

In this newsletter

1. 2015 May branch meetings
2. More information
3. Sign the petition to save adult learning
4. Take action: USS and weapons
5. The perils of pension freedom.
6. Life expectancy
7. Care in Crisis
8. Ethical Care Charter
9. This UCU Newsletter's hot tip ... Avoid TTIP
10. Women's Work in 21st Century Britain:
TUC warns of low-paid jobs recovery for women
11. Top pay for some and not others!
12. People's History Museum Donation
13. UCU Retired Members Branch
14. May Day gatherings
15. Chesterfield TUC report

Please inform us of change of address or email

We encourage retired members to use their **home** email for when you give up your work email address. We send out a quarterly newsletter by email, but only an annual newsletter by post. Sending the newsletters by post is increasingly expensive and private to boot.

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

Tuesday 5th May 2015

11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

(Speaker at 12.00 noon)

Speaker: Sandra Barker

AgeUK Derby and Derbyshire

"How to choose and finance residential and home elder care"

Afterwards we go to a local public house which does good pub lunches; join us for lunch for further discussion and socialising. If making a day out, the Cromford Mills are well worth a visit after the meeting.

See their website: <http://cromfordmills.org.uk>

October Branch Meeting: Tuesday 13th October, 11.00 a.m.

Loughborough, Swan in the Rushes pub, The Rushes

Speaker: Dr John Lister on "Saving the NHS"

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>

East Midlands NPC: <http://leicesternpcgroup.btck.co.uk/>

5. The perils of pension freedom

In days of old, when dragons roamed the land, there were things called private pensions. A person saved into a pension and then received an income for the rest of their life. The advent of what is euphemistically called “pensions freedom” and now the right to cash in annuities changes all that. Thankfully those of us in the USS and especially TPS pensions are exempt. But it is unlikely that, in the longer term, that the repercussions from these changes will not ripple across the whole of the pension system. Indeed, theoretically, if you were daft, it may be possible to transfer a funded DB scheme such as the USS into a DC scheme and achieve “freedom”.

There is no doubt that the **Defined Contribution (DC)** pensions and their annuities were a bad deal; particularly when compared to the efficient Public Sector **Defined Benefit (DB)** schemes. Even a comparison with similar Dutch **DC** schemes shows that they provide 50% better returns than their British counterparts. Historically savers have been told that around 1.5% of their money is eroded by fees each year. Research has shown that as a result, workers typically reach retirement with just two-thirds of the money they could have accumulated. Yet the true level of charges would be nearer 3.2% if hidden fees were included. Annuity rates are falling because of factors including rock-bottom gilt yields and people living longer.

The **DC** system needed dramatic reform but these changes are full of dangers. Money withdrawn from the pension risks being taxed on an emergency tax rate that not only pushes them up the tax bands - potentially to as high as 45% - but also removes their tax-free personal allowance. The problem of emergency tax being taken arises because HMRC systems will treat withdrawals from a pension scheme as the first of ongoing monthly payments. They are placed on tax code '1000L M1' - the 'M1' stands for 'month one'. Overpayments will be corrected at the end of the year but HMRC believe the changes will bring them a tax bonanza. Those on means tested benefits could also catch a cold.

The pension shake-up will allow over-55s to access their all their retirement savings at once from April, prompting fears this could mean a massive opportunity for fraudsters trying to loot their cash. The safeguard against this looks fragile. Operating under the banner 'Pension wise', they are being offered only **guidance** over the phone and online by The Pensions Advisory Service and in person by the Citizens Advice Bureau. This is not the personalised **advice** covered by the Financial Conduct Authority which has to be paid for and is given by Independent Financial Advisers. So the risk exists that people will spend or invest unwisely and not make provision for their old age, which used to be the primary purpose of a pension.

Worries about the new scheme are not limited to the usual suspects. The right wing Centre for Policy Studies has issued a pamphlet “Auto protection at 55” sounding a warning. This is written by Michael Johnson, the scourge of Public Sector Pensions, who sees the potential for a free for all going badly wrong.

There is a strong argument that a train crash for the private pensions will put further pressure on our Public sector pensions. And that is why we need to keep a wary eye on these changes.

Julian Atkinson

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.

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

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. 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

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.

10. 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

11. Top pay for some and not others!

The vice chancellor of Nottingham Trent University is the highest paid in the country, taking home more than £600,000 a year in salary and bonuses. So why does the university pay 212 of its workforce below the living wage? UNISON have pledged to keep the pressure on Nottingham Trent, after it obtained information through a [Freedom of Information \(FoI\)](#) request showing the underpayment of its lowest-paid staff.

