

South East Central Branch Annual Report 2009/10



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The views expressed in this annual report are personal to the author concerned and may not be the view of the branch. This report is "in confidence" and is meant for CWU South East Central members only.

BRANCH SECRETARY - CHRIS POWER

Annual Report for 2009

INTRODUCTION



2009 was a year when as a Branch we pretty much maintained our employed member's figures at just over a 1000 members, and retired members standing at just over 100. This figure is important, particularly the c900 that are employed by BT Group plc companies, as the amount of members directly affects the amount of time off BT Union representatives attain. Last year the Branch Chair Dave Kauffman and Assistant Secretary/ Financial Secretary Steve Taylor both had Union time, although with membership reducing that time is also slowly reducing. It is a real fear that with the time becoming less, and more and more cases and meetings taking place, our reps will be increasingly be spread very thinly.

Within other companies, Virgin Media has been placing many pressures on our members and activists, and within the Personal Telephone Fundraising (PTF) company, the pressures on employees to perform and conduct themselves within the myriad of policies and directives the company has, has become ever greater. The representatives within PTF also face ever increasing obstacles to deal with a challenging management position

BRANCH MEETINGS

During 2009 we had 8 General meetings in total around the branch area. At the beginning of the year we had the AGM at Tunbridge Wells (This meeting alternates between Brighton and Tunbridge Wells every year) and we then moved on to SEVENOAKS in March, which was the first time we have held a meeting at Sevenoaks for some time, and it was well attended. We are holding one in March again at Sevenoaks during 2010. The remainder of the year saw meetings in Hastings, Brighton, and Tunbridge Wells. Also, 4 Branch Committee meetings were held all at the Uckfield CIVIC Centre. The best attended was in Brighton in May, where 55 members turned up to instruct the Branch how to vote on the Service delivery issues, that were to be discussed at Annual Conference in June. However, Branch meetings attendances are reducing, and it is due to that fact that during 2010 the intention- as detailed elsewhere in this report- is to drop to 5 pre-set date General meetings in total. This will also be reviewed again for 2011, although Special Meetings can be called at any time for specific major issues. Many Branches around the country don't actually have pre-set General Meetings for the year- Meetings are just called for major issues, but other Officers and I felt that going to this position at this stage was too big a step.

Meeting members from various work areas is a real positive when holdin!! meetings, so please try and attend at least one a year. It would be nice to see a (;eneral Meeting that isn't just made up of pretty much Branch Committee members. Why not conic along and just get to know your reps a hit. You never know when you may ask for their assistance

BRANCH ORGANISING & RECRUITMENT

The primary target for recruitment and Organisation within the Branch this year was within the company PTF based in Brighton. Nick Childs, Regional Organiser was followed by Laura Segal mid-year and both worked very hard in recruiting and organising within the PTF Workplace. We were all faced with an employer that did not welcome the CWU and its aims with open arms, although more than 50 employees joined the Union due to the harsh way in which they felt they were treated. We were able to encourage several employees to become local site representatives, and together with associated training and guidance, in addition to several reps from the company being able to attend the Unions Annual Conference in June, the first half of the year was very successful. It became more difficult toward the latter part of the year when striving to achieve recognition. Pressure was put on the company reps and cases are, even at (he time this report is being produced, are still ongoing as a consequence of how some employees were being treated. The Branch will continue its aim to support members within PH who face difficult times, but with the membership in the company not at the level it once was things are becoming increasingly difficult.

The second major recruitment area that the Branch has targeted has been that of the BT Group Global Services division, which has a major Operations Centre at the BT Workstyle Sevenoaks site. We have negotiated with Global manage-ment throughout the year and as we are the Branch that covers the site for engi-neering grades, it was difficult to give across the board representation to everyone as there were/ are many non-



members and a lot of members on the site that were associated with other Branches. With the help mainly of 2 reps at the site, and they will know who I am referring, we made real inroads into signing up new members and transferring members into ours, as the appropriate Branch. This gives Branch representatives real influence when negotiating with management on the site over issues. Branch reps visit the site on a quarterly basis for membership purposes and will continue to do so in 2010. All employees must be aware that Branch reps can only represent members of this Branch. I extend my thanks to the reps on site for their assistance- and long may it continue.

