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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. USS – cuts and big bonuses

UCU members in pre-1992 universities were in dispute over pensions until earlier this year. This was the last struggle to defend USS from large cuts. After consultation and a vote the dispute was called off. Proposals were put to the USS board by UCU which lead to minor improvements. Overall the employers have got away with dramatic cuts to members pensions of up to 27%. UCU grudgingly accepted changes earlier this year. The USS’ previous link to final salary will end next year, with institutions’ contributions rising to 18% of salary and members’ contributions to 8%. Many academics continue to challenge the rationale for ending final salary pensions, once regarded as a hard won conditions of service perk. We have won the arguments but lost the vote.

While all these cuts are being carried out, USS has experienced “strong” investment performance, which contributed an additional £500 million to the value of the fund last year. The result of this performance? Improvement in the pension scheme or halting the plans to cut the final salary scheme? No, instead huge bonus increases for managers. USS staff earning over £300K trebled to 17 in 2014-15, up from five in 2013-14. The amount paid to staff under incentive plans rose by £4m in the year ended 31 March 2015 in light of strong investment returns, with the company’s top earner taking home over £900K.

USS have stated: ‘A number of high-level executive appointments and other related increases in headcount also added an extra £4.6 million to the company’s personnel costs, which rose by 26 per cent last year to £44.1 million. The scheme’s group chief executive, salary and benefits rose to £432,000, up from £309,000 the previous year.’ The normal excuse came from a USS spokeswoman “It was important for the fund to “attract and retain appropriate talent to continue to manage the scheme’s substantial assets, which total about £48 billion”.

Russ Bowman

1. Branch meeting and AGM

Tuesday 13th October 2015

11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

(Speaker at 12.00 noon)

Venue: Swan in the Rushes Inn

upstairs meeting room

The Rushes, Loughborough

Speaker: Dr John Lister

“Saving the NHS”

The meeting is upstairs and can be accessed from inside the pub or from the car park. The pub serves good pub lunches. After the meeting join us for lunch for further discussion and socialising. The pub has an excellent range of real ales.
<http://www.castlerockbrewery.co.uk/pubs/swan-in-the-rushes/>

2016 Branch Meetings

Nottingham: Wednesday 24th February 2016,
10.30 a.m. – 12.30 noon. Note earlier time.
Lounge in the Mechanics Institute

Cromford: Tuesday 26th April. 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

4. The New “Simplified” State Pension

Men born after 5th of April 1951 and women after 5th of April 1953 will be entitled to the new single tier State Pension when they reach State pension Age. In 2013, Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith said: ‘The single-tier pension will mean people have certainty in what they can expect from the State. Thirty-five years’ worth of National Insurance contributions will mean a full basic state pension.’ That is not the case. Department for Work and Pensions figures show just 37 per cent will be able to claim the full amount, and only from 2018 would more than half of new pensioners receive the full amount.

Our members will be affected by “contracting out”. Contracting out was a system where employees gave up their right to additional state pension, firstly in the form of the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps) then from 2002 in the form of the state second pension (S2P). In return workers and their employers paid reduced national insurance.

Initially, it was thought the deduction for contracted-out years would only equal those in which the reduced rate of NI had been paid. So someone who had contracted out for five years, but had 40 years of full-rate contributions, could still claim the full amount. **But it is worse than that.** The Government is assuming a certain amount of pension has been built up with the money that would have paid the extra NI contribution. It is then using a set of assumptions to deduct this from the full state pension. Some people have 35 fully contracted in years but contracted out for some further years above and beyond that. They are also facing deductions.

If you fall into a category likely to be affected then full details can be found on the DWP web site www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-work-pensions. Click on the amusingly titled “State Pension simplification” section and then download the 7-page fact sheet “New State Pension if you’ve been contracted-out of additional State Pension”. And if that fails to clarify the situation, get an estimate of the state pension by going to gov.uk/state-pension-statement.