According to its last financial statement, the university has an operating surplus in excess of £13.1 m; and yet it maintains that it cannot afford to pay all staff the living wage. UNISON's [FoI](#) request also revealed that the university spent £2.9 m on agency staff in a single year. That's approximately £984 per employee – money which could surely be used to give low-paid staff a decent income.

UNISON East Midlands head of higher education Catherine Mellors said: "We have approached the university and asked it to pay their lowest-paid staff the living wage, but this has been flatly refused. It is sad to see that both prestigious universities in Nottingham appear to be in a rush to the bottom. The universities are some of the largest employers in the city, and claim to offer their students great employability, and yet offer some of the lowest salaries to many of their own staff. However, they offer some of the highest salaries in the sector, with large numbers earning over £100k per year."

Universities rely on a large number of 'behind the scenes' staff to function, including cleaners, caterers and clerical and maintenance staff. In July of last year, students at Cambridge University won a campaign to get the living wage for all support staff at the university, after a report by the UCU revealed that over half of UK universities were underpaying some of their staff.

Julian Atkinson

12. People's History Museum Donation

Following the item in our last newsletter and discussion at the branch meeting in March, a collection was taken to contribute to the museum funding appeal. £77 was raised in support of their appeal due to potential funding cuts.

Rowena Dawson



13. UCU Retired Members Branch

The branch has been underway for four years with over 250 members. The aims are diverse, but include bringing together retired members of UCU in the East Midlands, giving advice to branches on pension and retired members' matters, campaigning on issues relating to retired members and representation to the UCU national congress, National Pensioners Convention (NPC), Local and Regional TUCs. If you worked outside the East Midlands, but lived or now live in the East Midlands, please join our branch.

Meetings: We hold meetings three times a year, in places of interest to make part of a day and lunch out. The meetings centre round important issues for UCU pensioners and give a chance to chat to other retired members.

Newsletter: A termly newsletter with useful articles for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses and to UCU branch secretaries in the East Midlands.

Email addresses: We encourage retired members to use their home email for when you give up your work email address. Please let us have your email address and also changes to your email address.

For more information
please contact **Julian Atkinson**
e-mail: jdatkinson34@btinternet.com
telephone: 01773 532105

East Midlands Branch officers and committee

Chair: Angus McLardy apmclardy@btinternet.com
Vice-Chair: Rowena Dawson jeanrowena@hotmail.co.uk
Secretary: Julian Atkinson jdatkinson34@btinternet.com
Assistant Secretary: Rob Kirkwood rsmkirkwood@gmail.com
Treasurer: Brian Hambidge brianhambidge@ntlworld.com
Women's officer: Lucretia Packman
paul@lucretiagardens.freemove.co.uk
Membership: Greg Cejer greg@gregthebuilder.plus.com
Newsletter: Russ Bowman [Bowman@dorothyruess.plus.com](mailto:b Bowman@dorothyruess.plus.com)
East Midlands regional UCU committee representatives:
Brian Hambidge, Russ Bowman

Roles and functions for retired members branches

The branch committee has drawn up a list of roles and functions of the retired members branch. These will be discussed at the next branch meeting in March.

- * To represent the interests of retired members within the union.
- * To represent the interests of retired union members within the wider union and pensioner movements.
- * To provide a forum within the union for retired members to come together to consider and debate matters of mutual interest.
- * To provide a resource of collective memory, advice and expertise in support of the union, in particular to those still in active employment.
- * To provide active support, where appropriate, by involving the broadest section of the branch in support of the wider interests of the union and its members, including support for those still in active employment.

14. May Day gatherings

May Day is a celebration of international labour all round the world. Up and down the country local TUCs will be organising celebratory events. East Midlands UCU retired members will be joining in Chesterfield and Nottingham with our banner. Please come and join us – look for the banner. There will be a range of political parties and trade unions involved in the both May Day celebration in supporting the labour movement.

Nottingham and Mansfield - Saturday 2nd May

Nottingham and Mansfield TUC MAY DAY 2015



Saturday May 2nd



**Assemble 10am at
The Forest
Recreation
Ground**

Speakers:-

- ✓ Lee Barron (Midlands TUC Secretary)
- ✓ Striking 1984 miner (invited)
- ✓ Activist from Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (invited)



Chesterfield - Bank holiday Monday 4th May

In Chesterfield it was Tony Benn, our former Labour Party MP who developed our May Day into one of the largest labour day celebrations in the country. This tradition has been continued since his retirement and death. Political parties and trade unions will be involved in the May Day celebration in Chesterfield supporting the labour movement.