BT Group Companies

Within the BT Group of companies, it is the OPENREACH Organisation which consistently seeks more input from reps than any other. The first part of the year was taken up with the debate over Service Delivery Transformation (SDT). The primary method of delivering this transformation was to do with the introduction of ILM's-Trackers in vehicles for my understanding. This created a lot of debate from engineers whom were concerned at the way the company would use the information that this technology would raise. However the company stated that this is not an issue for de-bate, as that purely the ILM's were an introduction of new technology, it refused to enter into any discussions that would prevent it from being introduced. Facing such a hard nosed attitude from Openreach, the CWU Nationally did well in at least attaining a Code of Practice for the use of the information the ILM's would attain. However, the information the trackers are providing contribute to individual performance statistics, and are resulting in what officers think will be a complete landslide of cases of poor performance against members. This started in December 2009 and could well result in large scale dismissals from the company on performance, utilising information we have yet to see that even management understand.



Additionally, part of SDT was the overhaul of the Attendance pattern agreement of 2006. The company felt that modern times required a modern attendance framework, and they negotiated with the CWU nationally to reach an Agreement. The problem was that the proposed agreement included Saturday becoming a normal working day for all pretty much, a latest finishing time of 9pm, a reduced notification of change of rota down to 6 weeks and many more aspects that were completely different to existing Agreements. As attendances are embedded into Contracts of employment a Ballot had to be held. The company put severe pressure on the Union in relation to stating that if the new agreement didn't come in. it would be forced to contract out of BT Openreach up to 13,000 members work. It took 3 ballots, the last of which accepted the attendance deal in an electronic ballot. I feel I can now advise the Branch that some %76 of those eligible to vote, voted in our Branch, %73 of those accepted - and %24 rejected with some spoilt papers- the new attendance arrangements.

This illustrates that the company pressure paid off, and that the Attendance patterns that were agreed within Openreach, we are now stuck with. Attendance negotiations on the new agreement start in late January, for a possible March commencement of introduction of the new rotas.

BT Operate division have been liaising with members over new attendances. They are consulting on the basis of preference an exercise, which is more palatable than the way Openreach are conducting business, but all the same, wholesale removal of existing patterns could be on the cards. The pressure is on, on a division which annually looks to reduce its headcount.

In GLOBAL Services negotiations with management during the first part of 2009 went as well as could be expected. However, the biggest issue was that management still imposed changes to attendance patterns that we as a Branch were against, and were against existing agreements, but the company still went ahead. The Branch registered a formal disagreement at National level and whilst negotiations on that disagreement took some time, Branch reps entered negotiations with a new management structure during the second half of the year, and those negotiations we believe, indicated the position that the company accepted that they may have acted inappropriately, and would work toward resolving the attendance issue. The only problem is that since that meeting, the company management has cancelled, and refused to respond to calls for meetings.

As an overview for ALL BT GROUP DIVISIONS members should be aware that there is a concentration from BT Group on the Attendance/ sick absence issues. I have never, in the last 16 years as a full time rep, been aware of so many Initial Attendance Warning (IAW) and Final Attendance Warnings interviews. Across all divisions, BT Group is, in accordance with the process, playing REALLY hard ball with those people who take time off sick. IT SHOULD BE MADE QUITE CLEAR, that if you are on a Final Formal Warning given to you by your first line manager, you could be dismissed for just ONE day absence in the monitoring period- whether certificated or not. We have had several dismissals during the latter part of the year on this basis. I would also ask members PLEASE contact your rep at the earliest opportunity, and always have a rep present if you are asked, as too many cases members contact reps when they are on a Final Warning and have just gone sick. Warnings on attendance must be taken seriously as dismissal is a real position. Reps can't ride in on a white charger to save someone's employment when they are on a Final. If reps have been involved in the earlier stages, we are much more able to assist and give advice.

GENERAL

To conclude my report in the most positive way I can, I do feel that being a member of the CWU is so very important. A lot of us moan and groan about our lot, but how could we even do that without any type of security or assistance from a Union that's almost a quarter million strong. Locally we do our best to help and support members through these difficult times, but pressures do face us all. Myself, I can be most manic, some-times with members, and mostly with Managers but as reps we all have the member's interest uppermost.

I would like to thank my Industrial Relation Comrades Steve Taylor and Dave Kauffmann, for putting up with my manic way of dealing with things, and would also like to thank all other Officers and the Branch Committee for their support and assistance over the last year, and all the reps from Companies outside of BT Group that I have had the pleasure to meet.

Chris Power

Maria Exall NEC Member and friend of South East Central Branch

The past year has seen employers in the telecoms industry stepping up their demands for greater flexibility and increased productivity from us. We have seen job cuts and de-mands for changes in our working lives that may improve company's profits but badly affect the quality of our lives. We have seen drastic cost cutting in the contracts with support services such as Monteray and Reliance.