Julian Atkinson



5. Care in Crisis

Cuts in funding for Care has not surprisingly led to 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

Julian Atkinson

6. Care Cap Delayed

The implementation of a lifetime spending cap on the amount an individual would spend on care was a flagship of the former coalition government’s social care policy, and a manifesto commitment for the present government. The Dilnot Commission on long term care funding, originally set the cap at £35,000- £50,000, which was carefully calculated to ensure that the less well off would benefit. This objective was undermined by the government’s decision to raise the cap to £72,000.

We now know that implementation of the spending cap, originally intended for April 2016, has been delayed until 2020. **This means after the next election.** This delay means that the cap may never ever be implemented at all. The new national living wage, combined with a decision at Employment Appeals Tribunal that care workers must be paid for travel between jobs, are very welcome but local authorities are receiving no extra funding to pay for the dramatic increase in care costs that will result. The care system therefore seems threatened with meltdown.

The Local Government Association recently called for the lifetime cap on spending to be delayed until 2017 in order to release funds for a one off injection of funds into social care. In fact the government has delayed the implementation of the cap beyond this, but has made no commitment that the money saved will go into the care system. It is unlikely that there will be any further announcement about whether the savings or indeed any other resources will be put into the care system until after the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review is completed later in the autumn.

The Government explanation for the postponement/abandonment of the cap is less than compelling. Alistair Burt, minister for community and social care, wrote to Izzi Seccombe, chair of the Local Government Association. “A time of consolidation is not the right moment to be implementing expensive new commitments such as this, especially when there are no indications the private insurance market will develop as expected.” At least, a minister putting the blame on the private rather than the public sector has the virtue of novelty.

Julian Atkinson

7. The Delights of Work

One of the more dubious propositions of mediaeval theology was the belief that heaven possessed a viewing platform. Here the saved souls could jostle for delicious glimpses of the torments of the damned. When retired members consider the dilemmas facing our working colleagues, our emotions are not a complacent enjoyment but anger and a determination to find ways to help. Both HE and FE are suffering under the assault of the new managerialism. The dentists' slogan of "No pain, no gain" is applied to education with the understanding that senior management are covered by an exclusion clause that guarantees them no pain but lots of financial gain. There is also an increasing antagonism to trade unions since they threaten untrammelled managerial power.

In 2013 Swansea University recruited Professor Nigel Piercy to head its School of Management. This was regarded as quite a catch since Professor Piercy was high profile and a contributor to The Financial Times. The school was overhauled following the arrival of Prof Piercy as dean but the new strategic direction has not been to everyone's liking and 25 staff members have left since he took over.

A position paper drafted by the school in October described certain staff as "a cancer that must now be removed" and Prof Piercy once said in a staff memo that the school "is not a rest home for refugees from the 1960s, with their ponytails and tie-dyed T-shirts".

He also made an impact by producing challenging and robust contributions to his blog. Prof Piercy said he maintained that the duty of business academics was to challenge the status quo but warned of "an increasing number of parties who are claiming the right to censor and veto to restrict the intellectual and academic freedom of expression in our business schools and universities". He said examples included: "Unpleasant and grubby little people, who purport to represent others because they have persuaded a tiny number of people to elect them to office in trades unions (sic) and the like, and appear to believe they have the right of veto over what academics publish and say, and the language they use.

"Usually distinguished only by their sad haircuts, grubby, chewed fingernails and failed careers, these undistinguished individuals feel entitled to censor what others say and write, and to threaten those who do not conform with their edicts with dire retribution. "A further distinguishing characteristic is often straggly beards – half-way between designer stubble and a real beard, such growths are probably indicative of a hormone deficiency. But why is it that the rabid left wing believes that they alone have freedom of expression and that nobody else does? "However did we allow such creepy little people to develop such an enlarged and disproportionate sense of entitlement, and blight our universities?"

Professor Nigel Piercy said feedback from postgraduate research (PGR) students enrolled in Swansea University's School of Management showed a "clear division" between those "who are generally happy" and those "who object to changes". As a result, Prof Piercy has chosen to split PGR students, with one group remaining in the university's Haldane Building and the other being relocated elsewhere on campus, to the Richard Price Building.