The procession will assemble outside the town hall at 10.30 a.m. with a view to starting marching at 11.00 a.m. In view of the proximity to the general election, the MP has not been invited to speak on the platform this year including Speakers include Christine Blower (general secretary of the NUT). James Eaden, UCU and president of Chesterfield Trades Council, will be introducing the speakers. There will have various bands, representing the varied musical tastes of different generations, in, out and retired from work, but united in wanting a dignified life for all.

Leicester May Day – Saturday 2nd May

There is a Rally at the Clock Tower from 12.30 noon with various speakers, including Kevin Courtney, National Union of Teachers, trade unionist from Venezuela, NHS speaker, Paul Henderson (UCU).



Branch activity

The branch is involved in various activities in the labour movement and sends representatives to various committees and organisations. We are active in several UCU national activities, e.g. Retired Members committee, Equality Committee activities for black members, LGBT members, disabled members and women members.

We are represented in local TUCs, the Regional NPC (National Pensioners Convention) and the Regional TUC Pensioners' Network. We have been involved in local May Days and in campaigning for the NHS and against casualisation of employment. The newsletter will give reports on all these activities from time to time.

15. Chesterfield Trades Union Council

This report highlights a range of union-related issues Chesterfield Trades Council has supported, relevant to our members in the UCU East Midlands RMB. Since the last report, these include: a Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team event; a Stand Up To Racism public meeting; the Stop Benefits Sanctions National Day of Action and the United Nations Anti-Racism Day demonstration in London. In addition Lucretia Packham was re-elected onto the executive committee of the Chesterfield Trades Council and was nominated as a Chesterfield Trades Council delegate to the East Midlands national Pensioners Convention.

Chesterfield Trades Council delegates attended a Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team event on 25th February in Chesterfield. This event highlighted, by use of the Interactive Asbestos House technology, the location of asbestos in domestic and commercial premises and advised on what can be done to avoid contamination. This is a massive health and safety issue, of great importance to all trade unionists, particularly retired ones, who may have worked or lived, unknowingly, in contaminated premises for many years. Any member wishing to gain further information about the presence and how to tackle asbestos can contact DAST on 01246 380415.

On 11th March Chesterfield Trades Council members attended a 'Stand Up To UKIP' public meeting held in the Assembly Rooms, Market Halls, Chesterfield. The meeting was well attended, chaired by James Eaden, president of

Chesterfield Trades Council, with invited speakers including Anne western, Leader of Derbyshire County Council, UCU, NUS and 'Stand Up To UKIP' representatives. An inspiring meeting discussed the importance of avoiding racism and immigrant scapegoating in the run-up to the general election. The speaker from UCU was particularly informative about the work of our union in support of immigrants into the teaching profession.

March 19th saw Chesterfield Trades Council members join members of the local UNITE Community Group to participate in an active 'Stop Benefits Sanctions National Day of Action' intervention. A Die-In was staged outside the Job Centre, where members highlighted the danger resulting from benefit sanctions by being wrapped in white 'shrouds' on the ground, to draw attention to the huge distress and number of deaths resulting from the sanctioning of benefits. The event was attended by local press, radio and regional television. Passers-by were asked to sign petitions and leaflets were given out to claimants to explain the way in which demonstrators were supporting them; many of whom had very sorry stories to tell, despite living in one of the richest countries on earth. A march through the town further promoted the issues.

A group of delegates from Chesterfield Trades Council were among demonstrators who attended the protest and march in London on United Nations Anti-racism Day on 21st March. This was supported by a range of organisations including the TUC, Unite Against Fascism, Hope not Hate, The Muslim Council of Great Britain and many others. Despite a somewhat cold March Day, in excess of 10,000 people gathered together in Trafalgar Square to present the message, 'Immigrants are welcome here'. There were some excellent and inspiring speakers from several trade unions. Encouraged by this day of solidarity, delegates from Chesterfield Trades Council are continuing to oppose racism in this area and will be joining 'Stand Up To UKIP' supporters in opposing the 14 anti-union UKIP candidates standing in the local election on 7th May.

Lucretia Packham, delegate
from the East Midlands UCU retired members branch

The Ken Coates Memorial Lecture

THE FUTURE OF THE LEFT - where next for Britain's labour movement?

with Frances O'Grady

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, will give the Inaugural Ken Coates Memorial Lecture at the University of Nottingham.

WEDNESDAY 3RD JUNE
Doors open 6.00PM

The Law and Social Sciences building,
University Park Campus,
Nottingham NG7 2RD

FREE ENTRY
For booking and registration, please email
tonysimpson@russfound.org