In BT Openreach the (at times fraught) negotiations on the new attendance pattern framework were evidence of BT seeking to pass on the cost of the economic recession to us, the ordinary employees. Rotas that include Saturday and evenings, and the expectation of greater mobility fly in the face of the company's stated commitment to 'family friendly' policies. We will have to ensure that the implementation of the new pat-terns are done in a way that preserves as much of a 'work/life balance' as possible.

What can we expect in the year to come? Well we know BT will press ahead with the changes in performance management under the Project Holborn negotiations. The CWU has for many years demanded that management culture in this area needs to be re-formed. Watch this space.

Many commentators believe economic indicators will improve over the coming year (at least temporarily). If so many telecoms employers, including BT, may find that they have pushed through redundancy and release programmes a little too hard. Who knows, there may even be recruitment in some areas.

The perennial threat to sell off of parts of BT are likely to continue because outsourcing has always had an attraction to employers as there are many cost savings to be made, not least in pensions. Any change in the current consensus on regulation with OFCOM, could lead to increased casualisation in field engineering and attacks on terms and conditions across the whole telecoms sector. Detrimental changes in regulation priorities may well happen if there is a new Government lead by David Cameron.

This brings me to the matter of the General Election, due this year. The CWU remains supportive of the Labour Party, despite having criticisms of the direction of some Government policy. The possible election of the Conservatives is worrying for us as trade unionists. We know that a Tory victory would lead to new attacks on our rights at work, including union recognition. Use your vote when the time comes!

Branch Chairperson — Dave Kauffman **Annual Report for 2009**

I would like to begin by wishing every one a belated " Happy New Year" on behalf of the officers of the branch.

2009 has been a trying time for the members of the CWU and one I like to think that most people have approached with a pragmatic view.

I don't think it suffice to blame the economy for all our woes, but think that the company have taken this oppor-tunity to bring in many changes to the way we work. Some of these changes will be little more than process changes, other changes will totally the way BT ap-proaches the relationship with its employees.

With the introduction of Eperformance now complete across the whole company, the introduction of ILM technology across Openreach, the implementation of key stoke monitoring in SMC and the way in which Operate and Global monitor performance on there teams, it is no longer sufficient to be in at work doing the work you have been instructed to do by BT. Now the work has to be completed within a certain timescale.

This is the challenge going forward, the challenge to say, "Where did you get those task times from?" and "Are they accurate and fair?". In many cases you will find that the times that BT are using to judge people are OLD and do not take into account the change in working practices that we have all undergone over the last year.

It has been mentioned in the voice that the CWU nationally have been working on some-thing called project "HOLBORN" a programme of meetings where the CWU nationally are challenging managerial style. I have attended a number of meetings on behalf of the branch to voice our concerns to CWU national officers on this subject and I see that some agreements have been met and I wait to see these implemented .

It was also mentioned in the voice about company managers having Targets for managed exits in some divisions .

So your performance and how its monitored will be key over the coming year and I urge every one to take notice, keep notes and above all ask BT, how do I improve, where have I gone wrong, show me how I can do better.

The new attendance pattern meetings have not yet started but are in the pipeline for Openreach and we will get something out or put it on the BRANCH web sight as and when it comes in.



Finances

I would like to thank Steve Taylor for his work in updating all the finance records on to the new CWU HQ database and for his work over the last year in keeping the Books. The CWU finances are again coming under scrutiny by Head office but are accounts are looking healthy and before going to press we await the Audit.

Political issues and Women's issues

I would like to thank Dianne Hill for the work she has put in this year for the branch on these issues. Dianne has attended several conferences in her own time to represent the branch and report back on the issues that are current . Dianne also does some work on the Equality issues in the branch and helps maintain the branch membership records.

Safety

I would like to thank Steve Awock ,George Hannah and Nick Smith for their work with the safety team this year .

Safety is paramount when at work however, we still see too many accidents at work. The safety team work hard preparing posters, doing exchange safety visits and carrying out accident investigations for the branch

We have had a couple of nasty accidents during the year in our patch and I hope these are the exception and that the coming year will see a reduction in accidents. I know management are about to release a safety statement on this basis but I feel sometimes this statement is at odds with local management style on what is safe. So be safe in 2010 and challenge any one that asks you not to be

Meetings

During the year we have had regular branch meetings around the patch and had mixed attendance. It was nice to see so many people turn out to discuss "Transformation", it would be nice to see as many turn out for each meeting.

With so much going on in all divisions I would encourage people to attend the meetings. The meetings are usually no longer than 2 hours long and we supply a buffet and a drink at the end of each meeting where you can have a chance to chat in an informal way to officers of the branch about any issues you may have.