Swansea's School of Management has been subject to a steady stream of negative publicity in recent months,

following a series of heated exchanges between Prof Piercy and staff. The university's students' union has received scores of complaints relating to the school and an online petition calling for change was established. Perhaps the decisive intervention came from Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones who said that issues arising from the troubled management school could be "detrimental to its good reputation" if they are allowed to continue. Prof Steve Wilks, Swansea's pro vice-chancellor designate has apologised to the complainants on behalf of the university and promised to refer his findings to Prof Piercy's line manager. Needless to say this affair is not typical but it illustrates a general, if more carefully expressed trend, among some senior managers.

Julian Atkinson

8. Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Just when you thought it was safe to read the Newsletter!

To recap (or for anyone who didn't see the earlier newsletter article) the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) being negotiated between the European Union and the United States could:

- * To give new powers for **corporations to sue Governments** through the secretive 'Investor-State Dispute System' (ISDS);
- * Lead to **more privatisation of public services** like the NHS and education;
- * Weaken workers' rights and **put millions of jobs at risk**;
- * **Reduce environmental protection** and food safety regulation
- * Be a new blueprint for future trade deals around the world.

In July, all Members of the European Parliament had the chance to vote on TTIP for the first time. It was a vote to give a signal to the officials behind the deal, of whether Europe was broadly in favour or against. Before the vote, over half of the UK's MEPs had committed to voting against the whole of TTIP unless the worst bits were taken out. That includes all Labour, UKIP, Green, SNP and Plaid Cymru MEPs. The evidence shows that they kept to their commitments.

But the vote didn't go the right way. The majority of MEPs across Europe gave their first thumbs up to the deal. What a surprise, given the power of the multinationals' lobbying in the European Union! So now TTIP, including the 'Investor - State Dispute System', will keep being negotiated with America " *in absolute secrecy so that even the members of the parliaments concerned are not permitted to see drafts*".

Some of the likely effects may be :

- * Campaigns against privatisation or 'outsourcing' (for example in the Health Service or Education) may fall foul of the TTIP;
- * Local Authorities, Educational bodies and Health Service organisations who may seek to recognise contractors paying the living wage or disinvest from organisations they see to be against their principles may also suffer;
- * Campaigns to protect environmental standards (for example the recent decisions by Lancashire County

Council to prevent applications for 'fracking' licences) may well fall foul of the ISDS embedded in TTIP;

- * Restrictions on 'localism' : current European Union rules allow for environmental and social considerations in the awarding of procurement contracts. Recently, Manchester and Glasgow, amongst others, have become sustainable food cities and are trying to use more locally sourced, sustainable food in public catering provision. This may well fall foul of the ISDS if American corporate life considers its potential profits undermined.

Even more worryingly, Trade Unions in the UK may well soon find it difficult to campaign against TTIP. The Cameron Government's proposed Trade Union 'reforms', by its attacks on the Unions' political funds, will make it increasingly awkward for Unions to campaign against the effects of the TTIP and defend their members' conditions.

So, what can activists do?

- * Ensure that there is regular publicity about TTIP and the ISDS and their potential effects;
- * Ensure that through their Unions and communities there is opposition to the Conservative Government's attempt to restrict the opportunities for Unions to mount effective political campaigns – for example on TTIP;
- * Continue to support the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) petition. It called for a rejection of TTIP (and the similar agreement, CETA, with Canada) and the replacement with “... an alternative trade and investment policy in the EU...” The petition totalled almost 3 million supporters. It appears to have been ignored by the EU treaty negotiators, but is still an organising and publicity tool;
- * Try to raise the awareness of TTIP by persuading Local Authorities to become 'No TTIP' zones. Already there are about 20 UK councils which have supported this approach. Across Europe, similar moves are being made in Austria, France, Germany and Belgium. Indeed, in Belgium “When the negotiators in Brussels leave their meetings they walk out into the Brussels municipality which is itself a TTIP – free zone.” (Global Justice Now and UNISON have produced a campaign pack to help support this initiative.)
- * And ... just use the resources that are out there ...

