors D Whitfield, A Pollack and P Sika,
- Becoming 'first responders' to provide help in medical crises in a college,
- Covering for posts where the Union has not been able to recruit an up-to-date officer, especially members with business/management, legal and social service qualifications,
- Helping members who are faced with employer bullying/tribunals, etc ,
- While doing this work we could keep the Union informed on matters concerning/affecting pensioners,
- We could also expect a quid pro quo in a louder voice in Union affairs and campaigns.

Tony Mitchell SW RMB

14. South West TUC Pensioners' Annual Conference. 14th May 2015

As we are affiliated to several local TUC branches, we can send delegates to this conference.

Motions:

1. Pensioners Free Rail Pass - GMB

This conference notes that with the high cost of rail fares a Pensioners Free Rail Pass would help pensioners visit friends and relatives at no cost and be on a par with bus travel. Therefore conference instructs the South West TUC to work with the relevant bodies to implement this idea.

2. Termination of Cottage Hospital Services - CWU Western Counties

This Conference voices extreme concern at recent decisions coming from Health Care Trusts to close Community Hospital bed units in several rural towns. As an example and recently in Devon, the bed units have been closed in CREDITON, ILFRACOMBE, AXMINSTER, TORRINGTON and OTTERY. These closures lead to considerable extra pressure on main hospital bed units, especially during winter months. The motion calls upon the TUC to register its extreme concern as to these closures.

3. Parking charges at hospital across the South West – CWU, Plymouth & East Cornwall Branch

This conference notes the obscene parking charges at hospitals across the South West. Conference further notes that these extreme costs have to be borne irrespective of ability of visitors to pay and therefore they are not progressive and harm those from poorer backgrounds such as pensioners, the young, the working poor etc. Therefore this conference instructs the South West TUC to highlight this issue, and to work with other bodies to reduce these hospital parking charges.

4. Promoting Pensioners' Issues – Prospect, Avon Valley RMG

Following the General Election, Conference instructs the South West TUC Pensioners Committee to seek positive interaction with local MPs of all parties, in and out of Government, with the aim of finding ways to further the needs of pensioners in the South West region.

Jo Corke SW

For more information

please contact ucu.swest@gmail.com
or contact the officers here:

South West Branch officers and committee

Chair: Jo Corke ucu.swest@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Liza Sentance, lizasentance@hotmail.com

Secretary: Pat Mee Patriciamee@sky.com

Regional rep: Margaret George mmargaretg@gmail.com

Treasurer: John Daniell john.daniell@btinternet.com

Membership: ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

15. Congress 2015.

This year our delegate, Tom Murray, will take this report to Congress:

Our branch is now in its third year and becoming well-established with over 200 members. During the course of the year we have welcomed back over 30 of our Retired Free members.

Meetings are held three times a year in Exeter, which is roughly at the centre of a large region, stretching from Penzance to Bristol. In addition to the meetings, a regular newsletter is produced. This is circulated mostly by e-mail with additional printed versions of some editions being made available. It includes articles and reports of both national and local interest to Union members.

We invite speakers to our meetings whenever possible, and this year's guests have included Kit Leary of the TUC, who gave a detailed update on their latest campaigns. When a speaker is not available, a branch member will give a talk and lead a discussion on a topic that interests or concerns them.

We are affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention and the TUC. This year our delegates have attended the 2014 National Congress, the Retired Members annual conference and South West Regional meetings. The delegates always give feedback at our meetings, and provide reports for the newsletters.

Our AGM was held in February. We look forward to our next meeting in June, and to receiving the report on this year's Congress. We also look forward to continuing to give our support in whatever ways we can to the UCU's local and national campaigns.

Pat Mee, Secretary SW RMB