Don't worry if you have not been to a meeting before they are run in a formal way, but if I see new faces in the audience I will briefly run over procedure so you know what's going on.

The Branch committee met regularly and I would like to thank all those that gave their time to attend and bring there views to the table. Time to discuss issues, which does pro-mote an interesting debate at times and I thank all for this .

The new year then looks again like a challenging time with the company looking to run people through the Eperformance (MUP,IFW and FFW) process again I urge people to take this very seriously

I would like to thank the branch secretary for his work and support this year. Finally I would like to thank you the members for your support through the year and if I am re-elected to the post of Chairperson then I promise to do my utmost for you the members.

Ex Chairpersons Report. (Jan-May 2009)

May I start my last report by wishing you all a very Happy New Year for 2010. As I am sure you are all aware I left BT under the New start scheme during the year with my last day of active service being in March.

I remained as Chair until Dave Kauffman was duly elected in May of last year. Needless to say we the officers knew that the start of the New Year would not make life in BT any easier for our members. Both Chris Power & I were dealing first hand with huge changes in Management Style particularly within BT Operate. Primarily BT Oper-ate wanted large scale changes in Attendance Patterns in the Sevenoaks Workstyle building. I am pleased to report

though that around the time I left the company we had launched a Formal Registered Disagreement with BT over the position regarding the Sevenoaks site. I am given to understand that negotiations have indeed improved on the site & a common sense approach has now been taken by management. I feel strongly that credit should go to all those on site who supported the union & to Chris Power for sticking to his guns through very difficult negotiations. Both Chris & I continued to meet

with the local senior management. We always raised your issues & concerns at those meetings. I also attended several disciplines cases up until my departure.



There is no doubt in my mind that the BT I have just left is not the BT I joined. Although we all recognise that change is inevitable & you cannot stop progress, I do wonder at what cost to the workforce?

Finally. I would like to thank all my colleagues in the CWU for their support, friendship & comradeship over many many years. It has also been a great pleasure & a privilege for me to have worked & represented you the members of the CWU. Please continue to support your branch officers as they strive to support you! I wish you all well with your future careers with BT & I hope to see some of you at the AGM & at future branch meetings. Thanks.

Yours Sincerely

Dennis Noble (Former Chair)

Gary Heather NEC Member and friend of South East Central Branch

It is a great pleasure to give you a synopsis of my activities regarding the CWU, and as the Labour parliamentary candidate for Tun-bridge Wells.

I have been a BT customer service engineer since 1981, and I am currently a member of the CWU's National Executive Committee. I have spoken at meetings of your Branch, and work with your officers on the telecoms industrial committee for the South East region.

As a union executive member, I am on the Openreach negotiating team that is dealing with the Service Delivery Transformation programme, including revised attendance patterns. It is important to recognise that the union did not ask Openreach to change our members attendance patterns. The privatised telecoms market regulated by OFCOM, and increasing competition from hundreds of other communications providers, is forcing both prices and labour costs down. The new Openreach attendance patterns framework agreement will allow negotiations at local level to change attendances so that they are more flexible and reduce company costs. That is the harsh reality of a privatised telecoms market. Personally, I support and promote the CWU's policy of public ownership of UK telecommunications as a means of achieving a better deal for customers and workers in the industry.



I am supporting the union's Delivering Digital Britain campaign, that is arguing for government investment in superfast broadband as a way of achieving "digital inclusion" so that people are not disadvantaged by being excluded from broadband services, either because of low income or due to where they live.

As the Labour candidate for Tunbridge Wells at the next General Election, I am working with two of your Branch members, Dianne Hill and Ray Moon, who are both town councillors in the borough. Although on the face of it the area appears really affluent - and it is in lots of places - there are still pockets of poverty and deprivation hidden away on former council estates, just like in the rest of our country. It is a Conservative stronghold, but I am fighting the good fight, with other Labour Party members in Tunbridge Wells, for more affordable housing and generally for a better deal for working people. The new hospital springing up at Pembury is impressive, due to the £215m investment from the Labour government. However, we need to campaign so that Labour devotes more resources to hard up working people. I am a socialist who cares about people. If you want to help my campaign in Tunbridge Wells, or

need my assistance, please contact me.

I am keen to support workers in struggle - either in their workplace or in the community - as I have done when I visited striking Royal Mail workers on their picket line in Tonbridge, and Land Registry staff facing job losses in Hawkenbury. I also campaign for the repeal of anti-trade union laws and for a positive charter of rights for workers.