To UNISON briefing at:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2014/05/On-line-Catalogue224101.pdf>

UNISON briefing with Global Justice Now at:

http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/local_authorities_briefing_0.pdf

38 Degrees petition page at:

<https://home.38degrees.org.uk/2014/08/11/ttip-sign-the-petition-now/>

Mike Shuker



The Department of Energy and Climate Change/the government say this is necessary to protect consumers and “keep bills down”.

However, the “Solar Trade Association” say “670,000 GB homes have solar panels, along with thousands of businesses, farmers, schools and community groups.” They also point out that solar recently provided 15% of GB electricity demand and that there is currently enough solar to power the equivalent of 2.4 m homes.

TUC correspondent Silkie Cragg reports that Renewable GB are calling on the government to reconsider the axing of subsidies, while elsewhere academics and industry executives are warning that such an attack on renewables will hit jobs and investment and damage the Prime Ministers credibility on addressing climate change.

She also explains the role of the Committee on Climate Change which is an independent climate change advisory group to the UK government and parliament reporting on government progress in meeting climate targets as required by the Climate Change Act. This includes five carbon budgets. Apparently the recent annual progress report makes it “astoundingly clear that there is significant uncertainty over how the government will meet its fourth budget target of 50% carbon reduction by 2025”. One of the more interesting and concerning aspects of this could be the effect of higher temperatures on the workforce/workplace productivity.

So obviously the government ought to act quickly to reassure us all that they will take this seriously, rather than reducing subsidies to alternative energy initiatives. But a recent Guardian editorial suggests the government policy is chaotic. Having committed to tough international targets, they are now reducing subsidies for alternative energy when greenhouse gas emissions have actually fallen by 8% over the previous year. They conclude by suggesting that “Just like fracking and nuclear, greening the energy supply needs intervention. It will not be cheap, but for future generations, not doing it will cost far more.”

*“Government delivers triple blow to the green economy”
“Government: don't let austerity get in the way of climate targets”. Silkie Crag blogs and TUC reports July, Aug 2015
“Government to cut solar power subs” “What cuts to solar panel subsidies will mean for you” “Greening the Economy: the price worth paying” The Guardian, Terry Macalister, Leader Comment, Money section July 2015*

Rowena Dawson

9. Green Energy and Environment

Recent news headlines and comments have focussed on current government plans to withdraw state subsidies for on-shore wind farms (as above photographed above in the North of Scotland) and other initiatives, including, subsidies encouraging the installation of electricity generating solar panels for homes. The issues and arguments are complicated.

10. National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Parliament Report

The NPC conference took place in Blackpool from 16 to 18 of June. It began with a rally. Keynote speakers included Natalie Bennett from the Green Party, David Ward the CWU General Secretary, and Professor Christine Beaty, author of *'Hitting the Poorest Hard'*. The panel spoke of austerity and the cuts that have taken place in the last 5 years. This was followed by a forward look to what the next 5 years might hold.

Debates included the challenge of Dementia and Social Care, the privatisation of the NHS, and accessible public transport. These are all themes relevant to UCU. The privatisation and marketisation of the NHS has a direct impact UCU members, both in their work in health related areas and directly upon them and their families as service users. Other fringes involved discussion of the pension landscape and money matters. With regard to the pension landscape, the nature of the flawed change from RPI to CPI was discussed, together with the inherent disadvantage to this change.

One of the key themes of the conference was protecting hard won public services for generations to come and the fragmentation of public services, including education and life-long learning.

UCU retired members Norman Jemison was re-elected as Vice President and Patricia Roche was elected onto the NPC health working party. Paul Russell and Philip Burgess also represented UCU at the event. In conclusion, the areas for discussion and campaigning have direct relevance for our members.

Pat Roche

11. May Day gatherings

May Day is a celebration of international labour all round the world. East Midlands UCU retired members joined rallies in Chesterfield and Nottingham with our banner. There were a range of political parties and trade unions involved in the both May Day celebration in supporting the labour movement.



UCU retired members and banner in Chesterfield. In front Angus McLardy (branch chair), on banner Lucretia Packham (women's officer) and Julian Atkinson (secretary)

12. May 5th branch meeting

Sandra Barker from Age UK came to speak to speak to us about choosing and financing residential and home elder care. Sandra works as an advocate – not in the legal sense but she speaks up for those who need it and tells us that the right to advocacy is now written into the new Care Act.