Yours fraternally,

Gary Heather CWU NEC member
gheather@cwu.org 07802 231 613

Financial Secretary Report

The current financial situation within the branch is stable, but with reducing membership due to a reduction of staff, we have to be more prudent with our finances more than ever. In the last year we have moved from having the accounts on a spreadsheet, to going online with an accounts system called SAGE. This

gives us a lot better tracking system of bank reconciliation, but it also gives Head Office the ability of monitoring our accounts on a regular basis as they want.

The state of the branches accounts are mentioned at every meeting, however I hope to bring in some additions to our accounts, that being a deposit account and the ability to pay expenses directly into officers accounts. In the next year we may have to replace some or all of the office computers as they seem to be getting slower and slower, but that will be made at a point when they become intolerable and a business case is raised.



In the political account we have once again supported the local Labour parties with donations, in the following constituencies: Battle & Bexhill, Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion, East Worthing and Shoreham, Eastbourne, Hastings & Rye, Hove, Lewes, Mid Sussex, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Mailing, Tunbridge Wells, and Wealden.

We have had only one request on the welfare fund in the past year.

Unfortunately we have had to forward some death benefits onto a few members' families.

An audited account of the branches finances will be made available at the AGM.

Steve Taylor (Fin Sec)

Organising and recruitment at PTF 2009

2009 saw a healthy growth of membership at PTF and as we began to build and further organise at this small telecoms company, recognition was looking to be more and more a reality. As always within the Organising department we constantly test the reps and ac-tivists we have as well as our membership, mainly because there is absolutely no point to gaining recognition if we don't have the structure and support of the members behind us, as you will know the process is a long and difficult one and that is when the company are pro union...

Sadly the membership were not quite ready to show solidarity and in November last year saw the dismissal of one of our reps at PTF, no fuss was made (although we asked the members and indeed non members to show there support for her) Further to this feeling toward the CWU and organising soured and we have decided to pull away from PTF until the spring.

The branch fully supported the campaign for change at PTF and provided not only solid sound advice and representation to members but financial support for meetings, training and leaflets.

With the amount of work that has gone in we would normally expect to have seen recognition by now, we can only put this down to the hostile stance the company has and the lack of willingness from members to fight for the changes that were so desperately needed at PTF.

I hope that this experience has not dimmed the thought and practice of organising at the branch- there have certainly been some interesting times along the way. Gaining peoples trust and double checking understanding are learning points to take forward to the next campaign.

Organising does work and can still work at PTF we need to re-focus and re-group I hope that support from the branch will continue this year and for many years to come.

Laura Segal

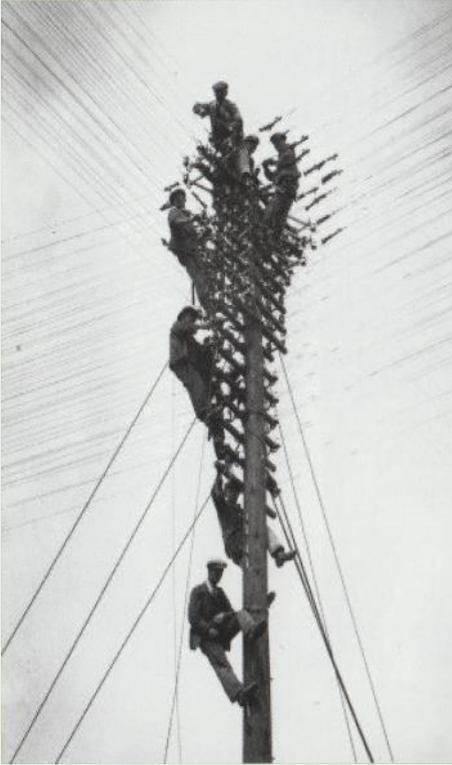
ANNUAL REUNION OF RETIRED UNION MEMBERS

Held on Friday 2nd October 2009 At the Tunbridge Wells Football Club

This years annual reunion was well attended with more than 90 colleagues attending from Sevenoaks , Tunbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Hastings and Eastbourne. The club house again provided the perfect atmosphere for the renewing of friendships and meet-ing long **lost friends** .

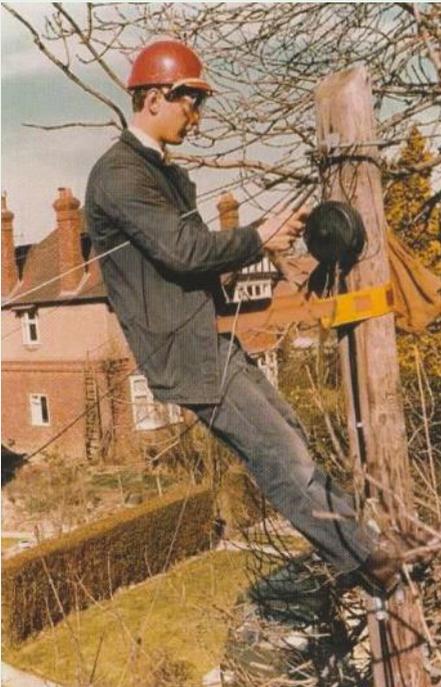
Many thanks to Dianne Hill who helped prepare all **the refreshments** and Paul Bridgett who organised the Hastings coach .

David Lomakin



Pole Climbing throughout the years

Who says it was better in the old days?



South East Central CWU Health & Safety Committee Annual Report 2010

It would be nice to start off on a good note this year but it feels that it would be inappropriate, seeing as this has been the worst year for health & safety within this branch that. I can remember, since taking on the role of a Union Safety rep some 15 years ago. For those of you not in the external engineering side of the membership or you have been living under a rock for the past six months you will all be aware of a very serious incident that took place this summer in the external field. The investigation that has only just finished after extensive interviews and meeting including the HSE (the Health & Safety Executive) have just concluded and the HSE has asked for a meeting which should involve all relevant parties including the union is being sought and should be being arranged as we speak.

It is difficult to go into the case in too much detail for legal and personal reasons but needless to say it nearly cost one individual his life and seriously effected the other individual in a "mental" capacity. Throughout the whole investigation one major point was apparent right from the start. Procedure.

This does not in any way exonerate the company from *any* blame (in my opinion) from the incident. There is a lot of pressure out there on individual engineers and within the call centre community of which we are

fully aware and we are making representation to the company on this issue on a regular basis. The issue of Managing Under Performance (MUP's (the worst acronym ever) is a real issue and a huge talking point for all. All these factors including the inadequacy of Computer Based Training (CBT's) all push individuals towards an inevitable end of "cutting corners".

Procedure is something the company prides itself on, it is a safe company to work for. It spends a lot of money researching procedures and yes, like a lot of companies, money can be a governing factor but none the less it does provide them. You could work for a small independent company that spends no money on safety, you work how you work and are lucky to go home at the end of the day intact and safe and see your family.

Only two days ago in the Brighton area I was out with my family and watched as an engineer climbed a pole without a lanyard, he had his climbing belt attached and used that



to climb the pole but at no point was his lanyard attached to his belt and used. This is a blatant disregard for the procedure laid down by Openreach on how to climb a pole. If, and thankfully it didn't, but if something had gone wrong at the point he disconnected from the pole and fell from the top of the ladder to the ground, there is every likelihood that once an investigation was carried out by management and the Union, we would have discovered that the lanyard was not being used. Then the individual as well as having potentially horrendous injuries would be facing discipline and the sack. For what? How much extra time would it have taken to use the lanyard? None. Because he was using his working belt instead! It doesn't matter that he was attached to the pole, it was not the correct procedure he had been trained to use.

This is really my point, and I've tried not to make it too preachy but it is virtually impossible for us a union to represent an individual whom has blatantly disregarded health & Safety procedures. We may find technicalities that were not in place training records not quite up to scratch but ultimately if you are aware of the process you should be following then please, please follow it. If at any time you are not sure of what you are doing, something is a little out of the ordinary on the site you are working there is a network in place for you to find out the relevant information. Your coach, your manager, any union Safety Rep (USR) plus any of the safety officers whose numbers are circulated on a regular basis with the "Safety Net" briefings the Branch releases.



That's the rant over, I would now like to take this opportunity to thank all of the USR's within the Branch that have continued to carry out their roles to the best of their abilities in difficult times. They do come under extra pressure due to their role and it is not something that I or the other officers take lightly. I would like to extend an extra thank you to Nick Smith, George Hannah and Dianne Hill for their continued support, without any of them this role would be thankless.

I hope you all have a safe 2010 and I hope we don't have to meet any of you (in the nicest way) for any disciplines for whatever reason but especially Health & Safety because you weren't doing something you should have!

Steve Awcock
07802 231036

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Women's Report

Once again I was elected as Secretary of the CWU South East Regional Women's committee and have represented the CWU SE on many occasions most recent at the centenary of the Scottish suffrage march through Edinburgh " the Gude Cause" an amazing day ending with a rally on the hill overlooking Edinburgh. How can we as women not vote when we remember the struggle of the women's suffrage movement. In the Region this year we have organised a weekend women's school at the unions education centre, took part in the "Keep the Post Public" campaign at the Guilford Guilfest. We set up the stall in the Unison marquee and I chaired the stage for the debate where we had Tony Kearns DGS and Terry Jackson Regional Secretary speaking. We collected hundreds of signatures, and it was great to have the women taking a lead and for it to be recognised by CWU Headquarters.