Although the Care Act was passed this year, many of the changes within it haven't yet been finalised so things could yet change. The Care Act has the aim of unifying services throughout England so that everyone gets the same standard of service. There are existing guidelines but Local Authorities can interpret these in their own way e.g. assessing someone's need as low or high. We will now have a national framework but it is open to local interpretation.

A second aim of the Act is to enshrine the right for everyone who requires care to have an assessment of their needs (previously some people have been refused such an assessment). She stressed that it is important that people take this up but noted that if everyone did, there would be chaos as the local authorities haven't enough staff to cope. She fears that there will be 'tick-box' assessments carried out online or over the telephone which would be unsatisfactory for many people.

Anyone who may be entitled will need to ask for an assessment next April when this comes into force. It is important this assessment is done but the claimant might need advice in negotiating the assessment process, which could be face-to-face, by telephone or on-line. To establish how much a person has to pay, they work out how much care you require (the assessment will establish your level of eligible need) and then the council will quantify that in terms of how much they would pay if you qualified for financial support. You then have a Personal Care Account which starts from April 2016 (or later if the need arises) which gives a running total until you reach the limit of £72,000. This cap does not apply until you have reached State Pension Age. It should be noted that this covers only care costs not 'hotel costs' which refers to the cost of meals, heating etc. in a care home. Sandra noted that she hasn't yet come across a care home which breaks down fees in this way. If, of course, you select a care home which charges more than the council would pay, you have to fund the difference yourself and this doesn't count towards the £72,000 total. The same rules apply if you are receiving care in your own home. The Care Cap is only for people of state pension age and anything paid out before that age doesn't count towards it.

There is a savings threshold which currently stands at £23,250. If you have that amount in savings (not including your home) then you pay for everything. There is a sliding scale down to £14,500 when maximum help is payable. From April 2016, if you have less than £17,000 you don't have to contribute from your savings but must contribute from your income. If you have savings of more than £27,000 you pay for everything and have the Personal Care Account. Theoretically, if you run out, you could be thrown out of your expensive care home but Sandra said there are safeguards to prevent that happening.

The new Act provides more support for carers but if the carer is a relative, then they will not be able to ask for support for the cared-for because that would be regarded as a conflict of interest, there would have to be an independent advocate. The carer can also ask for an assessment of needs.

12. May 5th branch meeting continued....

Choosing Care

The assessment of need will determine whether you need residential or nursing care. You will get a Statement of Need, you can ask for advocacy and you can appeal against the decision. The result is your Personal Budget so this is very important whether you are looking for a home or for a company to provide home care. It is possible to appeal if you do not agree with the statement.

When selecting a care home it is important to think about what the person wants e.g. rural/city location. You should look at the reports of the Care Quality Commission and when you decide to visit a home, turn up unannounced. Consider issues like how people are being treated, are entertainments laid on – what kind, are residents taken out, are the rooms big enough, does it smell bad! Does the home meet the needs identified in the statement.

Then you need to consider ways of funding it. There has been a deferred payment arrangement available to some which allowed the local authority to pay against the proceeds of your property when it's sold. Under the new Act, such a scheme is available to almost everyone but the money is taken as a loan on which you have to pay interest from day one and pay an arrangement fee. In Derby this could be £700 and a rate of 2.75% so it's not a good deal.

The council has a duty to point people to reliable independent advice but Sandra knows of one council which directs everyone to the same company. The government will be setting up an advice line but it may be similar to the one for cashing in pensions which is very basic. It is best to get independent financial advice and also make sure you are claiming any benefits to which you are entitled.

A charity called 'Independent Age' has a useful factsheet called 'Getting Social Care Support under the new law in England' which is very useful and available online.

Helen Chester

13. 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.

14. 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/>

15. 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**

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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.freeserve.co.uk

Membership: Greg Cejer greg@greggthebuilder.plus.com

Newsletter: Russ Bowman 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.