To the right is a picture of the women from the South East CWU branches at Women's Conference 2009. Women's conference for 2010 is in Coventry February 20th and is the largest of the equality conferences covering issues such as childcare, women's health, domestic violence, human trafficking, carers issues, etc, etc we have many and it's good to see women getting involved in so many issues that affect our lives.



At the CWU annual conference in Bournemouth I moved a proposition asking our Union to campaign to raise awareness of cervical cancer and to lower the age for young women in England to have smear tests, in line with Scotland, Wales and N Ireland. This is the second most common cancer in women under 35 and if caught early can be treated. With 13,000 new cases each year and approximately 4,000 deaths no one voted against this!!

2010 is the 100th anniversary of the chain makers strike.18th September 2010 If you want to know more about our women's committee which meets once a quarter or any events we have please contact Dianne Hill 07747 193133
orCwuse.women@btinternet.com

Di Hill

Work Related Stress

Stress is, simply, external forces affecting the individual. In general, stress is when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed your body responds as if it were in danger, your heart rate goes up, you breathe faster and you may even get a burst of energy.



Sometimes stress is normal or even useful, if you have to work harder to finish an important job for example but being stressed too often or for long periods of time can be harmful. It can have ad-verse effects such as headaches, upset stomach, back pain or sleep problems. Stress can also affect your immune system making it more difficult to fight off illness, if you already have health problems stress could make them worse. It can make you moody which could affect your relationships; you may also find that your work suffers. Stress can produce a range of signs or symptoms which can include changes to your behavior. You may suffer difficulty in sleeping or change your eating habits. There can also be physical symptoms like tiredness, aching muscles or palpitations. Mental symptoms can be feelings of inadequacy and memory loss; you may also feel drained or list-less, feel numb or get irritable or angry.

The H.S.E. say, "By the term work related stress we mean the process that arises where work demands of various types and combinations exceed the person's capacity and capability to cope. The H.S.E. are so concerned about work related stress that they have produced management standards which cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well being, lower productivity and increased sick absence. The management standards cover the six main sources of work related stress.

In the booklet "Managing the causes of work related stress." (A free to download booklet.) The H.S.E. state that "A total of nearly 11 million working days were lost to stress, depression and anxiety in 2005/06." And "In 2005/06 just under half a million people in Great. Britain reported experiencing work-related stress at a level they believed was making them ill."

In this booklet employers are reminded that they have a legal duty under existing laws to assess the risk of stress related ill health arising from work activities and to take measures to control that risk.

It is **important** to remember that stress from home will be carried with you to work just as work stress will be brought home, the human mind doesn't "clock off" just because the individual has.

If you feel **that** you are stressed it would, probably, be a good idea to go to your (cont..)

GP. Your doctor will be able to give you advice on how to best manage your stress. In BT/Openreach you can elect to use the stress management tool, STREAM, this is a simple online questionnaire which your manager should give you time to complete.

George Hannah.

Branch safety officer.

Equality Report

Rule 2.4 of the CWU Rule book makes it clear that no one should be discriminated against. It states the CWU shall actively oppose any organisation, political or otherwise, whose aims are racist or fascist.

Labour's flagship equality legislation, currently in committee stage in the House of Lords, seeks to outlaw any form of discrimination against disadvantaged groups in the office or the market place, these groundbreaking new laws will help narrow the gap between rich and poor. Hopefully this will become law in the Autumn, equality has made amazing leaps forward over the last decade, much of this due to the



number of women Labour MP's 97 and of course Harriet Harman. Michael Foster Hastings MP is the Minister for Equality let's hope we keep him there.

I represented the branch at the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender) in Bristol. This was another good equality conference also good to see that Brighton Pride is to go ahead this year, always a good CWU presence, 7th August. In the Region we held events for Black History month with displays in Gatwick, our National Equality Officer attended. We are looking to hold more equality events in the coming year. We published the first of our regional magazines which covered equality in the South East.

We cover all the strands of equality all having separate conferences. We have the retired, disability, LGBT, Black workers, women's and of course the youth, the future of our movement. If anyone would like to know more or become involved or have any issues they would like to raise please contact me or the branch.

Dianne Hill

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Political Report

This is the year when the future of the trade unions are in the balance. We trade unionists know that a Tory Government will take us backwards and although we haven't got all we want we have made much progress since Labour came to power.

As Chair of the South East Political Region which covers 16 CWU branches, we all know the importance of re-electing our Labour MP's in our branch areas. Michael Foster in Hastings is always supportive of our campaigns. Celia Barlow in Hove who has supported us and chaired our agency campaign meetings at Regional conference. MP's David Lepper and Des Turner standing down in Brighton with Nancy Platts and Simon Burgess hopefully replacing them, both supported the "Keep the Post Public" campaign when we took it to Brighton. In Tunbridge Wells we have Gary Heather from the CWU executive as the Labour Parliamentary candidate. We also have Ray Moon and myself trying to get Labour a seat on the Borough. As Town Councillors we know how hard this will be. We have had Labour events in Tunbridge Wells Tony Benn at the Nevill golf club, Mike Gapes, Hilary Benn and Nick Brown

As an elected member of the SERTUC (South East Regional Trade Union Congress) executive I have represented the TUC at various events. In May I spoke at the Lewes Trade Council against the spread of the far right fascist groups and the importance of voting in the European elections. This was another excellent event by Lewes activists. Once again I organised a stall in Hastings at the Robert Tressell festival.



The two main campaigns coming up are the campaign for Post bank and the delivery of Digital Britain giving equality across the Country with broadband access and speed. We have many rural areas who if they do get broadband it's slow! The Conservatives ideal time to bring the network back into public hands.

2010 elections important please
Remember Use Your VOTE.

2009 Tolpuddle, CWU branch banners assembling in remembrance of the Tolpuddle martyrs and the trade union movement Tolpuddle 2010 16-18 July.

Di Hill

GENERAL MEETING 2010 **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Members of the South East Central branch are advised that GENERAL meetings open to all members for 2010/11 are as follows:

2010

ANNUAL GENERAL	FEBRUARY 10TH	BRIGHTON Preston Park Hotel
GENERAL MEETING	MARCH 10TH	SEVENOAKS
GENERAL MEETING	MAY 19TH	TUNBRIDGE WELLS
GENERAL MEETING	SEPTEMBER 8TH	BRIGHTON
GENERAL MEETING	NOVEMBER 10TH	HASTINGS

2011

ANNUAL GENERAL	FEBRUARY 16TH	TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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Meeting venues will be advised closer to the time.
SPECIAL Meetings may be called to address urgent issues
Please also consult the Branch website on www.cwusec.org

ALL MEETINGS COMMENCE 7.30 AND LAST 2 HOURS

South East Central

Current Points of Contact

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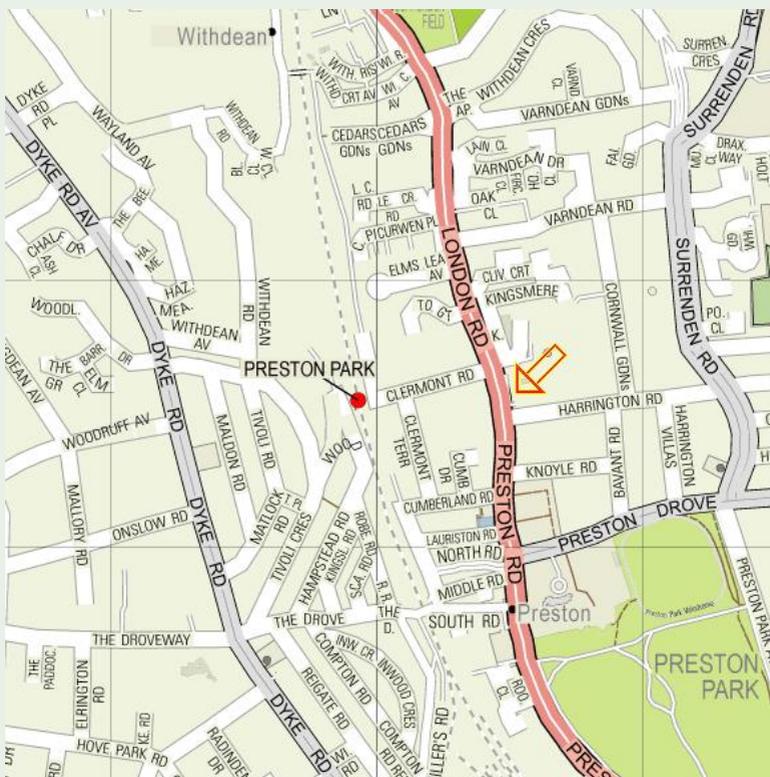
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South East Central Branch
Annual General Meeting
and election of officers
Wednesday 10th February 2010 at 19:30
In the Preston Park Hotel, Brighton BN1 6UU



There will be a buffet and a drink on the Branch at the meeting for all members who attend. If anyone requires transportation can they please contact either Branch Offices please.